

Minutes April 14, 2021

Present: Rebecca Abernathy, Lori Balaban, Gemilia Bouer, Kristy Davis, Christine Eagleson, Eileen Gomez, Kevin Kirst, Leanne Knox, Mark Niehaus, Jennifer Schaeffer, Chris Sibert

Updates

Eileen provided a brief update: 11 new cases in April; no evidence of transmission within schools except for one case. It appears that the mitigation strategies are working to prevent transmission in the schools.

She also mentioned the newly required vaccines: Hep A for incoming K students, HPV and MenACWY along with Tdap for rising 7th graders, and MenACWY for rising 12th graders. Students who entered grades K, 7 and 10 before these requirements (7/1/2021) are not required to get these vaccinations.

Quarantine after Vaccination

Eileen reported that there was some debate among school officials from other districts and private schools about the need for fully-vaccinated school personnel to quarantine after close contact with someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19. At issue is whether a school setting counts as a congregate setting or a high-density worksite. Some of the language at the [CDC website](#) appears somewhat vague, but since schools have been successfully able to implement mitigation strategies such as spacing, and are not residential settings, ACPS should continue to follow the guidelines of the [CDC](#) and [VDH](#) and not require fully vaccinated staff members to quarantine after exposure provided they are not symptomatic.

The CDC and the VDH have dropped the back date of the time interval for vaccinated people to be able to avoid quarantine after exposure. It was initially 90 days, then 6 months, but the current understanding is that the vaccines provide longer-term immunity.

Perhaps not having to quarantine if exposed might be an incentive for vaccine skeptical employees to seek vaccination.

Use of High School Weight Rooms

The SHAB recommends the opening of weight rooms provided safety measures can be implemented.

- a) Determine and enforce maximum room capacity based on 10 feet distancing between participants
- b) Ensure adult supervision
- c) Require face masks for all athletes and adult supervisors
- d) Mark adequately spaced spots on the floor where athletes can use free weights
- e) Ensure athletes are screened for illness upon building entry that day
- f) Keep a log with check-in and check-out times
- g) Limit use at one time to defined groups or pods
- h) Ensure athletes wash hands before and after
- i) Clean and disinfect equipment between users
- j) Increase ventilation by opening windows and/or placing HEPA filters in room, if possible

SHAB recommends caution with lifting that requires a spotter for safety such as the bench press.

Consider:

- a) Not allowing exercises that require a spotter

- b) Having a gym partner and the pair only spot one another
- c) Employ the 2-spotter method where the spotters stand back and then intervene if assistance is required
- d) Have fully vaccinated adult supervisor serve as the spotter
- e) Modify exercise to less weight with more repetitions

Food Sharing

The issue arose again about parents sending in food to share for celebrations such as birthdays. SHAB discourages the sharing of food and advocates reverting back to the guidance document previously developed around the sharing of food. If food sharing is permitted, it should be pre-packaged and served by food services personnel. SHAB also recommends that staff members do not gather for staff birthday celebrations at school.

Soccer at Recess

Eileen reported that the SHAB's previous guidance on recess led to a dichotomy between grade levels on the permissibility of soccer with elementary schools permitting and secondary schools prohibiting. SHAB recommends a general statement about safety parameters around masking, time and distance for all recess activities. For example, soccer where students form tight clusters around the ball should not be allowed, but the more distanced style of experienced soccer players would. Other suggestions include modifying soccer to games involving 2 on 2 or 3 on 3 and/or creating fun adaptations.

SHAB also recommends that students be instructed to bring a second mask now that the warmer weather has arrived to replace masks that become dirty or damp with sweat.

Other

A new [JAMA article](#) reports that a study found 12% of children with COVID-19 develop significant enough illness to be hospitalized, and some require mechanical ventilation. It is important to note that this was not a statement about all children who develop COVID, but rather of the sample selected for the study, which was of children who were brought to an ER or in-patient hospital setting. But the point that COVID can be a severe illness in some children is salient. [MIS-C](#) after COVID is still a concern.

How many people can gather in one space on a school campus under current conditions?

The most recent [governor's order](#) on gatherings that limits gatherings to 50 for indoor and 100 for outdoor does not apply to schools.

"The presence of more than 50 individuals indoors, or 100 individuals outdoors, performing functions of their employment or assembled in an educational instructional setting is not a "gathering."

The presence of more than 50 individuals indoors, or 100 individuals outdoors, in a particular location, such as a park, or retail business is not a "gathering" as long as individuals do not congregate."

SHAB recommends the size of gatherings at school should be based on how many people the space and personnel can accommodate while maintaining the ability to control safety such as being able to accommodate distancing and supervision.

Minimum distancing between students continues to be debated. 6 feet is good, but 3 feet might be okay. Kristy reports that she will share the results of UVA's study of safe spacing when it is available.

The mental health of students should continue to be a priority in planning. Providing opportunities for inclusion and normalcy should be considered.

Lunch at the secondary level remains a concern. Some schools are not promoting eating lunch outdoors.

SHAB continues to recommend encouraging as much outdoor time as possible including providing brief social periods during or after lunch as well as scheduling brief outdoor breaks into student class schedules so all students rotate through outdoor time throughout the day.

Medical practices have received doses of COVID-19 vaccines and are starting to vaccinate youth aged 16 to 18 who meet vaccine priority criteria. Although the number of doses administered to youth is fairly small, this is a promising development.

SHAB recommends that student athletes wear masks during all practices and competition, despite the fact that the VHSL does not require it. Can ACPS require opposing teams to wear masks at our facilities consistent with our universal masking policy?

Are parents required to report to the school when a child is kept home due to illness and/or tests positive? Parents are asked to notify the school if their children are sick as well as if they test positive. Schools are required to call if a student is absent and the parent has not reported the absence. If the child is absent due to illness, the school nurse will instruct the parent about when the student will be permitted to return to school.

Next meeting: May 12