

Safe School Reopening Task Force Leadership Steering Committee
July 23, 2-3 p.m.

Attendees: Adam Swinyard, Mark Anderson, Dr. Bob Lutz, Jeremy Ochse, Steve Fisk, Kristy Mylroie, Megan Read, Brad Read, Tricia Kannberg, Katie Kenlein, Stephanie Busch, Michelle Jenner, Shawn Jordan, Dawn Sidell, Jeremy Shay, Craig Numata, Phil Wright, Cindy Coleman, Becky Doughty, Salliejo Evers, Heather Bybee, Jennifer Keck, Oscar Harris, Gwen Harris, Becky Ramsey, Rebecca Powell, Jeremy Shay. Not in attendance: Jerrall Haynes.

Discussion: Dr. Mark Anderson said SPS leadership has been meeting with the Spokane Education Association on the information that's been presented to the Task Force and developed by the subcommittees. The goal is still to have a plan prepared for school board approval by Aug. 12, in advance of whenever school starts. The start date is beyond our control. Today's focus will be on our distance learning plan and an update on athletics.

Dr. Anderson said we are continuing to fine-tune our plan for key safety requirements, including the purchase of face masks, face shields and hand sanitizer, and setting up classes with appropriate distancing. That work is ongoing.

Superintendent Adam Swinyard mentioned that school districts in the greater Seattle area have committed to starting the year with a full distance learning model, and that this is the focus of conversations happening around the state – particularly, can we start school safely in-person, as we had hoped? Our focus in SPS is being diligent in developing a plan for what school looks like if buildings are open, as well as if they are closed.

Dr. Bob Lutz from Spokane Regional Health said that a work group is meeting this weekend, and he hopes for answers about which metrics will be used to determine when it is safe to open schools.

Dr. Swinyard said he appreciates Dr. Lutz advocating for clear reopening guidelines across the state so that school districts don't have to make individual decisions. "We are educators, not health officials," he said.

Gwen Harris shared [details about the distance learning option](#), which people will be able to register for in mid-August. That should allow time for appropriate staffing. "SPS@Home" is an option available to students in grades K-8. It is a separate program from what will be used if the whole district has to do distance learning. Families that choose this option may be able to transfer back to their home school mid-year, if there is space available.

Distance options for high schoolers include:

- **9th-12th graders** can sign up for Spokane Virtual Learning for self-paced, instructor-led learning in full distance learning format.
- **10th-12th graders** can attend On Track Academy @ Home for more personalized support, coaching, and social-emotional learning. Students work on individual learning plans guided by weekly schedules and teacher meetings.

With SPS@Home, elementary students would have two or three 50-minute sessions with their classroom teacher scheduled each day. They would also have sessions with specialists (fitness, music, science, art), and time for small-group interventions as needed.

Middle school students would have three 50-minute sessions a day: science/math, English, social studies, and Fitness & Health/elective. They'd also have an advisory session – a time for teachers to check in with students, connect them with needed supports and work on social-emotional learning.

Grades will be handled the same, and there will be virtual parent conferences. Orientations and trainings for parents and students will be held multiple times during the year, in addition to monthly intervention sessions for students falling behind.

Teachers will be assigned to SPS@Home commensurate with enrollment levels. Teacher schedules include four class sessions of 50 minutes each, one small group intervention session of 50 minutes, and the typical time of 5 hours/week for prep. Teams will be the main platform. Some teachers may still use Blackboard, which now integrates with Teams.

Shawn Jordan shared updates from WIAA about sports. They divided the year into four seasons, and assigned sports according to when they are usually played and also their risk level.

- Season 1 is only for low-risk fall sports: slowpitch softball and cross country
- Season 2 is for traditional winter sports
- Season 3 (new) is for moderate-to-high risk fall sports: volleyball, girls soccer and football
- Season 4 is for traditional spring sports

Potential dates:

- Season 1: Sept. 7-Nov. 8
- Season 2: Jan. 4-March 7
- Season 3: March 1- May 2 (FB starts Feb. 22)
- Season 4: April 26-June 27

Next week, WIAA is expected to have additional benchmark requirements. Many questions are still being worked on: Will districts doing 100% distance learning still offer sports? What about travel? What if different counties are in different reopening phases?

Dr. Lutz asked a clarifying question: that the start of Season 1 sports is predicated on being in phase 3? Shawn said yes, and also meeting the additional benchmarks (still to

come). He said the WIAA has been concerned about allowing practices to begin when there is no clear understanding of when, if ever, students would be able to compete. They have also taken into account the great benefit of just having students be able to practice.

Dr. Anderson said conversations with the SEA are still looking at having K-4 students attend every day, and grades 5-12 attend on an alternating schedule. Work is still happening with SEA to determine what a student's "off day" looks like. Dr. Swinyard said they have been using the phrase "catch and release" – so when students are in class, teachers are frontloading their instruction and giving lots of detail about what students should be working on when they're at home. Then when they return to school, they are getting questions answered, and getting more information and additional guidance on the things they worked on at home.

Messages went out earlier this week to staff and families with information about the possible in-person learning plan; there has not been much feedback. A second parent webinar is tonight. About 300 people attended last week's session and asked about 300 questions.

A few task force members asked questions and received these answers:

- It has not yet been determined whether Wednesday or Friday will be the alternating day in the rotating-day schedule.
- Families will need to make a program decision about whether they will have their student attend in person, or take part in distance learning. If they choose distance learning, there may not be room for them at their neighborhood school if they want to return mid-year. We will accommodate requests to the best of our ability, but return to their homeschool may not be immediate. There are only legal ramifications to this situation if a student has an IEP.
- Teachers will have training and professional development opportunities during Summer Institute and on professional learning improvement days. Talk is ongoing with SEA about structured time and topics. Jeremy Ochse said his staff have been training this summer on transitioning between in-person and distance learning.
- Mask wearing in schools will certainly be a challenge, but will be approached the same way we tackle other safety protocols at school, like not running in the halls. It will be another routine safety expectation. Dr. Anderson mentioned that about 70 students who are part of the summer Express childcare program have adapted to the mask-wearing requirement quite well. They do spend lots of time outside without masks on too.
- We are advocating for the establishment of clear guidelines and markers for when it is safe to open schools so that there is some predictability for families.

The meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.