

## Reopening Schools Advisory Committee

10 a.m. to noon July 29, 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, Tom Gresham
- 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 (excused)
- 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 (excused)

Guests:

Barb Del Wraa

### Welcome

### News & updates:

[Dr. Baker sent an update](#) to our community about planning for the new school year. It seems less likely that our schools buildings will be open for in-person instruction in the fall, at least for the majority of students. The health and safety of our students, staff and families is a top priority.



## **WEA recommendation, statewide district updates**

The Washington Education Association (WEA) recommends that schools should start remotely with quality distance learning at this time. On July 22, WEA published a blog post: [“WEA demands safety first.”](#) The focus for the association is on justice and equity. It is critical to support staff to develop quality learning. In Washington state, one out of five staff are over the age of 60 and many have health concerns. Ideally, the association asks that time prior to Sept. 2 be used to provide professional development for staff to provide quality distance learning. Appreciation was expressed for working in Bellingham Public Schools.

Across the state, Seattle, Bellevue, and other districts in the Puget Sound area announced intentions to go online-only in the fall.

[Oregon Governor Kate Brown announced metrics](#) to guide school re-opening. Metrics offer decision-making points for school districts to consider opening by county.

## **District Planning Updates**

Our planning began with a focus on the hybrid model, with half our student population coming into buildings at a time. As the health and safety landscape has evolved, we are shifting our focus to remote learning. We know that online will be a significant learning platform for many students this fall.

Using the excellent model provided by Northshore School District, we began to develop the Reconnect Plan for BPS. We are recommending 5 stages to reopening:

- Stage 1: 100% Distance Learning (both synchronous and asynchronous lessons)
- Stage 2: Nearly 100% Distance Learning (some staff could be on-site)
- Stage 3: Hybrid Learning with Early Childhood (allow K-2 in person in schools)
- Stage 4: Hybrid Learning (can add grades 3-12 on-site)
- Stage 5: Fully in-person for all students

There continue to be many unanswered questions, including what criteria we would use to move from one stage to the next, and how to determine which students might be prioritized for in-school learning.

## **Breakout rooms reflections on stages:**

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:

- Groups reflected that they liked the clarity of five stages and agreed that it would be helpful to have metrics to determine moving between stages.
- One group recommended adding a double arrow on stages 2-4 to illustrate that it might be possible to move either backwards or forward into stages.
- A group requested including safety protocols required whenever we move from one stage to the other, to remind students and staff that health and safety protocols and practices will continue to be an expectation.
- Wondering about what types of support do students with IEP, 504 needs?
- Promote personal transportation rather than bus riding.
- Make sure that Wi-Fi connectivity continues.

- Family engagement needs to stay strong; how do we provide professional development for quality engagement.
- Family-friendly wording needed in the description of each stage.
- Would like to keep a shared responsibility in the community to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all of us.
- A comment that students in transition grades (K,6,9) may face unique challenges.
- Many members wondered if it might be possible to bring a limited number of kids to our buildings within each stage.

## Work Team Updates

### I. Level Schedules: High School

Sehome Principal Sonia Bell and Director of Teaching and Learning Jeff Tetrick reported on the high school scheduling work team's progress. [Details available in July 29 Presentation slides](#)

Their focus recently has been on online learning; the work team recommends that students take only four classes at a time but eight classes over a semester. The work team is still discussing the rotation of courses—a quarter schedule is one option, as is a more frequent rotation of four classes. Daily connection with teachers is important. The work team is recommending a daily advisory meeting during the first period of the day so that there will be a common check in time for students to share with teachers.

The work team also explored different hybrid models, one allowing for 25% of students at school on any given day, and another allowing 50% of students at school at a time.

### Breakout rooms reflections:

The following comments and wonders reflect what was shared.

- Strengths include the 22-day rotation made sense, especially because it keeps the master schedule intact.
- How do you choose the cohorts?
- Advisory model to make sure the students know what to do.
- What would teachers/students do in the afternoon?
- How do they access support as needed?
- How would this impact AP classes?
- Bells would need to be reprogrammed to ring at the right times when kids come back in buildings if new periods were implemented for in-person instruction, as well.
- How do we communicate and show the high school experience in a way that students understand and can react to?
- Is the schedule too rigorous? Could be up to seven hours of screen time.
- Looking for flexibility during the fall due the potential mental health challenges that could be occurring. How would this line up with the stages?
- How would this impact families that have other commitments during the day? Job/childcare.

### II. Virtual Academy



Director of Teaching and Learning Charisse Berner shared information regarding a virtual academy. The key concept is that some students want to continue to be enrolled in BPS but know they want an all-online option for at least one semester. This would be an alternative to other online learning opportunities outside the district that families might be accessing. [Details available in July 29 Presentation slides](#)

**Breakout rooms reflections:**

- Many positive responses: this feels like a win-win for staff and families.
- Recommend one check-in per day as enough.
- Recommend a balance between live and recorded lessons
- Developing a year-long program may be too much work.
- Keeps a portion of our student with us instead of having students enroll in WAVA: some students who would prefer all online might want to stay connected with BPS teachers and students.
- Is there an opportunity for students who want to work at their own pace to work more quickly through the material?
- How would this be different from on-line learning in a hybrid model?
- Teacher would be more similar to an advisor; the student would oversee their own learning.
- Many members liked the recorded options. Instruction doesn't have to be live.
- Curious to see how the district decides to provide staff and training support.
- Curious how do we can engage parents? If this option doesn't work for them can they switch mid-semester?

A reminder that we have shifted to weekly meetings. The committee's next meeting is 10 a.m. to noon on August 5.