

SPS- Safe School Reopening Task Force - Sub Committee Meeting Notes

Date: June 10, 2020

Committee Name: English Language Development Services

Attendee Names:

Heather Richardson (ELD Director and Chair)	present
Larry Quisano (Admin - Sheridan Elementary)	present
Kent Hibbard (Admin - Garry Middle School)	present
Lisa Henderson (Admin - Ferris High School)	present
Bhakta Giri (Bilingual/Language Specialist)	present

Teachers

Molly Palermo (HS)	present
Tommi Palm (MS)	present
Maria Esther Zamora (ES)	present
Sally Dueweke (SEA Rep)	present
Doresty Daniel (Parent)	present
Naomi Hagen (Recording Secretary)	present

8:00 New Member Introductions

8:05 OSPI Update

- New deadline for school opening models – 6/10/20

8:10 Today's goal: Family Communication

- Heather: so far, district office shares communications with Heather; information pared down to basic information, then translated by Language Specialists and posted on Blackboard Messenger; Calls to families; Texts to families; Posted on Facebook page for Marshallese community Facebook: Family advocate posted translations on all district language pages; Language Specialists have attended digital IEP meetings as top priority to interpret for the meeting; Weekly ELD plans translated and sent to parents; videos created for accessing and logging in to district tech platforms; When individual ELD teachers unable to reach families, emailed info to Heather who sends to Language Specialists to get contact information and connect with families difficult to get ahold of (Facebook Messenger for Marshallese community); ELD teachers and Bilingual and Language Specialists called families to ensure they had access and helped fill out forms to check out computers to EL families and gave time to pick up during specific times with student name on computers; Posted translations each time updates went out
 - o What has worked so far?

- Kent: families responding to all of the different communication forms; doesn't seem to be one overarching method that is being accessed more than others; still some families that
- Larry: Able to deliver around 150 laptops plus students getting computers from Rogers; hoped it would lead to uptake in student community accessing learning online, but didn't happen; all methods helping, but one-on-one conversations with families seemed to work best
- Maria: problem came from the building communications when both parents work and can't spend the time to filter and understand what is happening; one-to-one communication seemed best; still have families resistant to having the technology; short communications seem to work best; many parents are essential workers and are exhausted and working longer shifts than ever before; please give me the most simple thing that parents can do (Heather's response – Blackboard messenger often too long and parents telling Language Specialists that parents hang up and prefer a short translated text)
- Lisa: multiple ways is important; our most effective move seems to be home visits face-to-face and showing how to log on – working better than verbal or written; agree that home communications usually need to be short and simple; keep all communication in one place (ELD webpage for district or individual schools and organized by date and topic so easy to access)
- Heather: good idea to have all communication in one place
- Lisa: can it be housed in clever if all students are accessing it?
- Heather: need to ask Betsy about moving translated materials on webpage to clever
- Lisa: picking up technology was difficult for Ferris to pick up from Rogers – different way to distribute technology in a way that is more community based?
- Sally: agree with Lisa with the “one-stop-shop” for ELD information; when principal did things through facebook, asked her to circle or point to phone numbers so that parents could easily/quickly see needed info; can we add picture icons to the information; district sent out a lot of text – need oral, visual and text; accessing things through phones seems to work; keep it small so that they can copy into google translate; multiple avenues, but some parents didn't like all of the communication; need to pare it down
- Heather: yes, need to be more strategic about who is sending out information (school vs building vs district) – only send one time
- Molly: game changer for me was when Julita and Doresty started sending out Facebook Messenger notifications; for families we couldn't contact, home visits were great; making access videos for all assignments was very helpful for students
- Doresty: Facebook and voice messages and text worked well; did all three and follow-up with phone call
- Tommi: email not working; needed to get creative with communication; sent email day before to remind and then day of called students, asked to talk to parents, and explained that “live class today”; informed parents of which students were not involved in online learning; sometimes when called, the students were in bed, and parents had to wake them up and reminded them to join class that day; at Gary, every Monday posted lessons onto Gary website; communication between teachers to track students whom we hadn't heard from to find out if students were going to all/some/no classes to see which students were completely absent – able to see trends and find out how different teachers were contacting student who were only attending some classes; think we need to do home visits
- Sally: communication between teachers was important to being able to engage siblings and let school know if older/younger students ok; sometimes had to contact middle school to find out about the younger student; database somewhere for ELD to know which families had been contacted at different levels
- Bhakta: personal phone calls add a personal touch and seems to be working more effectively along with Blackboard Messenger and texts; we get too many emails and phone calls and it becomes too

much and they stop listening; personal phone calls most effective, but don't have time to call every family every day

- Maria: have webinars to teach parents how to filter their information, how to monitor students learning at home, how to schedule learning time and holding students to certain expectations; as a former parent, I would have appreciated someone helping me to put together a schedule for each child and reviewing what to do; would help not feel overwhelmed with this unprecedented task; would be efficient for parents to know if students are meeting, exceeding or falling below the expectations – would encourage parents to continue the work of supporting their children in the learning process; this is an opportunity to parents and students to learn to become more independent but need support to get there
- Doresty: support Maria's point of being transparent with families and communicate how their children are actually doing at the school; the message needs to be open, honest and direct for families to be able to help/support children
- Kent: agree with Maria's statement to empower parents to navigate learning platforms and hold students accountable; even in my home, we had to check on what was actually happening and what assignments were being completed; if there was a quick "how-to" navigate so parents can go in and make sure students are where they are supposed to be online; support the idea of webinars in different languages to inform parents on how to access student learning platforms
- Maria: many of our staff do not have the perspective of the immigrant/refugee parent who is working so hard to make a difference for our family; need to work as a team with parents to support our students; need teacher "teams" to join in the meeting with parents; need to work with all faculty, staff and counselors need to be involved with these students
- Doresty: one of the challenges for our families is that students move so frequently that adds to academic struggles; new teachers and schools to build relationships every year; students are not feeling welcome at many of the schools, especially in the office (Heather: through McKinny Vinto or through School Choice, can stay at previous school)
- Heather: offered culturally responsible trainings to schools, but many things on principal's plates; need the individual connections; right now, our ELD staff (teachers, language specialists, and bilingual specialists) are bearing the burden of the ELs entire education; we need ALL teachers to own the education and EL students
- Lisa: this is hard at the secondary level; counselor acts as the point person and brings team of teachers together
- Maria: we need to ensure that ALL individuals who work with students are trained in cultural competence
- Molly: what will the teacher's access to Language Line be if distance learning continues? (Heather: in emergencies, always available; if distance learning continues, will continue to be available to all teachers and staff)
- Bhakta: group meeting for language interpreter; parent advisory boards not working for all language groups; school teams need to contact families
- Maria: How do we inform families that we are working at how to better inform/support families
- Heather: the district is working toward a plan for how to communicate this information to families

9:20 Overview of Communication Discussion (Heather):

- Multiple modes
- Pare down number of communications and avoid duplications
- Keep messages short and concise
- Add translated materials to clever
- At district level, have a tool to track student contact within same family

- Website webinar for parents to watch that will walk them through how to support their child in structuring home learning
- Plan for how to support families as a team (not just a series of individuals)

9:30 Needs Raised by the Group: Equity

Maria: equity; need teaching and administration staff to represent the students in our district; district should be asking for the voice from the teachers and staff of color; those of use who are minorities feel invisible in this district

Larry: administration is having this dialogue right now – shouldn't have taken a national crisis to get there

Tommi: when survey went out to staff for how online teaching is going, ELD teacher not even an option

Heather: shared personal experience in moving from another state/district to Spokane; mission is to have a staff that reflects the students

Naomi: what is being done to recruit teachers of color in our district to more accurately reflect the make-up of our students

Larry: shared his work with Gear Up and local universities; some is too little too late; need to recruit even younger than high school

Maria: shared work with local universities and future teachers of color; need to continue this work

Naomi: what about the bilingual/multilingual teachers already in our community who have education and backgrounds in teaching overseas but cannot get a teaching credential here? (Shared experience of her husband, a teacher from West Bank, unable to afford the only options available to do this here)

Maria: I had to use my retirement money from Mexico to pay to get a teaching credential here

Bhakta: agree that very difficult for refugee and immigrants with background in teaching to enter the teaching workforce; I have been trying for years and unable to do so yet

Heather: important questions; need to go to another meeting, but taking notes to take to the district