



School Board Work Session
Monday, December 14, 2020; 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

I. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order

II. Discussion

A. Learning Model Update

Description: Administration will share expectations for the current model and provide an update on plans for returning to a hybrid model.

Presenters: Dr. John Schultz, Superintendent; Dr. Randy Smasal, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Timothy Anderson, Principal, South View Middle School; Andrew Beaton, Principal, Edina High School; Karen Bergman, Principal, Countryside Elementary School; Paul Domer, Principal, Concord Elementary School; Chris Holden, Principal, Normandale Elementary School

B. Board ad hoc Committee on COVID Testing Update

Description: This ad-hoc committee was charged in early November with researching and discussing the opportunities, practicality, challenges and feasibility associated with COVID-19 testing of employees and students in the Edina Public Schools.

Presenters: Members Fox, Greene and Michaelson

C. Letter to the Governor

Description: This proposed letter requests additional gubernatorial support in getting students back into our schools.

Presenter: Chair Allenburg

III. Leadership Updates



Board Meeting Date: 12/14/2020 Work Session

TITLE: Distance Learning and Models Update

TYPE: Discussion

PRESENTERS: Dr. John W. Schultz, Superintendent, Dr. Randy Smasal, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary and Secondary Principals

BACKGROUND:

Administration has previously recommended a shift to distance learning for all students due to rising COVID-19 cases, community spread of the virus and the challenges associated with continuing to staff sections, programs and services. Teachers have been provided additional preparation time to prepare for the shift to distance learning. A number of professional development opportunities have been provided for teachers as well.

A process for shifting back to the hybrid learning model is described in the report accompanied by metrics that would initiate that shift. Also, some shifts to the program learning models are described.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Maintain Edina High, Middle, and Elementary Schools in the distance learning model until key metrics are met that allow for a safe return of students and the availability of staff.
- Phase in the return of learners based on level of academic need, e.g., site-based students receiving specialized services, our youngest learners (kindergarten and first grade)
- Upon return to the hybrid learning model, shift grade 1 to full day programming, four days per week.
- Continue to solicit feedback, analyze results and apply lessons learned to improve the learning models used in Edina

PRIMARY ISSUE(S) TO CONSIDER: This report will cover two main topics: a distance learning update and expectations and a proposed process and prioritization for when we are able to return students to buildings. The board should be prepared to provide feedback on the distance learning update and the specific issue of Grade 1 being increased to four days per week, and childcare moving to the high school.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Report (next page)

Learning Models Update

Background

A. Implementing Distance Learning across all schools

- Current Teacher Expectations for DL
 - Elementary Teachers
 - [Distance Learning Expectations](#)
 - Secondary Teachers
 - [MS Distance Learning Expectations](#)
 - [EHS DL Update](#)
- Elementary EVA Update
 - EVA has continued to focus on primary literacy for K-2 by aligning para support to address this need. We've recently connected room parents to classes to deepen the connection of families to the EVA classroom. Staff wellness has also been a focus area as we've utilized the Present Teacher modules provided by Hennepin County that address teacher health and wellness.
- Mental Health Update
 - Student Wellness
 - Support Services Staff have provided training to classroom teachers on strategies to support student wellness and learning including the 3 Signature SEL Practices encouraged by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). The first practice of a Welcoming Ritual emphasizes the need for interactive experiences that bring out the voice of every student, assisting them in making connections with one another. The second practice of Engaging Strategy focuses on intentionally teaching and building social and emotional learning skills. The final practice of an Optimistic Closure encourages educators to end each experience in an intentional way providing a sense of accomplishment and supports students in forward thinking.
 - Additional resources on topics of student mental health and wellness are regularly distributed to staff and to families as appropriate.
 - School support teams have continued their efforts to provide targeted outreach to students that began in earnest during the summer break. Students identified for targeted outreach include those students who have been referred by teachers or parents, are demonstrating a lack of engagement and those with pre-existing concerns.
 - Upcoming training for teachers include: Trauma 101, Trauma Responsive Classroom Strategies and Executive Functioning.
 - Fraser is accepting new students working through the district referral process and is now allowing direct referrals from families as well. They will be prepared to resume in-person services when the district is ready. They have increased consultation with staff members outside of student support services to better meet the mental health concerns of students and enhance the intervention and referral processes. Finally, the district is working with Fraser to provide additional community training to address student and family mental health and wellness topics.

Learning Models Update

- Staff Wellness
 - Student wellness training emphasizes the need for the development of self-care strategies for educators and encourages the development of skills that benefit both the students and teachers.
 - Schoology course on “Self-Care in the Time of COVID”.
 - Engagement in “The Present Teacher Restoration Project” which assist teachers in the following learning objectives:
 - Learn about the origins of healing from toxic stress
 - Discover the four core elements of mental well-beingness and emotional resilience
 - Receive support and insight on how to manage personal and collective trauma
 - Engage mind-body practices grounded in mindful awareness that “restore” the body’s natural health, sense of safety, and innate resilience
 - Experience strategies rooted in neuroscience and cognitive behavioral therapy that help an educator “re-story” stress in a way that promotes integration and integrity of self (vs. dis-integration and burnout)
 - Increased efforts to connect staff members to existing benefits through the district’s Employee Assistance Program which provides up to three free therapy sessions prior to accessing employee insurance.
 - Building efforts to promote staff wellness include:
 - In-person and virtual gatherings to decrease feelings of isolation and improve staff connections with one another.
 - Workload relief days.
 - Specialist training in self-care strategies.
 - Encouraging scheduled breaks.
- Staff Development for Hybrid Teachers
 - Since the initial Pandemic emergency we have provided consistent support focused on a few key areas for teacher development. Due to the regular nature of this support throughout the spring, workshop week and fall our teachers felt prepared to make the shift from a technical perspective. Pedagogy continues to be an area of focus and requires an updated approach while at distance. We are focusing on feedback vs. assessment, culturally responsive practices while at distance and classroom management in the cloud.
 - Monday and Tuesday during the week of Thanksgiving elementary staff were asked to attend Literacy Training in addition to that Sean Beaverson hosted sessions each day to help answer final questions about preparation
 - Updated and relaunched level specific Schoology Courses to centralize support and communication for teaching staff
 - Elementary professional learning included opportunities for EVA teachers to lead sessions on lessons learned teaching in a DL format. [Here](#) is a link describing some elementary level guidance used to prepare for distance learning.
 - Secondary Administrators and Teacher Leaders solicited ideas and invited staff to share what was working and best practice for Distance Learning. Here are two examples of staff development opportunities provided for secondary staff.

Learning Models Update

- [South View Spark Sessions](#)
- [Valley View PD on Demand](#)

In addition, the overall expectations developed for use of Schoology were reinforced and communicated to staff at both elementary and secondary levels.

- Provided on-site support for teachers that requested ideas on how to use their classroom as a teaching studio
- HS professional learning sessions included:
 - Assessment Practices in DL
 - Features and Uses of Google Meets for DL
 - Cooperative Team Learning and Successful Practices in DL
 - The Big 4: Purpose, Student Voice, Movement, and Checking for Understanding in DL
 - Features and Uses of Schoology for DL

B. Process and prioritization for a return to Face to Face instruction

Phase	Learners who will return	Decision Triggers:
Phase I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● K-12 students receiving site based special education services ● K-12 students receiving non site based special education services that have been recommended by IEP teams ● K-12 students receiving multilingual services that have been recommended by their service teams ● K-12 students struggling academically/logistically with Distance Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Down-trending COVID rates in the County and City, ● Sufficient staffing levels to operate sections, programs and services
Phase II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade K-5 hybrid learners ● K-1 returning first, one week lag for 2-5 returning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Down-trending COVID rates in the County and City, ● County Case Rates trending toward 50 Cases/10,000 ● Sufficient staffing levels to operate sections, programs and services
Phase III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grade 6-12 hybrid learners ● Additional time for K-12 learners struggling with the DL/Hybrid learning model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Down-trending COVID rates in the country and City, ● County Cases Rates trending toward 30 Cases/10,000 ● Sufficient staffing levels to operated sections, programs and services

- Exploring Learning model changes:
 - K-1
 - Full day in person, 4 days per week
 - Note: some additional para staffing may be needed to support first grade classes.

Learning Models Update

- Grades 2-5 hybrid AA, BB cohort
 - 4 days per week,
 - Childcare services may need to be relocated to the HS in order to have enough space to bring Gr 1 back for 4 full days each week
 - Note: The elementary principals revisited the possibility of switching grades 2-5 to a ½ day learning model. The logistics and challenges with the model were deemed too significant to bring forward as an administrative recommendation.
- Grades 6-8 hybrid AA, BB cohort
 - 4 days per week
 - Some adjustments to the assignment of AA or BB cohort may need to be made. Last fall this was assigned by alphabetical last name A-K as the Monday/Tuesday cohort and L-Z as the Thursday/Friday cohort. Some rebalancing of these two cohorts may require modification of this.
 - The structure of the hybrid model may need to be adjusted from last fall depending upon how many families select Hybrid vs EVA in the change of learning model status form.
- Grades 9-12
 - Childcare services placed at EHS will consume some space, which will have an impact on the hybrid learning model design at EHS.
 - Combination of Distance Learning and Hybrid Learning
 - Some courses may have more in school time than others
- K-12
 - Bring in students with high academic or logistical learning needs for more than 2 days per week.

Ongoing discussions, considerations, challenges:

- The effectiveness of Distance Learning vs Hybrid learning for different learners
- Staff availability: Isolation and quarantine due to COVID has and will continue to impact available staff for sections, programs and services.
- The level of student engagement during distance learning, especially for students with additional support needs.
- The equity, or rather inequity of distance learning for many students based on parent availability, English language acquisition, etc.
- Safety protocols will continue to be observed: mask wearing, hand washing, social distancing.
- Protocols for teaching and learning when a teacher is quarantined; allowing flexibility to staff with licensed paras, for example, would help maintain in-person learning.
- Additional PPE has been provided for staff in our site-based program given the additional risk of exposure since some children do not wear masks due to their sensory needs.
- Mental health ramifications of children not being in school vs. the risk of contracting COVID.

Learning Models Update

Appendix

Change of Status: Learning Model Form *(This form will be sent to K-12 families on Tuesday, December 15. It will be due back on Monday, December 21. This information will be collected through the Infinite Campus portal.)*

Date:

Student Number:

Student Name (Last Name, First Name):

Student Enrolled School:

Student Enrolled Grade:

Please Select Your Second Semester Learning Model Choice From the Options Below:

- Hybrid Learning Model (Some in school time, some Distance Learning time)
- Edina Virtual Academy Learning Model (All Distance Learning)

Will you require transportation?

- Yes we qualify for transportation and will need it.
- No we do not qualify for transportation or we do not need it.

Will you require food service?

- Yes we are participating in the Hybrid Learning Model and will participate in the EPS Food Service program.
- Yes we are participating in the Edina Virtual Academy Learning Model and will participate in the EPS Food Service program.
- No we will not need food service.



Board Meeting Date: 12/14/2020 Work Session

TITLE: Screening COVID-19 Testing Pilot

TYPE: Discussion

PRESENTER(S): Matthew Fox, Julie Green, Owen Michaelson

BACKGROUND: This ad-hoc committee was charged in early November with researching and discussing the opportunities, practicality, challenges and feasibility associated with COVID-19 testing of employees and students in the Edina Public Schools.

Even with a quickly evolving landscape of this pandemic, this committee has continued to meet, research and problem-solve potential paths for a COVID-19 testing program. It's important to note changes from the start of the committee work (early November) to the current timeframe (mid-December), and how these shifting variables have impacted the committee's thought process, discussion and ultimately, a recommended framework for moving this effort forward.

RECOMMENDATION: None

PRIMARY ISSUE(S) TO CONSIDER: Update on the Ad-Hoc Committee: Screening COVID 19 Testing Pilot

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Report (next page)

Ad-Hoc Committee: Screening COVID-19 Testing Pilot

Committee Background

This ad-hoc committee was charged, in early November, with researching and discussing the opportunities, practicality, challenges and feasibility associated with COVID-19 testing of employees and students in the Edina Public Schools.

Even with a quickly evolving landscape of this pandemic, this committee has continued to meet, research and problem-solve potential paths for a COVID-19 testing program. It's important to note changes from the start of the committee work (early November) to the current timeframe (mid-December) and how these shifting variables have impacted the committee's thought process, discussion and ultimately, a recommended framework for moving this effort forward.

Where We Started (Early NOV 2020) What Has Changed (Mid-DEC 2020)

COVID-19 positive case rates/less than 20/10,000	→	Increase in COVID-19 positive case rates/more than 100/10,000
Limited public testing sites/availability	→	Additional state-wide public testing sites open
Vaccine approval and distribution unknown	→	Vaccine approval/distribution on horizon
EPS students in Hybrid or EVA learning model	→	All EPS students pre-K-12 in Distance Learning
All EPS facilities and activities open	→	All EPS facilities open and most activities closed
State-mandate Tier 1 Essential Care offered	→	State-mandate Tier 1 Essential Care offered (model change)

Committee Process

The committee considered questions and sought information to determine the potential feasibility of an EPS COVID-19 Testing Pilot program based on the following considerations:

→ Funding

- ◆ Cost analysis of program and potential funding streams
- ◆ Advocacy and partnership opportunities

→ Logistics & Operations

- ◆ Implementation of testing process/district health services
- ◆ Participation parameters, accessibility and consent
- ◆ Legalities/potential risk assessment
- ◆ Staffing and facilities support needs
- ◆ Communication

→ COVID-19 Testing Resources

- ◆ Effective and reliable testing partnership
- ◆ Availability of tests
- ◆ Lab results/timeliness/process
- ◆ Focus at state/federal level starting transition to vaccine delivery

What We Learned

There is no silver bullet on funding (EPS is facing another round of budget reductions), logistics (there is no ideal in/out centralized facility that addresses all ten sites), and testing resources (we had business development calls with three providers and no clear partner).

That said, there are paths to explore; however, we should realign our mandate to be narrower and deeper in its application.

Why We Should Do This

Research has shown that around 40-50% of people infected with COVID-19 do not develop symptoms.* These asymptomatic individuals, through “silent transmission,” are significant contributors to the spread of this virus.

By offering an ongoing robust COVID-19 testing process for individuals in the EPS school community, we can 1) quickly identify positive cases 2) be able to isolate and contact trace those cases and 3) retain open classrooms to provide more in-person learning.

Data are showing that this proactive approach, in concert with other MDH preventive protocols, could effectively work to reduce the risk of asymptomatic spread by those screened. This would potentially impact school operations by finding cases faster and minimizing the amount of people needing to quarantine.

What We Recommend

Based on our initial findings, we recommend continuing the work of the ad-hoc committee in the following two-pronged capacity:

- 1) **Narrow** the scope of the committee work to the planning and implementation of a COVID-10 testing regimen for EPS.

Having not yet found a silver-bullet, and knowing that attention is starting to transition from testing to vaccines at the state and federal levels, we still see a very important and viable path for rapid testing in a pilot phase within our district. This thinking is in alignment with the most recent CDC Guidance for Expanded Screening Testing as a Reducer of the Silent Spread**.

Our position is to gain feedback from the Board as to which populations (students and staff) would be prioritized in phase one of a potential roll-out so that the committee can narrow its focus and make a targeted push toward a level of testing, funding, and logistical setup.

- 2) **Broaden** the committee needs flexibility and empowerment to seek alignment and support from city, state, and federal government resources. The committee would benefit from direction around what level of funding we can and should seek outside the currently available revenue streams. The committee would also benefit from direction around how much we can represent ourselves as an advisory body when engaging with elected officials in collaboration of this COVID-19 testing effort.

*<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html>

**<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/expanded-screening-testing.html>

Edina Public Schools
5701 Normandale Road
Edina, MN 55424

December 15, 2020

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capital
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz:

As Edina Public School leaders, we are seeking additional support from you in getting students back into our schools. School districts throughout the State are struggling to stay open and provide consistent in-person education to our students. It is imperative that the State focus on guidance, funding and policies that prioritize getting students back in school.

First of all, we want to express our appreciation for the tireless efforts by you and your team in working to strike a careful balance between student and staff health and safety, and allowing in-person schooling. However, we continue to be concerned by the growing education gap created when students are out of school as well as adverse impacts on all learners. In our district we see distance learning disproportionately impacting our Special Education students, our Multilingual Learners and our Students of Color. We are also seeing many students for whom distance learning simply does not work and many additional students being negatively affected from a social and emotional well-being perspective.

Rather than focus on problems, we would like to work with you on solutions. Below are areas the State can address that we believe will help us safely return students to school as soon as possible.

Revisit the Safe Learning Plan from July 30. Many districts, including ours, have, at times, successfully been able to have students in school with proper mitigation techniques. As time goes on, we are learning more about the virus itself and how it spreads. This natural evolution of learning has led to a change in quarantine time guidance from the CDC, which the Minnesota Department of Health has adopted. As what we learn increases, science evolves and recommendations change, we believe this is the right time to revisit and potentially revise guidance for school districts.

It is important for the state to re-emphasize that the number of cases per ten thousand is not the only factor pertaining to school opening decisions. While it may be a useful number to determine whether schools should re-open in their entirety, it may not be useful in determining whether schools should open for those students most in need, particularly for districts where identified

students represent less than half the student population. It is critical at this time for us to receive additional specific guidance from the State regarding partial re-openings for those in greatest need.

Utilize COVID-19 testing to confidently bring some students and teachers back to school.

Edina schools has already convened a cross-functional team that includes medical professionals, leaders from the district, and individuals from the Minnesota Department of Health. We believe with State support this can be a critical component to safely returning students and teachers back into the school system. Please see the attached report from our team.

Prioritize educators for vaccination. We want to ensure every district in the State receives needed and transparent guidance and timing information about vaccines to ensure boards and leaders are ready to answer and plan in the context of getting students back to in-person learning and keeping our educators and support staff healthy.

Find alternative solutions for childcare for first responders. School districts have been providing free childcare for qualified individuals per Executive Order 20-19. While providing childcare is an extremely important function, and we are proud Minnesota is doing this, the requirement has effectively reduced funding to school districts by requiring us to cover costs without offsetting revenue. It has also occupied school space that we could otherwise use for providing educational services to our students. In the Edina School District alone, close to 25 classrooms in our elementary schools alone are currently being taken up by childcare. Shifting that responsibility to the cities or counties would free up school finances and, more important, physical space for us to provide additional educational services.

Additional financial support for our schools. Districts throughout the state have incurred significant increased costs as a result of COVID-19. We estimate that our additional costs for this year have exceeded \$5,000,000 and that does not cover costs we may incur if we could have a partial re-opening for those most in need or for additional programming to help students meet additional academic and social emotional needs in an unusual year of learning. We understand that there is great fiscal uncertainty, however, we ask that the State increase its funding to districts to support district initiatives to properly educate all our students during this crisis.

Planning for learning loss. Despite all of our best efforts, learning loss is an unacceptable consequence of this pandemic. We would like to work with you now on creating short and long term strategies to reverse any learning loss students in our district and other districts have faced. Many potential solutions cannot be resolved only at the district level, but require both state funding and legislative action. We propose the creation of a coalition of educators and other professionals to work on this issue now.

To the extent the data shows that community spread of COVID-19 continues to be a main driver of school closure, we appreciate any efforts that can be used to slow community spread. We know we are all in this together and we look forward to partnering with you to maintain the outstanding educational experience here in Edina and across the state of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

John Schultz
Superintendent
Edina Public Schools

Erica Allenburg
Board Chair
Edina Public Schools

CC:

Jan Malcolm, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Health
Melisa Franzen, State Senator, Edina and Bloomington
Mary Cathryn Riker, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Education
Steve Elkins, State Representative, Edina
Heather Edelson, State Representative, Edina
Tom Connell, President, Education Minnesota - Edina