

Superintendent's COVID-19 Task Force

December 14, 2020

Questions/Comments

Questions:

Question
Will the district change the quarantine policy to follow new CDC, TEA, and Tarrant County policy of 7-10 days?
Does MISD have plans to survey parents and teachers as to what our students (and teachers) are going through and how they are feeling? Would MISD consider asking both teachers and students for suggestions on what MISD could be doing to help?
Since CDC changed the quarantine period to 10 days and 7 if tested negative, is MISD going to change that policy also?
With the rising cases around us...are people still upset about quarantining kids? Do they understand that quarantining students is the way we've been allowed to stay open?
Will any protocols be changing? I am receiving letters every day from both of my children's schools? Can we at least consider returning to virtual until the numbers go down?
In this difficult and everything-changing COVID environment, how would MISD rate itself in terms of how it's handled everything in this COVID environment? Any big takeaways or lessons learned?
What is the percentage of students/teachers who have been quarantined who have ended up testing positive and/or shown symptoms?
According to the CDC, people who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. Is MISD following this policy?
Are MISD athletic trainers performing stress tests on athletes who have previously tested positive for COVID-19?
There are rumors that misd is considering extending the school year, starting earlier next year or even extending the school day because so many kids are behind and failing. Is this true? If so, what about the kids who aren't failing or behind? Has MISD considered creating some sort of "gap classes" for those kids that are not up to standards? For example, those students who were behind wouldn't take electives and take a makeup class instead? Why make students who don't need it stay longer or go to school longer. Why make teachers work longer hours?
Will MISD consider allowing students to use their lockers? Many students are complaining of back pain because of having to carry such heavy bags all day.
What is the current failure rate? Virtual/In-Person? And is there any grading/failure rate data being gathered on the students who have been quarantined? Especially those that have been quarantined multiple times?
If a virtual student is failing 2 or more classes at the end of six-week period next semester, will schools be allowed to force students to come back unless have an underlying health condition or someone in their household?
Based on the last meeting, we were informed that there's an increase in failing students due to current environment. Can you update the group w specific tasks/initiatives you're executing on to help rectify this issue?
Are we considering paying subs a higher daily rate?
Can you provide an update on MISD's progress on recruiting and retention of teachers? A few weeks ago my 2nd grader didn't have class because her teacher was out. She was still required to turn in her Seesaw assignments but had no instruction. Is this due to a low talent pool?

Comments:

I received the following message from an MISD teacher today.

I currently have 93 students in my four classes, and as of 8am today, only 29 of these are passing this

Superintendent's COVID-19 Task Force

December 14, 2020

Questions/Comments

third six weeks and only 34 of them are passing for the semester. That is a failure rate of 71% for this six weeks and means 63% will have to redo my class unless they dominate the final exam next week or can complete grade redemption (even though only four of my students actually had me fill out the proper paperwork for this). Please understand that in my worst year as an educator I have never even had a rate of over 20% failures. To say this as humbly as possible, I've taught the same subject for so long, I know how to help kids succeed.

This year has not been a challenge for me, but yes, an obvious challenge for my students. Since November 10, which is exactly one month ago today, 39 out of my 93 mask wearing students have been quarantined. That is 42% of my students not in my class for over a two-week period just in this third six weeks alone! Yes, some have returned, but many are still out, and I won't see them again till next semester.

Despite me allowing unlimited attempts for full credit on all assignments and full use of all notes and reviews on all tests, students are still failing. I have basically used methods put in place for my students that get accommodations. Also, despite having placed videos of every lesson along with filled out notes available on my Canvas, and teaching no different than in past years inside my classroom, my efforts have been futile and I am completely at a loss.

Feel free to share this with whoever you feel will listen as I am not aware they are getting much info from front line teachers like myself begging our district to stop sending healthy masked students home as I am worried we are losing a generation of students.

Please consider his words. Our students need stability. They need their friends. They need the pep rallies, the dances, the class parties. They NEED all the things that make school enjoyable and engaging. Please consider changing the current policies. Over and over again, it is being shown that children are not the super spreaders of this virus. Stop treating them like they are!

Not sure if you consider this COVID related, but COVID is affecting schedules. I still believe in stacking virtual and in person classes. I know it can't change for this year, but if we are still in this predicament next year, we should truly look into that. I know there are both positive and negatives. But I feel with all the emotional issues with students and teacher, they need consistency with schedule for their social and emotional wellbeing. We are trying to work on SEL, and this is a huge issue. So if they go from virtual to in person or vice versa their schedule does not need to change. This will also help with class sizes and changing of seating charts. Virtual students will feel more connected if able to see kids in the classroom and not just on a screen. Have students have buddies in the class (like at STEM Academy). Also, teachers have a consistent schedule for the year and not being stressed by possibly changing from one class to another in the middle of the semester. And schools are not having to change the master schedule every six weeks and counselors can help students more instead of working on schedules issues. I know teachers worry about attendance, TEAMS for quarantined kids, etc. This way they always have TEAMS on. Some of the negatives are schools worried about in person students will stop coming to school. How would they code them for attendance? How do we get them back to school if failing if we offer both? How do we teach to both at the same time? One issue stated by the district has been we don't have the technology for that. Let's look into that. I believe this would be something we could work on during the spring and summer to come up with a definite plan. Get Admin, Principals, Counselors, teachers, etc. on a committee to work on this plan. I know last year a committee was put together but there were so many unknowns that all the plans couldn't be worked out. Now we know what we are up against.

Great leadership!