



## **Reopening Schools Advisory Committee**

**10 a.m. to noon July 8, 2020**

### **Members Present**

- Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez, co-chair
- Executive Director of Operations Jessica Sankey, co-chair
- Department of Teaching and Learning representatives: Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland, Assistant Superintendent Steve Clarke, Director of Special Education Mike Haberman, Director Amy Carder, Director Trina Hall, Director Charisse Berner
- School administrators Sonia Bell, Matt Whitten, Ari Feeney
- Certificated teachers Ronni Weston, James Walsh, Shirley Prichard, Nic Castona,
- Teacher on special assignment (TOSA) for early childhood Nina Ballew
- Paraeducator Karanbir Deol
- School nurse Alyssa Johnson
- Safety and wellness program specialist Nyla Thursday
- Front office staff: registrar Robin Montague, elementary principal administrative assistant Gladys Serrano
- Bellingham Education Association (BEA) president Lisa Peterson
- Bellingham Association of School Employees (BASE) president Rebecca Sauter
- Parent Advisory Committee representatives Jami Pitman and Samantha Dang
- Student Advisory Committee representatives Nigel Naylor and Serene Salam
- Whatcom County Health Department representative Laurette Rasmussen
- Bellingham medical community representative Dr. Sara Mostad
- Opportunity Council representative David Webster
- YMCA representative Shannon Millican
- Director of Transportation Rae Anne Thon
- Director of Food Services Patrick Durgan
- Director of Building and Grounds Mike Anderson
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Bob Kuehl
- Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Jackie Brawley
- Executive Director of Educational Technology Kurt Gazow
- Executive Director of Family Engagement Isabel Meaker
- Mental health coordinator Chris Cochran

### **Welcome**

#### **Family and staff survey**

Committee co-chair Executive Director of Operations Jessica Sankey introduced a few results from the family/community survey and staff survey administered in June. More data and the survey summaries are available on the committee website. She shared a few key take-aways, including that a large number of responses indicate high interest in return-to-school planning; most families are interested in returning to school and having in-person classroom experiences for their children; staff indicated slightly less comfort than families in returning to school.

## **Reopening Schools Advisory Committee**

**10 a.m. to noon July 22, 2020**

## **Members Present**

- Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez, co-chair
- Executive Director of Operations Jessica Sankey, co-chair
- Department of Teaching and Learning representatives:
  - Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland,
  - Assistant Superintendent Steve Clarke,
  - Director Jay Jordan
  - Director of Special Education Mike Haberman,
  - Director Amy Carder,
  - Director Trina Hall,
  - Director Charisse Berner
- School administrators: Sonia Bell, Matt Whitten, Ari Feeney, Tom Gresham
- Certificated teachers: Ronni Weston, James Walsh, Shirley Prichard, Nic Castona, Jeff Nyman, Sara Rose, Rey Ramos, Nina Ballew
- Paraeducator Karanbir Deol
- School nurse Alyssa Johnson
- Safety and wellness program specialist Nyla Thursday
- Front office staff: registrar Robin Montague, elementary principal administrative assistant Gladys Serrano
- Bellingham Education Association (BEA) president Lisa Peterson
- Bellingham Association of School Employees (BASE) president Rebecca Sauter
- Parent Advisory Committee representatives Jami Pitman and Samantha Dang
- Student Advisory Committee representatives and Serene Salam
- Whatcom County Health Department representative Laurette Rasmussen
- Opportunity Council representative David Webster
- YMCA representative Shannon Millican
- Director of Transportation Rae Anne Thon
- Director of Food Services Patrick Durgan
- Director of Building and Grounds Mike Anderson
- Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Bob Kuehl
- Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Jackie Brawley
- Executive Director of Educational Technology Kurt Gazow
- Executive Director of Family Engagement Isabel Meaker

## **Guests:**

- Bill Palmer, Director
- Jennifer Lawrence

## **Members Excused:**

- Nigel Naylor
- Dr. Sara Mostad

## **Welcome**

## **District Planning Updates**



Our district continues to rely on key resources, including reports from the Institute for Disease Modeling Report such as this one: [Schools Are Not Islands](#). It emphasizes the value of non-pharmaceutical interventions like face coverings and physical distancing in prevention.

Co-chair and Executive Director of Operations Jessica Sankey shared that Bellingham Public Schools has formalized the COVID Safety Work Team. A group has been meeting since March to learn about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recommendations and requirements, as well as workplace COVID protocols. Best practices indicate that a point person for COVID health and safety planning is necessary, and teacher on special assignment (TOSA) Jennifer Lawrence will be serving as our COVID Safety coordinator. Jenny has been coordinating PPE with local child care facilities and been the district point person for child care programs run by community partners since our schools closed in March.

Co-chair and Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez told the committee that our reopening work teams have been formed and are fully under way. We have nearly 300 staff participating in our teams.

The committee broke into small groups (via Zoom breakout rooms) and shared feedback and thoughts on what they have heard thus far. Each group had a representative share a summary.

The following comments and wonders reflect what was shared:

- It was a challenging spring for youngest students and P-2 teachers. How do we social distance with our youngest students?
- Concerns about students with special needs and their access to equipment. Do we have budget to support these needs?
- What is a virtual academy? How does a child stay connected to school if they are entirely virtual?
- One idea is to teach a class in the classroom, with some students in class and some at home by using classroom cameras. That could allow us to merge both an online and hybrid model into one.
- Concerns about returning and whether that is the best choice for the health and safety of our community.
- Developing tech skills will be necessary for all staff and students. Also recognizing that we need to support families with technology, too.
- Necessary to build schedules that are responsible and equitable.
- Challenging and important to maintain social distancing; cohorts are important but more difficult with current middle and high school level scheduling patterns.
- Need to identify what structures and teaching model(s) we use. The hybrid model requires significant work/support from families.

## **Work Team Updates**

Jessica shared a new district motto developed in the first few weeks of the closure that transportation director Rae Anne Thon said. “Be stubborn in your goals and flexible in your methods.”

The following work teams shared updates with the advisory committee.

### Transportation

Rae Anne shared that this group of staff has been meeting since the closure. They are working closely with food services on deliveries of multi-meal boxes. Safety is in the forefront as they created systems and environments, which allowed their staff to be more comfortable at work. They began with one system and tweaked as they received new information and guidance.

### Food services

Chef Patrick Durgan shared that typically, one of the food services’ primary goals is efficiency first. They had to switch to safety first and create protocols that were sustainable. They built trust with staff through communications, morning meetings, and creating a new culture with clear objectives. Currently, they are planning on meal delivery for three or four different school models for the 2020-21 school year.

### Building & Ground

Building and grounds director Mike Anderson said custodial staff have continued working in buildings since the closure with only one or two employees on-site at a time. Priorities are adapting to our new needs, for example, they focus on cleaning touch points. The custodial team are experts in cleaning and disinfecting and will use the appropriate tools to meet the need. Disinfectants take time to be effective. They clean first and disinfect surfaces second. All custodians wear gloves, and they prefer the use of hydrogen peroxide wipes rather than bleach. Bleach can mix with the ammonia in other products and may have bad reaction. Custodial team also needs to ask teachers to support students in changing practices, like washing hands, because we know that washing hands is more effective than hand sanitizers and would prefer that as the primary cleaning method.

The committee broke into small groups (via Zoom breakout rooms) and shared feedback and thoughts on what they have heard thus far. Each group had a representative share a summary.

The following comments and wonders reflect what was shared:

- The details are complicated. For example, cleaning high schools is tricky because there is typically high turnover in classrooms.
- Consider asking the paraeducators to be part of the team that disinfects classrooms.
- Reassured to hear that supplies will be in all classrooms.
- Concerns include the time it will take to clean in the secondary level; classrooms that don’t have sinks for handwashing.
- Reflection on how to create work materials for kids that do not have to be sanitized.

- Can we create a checklist of safety items? Each school is different and so one size will not fit all.
- When will we survey the parents again once we decide on a model?
- Is there a date when we will decide on the schedule, so that all the protocols can be put in place?
- What decisions have been made for food services already? Hot food?
- Do not want to go backwards with all of the gains we've made with fresh foods and scratch cooking. Every school will be a little difference based on the infrastructure for food services. We want to continue serving the most popular food items.
- Questions about traveling teachers' model, whether it's a specialist or a teacher that teaches at multiple locations.

### Digital Environments:

One of the largest work teams has been digging into tech environments. Director of Teaching and Learning and technology integration Bill Palmer shared some draft recommendations of the tools, practices and training, including that all students grades 6-12 would use the Teams platform in the Microsoft Suite.

The committee broke into small groups (via Zoom breakout rooms) and shared feedback and thoughts on what they have heard thus far. Each group had a representative share a summary.

The following comments and wonders reflect what was shared:

- How do we support families in learning?
- How do we get clear on Seesaw and Teams, which is being used and how parents can support students? Is there a phase-in with other platforms? How do paras support smaller groups of students?
- Elementary staff assisting parents as the first teachers seems important. Curious what hybrid and/or online schedules will look like. Support the idea of using library media specialists to help provide student technical training.
- Lots of energy for Teams as main platform.
- There were wonders about grading, devices for younger students (K-2), family support for younger students and online modules. What if parents are not available?
- Lots of professional learning opportunities to teach effectively within this model. How do we unleash some of the creativity among staff and stay consistent across schools?
- How do we meet social needs of students?
- Could we change names of classes to make it more family friendly? Teachers can serve as a learning coach to a group of students, like a case manager.
- Parent education will critical.
- Young kids typing will be challenging.
- Could there be different times of the day to teach like swing shift?
- Make sure platforms have the ability to translate.



- Concern that the initial 90-day internet subscription the district supported families in obtaining is ending—they will need an internet solution.

The committee's next meeting is 10 a.m. to noon on July 29.