

Reopening Committee Subgroup Meeting- Monday, August 9, 2021

Dr. Brady convened the District's Reopening committee to discuss health and safety protocols that the District plans to have in place for the 2021-2022 school year. Schools have been informed that they will not be receiving guidance from New York State; therefore each district will be left to make decisions in concert with local public health officials.

Twenty-six committee members including parents/staff/teachers participated in the Google meeting. Dr. Brady shared with the committee an updated document framing where we are today, and what are some of the things still to be resolved. Tomorrow Dr. Brady is meeting with the Westchester DOH and Westchester Superintendents group to discuss open agenda items since NYSDOH is not issuing any guidance to schools. The Dobbs Ferry School District is relying on the most recent science metrics, public health experts, and the CDC and Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, in addition to our school pediatricians' advice.

We will continue to work within the guidelines already established. The good news is the **Dobbs Ferry Schools will be running their full, normal school day for all grades! There will be NO remote option for this school year.** We still need to verify quarantine requirements and provide an option for those students. The District is not sure how many MS/HS students are vaccinated at this point. Our attorney will determine if parents will be required to share that information. At present, approximately 95% of staff is fully vaccinated.

Mask and face coverings in schools at all times will most likely be required. Distancing is still three feet where possible within the buildings. Students on school buses must wear masks, but there are no seating requirements.

Unresolved:

- Vaccination guidelines i.e. voluntary vs. required
- Elementary school age are not eligible for the vaccine yet
- Surveillance testing protocol for students and staff (saliva test). Would school be a collection site? No costs to districts.
- Barriers in the classroom were portable and now being repurposed in places that teachers/staff feel is necessary. Can put them back in the Commons if needed.

Lunch:

Springhurst will utilize the entire cafeteria (instead of half as usual), spreading grades out in classes with only six students at each table and staggered seating. Starting off the year, High School students will go out to lunch and eat outside for the 1st quarter. We will revisit this in the fall. Middle School students will eat in cohorts in the Commons, which worked really well last spring. The District will

also be providing “grab n’ go” breakfast and lunch; still free to students through the year.

Committee Questions:

- Back-to-School Night might be back to in person, thereby keeping in step with what’s happening in the outside world and more relaxed gatherings.
- Superintendent Conference Days are scheduled to be in person.
- Parent Teacher Conferences might be via Google Meets for ease; still being discussed.
- The Middle School is not planning on using lockers this year; the High School is planning to use lockers, which frees up space in the classroom.
- The daily health screener will remain in place and parents are still required to fill them out each morning.
- Cleaning will take place at the end of the school day every day. Each Wednesday, cleaning staff will disinfect all desks at both campuses.
- Can everyone download NYS Wallet to show proof of vaccination? Check with attorney.
- Maintenance will change air filters regularly. Springhurst uses Merv 11; Middle School will have Merv 13 installed as part of new HVAC work. Majority of classes keep the windows open as well. There are Hepa Air purifiers in all the classrooms with more coming and additional replacement filters for them.
- Students will not be distancing on the bus, but will have assigned seating. In the event of a positive case, only the children surrounding that child will have to quarantine (nearest 2-4 kids).
- The teachers will still be using seating charts in the classrooms to aid contact tracing.
- If a student has a COVID symptom, the parent has to show proof of a child’s negative rapid test.
- No general travel restrictions/requirements currently; can we make recommendations? Will check with the County.
- Can we translate all parent communications into Spanish?
- Are personnel other than teachers/staff vaccinated and if not, can they be encouraged to VAC UP.
- Official school times MS/HS 8:12-3:20 (2:20 dismissal on Wednesdays) SH (K-2) 8:15-3:00; (3-5) 8:45-3:30; (K) 8:15-noon until September 20th, then they go to fulltime.
- Does a district have authority to mandate vaccination? Question for attorney.
- The District will continue its own contact tracing throughout the year. Breakthrough infection has changed the landscape.
- We will continue to keep our District Reopening Webpage up-to-date and communicate regularly with parents as information becomes available.