



Reopening Schools Advisory Committee

10 a.m. to noon August 12, 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 (excused)
- 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 (excused)
- 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 (excused)
- Executive Director of Educational Technology Kurt Gazow
- Executive Director of Family Engagement Isabel Meaker
- Mental health coordinator Chris Cochran (excused)

Guests:

Barb Del Wraa, James Walsh, Kevin Terpstra, Jeff Coulter, Katie Jones

Welcome

Committee co-chairs Executive Director of Operations Jessica Sankey and Executive Director of Teaching and Learning Kristi Dominguez welcomed the group back.

Updates: Recap reopening announcement; priorities for reopening

Kristi and Jessica shared updates about the following items:

- **Health and safety:** COVID-19 Site Safety; Employee Protocols; Planning for bringing students back to schools
- **Online Learning** Teams platform; planning for K-12 online learning
- **Family Engagement** Parents are a student's first teacher– and especially critical in this time. How can our schools best support families so that students can be successful?

Superintendent Greg Baker shared the health department and governor's metrics that would allow us to move to different phases. Noting that there is no single authority on this subject, we are looking at a variety of different pressure points metrics guidance. A [decision tree](#) is posted on the committee's website.

Work Team Updates

I. Special Education

Federal law regarding special education has not changed, so we are needing to find creative ways to implement IEPs. It will require more training and figuring out how to use our parents through family engagement. We are working on identifying staff who could potentially be available and under what conditions they can work.

Themes from public feedback:

- Families first: create time to listen and plan early
- In-person pioneers: create safe spaces for in-person learning now
- Everybody is talking at me: streamline collaboration, communication
- Expand the toolbox – tools, platforms to reach all kids, Cares Act
- Do no harm

A committee member asked a question about the ability of staff to continue to provide support such as speech or behavioral therapy if we cannot meet in person. They are working to identify possible platforms that will make teletherapy easier.

II. Level Schedules: Middle School

Kulshan Middle School Assistant Principal Kevin Terpstra and Whatcom Middle School Principal Jeff Coulter presented the work team's recommendation with a draft schedule and student support concepts. The challenge is to mesh the middle level schedule with high and elementary schools' schedules. Schools often share staff who help meet the needs of middle school students.

The following is included in the latest middle school draft schedule:

- Daily live classes: two 40-minute live core academic classes, one 30-minute live enrichment class, one 30-minute live homeroom class
- Daily independent learning: one 30-minute independent enrichment block, two 75-minute independent core academic blocks
- Grade level teachers available for check-ins and office hours daily from 1:15-3:45; enrichment teachers available daily from 2:30-3:45

- Read 180, ELL, SPED groups scheduled during independent learning blocks. Read 180 is supplemental to core
- District combined grade 8 geometry class scheduled daily during independent learning block
- All schools follow same schedule to allow for sharing of students across enrichment classes
- AVID, SPED groups, ELL groups can meet during homeroom
- Preference for shorter rotation chunks; potentially one-week rotations

This schedule allows for creative potential of combining district classes and supports (Music, ELL, AVID, Web). It also allows for consistent collaboration opportunities across schools, grade level and content.

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:

- Overall, the schedule was highly accepted. It creates opportunities for kids on a rotation schedule and alignment across all schools that did not exist before.
- Discussion of having parents help with small groups, paraeducators responding to a call-center as well as responding to email inquiries.
- They are looking to community partners to support middle school age childcare.
- Some concern expressed for families who have students in multiple grade levels and how to align the weekly schedules.
- Excited about using Wednesday afternoon as a cross-district collaboration time. We know this will occur naturally but think it would be smart to build it into our schedule so that it does not get lost in the shuffle.
- We are wondering how to pull off the schedule and how to balance synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- The potentially inequitable impact on students with the 22-day schedule particularly as it relates to math. An anticipation that some families with available resources will access private math support and then the resulting widening of a gap because of inequitable access. Could there be shorter math opportunities in the interim that provide continuity of math instruction for all students?
- Space for support for family engagement at middle school (current drafts show that in elementary, but not middle)
- Appreciated the flexibility of the schedule—especially in terms of offering built in time to apply the learning. Liked the idea that enrichment was back-to-back, which could offer a larger engagement time if needed.
- Questions: will there be social emotional learning support during independent work time? How will teachers measure participation?

III. **Student Feedback & Grading Practices:**

Educational technology coach Bruce Mansfield and Squalicum High School Assistant Principal Katie Jones presented the work team's recommendation to develop an equitable grading policy. They reviewed current research on effective grading and feedback practices with a focus on Joe Feldman's work as a guiding text. It identifies grading practices that meet Feldman's criteria of accuracy, bias-resistance, and motivation. The goal was to develop a common understanding of the qualities of effective feedback, to identify instructional practices that embody effective feedback and focused on growth over time.

Breakout room reflections:

- Big picture very inspiring. How do we collaborate with families on grading/feedback? Importance of being "fair" in terms of grading very important.
- Make sure that the purpose of grading stays very clear -- feedback and growth not motivation, punishment or sorting.
- How do we influence higher ed institutions who expect a diploma that shows grade point averages, etc. and still have a meaningful system of feedback and growth-oriented grading?
- Wondering about the connections for elementary teachers. How do we help families give good feedback to kids as they are working with them at home? Getting rid of 'zeros' is something we can do right away.
- The work should be about the learning and not about compliance. We should try to focus on addressing barriers that are holding kids back rather than penalizing them. We agree with no group scores and things that lump kids together or sort them.
- Discussion of the multiple grading systems in every class and how to create alignment. Great discussion of the "must haves" from our group or that we must be able to show growth and with our formative assessments, be able to support students in revising work toward their learning goals. The ultimate goal for kids is to develop ownership of their learning.
- Thoughts about students putting themselves in a box right away and how to prevent that. Need conversations around culture/race relations, conversations needed at all levels, what is equitable.
- Some students do need incentives. Punishments = forms of resistance.
- How do we give students feedback for mastery in pursuing future career goals? Liked the "don'ts" but also realize they served a purpose. Sometimes we hyper-focus on the need and we do not always see beyond that. Look at the positives.
- How do we get buy-in from all the parties involved and move from extrinsic to intrinsic? Can we add independent studies to all classes?

Deputy Superintendent Mike Copland announced that Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Steve Clarke would be retiring at the end of August. Steve was thanked for what he has done for the district. Steve is loved and will be missed.

Next meeting: August 19