

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

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

Discussion: Dr. Anderson kicked off the meeting with a reminder of the committee's purpose and timeline. By backmapping from the first day of school Sept. 3, and the need to have a plan adopted by the school board and presented to the state superintendent two weeks before that, we need to have a proposed plan by Aug. 12.

There has been a lot of attention in the media surrounding a [recommendation from the American Academy of Pediatrics](#), which advocates strongly for having students physically present in school. Their guidelines call for 3-6 feet between desks.

Superintendent Adam Swinyard, Dr. Anderson, Phil Wright and Craig Numata have been working on classroom set-ups and models, particularly at the elementary level, to determine how many students can safely fit in a classroom. They have done numerous mock-ups for small, large, and portable classrooms, with a goal of 21 students in a classroom. By blending furniture types (i.e. desks and tables), the work group was, for the most part, able to hit the target. They have also found creative ways of incorporating bookcases and other furniture items into classrooms.

The Safety & Operations subcommittee is recommending that cubbies and lockers not be used, both to free up classroom space and to minimize shared surfaces. Instead, students should keep their supplies with them at their desk – in a backpack, for example.

Cafeteria space has also been studied and determined not feasible for hosting students for lunch. Instead, students will eat lunch in their classroom where safe spacing is already established. Nutrition Services is looking at a bagged-meal model.

Craig Numata explained five elementary education scenarios that have been studied and discussed. They involve various iterations with the goal of having as many grades attending everyday to include:

- Class size – max of 21 for all grades or for just K-3, max of 18 for K-4
- Rotating schedules for grades 4-6 or for grade 5-6
- Using specialists (art, music, science, health & fitness teachers) as classroom teachers
- Shortening the school day
- Combo classes

Dr. Swinyard reminded everyone of the three-step process: to develop a recommendation, negotiate potential contract changes with the Spokane Education Association, then implement the plan.

Heather Bybee reported that the Elementary Education subcommittee has been coalescing around model A (max class size of 21 for K-6, uses specialists as classroom teachers, teacher prep before or after school which would shorten the school day) and model E (fill all classes to 21 by blending grades as necessary, which means multiple combo classes). She acknowledged that there is fear from specialists about becoming classroom teachers, though some said they would do anything to be able to see their students again. Others had a lot of fear around combo classes. Each model has pros and cons.

Dr. Swinyard mentioned being cognizant of the fidelity of teaching and learning. Most specialists are not fluent in regular classroom instruction, and by moving them to the classroom, students lose the wholistic experience. Combo classes have a history of negative feelings from staff and parents; teachers would need additional supports.

It was noted that extra teachers will likely be necessary to instruct the purely distance learning classes that will be offered to those families uncomfortable with having their student back at school.

Heather noted that there is no perfect model. No matter what, next year will be different.

For secondary education, that subcommittee has galvanized around an A/B rotation model, since there seems to be no way to safely get 2,000 students into a building at once. Area school districts are focusing on this model for their secondary schools as well.

The current top option has one group attending school Mondays and Wednesdays, and the other group attending Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each group alternates Fridays.

Two or three educational models will likely be recommended for the start of SEA negotiations.

Heather Richardson provided recommendations from the English Language Development subcommittee:

- Move to one platform for distance learning
- Send more concise messages out in multiple languages
- Translated audio messages are needed for instruction
- 1:1 devices

English-language learners are one of the most at-risk groups for learning loss because of the essential need for face-to-face learning. The Newcomer Center, which already has small class sizes, should meet daily. For elementary, ELLs should be clustered, while maintaining the max class size limit. There will likely be a need for a dedicated space to take screening tests

The Extracurricular and Activities subcommittee is eagerly awaiting a decision regarding fall sports from the WIAA on July 21. Shawn Jordan reported primarily on Potential Infection Risk by Sport (Low, Medium, High) and Athletic Guidelines specific to Phases. [Find his report here.](#)

The next meeting of the Steering Committee is scheduled for Thursday, July 9.