

Returning to School Fall 2020 Project Charter

PROJECT OVERVIEW/GOALS

- Engage the community and stakeholders in determining an adaptable return to school plan for Fall 2020, acknowledging that learning structures must be adaptable. A plan that:
 - Mitigates and minimizes the spread of Coronavirus;
 - Keeps staff and students safe;
 - Prioritizes access to learning of students furthest from educational justice; specifically Black boys and young men;
 - Provides services through a racial equity lens;
 - Enables staff and students to return to learning;
 - Supports social/emotional well-being and interactions in a safe environment; and
 - Supports families through this transition.
- Communicate the plan to educators and families in June. Completing and communicating this plan timely will allow planning time for educators and school operations staff to coordinate this enormous transition.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Due to COVID-19, Superintendent Juneau ordered all Seattle Public Schools (SPS) closed starting on March 12, 2020. Soon after, Governor Inslee issued the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” guidelines requiring all schools to close from March 17, 2020 through the end of the current school year. In addition, school districts were required to implement remote learning for students to continue their education, ongoing academic achievement, and social emotional well-being. While there are not definitive timelines in place, the governor has provided a plan based on scientific data and research that provides for a phased in re-opening across the state. As a result, it is unclear what the restrictions and guidance may be when education resumes for the 2020/2021 school year.

Guiding Principles

- Assure the health and safety (physical, intellectual and emotional) of our staff, students and families is a top priority;
- Reduce anxiety and stress for students, families and staff providing predictability, and consistency while acknowledging the needs of families returning to work;
- Mitigate, monitor and minimize spread of Coronavirus;
- Prioritize anti-racist practices, including identity safety, culturally responsive teaching practices and equity-minded (equity-driven) resource allocation; and
- Provide high-quality, culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate social emotional and academic learning.

Constraints

The Fall Return to School Plan must work within the following constraints:

- Address Washington State Department of Health and Center for Disease Control (CDC) safety protocols:
 - Screening at work site locations school buildings
 - Handwashing, sanitizing, and cleaning
 - Physical/social distancing
 - Isolated student/teacher learning cohorts
 - Testing and quarantine space
 - Transmission prevention materials, supplies, and practices

- Work within Capacity and Operational Constraints (or identified alternative solutions):
 - Space
 - Custodial
 - Transportation
 - Staffing
 - Technology

- Provide effective and sustainable instruction:
 - Staff health and wellbeing
 - Educator capacity and effectiveness
 - Educator/student connections
 - Practical and meaningful communications/feedback

- Prioritize student developmental learning and social emotional needs across PreK-12 spectrum
 - Guidance and rules from OSPI and other government authorities and jurisdictions
 - Social and emotional needs of all students
 - Students' normal social behavioral interactions are not conducive to social distancing
 - Culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate instruction
 - Students receiving support services:
 - Advanced Learning
 - Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
 - Section 504
 - English Language Learning (ELL)
 - McKinney-Vento
 - Students furthest from educational justice

In response to health guidelines, the Governor's guidance, and OSPI rules, there are **three models for consideration by the Engagement Teams:**

- PK-5 students attend school in person; students in grades 6-12 have an A/B schedule where they receive part in-person learning and part remote learning
- PK-12 students have an A/B schedule and receive part in-person learning and part remote learning
- 100% remote learning

Each model requires different levels of resourcing and implementation which may determine feasibility. Each model also makes instructional assumptions that must be identified, examined and aligned to the SPS Strategic Plan and Policy No. 0030.

Teams may suggest revisions to the initial options or a hybrid the elements contained within the three models. **Each team will present their preferred option to the Leadership Group, who will make the final decision.**

The final decision for the Re-entry Scenarios will be communicated to staff, students and families in June 2020. This quickly approaching date will allow educators to prepare for student learning and student learning environments upon reopening.

Approach

Each scenario will be reviewed by four separate teams that will be facilitated by a District lead. Within the identified constraints teams will analyze the models, be provided additional information and identify values and provide recommendations for how school could be structured to begin the 2020/2021 school year. The planning process must be guided by

- District's strategic plan, Seattle Excellence.
- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, which is currently determining guidance for fall re-opening. It is unclear whether the State will provide guidance or rules and planning, and preparation must continue.
- The need to document teams' assumptions and priorities in finalized recommendation.
- The understanding the District will determine the strategies to use and the operational plan to implement the work.
- The Board's collaboration in direction setting, approval of plans, and monitoring of outcomes as well as any need to update relevant policies.

Framing Questions for Engagement Teams

1. Racial Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
 - a. How can we be culturally responsive in our approach to reopening schools for students, staff and families?
 - b. What is racially equitable remote/distance learning?
 - c. What are the short and long-term implications of each model for students furthest from educational justice?
 - d. How might the models we are evaluating have unintended consequences for students furthest from educational justice?
2. Teaching and Learning in COVID Conditions:
 - a. What might interactions look like between educators, students, and families within a remote learning platform?
 - b. What are the qualities of culturally responsive instruction as we educate our students of color furthest from educational justice?
 - c. What are experiences you want for students who qualify for special education, Section 504, English Language Learners, and/or McKinney-Vento services within a remote learning platform?
 - d. How might the developmental learning and social/emotional needs of PreK-3 be met?
 - e. What distance learning opportunities are available for families who choose to not have their child physically return to school?
 - f. How does the model support families, especially first responders and those unable to 'work remotely'?
3. Health & Safety:
 - a. Which health and safety measures would allow you to feel comfortable with student(s) returning to their SPS school?
 - b. Which health and safety measures allow you (staff) to feel comfortable coming to work each day?
4. Return to School - In-School Services Planning:
 - a. In planning for students to return to school in some capacity in September, what values are most important to you?
 - b. Centering policy 0030 and with special attention to long-term impacts on students, what learning experiences do you envision for students, pre-K through 12th next school year?
 - c. How should we balance the benefits of an in-person learning community with the constraints of established health and safety measures?

Benefits

In this moment of social change, Seattle Public Schools can re-imagine learning and intentionally design a public education system that centers and supports students and families furthest from educational justice, specifically African American boys and young men.

Considerations/Barriers

Budget: In order to comply with new health standards, there will be additional cleaning costs that are unavoidable. The recommended Re-entry Scenarios for Fall 2020, must be as budget neutral as possible.

Re-entry planning: Even if we go back to school as “normal”, we did not end school this year as normal. What implications does ending this school year with remote learning create for the start of school next year? Will all students return to school if families are still in fear of catching the virus? What if only 80% of students return, would we serve the other 20% of students? A plan will need to account for the ever-changing environment and provide flexibility to expand and contract based upon increases and decreases of the COVID19 spread.

Physical Distancing: Physical distancing is recommended to curb the spreading of COVID-19 requiring approximately 6 feet between people who are not from the same household. Under this scenario schools could be open however, only a portion of the districts’ students would be able to attend school at any one time for the physical distancing to be maintained in classrooms.

Remote Learning: Requires the learner and instructor to be separated by time and/or distance and therefore, cannot meet in a traditional classroom setting. What training might educators need? What are the expectations for time spent teaching, “live” instruction, etc? What are best practices for blended learning? How should people be held accountable? How should student learning be assessed?

Second Wave of COVID-19: Even before current physical distancing restrictions are lifted, scientists are worried about a second wave of the disease. It could be a bigger wave impacting the people who had no exposure to the virus during the first round or it could be a small impact because people who have been infected without symptoms have high levels of immunity. So much information is currently missing, scientists are having a difficult time making accurate predictions. Worst case scenario could be that school starts as normally, then schools are closed sometime mid-year. How should we prepare for this possibility? How can we help mitigate social emotional challenges resulting from COVID-19 conditions?

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

Leadership Group

Membership

- Superintendent
- SCPTSA-president
- Union Leadership (SEA and PASS)
- School Board President, VP, Chair of CAI
- Students

Four Engagement Teams

Membership – (2) each category, except (1) principal and teacher at each level

- Parents/families
- Central Office – teaching/learning/engagement
- Principals at each level
- Teachers at each level
- Classified SEA member
- CBO's
- School board director (ex officio)
- Students
- Health and Safety Representative

Operations Teams

Membership

- Health
- Transportation
- Budget
- Instructional Technology
- Human Resources
- Enrollment Planning/Capacity Management

PROJECT SCOPE

Leadership Group has the following responsibilities/body of work:

- Understand operations constraints
- Review framing questions
- Review presentations from the Teams
- Make final decision on reopening schools

Each of the four Engagement Teams has the following responsibilities/body of work:

- Briefed by Operations groups and survey data
- Understand of resource constraints
- Review/evaluate (pro/con) three options for learning in Fall 2020
- Review framing questions
- Develop and present recommendation of preferred option to Leadership Group

The Operations Teams have responsibilities/body of work:

- Develop one-page summary of each area's resources, constraints and other important considerations
- Attend and staff each Team's meetings
- Provide detail data by school/area

Out of scope of this project:

- Childcare needs
- Family Support for remote learning
- Best practices/PD for remote learning

High-Level Risks

- Significant labor needed for cleaning
- Supply chain for cleaning supplies and PPE
- Coronavirus policy changes may force timeline changes that are unpredictable, as well as limit "essential workers"
- Enrollment projections/staffing
- Civil unrest may cause unexpected situations at a national level
- Timeline