

Meeting Minutes

State Education Issue Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools – Final Plans and Update for Hempstead Reopening Task Force – Group A July 30, 2020 10:00 a.m.

Attendees: Regina Armstrong, James Clark, Allan Wakefield, Robert Hodge, Djuana Wilson, Peter LaDuca, Yohana Arevalo, Bridgett Burroughs, John Robinson, Stephen Strachan, Carey Gray, Pamela Parsley, Rowena Costa, Thurston O'Neal, Anita Reynolds, Carole Eason, Cynthia Drayton-Moore, Dorothy Butler-Crayton, Felicia Prince, Gary Rush, Juanita Diaz, Johnetta Hill, Janet Lovett, Jasmin Sowell, Nicole Brown, Reina Jovin, Sonia Hood, Susan Thompson, Winsome Brown-Cooke, iPhone, Hempstead High School

James Clark opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and for all the valuable input that has been provided over the last month or so. I had a meeting this week with 56 other Assistant Superintendents in the area and I have to say that I am very proud of what we have accomplished in Hempstead with our taskforce and leadership. Most districts are looking a blended model for reopening. We were equal, if not ahead of most schools in our planning. One thing we all agreed on is that we must be flexible. We must be ready for change as we move through the year. We also agreed that safety of our staff and our students is our number one concern for all districts.

RA: Thank you all for coming. You should have received a copy of the plan late yesterday. I don't know if you had a chance to read all of it. This session is for questions that you may have regarding the plan. We are still dealing with change from the governor. The and/or debate from last week was settled. It is 6' or a mask or barrier.

PL: Some people feel that they only need to wear a mask and not distance. There are different interpretations. We should be doing both

RA: As you are probably aware, Hempstead will be going with a hybrid model. Cuomo says that we must have some sort of in-person instruction for our students in our plan. Some districts in Nassau County are bringing back all their

elementary students at once. I feel that is too many people in the building at one time. Questions?

NB: I have two questions. The frequency of cleaning in the building, especially the high school and middle school. Who will be watching the students when their teachers are changing classes? And who will be cleaning up after the teacher that vacated the room?

AW: I don't know how we can be cleaning 10-20 spaces that are vacated at one time. The teachers need to wipe down when they leave. We can do it, but it will take time. We will thoroughly clean the classrooms when they are empty.

NB: How will it work at the high school?

SS: Teachers will move. Students will stay with their Cohort. Teachers will travel with cleaning supplies. If a teacher feels an area should be cleaned, they should do it

RH: I will provide teachers with spray and microfiber cloths

AW: They should also carry their own materials like erasers, so they don't have to share and clean those items

CG: Teachers that are not teaching the next period can supervise the students in the classroom. We will also use TA's for that purpose

NB: Regarding the suites at the middle school. The staff bathrooms have two stalls for men and women and there is another bathroom down the hall. Is there a protocol in place to clean the bathrooms? Will there be a schedule?

AW: Yes, there will be a schedule and they will have a form to fill out stating that it is done. The same goes for the student's bathrooms

NB: What about hand washing stations for staff?

AW: We are looking at portable sinks. There is one at 100 Main in what was probably a science lab. It sits on wheels and requires electricity for the pump

SS: Back to restrooms, we are discouraging multi-use of restrooms at one time

ST: Adult Ed leaves at 9:30. Will there be enough time to clean after? The late shift leaves at 11:00.

RA: We have been talking about possibly having an overnight staff. I'm not sure where that stands

AW: They leave at 11:30. Will Adult Ed be coming back in September?

ST: Yes. We begin in September. We, too, are doing a hybrid model.

AW: We may have to look into schedule changes

NB: How are we doing with filters for the HVAC system? There is a concern for air quality. And what about filters for the window AC units?

AW: We are looking into filters for the window units. The vent can be opened as well, to allow for fresh air to come in instead of recirculating the inside air. We will be changing the HVAC filters 3 times a year instead of the usual one time. The HVAC will be cleaned as well. It has not been done yet. We are also waiting for our filling stations to come in and be installed

DBC: What is better, open windows or AC on the fresh air setting?

AW: Once you open the vent and let the warm air in, you lose some of the cooling. You can open the windows as well as running the AC

NB: Where are we regarding lunch?

YA: No one in the cafeteria, everyone eats in the classroom. We may have kiosks at the high school so the students can pick up their meals to eat in class. Maybe we can have tables outside so they can spread out. No cafeteria. I have to work with IT to make sure we can get the Web-Smart system installed so we can account for the meals. We need to account for everything. At Marshall, the student's ids are printed out and put in their lunchbox. The teacher must keep

track of who gets the meals. As far as allergies go, we will have bag lunch labelled with their name and it will be brought to the classroom. There will be absolutely no food sharing! I am getting signage for that. I am also ordering tray mats for the student's desks. Also, how do we ensure that students wash their hands before and after the meals?

NB: Who will stay with the students while having lunch at ABGS?

CG: There will be less than 450 students per day at the middle school. We will only be having three lunch periods (5, 6 and 7th). No 4th anymore. Teachers and TA's will have lunch duty. The largest lunch period is 7th which is the 7th graders. The classrooms will be monitored. We are working on how we will clean hands, take away the garbage, etc.

AR: What happens when people are absent? What if a lot are absent?

RA: That is impossible to anticipate. We will make adjustments that day, as we do now. We may have to go to remote if there are not enough teachers. That is part of the plan

SS: We are making the gym a temporary cafeteria at the high school. That will cut the capacity of the cafeteria by 50%. We will also utilize our outdoor space with security officers supervising

YA: We still need to make meals for our remote learners. We will be giving them out at ABGS as we do now. Everything must be pre-packaged. This will be even more work though we have less students in the building

NB: How are special areas providing instruction?

CG: Push-ins as much as possible. Art will have a cart, for instance.

RA: Can't have chorus or PE without 12' distancing. Any strenuous physical activity or projecting requires twelve feet

NB: Will the elementary be push-in as well?

RA: Yes

NB: So, all specials are push-ins at all levels?

RA: More or less. They have to adapt. Musical instruments may be taken outside

NB: What about the middle and high school schedules? Do they include mask breaks and hand washing breaks?

SS: No and no. We are not scheduling breaks for that

CG: We are looking into that now. Our students are more mature and may not require them

PP: Do you know the numbers of students and staff that can be in each building for distancing?

RA: Yes. And we may have even less in the building. We don't know yet. Parents may not send their kids back. We are just beginning to send out info

DBC: Will we have teachers that are working totally remote?

RA: As soon as we get the data from HR we will know. If you work remote, you may not be working in your school. There may be one third grade remote teacher, for example. Details will have to be worked out. There is a letter going out tomorrow to the parents, it is due back on August 14th. We will have a better idea then of how many students will be returning.

SS: Once we know who is returning, we can finalize the schedules

RA: But all elementary, middle and high school schedules have been made

BB: Can students ZOOM into live classes?

RA: We are working with Dr. Akoma on that. Some districts have bought webcams. Microsoft TEAMS has an option to livestream, so they can have the class experience

DBC: Will there be an issue if we have kids in the classroom and others livestreaming?

RA: No, it should not be an issue

PP: Will temperatures be taken at every building?

RA: No. We will have an app for staff that they must complete before entering the building. And parents must complete and submit a survey for their child prior to coming to school. There will also be random checks in the buildings

YA: I am looking at the health check questions. I do not see one as to whether you have travelled out of New York. Was the staff sent a letter saying that they have to be cleared?

RA: No. We all know that we have to quarantine for two weeks. We are relying on honesty and managing their time properly

YA: Will there be a policy in place?

RA: The governor has already put a policy in place

DBC: What about students and their families that travel?

RA: When we started this process, this was not an issue. I will talk to the attorneys. We may have to add it to our plan. A lot of people are travelling now, even though it is discouraged. They will not get paid if they don't comply

AR: Will we be getting training on remote teaching?

RA: Yes

NB: Have all the devices been ordered for the students?

RA: We are working with the Town of Hempstead to supply devices. Dr. Akoma is taking care of the rest. We will be using our Smart Bond money

NB: How will we train students to use the devices?

RA: Parents receive instruction in English and Spanish. They are also given a contact phone number for any questions

DW: I gave them out personally. They had instructions

RA: Every school is assigned a tech person. And a staff tech person. We don't want to overwhelm technology

DBC: The parent may not want the responsibility of the device. How do we handle that?

RA: We will make a notation. That is a parent issue, not a district issue. They must sign that they are not accepting the device and we will give them paper packets

RA: Thank you all for coming. We will be setting up ZOOM meetings with the parents and maybe even a YouTube video for the website to share this information. There is a receivership meeting at 5:00 on Monday at the high school. We will probably have another 1-2 Task Force ZOOM meetings prior to the school year since other questions will come up. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me or Mr. Clark

bring products from home, especially Lysol. That has many chemicals in it that can't be used in a school

AM: Who will monitor the masks? What if it is not disposable? What if they go outside and take it off? Who puts it on?

RA: No one should touch anyone else's mask. And they should be wearing the mask when going down the hallway to get outside

JC: We will also have gloves if you have to clean up a spill, like always. We will have supplies for you in the classroom

RA: We will supply what you need

RC: I heard that it may be good to have lanyards to hold the masks when they are not being worn so they don't lose them. Can you supply or can we put them on the supply list?

RA: Talk to your principal. There is nothing to prevent them from buying lanyards for the students

DU: How do we know how many kids will be in class at a time?

SS: We will have a schedule and will know how many will be returning. We will have Cohorts, a family, a team. We will schedule teachers as needed. Every student that is enrolled will be scheduled and assigned a Cohort

DU: When will the schedules go out?

SS: Within the next week and a half. But that can change based on accommodations

JC: Registration is open, and we have many new families coming to the district, and some families leaving. Once we have a complete list we can schedule

RA: Letters will be sent to principals that can go to the families to poll them as to whether they will be coming to school. They should go out on Monday. Our goal is to be at 50% capacity

LB: The students are coming in Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday. The staff is expected to be here all the time. That is a lot of exposure, we are at a high risk. Are we all home on Wednesday?

RA: Yes

LB: We will be exposed for 4 days. Are there any plans for teachers to work from home?

RA: Dr. Gilmore sent out a package. We will know what staff members can return

LB: Some staff don't meet any criteria on his list. But we are exposed. We don't know how severe we will get it. I also know of many staff that have travelled. How do we know they will quarantine for 14 days before they return?

RA: It is up to people to be truthful. Gov. Cuomo has a mandate on this subject. We will include this in a letter to go out to the staff. They have to make sure that they are back in time to quarantine or they will not start school

LK: Laptops? Who is responsible for them?

RA: The parent is responsible for their upkeep. When they sign, they take responsibility. We will provide support

NB: Are the classrooms set up yet? Are they spaced 6' apart?

RA: They are not set up yet, but they will be. We will require masks as well

NB: Can we do a walkthrough before school starts?

RA: Yes, reach out to the principal to schedule

NB: Self contained classes usually have around 15 kids. Will that still be the case?

RA: No. We are working on the plans now

NB: Also, the bilingual classes. Splitting them in half may not be enough

RA: We have to wait for data. Many are not returning their students

NB: What are the accommodations for pregnant teachers?

RA: Talk to HR. And it depends on what the doctor recommends

AM: What is the eating/lunch plan for the high school?

SS: The high school students are not eating in the classrooms. The gym will be set up as an alternate cafeteria to reduce capacity to 50%. There will be no hot food, it will be a bagged lunch. Weather permitting, they can use the outdoor space to eat. And the faculty lounge and staff cafeteria will be closed. Bring your own lunch

AM: Can the students bring their own lunch?

SS: I don't know. We discourage bringing their own

NB: Where will the teachers eat?

SS: The car, empty classroom, hallways. We have two staff lounges. There are usually around 50 people in there at a time. We would have to limit it to two staff members at a time. We can't do it. And, food services will not be providing lunch for us

NB: Will all staff lounges be closed?

RA: Many schools don't even have them. It will be hard in the elementary because all classrooms will be in use. The principal has to work that out

NB: Specials? Pushing-in? Who will be working with the kids at home?

RA: The schedule will be different every day. Some days they will teach the kids at school, other days the students at home. But all teachers will be in the building

NB: APPR. How will that be done? What if they observe a teacher who is teaching students at home? The dynamic is very different

RA: That would not be a class that principals would choose to observe. That is not normal. You may not be able to receive a score on certain rubrics based on the current environment. A teacher cannot be punished on what they cannot control

LK: At Joseph McNeil how is the bus situation being handled?

RA: They will be wearing a mask, 2 to a seat, I believe. I have not had the meeting with the bus company yet. That will be discussed. The bus companies are worried they will not have enough busses/monitors to handle this. Shared busses must be cleaned in between

RM: Will Marshall have busses for Pre-K this year?

RA: Yes. First Student will be providing it

LB: I heard that you need 67 sq. ft per student. What do we have in Hempstead?

RA: I have not heard that. And, as far as the and/or question that came up last week, it is six feet without a mask. We will do the best we can. We need to have 12 desks in every classroom

DU: What about mask breaks in the middle and high school?

SS: No mask breaks or handwashing breaks. We will have hand sanitizer in each classroom. They will have the opportunity to breathe in the restrooms

RA to AW: Please address the portable sinks.

AW: That is something that just came up this morning. There are sinks on wheels, they do require electricity for the pump, but they can be moved around. They are expensive; at least \$1200 each. I just started researching this today

RC: Health screening, self-screening. Do we just assume they did the screening?

RA: The staff will have an app where they will submit their data. We are still looking in to how we will collect from parents. Both are based on an honor system. We will also be doing random checks

RC: When will the parents be trained on Schoology?

RA: I have a meeting with Dr. Akoma today. I will get dates for training. And each school will have a Schoology rep

LK: What if a child gets sick in school?

RA: Each building will have an isolation room. We will contact the parents (we may even need security to knock on doors) and they must come to school and get them (they will not enter the building). Every school will have a COVID Coordinator and the usual Health and Safety Rep

SM: (Stephanie) I work at the high school. Will speech teachers have clear masks?

RA: We have purchased face shields for everyone

AM: Our kids have to be signed out at the end of the day (Pre-K and K). How will that be handled?

RA: I will have a conversation with Diaz and Eason regarding that. As far as picking up a child mid-day, they must call first, and "Johnny" will be delivered to the door. No parents are to enter the building

AM: What about the staff that clocks in?

RA: We are looking to get everyone a stylus to clock in

AM: When will we get it?

RA: When school starts. We are also putting hand sanitizer at each entrance

(How will cleaning supplies be refilled?)

AW: The custodians will refill

NB: How will the counselors, social workers, etc. work in a confined space?

RA: Each building is different. Looking at plexiglass-like partitions.

AW: We have ordered and received polycarbonate barriers for the security desk and secretary's desk for each building. Others are on order for speech, etc., but have not arrived. It needs to be requested in writing. I have no information on it

JC: That is where a face shield may be good

AW: We can send you information on the fire/safety regulations and ratings if you want to order it. It must be polycarbonate

RA: There may be some flexibility in that. Maybe order 5-7 barriers per building

Stephanie: Are we still doing 75-minute time periods?

SS: Yes

LK: How are we handling day-care? A lot pick up more than one school

RA: That is a building thing. They must be released to day care. They cannot come into the building

RA: Thank you all for coming today. We will be submitting our plan tomorrow to the state. We will have a follow up meeting in a few weeks to discuss bussing, HVAC and any other updates. Please feel free to email me or Mr. Clark with any questions