



School Board Work Session
Tuesday, February 23, 2021; 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

I. Determination of Quorum and Call to Order

II. Report/Discussion

A. Secondary Learning Plan Update

Description: Secondary school students will be migrating from a hybrid learning model to an in person learning model as outlined in the attached report.

Presenter(s): Dr. John W. Schultz, Dr. Randy Smasal, Jody De St Hubert, Dr. Tim Anderson, Andy Beaton, Shawn Dudley; Eric Hamilton; Dr. Nick Kelley

III. Board Chair Updates

IV. Superintendent Updates

V. Information

A. COVID Update from Epidemiologist Nick Kelley, Ph.D.

B. Area Districts Survey - *walked in*

C. Superintendent Compensation Range for Search Firm Advertisement



Board Meeting Date: February 23, 2021 Special Meeting

TITLE: Secondary Learning Plan Update

TYPE: Information

PRESENTER(S): Dr. John W. Schultz, Dr. Randy Smasal, Jody De St Hubert, Shawn Dudley, Dr. Tim Anderson, Andy Beaton

BACKGROUND: Secondary school students will be migrating from a hybrid learning model to an in person learning model as outlined in the attached report.

RECOMMENDATION: For school board information. Several next steps indicate how the administrative team plans to implement the return of secondary students to the in-person learning model.

PRIMARY ISSUE(S) TO CONSIDER: Consider the degree to which the school district can provide for a safe and effective learning environment for all stakeholders.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Report (next page). *Please note that Chrome is the best option for opening the links.*

EPS Secondary Return to Face to Face Instruction

As of February 2021

Background:

Planning for bringing students back in school for more in-person time has been going on based on new scientific data that shows the rate of Covid-19 transmission data in the school setting is low. The CDC came out with updated guidance for the safe delivery of in-person instruction on February 12th, this guidance stressed the importance of the following elements for the successful delivery of an in-person model: layered mitigation efforts, continued prevention of the transmission of Covid-19 in the community, phased mitigation and learning models, testing individuals to limit the spread of Covid-19 transmission and outbreaks, vaccinations for teachers and school staff.

Subsequent to the new CDC guidance, Governor Walz provided school districts with new guidance on February 17th that had two major changes: the social distancing requirement for secondary (high school and middle school) has been reduced from six feet to a minimum of three feet and adherence to county Covid-19 rates is no longer the primary indicator if a change in learning models is necessary. The rationale in the variance between the Minnesota Department of Education guidelines and the Center for Disease Control guidelines revolves around initiatives the State of Minnesota has implemented to prioritize a safe learning environment: providing vaccines to educators and school staff and bi-weekly testing opportunities for educators and staff.

Current Situation:

Our prior planning for both the hybrid model and this model, layered mitigation efforts that have proved successful across both middle and high school, the current positivity rates of Covid-19 being below 5% and the Hennepin County number staying steady give us confidence that our measured approach to bringing more students into the middle and high schools will be safe and successful.

Hennepin County Case Rates

14 day Covid Case Rate (Total Positive cases in 2 weeks/10,000 county residents)

| Date | County Case Rate |
|---------|------------------|
| 1/4/21 | 36.2 |
| 1/11/21 | 38.4 |

| | |
|---------|------|
| 1/18/21 | 31.3 |
| 1/25/21 | 24.1 |
| 2/1/21 | 22.5 |
| 2/8/21 | 20.6 |

City of Edina Covid Case Rates

7 Day Rolling Average

| Date | City Case Rate |
|---------|----------------|
| 1/29/21 | 8.3 |
| 1/30/21 | 7.4 |
| 1/31/21 | 6.6 |
| 2/1/21 | 6.9 |
| 2/2/21 | 6.4 |
| 2/3/21 | 6.3 |
| 2/4/21 | 6.0 |

Additionally, our district's unique opportunity to start testing students (voluntarily) on a weekly basis to reduce asymptomatic students within our middle and high schools gives an additional layered mitigation tool.

While we are excited about declining case numbers and the ramp up of vaccines for educators, our regional partners at Bloomington Public Health are advising us to take a cautious approach and to watch how COVID-19 variants impact case rates in our state and local community. Additionally, vaccine availability and access for our educators and staff has been varied, so our ramp-up for in person learning is paced with when our district estimates the majority of our educators will have received at least one dose of their vaccine and a large number will have received two doses.

Learning Plan:

The latest guidance supports our plan to transition our secondary students to more in person days. Our previous planning and structures position us well as we work through any modifications or logistics that need updating.

Below is a preliminary plan and target date for all EPS secondary students who selected the hybrid model for spring 2021 to attend school in person 4 times per week (M, T, TH & F). Wednesdays of five-day weeks will continue to be an At Home Learning Day where teachers meet virtually with students both individually and in small groups. At Home Learning Days also provide time for teachers to prepare digital lessons and resources so they can continue to meet the needs of students who are absent, quarantined and in EVA.

Be advised that the proposed timeline below is contingent on what is happening with the COVID-19 virus and any changes in state guidance we may receive. This data/guidance may slow or accelerate this timeline.

Timeline

- **February 16th, 2021**

- Secondary students (6 - 12) return to hybrid. Students attend school in alpha groups A-K and L-Z two days a week and approximately 100 tier one high need learners are attending school 4 days a week.
- EVA students continue with remote learning.
- The hybrid model allows for class/section sizes that meet the 6 foot distancing guidelines per the MDE Safe Learning Plan.
- The most recent Hennepin County 14-Day COVID-19 case rate is 20.6; that is within the MDH guidelines to offer hybrid instruction to secondary students.

| FEBRUARY 16, 2021 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | MONDAY A DAY | TUESDAY B DAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY A DAY | FRIDAY B DAY |
| 6-12 STUDENTS IN EVA OR HYBRID EVA STUDENTS CONTINUE WITH REMOTE LEARNING. | LAST NAME A-K ATTEND F2F | LAST NAME A-K ATTEND F2F | At Home Learning Day (see below for options) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Asynchronous Learning ● Invited Synchronous Learning | LAST NAME L-Z ATTEND F2F | LAST NAME L-Z ATTEND F2F |
| | | | | | |

- **March 8th, 2021**

- Hybrid continues. Students attend school in alpha groups A-K and L-Z two days a week and approximately 200 tier one and two learners move from hybrid to attending school in person 4 days a week.
- EVA students continue with remote learning.

- Model allows for 6 feet of distancing between students and teachers with 3 feet of distancing between students in some classrooms.

| MARCH 8, 2021 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 6-12 STUDENTS IN HYBRID AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F. ~~~ EVA STUDENTS CONTINUE WITH REMOTE LEARNING. | MONDAY A DAY | TUESDAY B DAY | WEDNESDAY A DAY | THURSDAY B DAY | FRIDAY |
| | LAST NAME A-K AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | LAST NAME A-K AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | LAST NAME L-Z AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | LAST NAME L-Z AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | At Home Learning Day (see below for options) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous Learning • Invited Synchronous Learning |

- **March 15th, 2021**

- EHS Hybrid students in grades 9 and 12 return F2F 4X per week (M, T, TH, F).
- VVMS and SVMS students in grade 6 return F2F 4X per week (M, T, TH, F).
- EVA students continue with remote learning.
- Model allows for 6 feet of distancing between students and teachers with 3 feet of distancing between students in classrooms.

| MARCH 15TH, 2021 |
|---|
| GRADES 6-9-12 BACK TO F2F FOUR DAYS/WEEK |
| GRADES 7-8-10-11 --CONTINUE WITH HYBRID |

| MONDAY A DAY | TUESDAY B DAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY A DAY | FRIDAY B DAY |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| GRADES 6, 9, 12 AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | GRADES 6, 9, 12 AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | At Home Learning Day (see below for options) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asynchronous Learning Invited Synchronous Learning | GRADES 6, 9, 12 AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F | GRADES 6, 9, 12 AND GO STUDENTS ATTEND F2F |
| GRADES 7-8-10-11 STUDENTS LAST NAME A-K ATTEND F2F | GRADES 7-8-10-11 STUDENTS LAST NAME A-K ATTEND F2F | | GRADES 7-8-10-11 STUDENTS LAST NAME L-Z ATTEND F2F | GRADES 7-8-10-11 STUDENTS LAST NAME L-Z ATTEND F2F |

- **March 22nd 2021**

- EHS Hybrid students in grades 10 and 11 return F2F 4X per week (M, T, TH, F).
- VVMS and SVMS students in grades 7 & 8 return F2F 4X per week (M, T, TH, F).
- EVA students continue with remote learning.
- Model allows for 6 feet of distancing between students and teachers with 3 feet of distancing between students in classrooms.

| MARCH 22ND, 2021 | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| MONDAY A DAY | TUESDAY B DAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY A DAY | FRIDAY B DAY |
| ALL 6-12 STUDENTS ATTEND F2F ~~~ EVA STUDENTS STAY IN REMOTE LEARNING | ALL 6-12 STUDENTS ATTEND F2F ~~~ EVA STUDENTS STAY IN REMOTE LEARNING | At Home Learning Day (see below for options) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asynchronous Learning Invited Synchronous Learning | ALL 6-12 STUDENTS ATTEND F2F ~~~ EVA STUDENTS STAY IN REMOTE LEARNING | ALL 6-12 STUDENTS ATTEND F2F ~~~ EVA STUDENTS STAY IN REMOTE LEARNING |

Mitigation Practices

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| Daily screener and decision tree protocols for isolation and quarantine | Hand washing or sanitizing | Masking at all times indoors and when distancing can't be maintained outdoors | 6 ft of distancing student to teacher. 3 ft of distancing student to student. | One way hallways and directional signage |
| Bathroom capacity limits | Bottle stations on, drinking fountains off | Hourly cleaning of desks, nightly sanitizing | Assigned seats for contact tracing | Asymptomatic on site testing available for staff (now) and students (future) |
| EVA option for athletes during season | Section size based on room capacity and distancing required | Additional gymnasium used for lunch. | Potential additional lunch periods/spaces for increase in F2F learners | EVA option for students post travel |

Updated Mitigation Efforts For Secondary Schools

EPS secondary schools will continue to implement mitigation strategies that have been effective in the hybrid model as we gradually add more students to our schools. Certain mitigation efforts will be altered to meet the most recent MDH/MDE guidelines. These include:

Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

Social Distancing

This model will be adhering to the most recent Minnesota Department of Health guidelines which require school districts to do the following for when Covid-19 rates are still above 14 day county rates of 10/10,000:

- Maintain six feet of social distancing between educators, staff, adults in the building and students.
- Maintain a minimum of 3 feet between students.
- Section sizes will be based on room capacity and distance required.

Lunch

We will be updating our lunch practices to adhere to MDH guidelines, which include the following:

- Utilization of gym space for lunch to allow for additional space.
- Additional lunch periods if needed.
- Documenting student mealtime seating to support contact tracing in the event of an exposure.
 - Assigned seating during lunch at the middle school

Additional Mitigation Efforts

- Assigned seating in classrooms to support contact tracing in the event of an exposure.
- One way hallways and directional signage.
- Daily screener and decision tree protocols for isolation and quarantine.
- Hand washing or sanitizing.
- Bathroom capacity limits.
- Limitations on outside visitors to buildings.
- Masking at all times indoors and when distancing can't be maintained outdoors.
- Bottle stations on, drinking fountains off.
- Hourly cleaning of desks, nightly sanitation.
- Asymptomatic on site testing available for staff (now) and students (future)
- EVA option for athletes during season
- EVA option for students post travel

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we recommending staggering the grades by a week?

While we are optimistic about the ramp up of vaccines, testing and declining case rates, we believe a cautious, gradual approach provides stability in the coming months. This approach is based on guidance from the Bloomington Department of Health. Gradually increasing the total number of students decreases anxiety among staff, students and families and provides additional time for more teachers to be vaccinated before all hybrid students return to the school.

Can EVA students now attend in person?

No. The distancing guidelines recommend six feet of distancing, but require 3 feet. Our return to school plan includes EVA students continuing with distance learning. However, per

MDE, if the case rate moves below 10/10,000 these distancing guidelines are no longer required and we would look into whether EVA students could return to in person if they wish.

Can my in person student now attend EVA?

Yes. As our sections remain intact, students can move from F2F to EVA at any time without a teacher or schedule change. Parents simply need to communicate this desire with the school.

How has the guidance for social distancing changed?

The revised language from the MDE Safe Learning Plan on distancing is the following: *Students must maintain six feet of physical distance from one another throughout the school day whenever feasible; when six feet of distancing cannot be met, a minimum of three feet of physical distance between students must be maintained.*

Will all students and staff be required to participate in the COVID-19 testing program?

No, but it is highly recommended that everyone participate in our school based program to help prevent asymptomatic spread. Per the MDE guidance, it is strongly recommended that in person students and staff test every two weeks.

Why maintain the “At Home Learning Day?”

Teachers are working and learning is happening 5 days/week. While this plan eliminates the alpha model and returns all hybrid students to school, teachers will continue to be responsible for EVA students in every section who deserve a high quality experience. Wednesday At Home Learning Days provide targeted synchronous learning for some students, asynchronous learning for others and critical collaboration and planning time for teachers. Additionally, when teachers are teaching in two different models, MDE requires that teachers are provided 30 extra minutes of preparation time daily. These 30 additional minutes/day are bundled and provided on the At Home Learning Day.

Below are some comments from EHS teacher leaders on why maintaining At Home Learning or (Flex) Wednesdays both support students and are critical for their success and wellness.

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| Social Studies | In the current situation, our Flex Wednesday should continue. This day allows for teachers to directly intervene with students who are needing additional support. This is very important as there is currently no time in the schedule to have dedicated to work with students who need additional help, especially students who are registered in Edina Virtual Academy. In addition, it allows for students to continue the learning process on Wednesday as teachers are still pushing out new lessons. For teachers, it allows them a chance to plan and provide curriculum in a model which we have not done before. Flex Wednesdays allow staff to work with their |
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| | <p>teams to try to stay on top of a difficult situation. Many meetings on this day last multiple hours to make sure that we are providing the best education possible in the hybrid model. Further, the move to a different schedule that has not been implemented yet, would bring an additional transition that no student or staff member has done yet. This transition would bring an additional piece of difficulty and stress for students and staff to navigate.</p> |
| <p>Counseling</p> | <p>The FLEX Wednesday has been indispensable in terms of meeting student needs without pulling them from instructional time. Students with 7 courses would have to choose which academic course to miss in order to meet with us – often frustrating students and teachers. The flexible Wednesdays open up our availability to more students.</p> <p>As an example, I am working directly with a student who deals with anxiety directly related to her school work. She is taking 7 classes and missing instruction exasperates her stress. She and I meet weekly to build strategies for test anxiety and do academic checks so she feels in control. We are able to do this, for the first time, on Wednesdays rather than during one of her classes.</p> |
| <p>Fine Arts</p> | <p>From the Fine Arts department Wednesdays are crucial for us as we primarily teach singleton classes. The only way many are staying afloat is due to the ability to plan on the Wednesday Flex Days. I think the workload is amplified by the amount of content that piles up when teaching simultaneously in person and online. Our classes don't really work going from flipped to in person so many are feeling exhausted from teaching 2 sections during 1 course period. The amount of team planning that happens this day is necessary for us in order to successfully implement our current model.</p> <p>On a side note: Theater For All uses the time to offer a large scale unified activity every week which combines our students with the unified gym students and students from other districts.</p> |
| <p>PE/Health</p> | <p>We support the Wednesday Flex days as we will continue to have EVA students in all of our classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dedicated time for intervention to work with all students ● Dedicated time for EVA students who need added face-time with their teachers. ● Dedicated time for PLC and teamwork for lesson plans (which need to be updated daily as we are teaching both F2F and EVA) ● Secondary staff wellness- This flexible time allows teachers an opportunity to de-stress while teaching during a pandemic and teaching two models. ● We hope that EHS will continue to get a DEEP cleaning on these days. ● Consistent schedule for the high school students, families, and staff. Any time we change the weekly schedule there are multiple issues for families, especially those with students with special |

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| | <p>needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allows time for feedback on assignments ● Hybrid and smaller classes sizes along with Wednesday’s cleaning helps ensure that we stay in school longer or even until the end of the school year. |
| Special Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wednesdays are essential for connecting with EVA students, ensuring high quality instruction continues to be delivered, and for teacher mental health. ● We also use it within SPED to get physical materials delivered to our EVA site based students who need constantly refreshed physical manipulatives to engage in virtual learning. ● If the makeup of our EVA population is still disproportionately students of color, I think maintaining an EVA focused Wednesday is an essential equity step. |
| Math | <p>Wednesdays are needed for us to be able to deliver the high quality instruction that we are during these difficult times. They provide dedicated time to intervene with students and families who are struggling. And it provides an opportunity to meet with colleagues to do our work to our highest ability.</p> <p>Also, even if we go back to full in person, our EVA students will not be returning. Wednesdays are a needed day to create online content, meet/reach out to online students. We do not have teachers either doing OL or In person. We are doing both.</p> <p>We are teaching in the most difficult possible model. We are doing it as well as could be done (which isn’t perfect, but we are human) and we are surviving. We taught this week without a Wednesday, and it was difficult to reach our EVA students. I’m sure that they are feeling the shift in attention from all of their teachers.</p> <p>I hear a lot of talk about mental health of teachers and students. I don’t hear a lot of plans for improving teacher mental health. Wednesday was one thing that we had that made our work feel manageable even though we are teaching in the most difficult possible way.</p> |
| Science | <p>In the current hybrid model, Wednesdays shouldn’t even be questioned from everyday use; we believe Wednesdays are now the minimal, fundamental level of time needed even to consider running a hybrid teaching modality.</p> <p>A shift away from Wednesday asynchronicity, moving towards teaching hybrid 4-5 days a week, will likely see a significant decline in EVA students’ experiences.</p> <p>Short list of the ways Wednesdays are currently used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of Online Curriculum/material |

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|---------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creation of hybrid material ● Intervention time, individual/targeted ● Small student group meeting ● Large student group ● PLC TIME ● Planning time ● 9th-grade Teaming ● PD - (self-taught tech skills) <p>Staff mental health</p> |
| English | <p>In addition to the direct connection and benefits that students get from Flex Wednesdays, the work that teachers do on these days--whether it is collaborating with colleagues, developing curriculum, lesson planning, or preserving mental health--ALSO benefits our students in a ton of different ways. Everything we do on these days is in the service of making the student experience better.</p> <p>Specific examples of how English teachers use Wednesdays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working directly with students during Flex time and throughout the day as student schedules allow. This time allows us to support and reteach students who struggle with course content, connect with students who need positive reinforcement or positive interaction, and work to make sure that students can succeed in a difficult learning environment. ● Since EVA students will remain online learners, it's important to retain time where teachers can maintain relationships with them, which is more difficult when we are teaching in both hybrid and online modalities. Flex provides much-needed dedicated time. ● Since we are teaching by in-person and online simultaneously, teachers are constantly retooling existing curriculum (activities, assignments, assessments) to be an effective learning tool for students regardless of learning model. ● The current Wednesday format allows teachers to keep up with the shifting and challenging demands of these learning models. ● English teachers frequently offer writing conferences on Wednesdays. Since it's a flexible day, students can choose when they meet. ● Collaboration with colleagues to meet with CTs. We work on student learning goals, aligning curriculum, norming grades, finding ways to better help students in areas of need, and providing high quality instruction. |

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>
2. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>



Board Meeting Date: 2/23/2021 Work Session

TITLE: COVID Update from Epidemiologist Nick Kelley, Ph.D.

TYPE: Information

PRESENTER(S): John W. Schultz, Superintendent

BACKGROUND: Epidemiologist Nick Kelley has been an integral part of the leadership in this pandemic. In this report Dr. Kelley provides current information about the virus and mitigation recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health and CDC. Dr. Kelley will be present at the meeting to also share this information.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Update from Nick Kelley, PhD, Acting Public Administrator, Bloomington Public Health

February 22, 2021

On February 11, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forecasted that Hennepin County would experience flat case growth during the following four weeks. On February 18, the CDC's forecast shifted to a decline in cases over the next four weeks.

The recent increase in cases in Edina is starting to wane and other indicators are moving in a positive direction. The current case rate in Edina is in the moderate transmission level range. According to the CDC, this means schools can be open for in-person instruction with physical distancing and implementation of all recommended mitigation strategies.

The evidence-based instruction from the CDC is clear: with rigorous implementation of multiple mitigation strategies, transmission within schools can be reduced. These strategies include: improved ventilation, diligently wearing well-fitted masks with multiple layers, using student cohorts who interact mostly with each other, physical distancing, routine testing of students and staff, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine, hand washing and cleaning of facilities. I urge students and staff to take full advantage of the testing opportunities provided to them.

I would anticipate some challenges with operations as students come back full time, so anticipate having increased numbers of students/teachers/staff in quarantine and isolation. Routine testing will help identify cases without symptoms. Edina has done tremendous work to improve ventilation in the schools, which is very important, when combined with stringent masking and physical distancing, to limit transmission. By mid-April, I anticipate most staff will be approaching the two-week mark after their second vaccine and no longer needing to quarantine after an exposure.

While the metrics look good now, we are carefully following the variants. We are seeing exponential growth with these variants in the United States and here in Minnesota. Some of these variants spread faster and easier than the COVID-19 we are accustomed to dealing with. It is possible that additional mitigation measures, including going back to hybrid learning, will be necessary in the near future if we see uncontrolled spread of the variants.

Bringing students back to the classroom is, in part, dependent on community spread. The ability to vaccinate against COVID-19 is increasing daily and will help change the course of this pandemic in the coming months. Keep following public health guidance and get vaccinated when you have the chance to do so.

Survey of Area Districts on their In-Person Model

The data below was collected by contacting the Superintendent's offices to determine the number of days each district is planning to implement. These days are subject to change by school districts' leadership.

| Area Districts were asked on 2/22: When your secondary students return to in-person learning, will you be following a 4- or 5-day schedule? | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Anoka | 4 days |
| Eastern Carver Co | 4 days |
| Eden Prairie | 4 days |
| Hopkins | 4 days |
| Mahtomedi | 4 days |
| Minnetonka | TBD |
| Osseo | 4 days |
| Robbinsdale | 4 days |
| St Louis Park | 4 days |
| Wayzata | 4 days Middle Sch 5 days |
| White Bear Lake | 4 days |



Board Meeting Date: 02/23/21 Work Session

TITLE: Superintendent Compensation Range for Search Firm Advertisement

FROM: Board Governance Committee
Nicole Tuescher, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services

TYPE: Information

BACKGROUND:

Current comparable superintendent salary for 2020-2021 range from approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000. Comparable districts include but are not limited to: Bloomington, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Richfield, St. Louis Park, Wayzata.

Superintendent Compensation Range for Search Firm Advertisement:

\$205,000 - \$240,000 depending on experience.