

March 9, 2021: School Reopening Community Task Force Meeting 3

Attendees:

Alexander Wolff, Alexandra Drinkwine, Cheri Hardial, Cheryl Champ, Christina Viggiano, Erin Blakeley Ginsburg, Farid Johnson, Gail Sider, Jackie De Angelis, James Hricay, Jason D'Amore, Jeannine Carr, Jessica Waters, Jessyka Calzolaio, John Condon, John Sebalos, Julia Chung, Julia Martin, Kevin Ritchie, Kristen Burke, Kristin Quintano, Kusum Mathews, Laura Hendrie, Leah Tahbaz, Lisa Arbelaez, Lynn Sabia, Maria Thompson, Mark Berkowitz, Rachel Pixley, Scott Brown, Sean Llewellyn, Stephanie Otero, Steven Garcia, Susan Gilbert, Tara Weishaupl, Theresa Pignone, Thomas Callahan, Tiffany Hebert, Tricia Joseph, Trisha Fitzgerald

Meeting Opening

- Dr. Champ reviewed meeting objectives:
 - Review school reopening update presentation in preparation for 3/10 BOE meeting
 - Move to breakout sessions in the areas of elementary and secondary lunch, mental health support, virtual learning support and metrics/surveillance testing
- Dr. Champ noted that the administration and teachers have been meeting frequently to push reopening forward
- The Task Force is scheduled to meet 2 more times: 3/16 and 3/23:
 - These meetings will focus on finalizing spring reopening and developing a final report for BOE
 - After spring reopening implementation, the Task Force will be engaged again to plan for fall reopening
 - The goal is to have fall reopening plans finalized by 6/25

DRAFT Reopening Proposal Review

- Dr. Champ asked Task Force to review content and make suggestions in the areas of transparency, honesty and tone
- The DRAFT reopening proposal discussed the following areas (please see full presentation for details):
 - Mitigation strategies
 - Masks
 - Barriers
 - 3ft (Note: this distance is supported by current research and in practice at some schools; it is not indicated in NYS or CDC guidelines)
 - Air purifiers, open windows, box fans

- Surveillance testing
 - Will help track infection rate in school community
 - Will use to track success of reopening and ongoing
- FTIP or virtual commitment
 - Survey to be sent this week and due back 3/17 (based on subsequent discussion after Task Force meeting)
- Changing dynamics of instruction
 - With a majority of kids in FTIP and small number of kids in all virtual, the dynamics of instruction changes somewhat
 - Attendance expectations need to be set (e.g., if FTIP, you are expected at school every day and cannot toggle between virtual and in-person; student should stay home if sick or needs to quarantine)
 - Fully remote students will continue to use Google Classroom / Google Meet and Academy hours available
 - Fully virtual teachers may be possible in fall if families commit to remote instruction
- Reopening timing
 - 4/12 – K-5
 - TBD timing starting in April (based on subsequent discussion after Task Force meeting) – MS/HS phase-back
- Schedule
 - Elementary start will be 8:30 am with staggered arrival
 - Secondary 1st period start will be at 8:15 am
 - 1/2 day Wednesdays will continue due to need for virtual lesson planning
- Lunch
 - With barriers in the classroom should be sufficient and works at other schools
 - MS/HS can use cafeterias and open campus (HS)
 - District is awaiting quotes on tents for outdoor open space

Discussion/Q&A

- **Ventilation clarification:** 6-8 air changes per hour already; in schools with HVAC this is higher, windows will be open when possible, and air purifiers and box fans in place
- **Parent information share request:** It was asked if Task Force parents can share back information with other parents and schools as a part of change management; Dr. Champ agreed and would be happy if Task Force parents are willing to answer questions using meeting minutes
- **Firm commitment for in-person vs. virtual:** Need clear language to convey necessity of this; It was suggested that district allow “FTIP to virtual” switches this spring in case family circumstances change (e.g., too many quarantines to arrange childcare, revised risk assessment, other changing circumstances, etc.)
- **Virtual learning:** Need clarified language to address additional support needs available for students and teachers given the changing dynamic

- **Request for “practice-day” for teachers:** Dr. Champ will discuss separately at a meeting with teachers
- **Mental health and wellness:** Students are struggling emotionally, anxiety is high, and this new transition may cause additional stress
- **Clarification on MS/HS phase back needed:** The proposed MS/HS phase back is likely over several weeks and it needs to be determined if those “waiting” to come back will need to be virtual or can continue hybrid
- **Demand for FTIP in person may have increased since last survey:** Many more may want to come back given the progress of vaccinations:
 - We can accommodate all elementary at 3ft
 - We can only accommodate approximately 70-80% of secondary at 3ft requiring us to explore satellite classrooms or other arrangements like $\frac{2}{3}$ or 75% capacity
- **Need clear language around continuing $\frac{1}{2}$ days Wednesdays:** It is needed for as long as virtual learning is necessary and teachers are teaching both ways
- **Lunch:** It was asked if we can increase “going home” for lunch at elementary. Yes, if parents want this for their child, they need to speak with their Principal
- **Need to set expectations with the students:** Kids are excited to go back every day, but it needs to be communicated that school is still “not the same” yet

Breakouts

- The Task Force broke out into subgroups for the last 10 minutes of the meeting to start building recommendations for:
 - Elementary Lunch
 - Secondary Lunch
 - Metrics/Surveillance Testing
 - Virtual Learning Support
 - Mental Health and Well-Being Support
- Breakout sessions will continue at 3/16 meeting