

The Re-Opening of Schools in Fall 2020

Wissahickon Board of School Directors
Special Public Meeting
June 22, 2020



6/22/20

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Introduction

Purpose of Tonight's Meeting

- ▶ Provide a preliminary update on the reopening of schools in the fall—***NO DECISIONS YET***
- ▶ Share options being considered
- ▶ Share major outstanding issues/challenges
- ▶ Answer questions

Current Status

▶ WSD Fall Reopening Task Force

- 30+ leaders from across district
- Lessons learned from remote teaching & learning in spring
- All aspects of planning for reopening in fall

▶ State designations (red, yellow, green)

▶ Guidelines galore (CDC, PDE, PSBA, etc.)

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Health, Safety & Well-Being
- ▶ Instructional Rigor & Excellence
- ▶ Flexibility for Families (& Staff)

Options for Fall—Big Picture

- ▶ **Option #1:** All students back at once, every day, w/ precautions in place
- ▶ **Option #2:** Some students back on a given day, some virtual that day
- ▶ **Option #3:** No students back (entirely virtual)

Option #1—All Students Back

- ▶ Most “normal” of the three options
- ▶ Substantial precautions needed, but compromises are necessary (e.g., six feet distancing not as frequent)
- ▶ Best option for teaching & learning, so we are leaning this way (at least to start the year)
- ▶ Best option for childcare considerations

Option #2—“Hybrid”

- ▶ Possible versions include every other (“A/B”) day, split sessions, etc.—none are easy to implement
- ▶ Allows for more precautions while at school (e.g., six feet distancing more frequent)
- ▶ OK for teaching and learning, but going back and forth between in-person and virtual is tricky
- ▶ Moderate childcare burden for families and staff

Option #3—Fully Virtual

- ▶ All students at home, w/ 100% remote instruction
- ▶ Want this as an OPTION for some families (by semester), but need to be ready for this for all students should condition go back to red
- ▶ As we learned in spring, this option is not first choice in the long run for teaching and learning OR social well-being
- ▶ Most severe childcare burden for families and staff

Ongoing Work

- ▶ There are still many, many details to be worked out
- ▶ Two (so far) Essential Questions
- ▶ Other Important Challenges

Essential Question #1

What to do about MASKS?

- ▶ Evolving to be the #1 most effective measure to combat the spread of COVID-19, AND it's about protecting others, not the wearer of the mask
- ▶ Eventual Decision could vary with level—NOTHING IS FINAL YET
 - **K-5 Students** (“encouraged” or “required when practical”)
 - **6-12 Students** (“strongly encouraged” or “required when practical”)
 - **All Staff** (leaning towards masks or face shields “whenever practical”)

(NOTE: Masks will be required on buses at all times)

Essential Question #2

What to do about BUSING?

- ▶ Goal is to maximize distancing, but that's tough on a confined bus!
- ▶ Will follow some common recommendations such as masks required at all times, spreading students out, keeping windows open, etc.
- ▶ CONSIDERING a move from double tiering to quadruple tiering (to help w/ distancing)
 - WHS run, Middle run and then two elementary school runs (two schools at a time)
 - Will require slight adjustments to building schedules
- ▶ Availability of bus drivers is a major concern (may impact our ability to provide busing)

Other Important Challenges

- ▶ Many, many other important challenges remain
- ▶ Examples of challenges we are working on include:
 - Social Distancing (6' vs. 4', desks vs. tables, etc.)
 - Lunch
 - Athletics
 - Transitions during the day (K-5 AND 6-12)
 - Encore/Related Arts classes
 - Staffing
 - Nursing/Medical matters

Moving Forward

- ▶ **TBD (over next three weeks):** Focus Groups and follow-up survey(s)
- ▶ **7/20/20:** Board meeting to review and approve final plan required by state
- ▶ **7/31/20:** Deadline for commitments from families (and staff)

Moving Forward (cont.)

- ▶ **8/7/20:** Finalize staff assignments
- ▶ **8/21/20:** Finalize student assignments
- ▶ **Week of 8/24/20:** Various staff training sessions
- ▶ **8/31/20:** Welcome everyone back to school!

Conclusion

- ▶ We will continue to communicate as often and comprehensively as we can
- ▶ We appreciate everybody's understanding and patience—we are doing the very best we can under very trying circumstances, juggling widely differing opinions as to how we as a school district, state and nation should respond to the COVID-19 challenge
- ▶ QUESTIONS?