

Reopening School Sharing Sessions Notes

July 2020

In an effort to assist superintendents in gathering ideas regarding their reopening school plans, SASD and ASBSD host three sharing sessions across the state the week of June 29. Rob Monson (SASD), Jim Holbeck and Wade Pogany (ASBSD), hosted the events and were delighted at the discussions that ensued. Our thanks to superintendents Alan Kerr, Douglas, Becky Guffin, Aberdeen, and Joe Graves Mitchell for opening their doors to host the events.

This document attempts to capture the ideas, dialogue, and questions from over 85 superintendents who shared suggestions on their “Back to School” plans. This is not a legal document nor is it intended to be legal advice for any school district. These are merely thoughts and ideas shared from superintendents to help guide schools in their planning efforts. There was not consensus on everything, but all viewpoints were shared on differing processes. This document attempts to “walk through” what a school day would / could look like for a student and what changes may need to be in place for their safety. The “walk through” is broken down into the following categories:

STUDENT GETS READY FOR SCHOOL

TRANSPORATION

STUDENT ARRIVES AT SCHOOL

DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

STUDENTS AND SPECIALS

LARGE GROUP SETTING

SMALL GROUP SETTING

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

EXTRA CURRICULAR

STUDENT WITH A POSITIVE TEST

TEACHERS

BOARD ACTION

Ideas, suggestions and questions from the Sharing Sessions:

General observations:

- All plans are contingent on the spread of the virus. Several superintendents talked about plans organized in phases depending on the spread of infection in their communities.
- Most agreed they would plan for full face to face instruction at the start of the school year and react if spread increased.
- Most agreed they are planning for full face to face instruction, but also remote delivery or some form of eLearning for parents who are not comfortable sending their students.
- It's difficult but need to plan for a continuum of comfort levels of parents – some sending kids to school regardless, others fear infection may not send, now what?

STUDENT GETS READY FOR SCHOOL

What recommendations, if any, will you have for parents to do wellness checks in preparation for school each day and what information will be shared to help them for pre-school preparations? Are you going to have parents take temperatures at home?

- Some were encouraging self-checks at home. Information on symptoms to be sent to parents. Strongly suggest parents not send their students if they show symptoms.
- Some were taking temperatures, some were not
- Others were not thinking of having parents do some form of a checklist.
- Checklist will be sent out by SASD as a sample.

TRANSPORTATION

Bussing – what precautions?, Temperature checks?, Masks required on the bus?, Limiting number of riders?

- Probably an issue to check temps on the bus because it may be too late to send back home. Some going to temp check. Noted some health officials have some concerns about temp checks unless the individual is acclimated to the schools for 30 minutes to get an accurate reading.
- Seating on the bus – by family seating – no one directly behind the bus driver – distance as best they can
- Many suggested making it clear to parents that students ride at own risk and communicate expectations to parents
- Asking parents to transport kids instead of bussing may cut down on number of kids on busses
- Some are adding more routes or adding smaller vans
- Some protecting bus drivers with – not doing cleaning – protecting measures for the driver in cab retrofits
- Some are going to require riders to wear masks, some are recommending it.
- Some are going to offer to pay parents who do not want students on the bus.
- Some are asking parents who can transport students to help with social distancing.
- Suggest filling from the back to the front.
- Many sanitizing busses after each load

STUDENTS ARRIVE AT SCHOOL

Where do the students go? Playground? Lunchroom? Home Room? Designated Entries?

- Increase space between kids as much as possible
- Keep kids in cohorts as much as possible
- Designate more areas for kids to be at the beginning of the day – supervise elementary recess
- Homerooms required to attend when arrive at high school.
- Breakfast program will have kids in lunchroom – spread out the lunch tables as far apart –

- Some do grab and go for breakfast
- Go to directly to classroom.
- Stay outside as much as possible with supervision.
- Go to breakfast and eat in lunchroom.
- Designated entries to the building for certain groups to keep kids in separate hallways, separate classrooms
- Educate parents to not bring before designated time. – move kids directly to classrooms, no parents walking into the school.

Does everyone get temperature checked?

- Mixed reaction on temp checks – some will perform others not – most agree it is also about public perception in addition to safety
- Some will have Paraprofessionals will do temperature checks of students.

Masks Required or Recommended?

- Most said optional for kids, but not required to wear.
- Some investing in masks and face shields as options – school will wash the reusable masks daily and have available

Signage and floor markings as you enter school?

- Some floor stickers to space kids out in halls
- One-way hallways in some hall areas
- Setting up barriers (Plexiglas) to the office for protection
- Limit or no Parents access into schools, and no volunteers in classrooms
- CDC has posters you can download and print.
- Kindergarten parents? Set up an outdoor picture area as they come to the school do the pictures outside
- Scheduled times for open house with controlled access before school
- Parents and / or visitors in the building?
- Most are not allowing visitors.

Vendors?

- Limit to non-student areas.
- Not allowing at all.

Hand sanitizer available and where?

- Hand sanitizers – every room will have them and in hallways, and entrances
- Elementary level build into the daily schedule for hand washing
- Students hand sanitize their hands as students enter and leave the classrooms at secondary level
- Large buckets of disposable towels infused with safe disinfectants in every classroom
- Mobile stations.

Water Fountains?

- Providing water bottles to students and only use water fillers put in the school
- Some schools asking students to bring bottles other districts are providing them
- Installing new water fillers to use
- Some closing the regular water fountains
- Changing fountains out for bottle fillers.
- One district was going to have kitchen sanitize the bottles for students.

Bathroom Breaks?

- Scheduling breaks for full classes to take breaks
- Separate bathrooms designated for grades.
- Hand sanitizers outside of bathrooms Scheduled by the teacher – individual not groups.
- Sanitizers outside the bathroom doors.
- Prop open doors.

Frequency of hand washing?

- Teachers have it scheduled throughout the day.

DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION

Are you going to offer dual delivery of classes?

- About half starting “normal” with no online and about half planning to do in person as well as online instruction.
- One option was elementary in person and 7-12 online.
- Survey of parents and options
- Many surveying parents or in process to determine who is coming back and how many might need remote delivery
- Some parents want an online remote option
- Most are allowing and providing a dual platform on instruction for remote instruction and face to face in school instruction
- Timeframe for remote – some doing nine-week increments
- Many using Google classroom as the online platform –
- Some may split days – most are only considering split days if the situation requires, but start normal
- What is the criteria for a parent to decide if they choose to stay home. – most response was any parent should have the option to make the decision of face to face or remote regardless of their reasoning. Accommodation of remote learning is as much an instruction issue as it is student count/funding issue.

How are utilizing teaching staff for remote learning?

- Who is willing as faculty to do remote teaching? Survey staff
- Scenarios:
 - Some schools will have existing teachers do face to face and remote – some concern of over burden on teachers
 - Hire remote eLearning teachers – or hire additional teachers
 - Looking at a consortium of schools to offer remote learning and use staff specific to eLearning

Are you providing everyone devices?

- Many were already one-to-one
- Some purchasing more computers

Cameras in the classrooms?

- This was a highly debated area. Some have concerns with FERPA violations while others don't see an issue with it. Some are going to utilize the swivel technology while others are looking at a Zoom type deliver.
- Are teachers comfortable or going to accept watching every day of live evaluation of the teacher
- Some classrooms capturing the lesson as a webinar, but not video of the students and classroom
- Could use a waiver if using cameras in the classrooms.
- Some putting swivels in classrooms – teachers can edit recording – parents being instructed to not share the video – there is some risk, but extreme times need to find a way to minimize risk of privacy of the students.
- Maximum number of students allowed in a classroom? (social distancing?)
- Some spoke to encouraging some students to take advantage of the online option which would reduce the “in-person” numbers in the room.
- Many said they would do the best they could.
- Talk of partitions.

Delivery products?

- Edgenuity
- Google classroom
- See Saw at the elementary level
- Black Hills Online options – consortium already exist
- Black Board
- DIAL Consortium

Alternative days of instruction or half days?

- Only a consideration if the infections push to that situation
- Some considering alternate days and alternate weeks with remote learning when students are at home.
- Considering K-8 in school building with distancing – high school online if situation requires.
- Distancing – spread apart as much as can – some bought desk shields.
- A few who were not on a four-day week were considering it.

- Some spoke to doing a half day rotation which would increase bussing
- Some talked about alternate weeks. (week on week off)
- Some talked about alternate days. (Mon,Wed, Fri)
- Some have teachers move kids stay in classrooms -
- Adding minutes to school day for staggered passing times

Utilize existing staff to deliver instruction or hire additional?

- If they have multiple sections, they will consider.
- Some talked about coordinating with a neighboring school to take a group of students (1st,2nd, 3rd grade as an example if there are only a few students)
- Some were considering hiring a teacher just to manage this piece.

STUDENTS AND SPECIALS

Art, PE, Music/Band, Library, Computer Labs?

- Computer labs were not much of an issue as many are 1 to 1.
- Many questions yet about what to do with choir and band. Waiting for further guidance.
- Choral music is major concern with projection of breath and drop lets into the air.
- Movement from classroom to specials area
- Some bringing the teacher to the homeroom.
- Most just practicing social distancing in the movement.
- Keeping cohorts of kids together – for music and art having teachers come into the classroom where the kids are in cohort groups already – limits passing
- PE – taking outside as much as possible
- Considering limits to locker room

LARGE GROUP SETTING

Lunch? In the classroom?

- Lunchrooms – changing schedules to spread out – limiting exposure
- Going to chairs on benches
- Eating in classrooms – adding burden to custodians – some adding more custodial staff
- Elementary staggering classes and eating in lunchroom then stager some into the cafeteria on different days
- Pull out first row of gym bleachers and put portable tables in front of them to eat with distancing
- Some may have sack lunches available for students at home similar to summer meals
- Cleaning of tables is a burden – divide up the work

- Recess – staggered times – no equipment balls etc. – question of whether to clean playgroup equipment -
- Keep same cohort together by classrooms not mixing on playground – outside is probably one of the safest places
- Some were thinking about elementary eating in their rooms. (concerns over duty free lunch etc. Additional janitorial with spills.
- Some “grab and go” breakfast and lunches.
- Cohorts (4th grade classroom) eating together, distancing from others.
- Self-serve utensils / salad bars?
- No more salad bars.
- Pre-dished salads, veggies, toppings

Staggering lunch times?

- Stagger grade levels more (add additional time to lunch serving)

Recess?

- Try to keep cohorts in groups as much as possible.
- Stagger times / entry points to building.

Passing in hallways?

- Stagger times.
- Provide guidance on the floor for flow of traffic.

SMALL GROUP SETTING

Testing Individuals?

- Speech therapists wearing clear face shields for staff not masks to see face.
- Testing this summer to get as much done.
- Some virtual testing, but it’s not as valid as face to face
- Summer school for elementary ed for kids to catch up in small groups with screening protocols
- Screenings to limit as much as exposure as possible Plexi glass partitions.
- Clear face shields.

Special Education Instructions?

OT / PT / Psychologists?

- Think about coop staff that visit multiple sites (local expectations?)

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Air Quality

- Installing U/V light filters on air cleaners
- Bring in ionizers on the HVAC system

- Surface cleaning – most asking teachers to help in sanitizing classrooms once a day and have custodians clean at end of the day.
- Adding 25% more fresh air to exchangers.
- Higher quality filters.
- Adding an ionizer to the HVAC system.

Surface Cleaning? (who is doing it and when?)

- The Wand or The Gun– blasts the area as a sanitizer – some have ordered.
- 360 machines to spray large surfaces – spray and let dry
- Teachers at the end of the day.
- Teachers any time the students leave the room.
- Paraprofessionals cleaning as much as possible – hiring additional custodians

Hand sanitizer and wipes in every room?

- Yes, if we can find them.

Note: Contact Jim Holbeck for access to BuyBoard vendors for cleaning, and PPE equipment

EXTRA CURRICULAR

Practices? Travel? Performances? Locker Rooms?

- Looking to SDHSAA for guidance on fall sports. Consensus that extra-curricular activities have to be statewide decisions not just local.
- Fans – would there be fans at games
- Medical community will help with protocols?

STUDENT WITH A POSITIVE TEST

So, what do we do if someone is showing symptoms or we have a positive case(s)?

- Looking to DOH to give guidance on protocols on reaction to positive diagnosis.
- Pennsylvania plan has DOH protocols same as North Dakota
- Symptoms – Best thing short term is to I.C.E. the student
 - Isolate and mask them immediately
 - Contact the parents
 - Exit them from your facility as quickly as possible
- As far as the positive cases that get reported, The DOE and DOH workgroup will have further guidance by mid-July

TEACHERS

Self-Check?

- **This was not part of our discussion at the workshops but thought it would be important enough to include it. Are you going to ask employees to do a self-check each morning?**

Wearing masks?

- Some Recommend masks to faculty to wear not required
- Some going to hire in house substitutes all day every day - depends on what phase we are in.
- Very few if any were going to required masks.

Negotiated Agreement?

- There will be some staff members who will want to refer to the NA on everything they are asked to do additional. This is a time when you may want to have a “Coaching Pep Talk” at the start of the year letting them know this is a whole new animal. We are all going to be asked to do things we may not want to do, or that we typically do, but the public will be watching our every action.

Substitutes?

- Increasing substitute daily rate – could find more people with increased pay.
- Many are concerned about the pool. (availability and vulnerability)
- A few have hired full time subs to show up every day.

Working remotely?

- Many questions around whether it should be a “choice” of a teacher or if it is a medical issue that forces them to go remote.
- See COSA document on ADA process for teachers concerned about returning

Hazard pay?

- What to do with staff who do not want to return?
- 504 ADA Concerns?

BOARD ACTION

Will you ask your Board to act on your mitigation plan?

- How involved in your board going to be?
- Most are keeping them posted on the plan development
- Most are including board members on the reopening committee
- Most board will sign off on the final plans
- A few did not want board action as they were looking for flexibility if a change was needed.
- Many wanted “cover” on the plan since there will be parents and community members on all sides of the plan.

Will you ask your Board to act on your calendar if you change your date?

- Could need the board to waive some policies
- Some have approved calendar changes by board
- Some want approval for the phases and decisions of remaining open and not open