

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

Date: 6/12/2020 – 1:00pm

Committee Name: Elementary Ed Sub Committee Mtg

Attendee Names: Adam Swinyard, Heather Bybee, Debbie Oakley, Dana Meyers, Karin Thompson, Cindy Leonard, James Russell, Tricia Gessele, Carol Pederson, Stephanie Splater, Betsy Weigle, Tricia Kannberg, Sara Ball, Bonnie Williams, Sue Pfeifer, Patty Baer, Suzanne Bantilan, Corina Fletcher, Sam Rasmussen, Melissa Raymond, Melissa Percy, Meredith McNally, Brian Trimble, Laura Sumner

Meeting Notes:

The meeting began with group introductions. Adam Swinyard shared the outline for today's meeting:

- Talk about task force structure
- Talk about some of the recently released OSPI Guidelines (released yesterday) and calibration
- Review Key Questions for this Sub Committee
- Share information about next meeting dates/schedule and how we will move forward

Adam shared that while we have been waiting for OSPI Guidance, have been thinking about planning out what is the best way to plan for opening for 54 schools with 30,000 kids. We have incredible, smart people, and he is confident that this group will be innovative, logical, and thoughtful with plans to get back to as normal as things can be in the fall.

Adam briefly discussed the structure of the Steering Committee which includes Supt. Shelley Redinger, School Board President, Jerrall Haynes, the SEA President Jeremy Shay, Bob Lutz from the SRHD, principal reps from elementary, middle and high school, central office leaders, reps from special needs advocacy groups from the community, etc.

The work is broken into sub committees. There is a sub-committee focused on safety and operations, who will work on parameters of what we can safely do so we will work in close knit with them. They are working through addressing items like how we will approach social distancing kids, and how are we going to approach masks, cleaning protocols, transportation protocols, etc. There are also the following groups focused on:

- Sec Ed Group – looking specifically at MS and HS
- SPED
- ELD
- Intervention services – counseling, mental health, social/emotional learning, staff wellness
- Tech Access and supports – how do we ensure all kids have equitable technology access and devices whether in or out of the school bldg.
- Extra-Curricular and Activities
- Remote learning options – We need to have a full distance learning option for kids.
We know and are hearing from many parents that they will not be comfortable sending their students into our buildings until there is a vaccine – we want them to continue to be Spokane Public Schools students and we do not want them to leave our district so that sub-committee is expanding and developing the full distance learning options that we currently have in place; SVL option currently offers full time options for secondary and elementary but not many elementary kids are currently in that model. We also have the TEC at Bryant program which is a parent partnership.

There will be a lot of overlap between the groups so it is important that we are communicating - each sub-committee is taking good minutes/notes and we will post them on the web site for information. There will also be a place on the site

where any stakeholder can share their thoughts about the minutes or thoughts on anything in general to contribute to the discussion and broader topics.

On a regular basis we will be looping and reporting back to the Steering Committee to identify next steps. Adam also shared that a number of items discussed would need to be collectively bargained and potentially developed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Many of our teachers are aware that when we had the school closure, we had to develop an MOU with the Spokane Education Association because it changed the working conditions for staff. Our recommendations will potentially inform our conversation with SEA as well as recommendations to the steering committee. It is very important to be clear about what our objective is. Our work is to make recommendations to inform bargaining and to inform the steering committee.

Questions on the structure and how information will be passed? – No questions.

Review of OSPI Guidelines

We are very fortunate because Tricia Kannberg was on the state task force that developed the guidelines and was at the table having the conversations. She has a lot of context and can provide clarifications.

Adam shared the OSPI guidelines document to go through the broader themes noting that it's a lengthy document and there isn't a lot of specificity; Pointed out a few things and wants to calibrates with the group about what the document says and doesn't say.

- General Guidelines about health-related aspects, drop off and pick up, health screening and entry (all will be covered in the safety and operations committee)
- Reducing Transmission will have some implications for us as we think through our work – practice physical distancing 6 feet within each group of students as much as possible. Create space between students and reduce the amount of time they are close with each other. What it doesn't say is practice physical distancing within every student, but with each group of students as much as possible. We know that 6 feet is the general parameter that we've been using from the CDC across the COVID crisis. This document does not mandate that kids have to be 6 ft apart at all times, just to the greatest extent possible within groups of students. Our ability to do that is going to be dependent on age and developmental and physical abilities.
 - We know our Kindergarten teachers are going to have many wonderings about how to do that in a Kindergarten classroom.
- Specific Strategies: Cancel field trips, assemblies and other large gatherings.
- Cancel or modify classes where students are likely to be in very close contact so something this group is going to have to be thinking through and how that might impact specialists.
- Suspend or make significant modifications to activities that are considered high risk like choir or other classes or other activities that require students to remove face coverings and may contribute to transmission. This group will need to think through this topic and what that will look like for specialists.
- Increase the space between desks/rearrange the desks to maximize the space between students. It doesn't say the desks have to be 6 feet apart; It references desks need to be rearranged and facing forward.
- Reduce number of students in the halls at one time
- Stagger arrival/dismissal
- Reduce congestion in the health office
- Limit non-essential visitors
- Limit cross school transfers for special programs – Tessera is an example – Students are bussed from 34 elementary schools to the Libby Center for enrichment programming so that fits under this parameter
- Teach staff, students and families to maintain distance from each other at school
- Keep students outside as weather and space permits
- Kids and staff will be required to wear masks at all times

- Still seeking clarification but heard that the face shield does not replace the mask because droplets can still escape from the face shield. Adam knows there are primary teacher concerns and we know that many kids need to see social cues and facial expressions and it is a very important connection for kids and are very in tune and sensitive to non-verbal behavior. An important part in how they create connections so that is something this group will need to think through.

Adam asked if Tricia Kannberg would like to add to the quick, high level guidelines overview?

Tricia thinks they made an exception to the face shield for kids and thinks the document discusses accommodations (e.g. deaf teacher) and exceptions for kids who cannot keep a mask on. (e.g. underlying health conditions that would prohibit a student from wearing a mask safely. (asthma) It does say students may use face shields as an alternative to cloth face coverings. We are seeking out clarification to the face shield issue/cloth masks. Adam clarified that what he heard this morning is that we would be requiring staff to wear a mask and that the shield wouldn't replace that – another example of where we are seeking clarification.

Any other thoughts, questions or wonderings about the guidelines?

Question - Parent – Shared that his organization (Herzog Family Center) has been open throughout COVID and they are navigating these similar things. This seems very fluid and he is guessing this committee is going to be very fluid because there will likely be a myriad of changes in 3 months. How do we approach future changes?

- Guidelines require we develop a continuous learning plan in the event there is a wave where we have to revert back to a hybrid model like an A/B rotating schedule or to full distance learning, we need plan for that potential. That will be part of our discussions and could take up a significant portion of this group's work. We are hearing from the state Superintendent and from other districts that the intent is to get kids back into school, and to be as normal as possible and use social distancing, safety precautions and strong cleaning protocols. Much of the work for this group might be what will our continuous learning plan be if there is another wave and we have to go back to distance learning. We learned a lot this spring from teachers about what's worked well and what hasn't and also received good feedback from families.

Question -Desks and tables – If a teacher has tables you could have 2 students at one table under these guidelines all facing forward at one time as many as you can fit? Some of the tables are larger table – wondering about big furniture changes?

- We will need to look at removing any non-essential furniture to create as much room for desks and that is a likely recommendation that may come out of the safety and operations committee.

Small Groups - The group went into break out rooms for 5-6 minutes to talk in smaller groups about what is going to be the most important thing to figure out first. Now that we have guidelines, what are first things/number one thing(s) we need to tackle as a group?

Large group reconvened and looked at Key Questions to be answered – developed by the SLT and vetted by the Task Force Steering Committee

Talk through, get feedback and have conversation about which questions need to be the priority and which are less important in the moment and which ones are broader, more ambitious and long term reaching.

What Model will be used to provide educational services?

- Big one and predicated by what the Safety and Operations committee puts forward and the guidance just reviewed from OSPI. Only adjustment to that is if Safety and Ops committee recommends some type of rotating hybrid schedule. Sense is that is not the case; they will look at what our facilities can handle and compare it to the intent and spirit of the guidelines - although very vague. Adam will put this question in yellow highlight indicating we are on standby and waiting for more input.

- Question/wondering – Do we foresee the possibility that we will have a model but then we will have families that can opt into continuous learning only and not participate in the model? Yes, the sub committee on remote learning is going to develop those models and communication will go out to families letting them know that we are moving forward to plan for opening our schools and returning to face to face instruction in the fall and if there is a family who wants more information on an option that does not involve coming into a building or involves coming in on a limited basis there will be a form that they can fill out and the district will send them more information.
This will give us an initial temperature check on how many families are feeling that way.
- **How should student centered modalities such as competency-based learning and project- based learning be explored?**
 - This question is probably a longer range vision - how do we think differently about teaching and learning in our district and how do begin looking at an educational model that can seamlessly shift from in a school bldg. to out of a school bldg.? We don't know if there is a potential new wave, if we have to close one of our schools but part of our new normal in years to come we may have another widespread closure so how does our model seamlessly accommodate that shifting? And what does competency and project-based learning look like? The District passed a broad ranging resolution on racial equity-one aspect of the resolution is creating a task force to think differently in teaching and learning in our district and have approaches more 21st century in nature and more equitable in access. Longer range approach-but one we keep in our minds moving forward.
 - Question - Are there other districts in the state that have a competency-based learning going on before COVID? - In our state there is a lot of overlay between standards-based grading and competency-based learning – in many ways those constructs overlay on top of each other our district is implementing aspects of project-based learning, in terms of an elementary or district that is full on competency based – not in the state of Washington – that is something that is happening more on the east coast and mid-west and some of the southwest and probably more relevant to secondary than to elementary based on shifts we have already made in our district. It's surfacing at the secondary level (example – if a student fails freshman English and they take 10th grade English – it's a spiral curriculum and they are exposed to standards that are increasingly more complex and they pass 10th grade English – why wouldn't they credit for 9th grade English if they've shown mastery on the 10th grade standards at that level?) The conversation about this will be more robust at the secondary level – it's included here so it's a K-12 overlay and so we are thinking about it.
- **How will we adjust scope and sequence for the curriculum?** This will be very important - we know kids missed a number of learning opportunities over the spring and what a 4th grader knows coming into 4th grade will look different than what we've seen before. How are we going to adjust our curriculum and program guides for our teachers so they know what they should be focusing on with kids when they come back?
- **What digital curriculums will be used?** We are talking about DreamBox, MobyMax, Lexia, Epic – we have a strong menu of digital curriculums. Heard from families we are using too many different platforms and it's confusing and hard to navigate.
- **What will the assessment plan be and how will we integrate an adaptive measure?** Adaptive measure means an assessment that uses artificial intelligence and when a student gets a question correct the next question is harder and when the student gets the question wrong the next question has less complexity and it approximates where a kid is. Think of the adaptive measure that is built into Dreambox. Important to think about this -how will we know what gaps kids have knowing it's going to be across the board and how will we address that?
- **How will feedback, reporting and grading occur?** That will be predicated a lot to the educational service model. If we are back face to face, we will be able to use a lot of our traditional methods.
- **What structures such as cohorts, looping and combo classes should be considered?** Many schools are currently looping; we had more combo classes this year than we've historically had because of the 2019-20 staffing ratio/model.
- **What digital tools will teachers use for assignments and activities?**
- **What digital tools and protocols will teachers use for communication?**

- **What digital tools will teachers use for live meetings?**
 - Main piece of information we heard from families this spring - Too many platforms, too many different digital curriculums, too many differences in who is using what tools for live meetings - need to create consistency
- **How will we deliver PD on social emotional learning?**– Heather B. will be able to speak to that about our implementation of our SEL curriculum.
- **How will we deliver PD on blended learning strategies and whatever identified digital tools will be the focus?**
- **How will we support students who do not want to attend school?**
- **How will we support specialists and provide specialist services safety?** That gets back to the guidelines around choir – wearing masks and how we are going to address that.
- **How will we monitor engagement and attendance?** Now that we have OSPIs guidance that question may be a little less relevant.
- **How will childcare be addressed?** – This question will not specifically be our focus; needs to be an overlay if we are in some type of hybrid model. If for some reason we go in a direction of the A/B model where we are fazed in, we need to be aware of the impact on childcare on our community.
- **What will the first 4-6 weeks of school look like and how will we support the transition back?**
Students have incurred a significant amount of trauma for a lot of reasons and we’ve never been away from them for 6 months and it’s hard to come back just from a normal summer so we want to be as intentional about the transition back and prioritizing the wellness of the students; when there is a sense of safety and community, relationships and habits and routines are built back then we pivot to academics and we don’t want to pivot too abruptly.

Thoughts, Suggestions, on questions we missed?

- Question - Hard to address a lot of these lists without being clear on the learning model. How long does the committee have to decide whether we are going to do blended or all kids coming all days, whether or not we’ll have specialists and knowing all that could change at any minute and probably will. When do we need to decide the model to move forward with?
 - Hopeful we will have guidance from that sub committee within a week. Ambitious but we have to move really quickly to get a plan into place. This group will address the questions it can address as this group is waiting. Some questions we may not fully get to and some questions will have to be addressed when we find out the model; some we can do now and make progress.
 - How we adjust scope and sequence, whether hybrid or face to face, we can have conversation around what does that look like, how we are going to do it. – It doesn’t mean this group is doing the work; this group is laying out a recommendation on how we go about it.
 - Another example of one we can address– What digital tools will we use for live meetings. Need to be ready for that regardless of the model. Can use teacher survey sent last week to help guide that conversation.

Question - We’ve been working on scope and sequence figuring out which standards are must accomplish and which ones are more supporting standards similar to power standards we did a couple of years back. Is that the direction you think we’d go? Or is that how we would adjust the scope and sequence or just the breadth of content that we cover for both?

- Karin Thompson and Tricia Gessele (curriculum coordinators to weigh in on this question). Heather Bybee shared it is work we had already started when examining the report card and taking an honest look at what teachers were asked to do over the past few years and in the best of times it was too much; nothing like a crisis to relook. There is more weeding to do. All teachers will be looking with fresh eyes about what is essential, what’s viable knowing what we know now and what do we have to hit and the sequence for those.
- It is a both and, we do have to look at specific standards and what we have in our scope and sequence. It will require rethinking and potentially in more of a project based integrated way and a deeper look in

the way we have wanted to for a long time. All the content learning teams would say what are the must haves by end of the grade level and what can I count on that's coming up. Less is more and figure out the common ground minimum to strive for that is doable. We can always go beyond.

- The first few weeks should not be content focused but really around relationship building and routines and procedures and reinforcing it for teachers because when we come back our big focus is oh my goodness, they are missing this – we've got to get caught up. Helping ease that will be a big part of this work – Emphasize what's important in the first couple weeks vs. the focus that we need to get kids caught up. Stay in strength-based conversation with kids versus here's the gaps I want to fill.

Question - Is there a timeline of dates outlined for the task force? We know there is a time crunch but is there a specific date we need to hit with decisions?

- Things are fluid - That group met once for the 1st time after the guidelines were distributed by OSPI so they will establish the schedule next time they meet. Supt. identified Aug.1st as the date we need to have a plan in place for what schools will look like. Adam is confident that we can get a significant amount of a plan outlined and communicated to staff well in advance. If we hit August 1st and staff have not heard anything there will be a lot of anxiety on what next year will entail. A lot of work is going to have to happen over next 2-3 weeks.

Thought - K teachers – They didn't get to teach all of their information and are concerned they will need to be starting at a lower level and incorporating that into what our scope and sequence is for next year because some kids still haven't learned the alphabet in K - they missed 4 months of school so looking at where the starting point is for grade level academics in each content area.

Thought - We can't fill in gaps of 3 months' worth of learning. Those aren't gaps, those are just not learning and not having the opportunity to learn those things We can't look at it like let's plug the holes and look where are kids at and next steps they need across the board. Teachers may need more strategies and trying to word it the correct way. It's a mind shift from, I teach 2nd grade to, I teach these 25 kids and this is where they are at and where are needs.

Thoughts - Concerns around various things that we teach and need outside the box thinking, and create ways to teach things that have concerns; that goes for any subject area that might have various compliance and safety issues. A lot of people have done a lot of outside the box thinking – but we shouldn't corner ourselves by saying we can't do this because of this – ask what is important about the subject being taught that we want kids to know and learn.

Question - Are we focusing on this as a one-year plan for next year or a two-year plan slowly catching up or a three-year plan to move a little further forward each year?

- That's something this group will need to think and process through – one of the important conceptual things we think through. Already hearing the State Supt. advocating we not take the smarter balanced test next year. Hoping we can legally do that (not sure we can with ESSA but it sounds like there will be strong advocacy for that so hope it takes some pressure down if that happens. We still need to answer that question and communicate as a district where our priorities will be - not the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Thought – Hope that we don't ever go back to what we were, completely. Hoping we are forever changed by this in a positive way. It will be a 2020-21 school year plan and reevaluate for the 2021-22 school year. Positive outcome of this crazy, tragic time is that education will be transformed forever.

Next Steps: Adam will send the document out to the group to look at the questions if anyone has additional thoughts/questions let Adam know.

If no strong feelings, the group will approach the curriculum and assessment first and have those conversations and move into the digital tools while we wait for verification of the overall model. Safe overall assumption (disclaimer

though - could be wrong) but thinks we will be back in school face to face with kids. Challenges of hybrid schedule with childcare are so significant not sure that is where we'd end up but cannot say that with certainty.

Approach to the work:

Sometimes this type of work is approached like a blank sheet of paper – coming together as a group with a blank sheet and working in small groups/whole groups, poster paper, brainstorm, different ways to build the thinking and work from a blank canvas. Sometimes it's helpful and necessary to use the group as a vetting structure and bring general ideas and the group helps mold the clay into what it needs to look like. Probably don't have time to have a blank slate based on the format we are in and is more realistic to come to the group with what we've heard based on conversations and realities of the district and here's what we think makes sense. Use this group to revise from there and get input/feedback to say yes - it makes sense, let's move forward or we're asking the wrong question. As long as there are no objections or worries, that is the approach we will take – just wanted to be open so group what participants are anticipating or expecting of their valuable time is clear– never wants people to feel like they are being handled or spoon fed what the district wants so trying to balance that.

Example - What digital curriculums used? – Based on staff survey, finances, and cost we recommend these 3 digital curriculums be used and would ask the committee what do you think – good, not good? Probably most realistic way to approach this work.

Any questions or wonderings or concerns about navigating the task this way? (None) If we need to address a topic that needs a white canvas or a weeds moment we will be putting things together quickly but the advantage is that the curriculum team has been thinking about these things for quite some time and now it has prioritized itself in the next two weeks instead of 6-12 months.

Meeting Schedule:

Meet 2X week for the next 3 weeks – we will record the meetings moving forward. Intent is to meet probably Tuesdays and Fridays over the next 3 weeks and probably in the afternoons. Laura Sumner will send out meeting invites. If you can make it, so appreciative and if you can't make one or need to leave early please do not worry.

Question - Shelley wanted done by 8/1, does that mean everything bargained and ready to go by August 1st or done earlier and then time to bargain for it and then ready by August 1st?

- Her hope is that we have a clear direction what the fall will look like by 8/1. How that overlays with collective bargaining we can't control. It is a conversation to have with SEA partners. The hope is staff have a clear idea where we are heading by that time. There might be pieces or details that need to be negotiated into an MOU and the MOU may not be available until well into the summer but her hope is to have a fairly well defined vision and picture of what it will look like. Adam thinks that hopefully the guidance from OSPI will lessen the complexity of some of the things that will need to be worked out.

Question/Wondering - Will required instructional minutes change for any subject area or specialist? Things will take longer – envision lunch will take longer to get through no matter where it is. Any adjustment to minutes?

- Haven't heard that yet. There is the 180 day requirement and the average instructional minutes requirement and it isn't specific to a content area so there is a lot of flexibility within that. You really start meeting some challenges if you have too many half days so that counts as a school day so you can meet your 180 day requirement but if you had too many half days or early releases then you start eating into your average instructional minutes. Thinks we will be ok. Hopeful that will meet the interest in lots of flexibility for teachers -back to shifting the mindset from I'm a 2nd grade teacher to I'm a teacher of 25 learners- knowing that might mean more time for math and less time for something else.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 16- 1:00 p.m. Meeting ended shortly after 2:00 p.m.