

July 22: BOE Meeting: Presentation of Re-Opening Plan in Compliance with State Mandated Guidelines. General overview with considerable facilities details.

Dr. Lucero began the meeting by stressing that the plan being presented was in response to the State requirements and recommendations. Over the next 6 weeks, the district will be working on how this plan specifically looks in Stamford and developing a reopening plan for families. They are calling the plan they are now working on The Stamford Plan. Next Tuesday's BOE meeting is an opportunity for the public to be heard, if you would like to make a statement. Note that last night's meeting went above capacity (500) and people were disappointed to not be let in. The video will be posted on the SPS website.

Here are notes from last night's BOE meeting.

Calendar:

- SPS will need specific decisions from families by mid-August in regards to whether or not you intend to send your child(ren) to school in the buildings or opt for Distance Learning. A survey will be sent out.
- There will now be 5 days of professional development before students return to the classroom. The state gave schools 3 additional days for professional development. SPS was considering taking off the 18th to pause and take time for professional devt after teachers had already been in schools; however, BOE RepJackie Heftman brought up adding days to June and starting after Labor Day. To be determined.
- If the hybrid plan is put in place, children will attend every other day. There will be an A day and a B day. Like this: Monday: A, Tuesday: B, Wednesday: A, Thursday: B, Friday: A, Monday: B, and so on. The plan is that families with children in different schools will be put into the same grouping A or B so that your children will be in school on the same days. They are considering giving you the option of saying you'd rather have your kids attend school on different days, they may be open to that.

Facilities:

- Elementary students will be sitting at their specific desk in their classroom with a mask on all day.

- Students will face same way, especially if we have to use tables.
- Tables will not be used for middle school and high school. If tables are used, Plexiglas will separate the children.
- Signage: Unauthorized visitors not allowed, must be authorized. Hygiene reminders.
- Ventilation: Already had been looking at fresh air flow and mechanical in buildings due to mold task force. Facilities has made sure that HVAC is up and running and controlled per guidelines by the state. Per these guidelines, run fresh air 2 hours before and after school is open. Exhaust fans will run 24/7 in bathrooms. SPS uses MERV 8 filters. You can go up to MERV 13, which are better, but not required by the guidelines. When asked if one or the other filters blocks COVID, Kevin said none of the filters block COVID; evidence is that no filter is small enough.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: certain chemicals will kill coronavirus. Summer cleaning, scrubbing everything, waxing floor, when reoccupy building specific requirements for dealing with the buildings and furniture.
- All furniture other than the children's desk and a teacher's desk in the corner will be removed from classrooms. They will carve out an open space in front of promethium board 5 feet wide and the length of the classroom for the teacher.
- They showed a plan of Davenport Elementary and looked specifically at one classroom and how space will be allocated. Details are as follows: 3 feet to sink space, if 6 feet between desks there will be 12 desks, if 5 feet between desks 18 desks. Depends on how many children return to in classroom education. Squares will be drawn on the classroom floor 5 or 6 feet apart, a desk and chair will be put in the square and that is where the child will learn.
- Depending on how many children are returning to the classroom, rooms may not allow for social distancing and other rooms (art, media center, etc.) will need to be utilized. This means that they will need another teacher to teach that class (addl expense). Even at 5 feet apart, is that social distance? How can children take mask breaks when they can't social distance? If everyone comes back to school and they can only maintain 5 feet between students, Tamu would need to open a conversation with the Commissioner of Education about options.

- A room must be designated for a COVID pick up shelter in case a child or teacher is sick at school. At Davenport, they were eyeing designating the Gymnasium. This room must be monitored.
- Furniture that is removed from the schools to maximize space will need to be put in storage somewhere. All furniture besides desks will be removed.
- About \$13 million of additional funds are needed. Tamu said that she first estimated a much larger number, but was told it had to be under \$15 million. She thinks that the cost will exceed \$15 million to outfit spaces, and clean. They need to figure out reallocation.
- Repurposing as many of the school areas as possible.

Central Office/Administration:

- When asked about the Govt Center, Dr. Lucero said that staff concerned that their office does not work for social distancing should report this to their manager. Mayor Martin chimed in and said that he is not in a hurry to open the Govt. Center or bring Central Office staff in to work. If people can work from home, he thinks they should. When asked by BOE member Fritz Chery when BOE meetings will be in person again, Mayor Martin said 3 to 4 months after a vaccine. He also thinks the public is better served by Zoom meetings. Tamu followed up and said central office will be back at the government center.
- They are creating an FAQ and a Glossary, which will be posted on the SPS website.

Policy on mask wearing:

- Mask wearing is mandatory. If your child does not wear a mask, s/he will be sent home. I believe it was said that the child will go to the COVID waiting room where parents will pick up the child.
- On the Plan, it did say that you could petition to not wear a mask. Petitions will only be considered based on the limited exceptions noted by the CDC.

Health and Safety:

- Protocol, procedures and training are critical. They are putting plans in place now for what happens if/when someone tests positive. If we know what that looks like it won't be a surprise if/when it happens. Professional Development and training for all community members. Webinars will be held in advance for staff and families. Families will understand what it looks like, what you do, when you are sick. How we will react when someone is ill with anything.
- Employees who may have underlying health conditions and are concerned: SPS will follow Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Hoping to find an accommodation for them that works for both parties. Expanded FMLA due to COVID and are prepared to deal with them.
- Substitutes will be assigned to specific buildings. The Plan does note that if there is a critical shortage of teachers, this may change.
- Families will be asked to take students temperatures at home before coming to school and make a good faith effort to pause and see if your child is ill before bringing them to school and do not bring a child to school if sick at all.

Curriculum:

- First three weeks of school will be focused on relationship building, making up lost learning and getting children fluent in distance learning technology.
- Art, PE, Music, etc. Specials will be every day for 1/5 of the year. So, if Art is your child's first special s/he will have that every day for the first segment of the year then switch to, say, music every day. This is in line with cohorting.
- BOE Rep Jackie Pioli asked for budget numbers on specials. She is interested in having "Grab and go" art if we move to distance or hybrid learning.
- In the high schools, "Connection Time" will most likely be eliminated from the schedule.
- In distance learning scenario, there will be a 50/50 split between synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- Technology will be 1:1 from pre-K through 12.

Meals

- Lunch will be eaten at a child's desk and masks will be removed for this purpose.
- Lunch may be purchased or brought from home.
- Free and reduced lunch will be available.
- Three scenerios are being considered for school-made lunches: delivery to desk, meal cart in the hallway, grab and go.

Budget

- All community members should know that funding is not sufficient. Feel free to call anyone you know to ask that money be directed to SPS. Finance Board. Representatives. Rich, rich people.