

## Board Report #2 School Reopening Narrative

### Background

On June 9, 2020 the School Board received the first in a series of reports on the District's plan to re-open schools on August 18, 2020. The prevalence of COVID-19 in Santa Barbara County in August 2020 will determine which instructional models we will use. We are utilizing three scenarios to guide our planning:

Scenario #1: For public health reasons, campuses must continue with *full remote instruction*, and predominantly remote work being done by our workforce.

Scenario #2: In-person operations resume, including *hybrid instruction*, with limits and restrictions imposed by public health authorities.

Scenario #3: Campus operations largely return to full face-to-face instruction, but wherever possible, we will accommodate students, staff, and faculty who need or prefer to operate remotely due to continuing pandemic conditions.

On Thursday, June 11, 2020 Santa Barbara County Public Health released “*COVID-19 Industry Interim Guidelines for Schools and School Based Programs*” which includes nearly 80 actions that must be achieved before our schools are able to attest to SBPH that we are ready to reopen. These actions are organized into the following categories:

- General Measures
- Promote Healthy Hygiene Practices
- Intensify Cleaning, Disinfections, and Ventilation
- Implementing Distancing Inside and Outside of the Classroom
- Limit Sharing
- Train All Staff and Educate Families
- Check for Signs and Symptoms
- Plan for When a Staff Member, Child, or Visitor Becomes Sick
- Maintain Healthy Operations
- Considerations For Partial or Total Closures

In the June 9th report, the Board was introduced to the five decision drivers that will guide our planning, with district leaders taking responsibility for each of the drivers. They are:

- Instruction
- Health and Wellness
- Facilities and Operations
- Community and Family Engagement
- Governance and Leadership

The actions required by the industry guidelines have been evaluated and assigned to the appropriate driver. The leaders responsible for each driver will oversee the completion of these actions.

The purpose of this report, which was co-written by Executive Cabinet and Education Services Directors, is two-fold: (1) to provide the Board with a progress report on re-opening plans; and (2) to present the hybrid models recommended for elementary, junior high, and high school.

The Board is being asked to approve the hybrid instructional models at the June 23, 2020 board meeting. In addition, because of the need to order the materials and supplies to meet the SBPH requirements for reopening in a timely manner, the board is asked to waive Board Policy

## **Governance and Leadership**

Strategic organizational leadership will be key as we move through the summer toward reopening of schools in the fall. The established school reopening design teams will continue to meet and plan as we finalize scenarios and create policy, but also prepare to adapt according to new information.

Communication between staff leadership and the school board will continue via regular weekly updates and reports as we navigate our way through the planning process and create structures that will inform how we bring students back to our physical campuses.

Included in this collaboration will be the need to establish and continue communication with local and State authorities to determine current disease levels and control measures in our community. Both the superintendent (or designee) and the PIO participate in weekly calls with partner agencies throughout the county to stay connected and updated on new information.

Once students are back on campus, leadership is responsible for establishing guidelines and policy around how the district will respond if a student, teacher or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and has exposed others at the campus. We will follow guidance from county Public Health in our response as we navigate all factors. Those factors may include:

- Working with county Public Health to decide whether school closure is warranted, including the length of time necessary, based on the risk level within the specific community.
- Providing guidance to the patient, as well as those who have come in contact with the patient, for isolation at home for at least 14 days after close contact and making determinations about potential temporary closure of other areas where the patient was based.
- Following established communication plans for school closure to include outreach to students, parents, teachers, staff and the community.
- Notifying staff regarding labor laws, information regarding Disability Insurance, Paid Family Leave and Unemployment Insurance, as applicable for public local educational agencies.
- Providing guidance to parents, teachers and staff reminding them of the importance of community physical distancing measures while a school is closed.
- Providing information and guidance to students and families if the need arises to return to distance learning models.

Staff leadership will be responsible for internal communications to staff, while the PIO will be responsible for external communications with parents/guardians, students, the broader community and the media.

## **Instruction**

### *General*

District staff are recommending instructional models for School Year 2020-2021 that are designed to maximize the time students can physically be on campus while adhering to health and safety guidelines. By dividing each class into two cohorts, students will be able to physically attend school two days each week pending guidance from the Public Health Department. By

incorporating a mid-week Blended Learning Support Day, the models also accommodate the need to support teachers and students as we execute a blended learning model which will feature a balance of in-person and remote learning, as well as synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous learning. We are well positioned to make effective use of technology to support new and ongoing needs due to the infrastructure and capacity that has been developed over recent years. We remain committed to developing the competencies associated with our Global Learner profile; in some ways, the disruption of traditional school affords us new opportunities to do so. Personalized professional learning will be provided as a support to teachers in order to support the dramatic shifts to instructional design, in both on-site and remote contexts.

#### *Elementary Process:*

After the June 9th report to the board, a committee composed of Assistant Superintendents, Directors, Principals, Teachers, and representatives from the Santa Barbara Teachers Union came together to review the proposed hybrid models. The committee narrowed it down to 2 models for consideration:

1. AM/PM model
2. AB model.

The committee reviewed CDPH Guidelines Classrooms and Non-Classrooms and a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was conducted on both. The committee determined that the AM/PM model would not work due to health and sanitation concerns. The committee landed on an AB model, in which students would have in person instruction 2 days weekly and virtual instruction on days they are not on campus.

#### *Rationale:*

The health and safety of students, families, and staff is our utmost priority and the guiding factor in the design of the hybrid model. The need for social distancing and sanitation of shared spaces calls for reducing the number of students on campus, while simultaneously providing virtual instruction to those who are not on campus. We sought to align models with secondary schools and our partner districts as closely as possible to support families and staff with students in multiple grade levels. We landed on Wednesdays as a collaboration, professional development time for teachers to address the challenges and opportunities of remote learning and to plan both in person and virtual learning for students. Elementary has had early release Wednesdays for some time and our secondary schools were able to adjust their models to be in alignment with this. Additionally, there will be opportunities for small group intervention and deep cleaning on Wednesdays.

#### *Design:*

The model for elementary TK-6 will be to have 2 cohorts (A & B) attend twice a week in person and have remote learning the days not in physical attendance.

- Cohort A will attend on Mondays and Thursdays all day in person with appropriate social distancing and safety protocols in place.
- Cohort B will attend Tuesdays and Fridays all day in person with appropriate social distancing and safety protocols in place.
- All students will receive remote instruction on days not attending in person
- Cohorts will be designed with the following in mind: siblings, transportation needs, EML needs, intervention needs, Special Education Services, and alignment with secondary siblings.
- Breakfast and lunch will be available every day.

### *Secondary:*

The demands associated with building an optimal schedule in light of pandemic conditions are complex at all grade levels; this is particularly true for high schools. We are reducing the number of classes that run at a given time for sites which normally feature a six-period day. This will promote our ability to adhere to distancing guidelines and will allow students and teachers to focus on fewer courses at a time while building and sustaining positive connections.

### *Secondary Process:*

A “Reopening of School” design and planning team was formed and met four times. The design team was composed of Cabinet members, the SBTA negotiating team, and rotating principal representatives.

Separate elementary and secondary specific reopening workgroups also regularly met. Each of these groups met six times and was composed of cabinet members, administrators, and teacher representatives.

The work of all of these groups was informed by direction from the school board, regular updates from the Santa Barbara County Health Department, emails from stakeholders, and three formal surveys.

The three surveys were:

- Districtwide Parent Survey: 3,666 respondents
- Secondary Certificated Staff Survey #1: 316 respondents
- Secondary Certificated Staff Survey #2: 285 respondents
- Secondary Student Survey: 2699 respondents

### *Junior highs:*

Junior high schools will run three classes during the first quarter and another three classes during the second quarter. The junior high schedule allows for “0 Period and 7th Period” options in the morning, as well as a flexible “8th period” in the afternoon. The junior high schedule can be replicated anew in the second semester or--public health conditions permitting--a return to a traditional schedule can occur.

### *High schools:*

Santa Barbara and Dos Pueblos High Schools will adopt a version of the block schedule in which students will be enrolled in up to four classes in the fall semester and up to 4 classes in the spring semester. The window of time associated with 4th period each day can be utilized flexibly, for example to offer expanded course opportunities or to accommodate athletics. San Marcos High School will utilize the familiar 4 x 4 block schedule. La Cuesta/Alta Vista High Schools will put forward schedules specific to the unique needs of their respective programs.

## **Facilities and Operations-- Business Services**

A committee was formed consisting of principals, purchasing, food service, maintenance and operations and are meeting bi-weekly to consider the needs of sanitation, meal service and transportation to ensure the safety for our students and staff.

### *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):*

The district has purchased masks for all staff and students. Sanitizers have been delivered and we will continue to purchase more to ensure availability. We are researching thermometers; however, we will need input from our nurses. We are researching different types of plexiglass partitions for office staff who are frequently interacting with visitors.

### *Transportation: Student Transportation of America (STA) and Metropolitan Transit District (MTD)*

We are considering staggering the arrival and departure of students to ensure minimal contact. We are working with our transportation partners to ensure students are able to get to school safely.

### *Food Service:*

The California Department of Education has not determined which model schools will follow for the reopening of schools. The goal is to feed as many students as possible, whether they are attending school or not.

## **Facilities and Operations-- Human Resources**

The human resources work associated with the reopening of school will be extensive. There are many considerations that have to be made in the realm of employee safety and working conditions. The three main areas of concentration with respect to human resources issues are:

### *Employee Health & Safety*

Ensuring that we have all the safety precautions in place will be a joint effort between Human Resources, Maintenance and Operations, our bargaining units, and our management team. Human Resources and our bargaining units have already begun holding regular meetings to discuss employee safety protocols. Maintenance and Operations and management will be responsible for carrying out these protocols and ensuring that they are adhered to. This will require a coordinated team effort and the work will be ongoing from now through the Summer months until the start of the school year.

### *Employee Working Conditions*

Upon completing our collaborative work with the bargaining units related to the general theme of opening school and the models we may use in the Fall, we will need to enter into negotiations to craft language related to working conditions that will support the model that is implemented. The language we end up agreeing to will be temporary language that applies to the school scenario under COVID 19 conditions.

### *Employee Absences*

One large concern we have is employee absences once school starts back up and how to address the issue of child care, employee illness, or employees who must care for family




members who either have COVID or are a vulnerable population. Human resources recently sent out a childcare survey to all staff. 25% (n=260) of respondents to our survey stated that they are extremely concerned about childcare and don't believe they will be able to return because they don't have childcare arrangements. This will be an ongoing dilemma that we try and figure out how to address.

## Community and Family Engagement

Public Information Officer Camie Barnwell and María Larios Horton, Director of Parent and Family Engagement, will work in partnership to ensure that our families are informed throughout the planning process, as well kept updated on a timely basis on decisions, information and resources.

We will continue to communicate with and engage our students, families and community stakeholders.

Communication channels:

- District website: (new homepage design with icons for easier navigation to **Reopening of Schools** and **Learning at Home** resources & information)
- Parentsquare
- eNewsletters
- Press releases/updates to local media outlets, including updates via Radio Bronco
- Mail-home postcards
- Fliers
- Social media:
  -  Facebook
  -  Twitter
  -  Instagram

Community input:

- Survey feedback: **6.9.2020 Board Report**
- Stakeholder focus groups are being scheduled
- DELAC committee meeting
- Board meeting public comment

## Health and Wellness

Health and Wellness will focus heavily on providing the infrastructure and training needed to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in schools and district offices. This includes:

- Promotion of healthy hygiene practices such as regular hand washing and covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, reinforcement of the use of PPE, and monitoring of safety guidelines.
- Creation of guidelines for limiting sharing of equipment and belongings. Plan logistics to address school arrival and departure.
- Create guidelines for guarantee of physical distancing in classrooms.
- Create policies related to the use and navigation of non-classroom spaces.
- Design of systems for monitoring students and staff for symptoms of COVID-19 before entering school each morning.
- Develop plans for responding to sick staff members and students.

- Monitor state and local health orders and adjust district operations accordingly.
- Respond to mental and emotional health of students and staff

The Health and Wellness work will be a joint effort that includes Student Services, Business Services, HR, Community and Family Engagement and site leadership.

## **Conclusion**

It is recommended that, in the event that the District is required to open school in a hybrid scenario, the school board:

1. Approve the implementation of the A/B Cohort Model for its students in grades TK-6.
2. Approve the implementation of the Quarter-Block model in junior high schools.
3. Approve the implementation of the Semester Block model at Dos Pueblos and Santa Barbara High Schools.
4. Approve the implementation of an optional 100% remote model for students grades TK-12.

On July 21, 2020 the Board will be provided the third reopening report to include a status update on implementation of the hybrid models and progress toward meeting SBPH guidelines for opening school.





