

Return to Instruction Considerations: Special Education

School Board Discussion
August 6, 2020

Task Force Membership:

Special Needs Review Members:

Chad Berg, Director of Special Education

Patrick McClellan, Principal Longfellow Elementary, incoming Principal CJMS

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Samantha Glynn, Parent of a child with a disability, Special Education Teacher, Dept. Liaison, BHS

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Ashley Cook, Special Education Teacher, Meadowlark

Katie Becker, Special Education Teacher, CJMS

Jessica Kelly, parent of a child with a disability, SEPTA

Amber Miller, parent of a child with a disability, SEPTA

Special Education in BSD7

2019 IDEA child count data:

- 810 students with Individualized Education Programs (growing by nearly 50 students per year, slightly higher percentage compared to district growth)
- 11.4% of our student population (13% is state and national average)
- 150+ staff providing individualized instruction and supports
 - Special Education Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Psychologists, Therapists - OT, SLP, PT
 - Services range from low frequency/intensity supports to highly specialized off-site programs

In the spring, this meant 810+ individualized conversations on programs for students with disabilities.

Special Education in the Context of General Ed.

Excerpt from the Preamble of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):

"Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities."

Andrew F. US Supreme Court clarification of the definition of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):

- FAPE standard redefined as "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances."

...in light of the child's unique circumstances

Our Individualized Education Programs will need to be tailored to instructional context and disability driven needs of the student.

100% Remote - Students with disabilities that elect a 100% Remote option will need to have IEPs adjusted, with parent input and permission, to determine what level of remotely delivered specially designed instruction is needed for the child to make progress on IEP goals. We will also need to consider accommodations that are specific to the remote context that may not be present during in-person instruction (for example, students may still need access to print materials and text)

Blended: If we end up in a Blended instructional model, IEPs will need to be adjusted to reflect the level of special education services that are needed during the in-person time, and the level of special education services and accommodations that are needed during remote learning time.

Cohort/Block: If we have all students back, every day, IEPs may look most similar to the types of supports that have been previously provided. Service minutes may need to be adjusted to account for block schedules.

- In either in-person scenario, contingency plans should be discussed in the case of sudden, emergency shifts to remote learning. These shifts could happen due to district-wide decisions or close-contact exclusions

Special Education Concerns:

Students with disabilities have widely varied needs, which should not be overgeneralized for the group as a whole:

- We have some students with learning disabilities that have faced disproportionate impact within a text-based, online, asynchronous learning environment.
- We have some students with social/emotional disabilities that appear to have thrived when the social pressures of in-person school are removed. These students still need access to mental health supports, specially designed instruction for social/emotional needs, and a social setting wherein to grow their skills.
- We have some students, particularly those on the Autism spectrum, that have struggled with the construct of “school” crossing over with the construct of “home.” These students will require the consistent separation of those constructs, with a systematic, intentional reentry into “school.”
- We have some students with special health care needs (under HCPs, 504s, or IEPs) that will require continued off-site, remote learning through the 2020-21 school year.

Individualized services during periods of remote or blended learning must be constructed with parent involvement and approval, to allow a child to make progress on goals and advance in the general curriculum, based on the unique needs of the student. Such service may include:

- Alterations to IEP goals to account for revised learning demands of the general education environment.
- Alterations to direct services, provided through phone, video conference, or in-person instruction following social distancing guidelines.
- Alterations of accommodations, taking into account the demands of technology-based remote learning plans.
- Specific focus on parent training and consultation, to support students in attaining their individualized goals.
- The need for extended learning opportunities to mitigate skills lost due to gaps in instruction

Final Take Away:

Amongst each of these student populations, we have families with varying degrees of comfort over the safety of sending their children back to in-person school. We cannot assume that children with special health care needs will stay home, and we cannot assume that students with learning or social needs will be comfortable coming back.

We will need to have 800+ individualized conversations, with parent input and permission, to address the unique needs of each child with a disability, in light of chosen instructional model.

Questions?



Safety, Facilities and Health

Board Presentation

August 6, 2020

Information from Return to School Detail Plans
2020-2021

Safety Considerations

Mask/Cloth Face Coverings for Staff

PK-5: Required*

6-8: Required*

9-12: Required*

Mask/Cloth Face Coverings for Students

PK-5: Required*

6-8: Required*

9-12: Required*

*Feasibility and adaptations will be considered based upon specific staff/student needs, IEP/504 implications, and guidance from the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics

School Supplies

- Very limited sharing of supplies.
- Families will be asked to provide masks and/or face coverings, a water bottle, sanitizing gel and a school supply bin (to keep school supplies separate and easily ready to bring home) for each student as part of their individual student supplies.
- Any shared items will be sanitized prior to use.
- No sharing use of soft or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected, (e g , stuffed toys, clay).

Student Programs

Details can be found on the Return to School Detail Draft Plans located on the Superintendent's webpage.

kidsLINK, mentors, guest speakers, volunteers - would be revisited in 30-60 days for the Blended Model.

Building Access

Entry/Exit: Students will be required to utilize multiple, supervised entrances or stagger arrival times to maintain proper social distancing. Doors should be held open to avoid frequent touches.

Building Access: Building access will be limited to students and essential personnel. When possible, a parent picking up a sick child shall meet their child at the front door. All face to face interactions shall be limited wherever possible.

All on-site plans include increased handwashing, sanitizing of surfaces, and potential for additional student/staff PPE equipment

- Added handwashing stations and bottle fillers will be added at key locations.
- All drinking fountains and hand dryers will be disabled.
- Hand sanitizer will be available to each classroom with teachers being expected to monitor the use as needed.
- Surface disinfection will be available to each classroom with staff being expected to utilize as needed.
- Special attention to all frequently used touch points and added disinfection will be in place.
- Additional soap and paper towel dispensers have been added to each restroom.
- Additional PPE will be available for staff and student use to encourage in person learning.

- Increased classroom ventilation added and will be made available on a seasonal basis.
- Removal of hard to clean and/or “soft” furnishing from all common areas and classrooms.
- All custodial staff has been trained on COVID-related disinfection procedures.
- Plexiglass screens will be added at main entrance points. Individual requests for anything additional can be added on a case-by-case basis.
- Signage will be placed within each bathroom to encourage proper handwashing practices.

Busing

- Program Overview
 - Importance of bus service
 - BUSES WILL RUN in all models except 100% remote
- Alternate routes under development for use during blended/cohort models
 - CDC recommendation for social distancing: 1 student per seat with masks
 - Resource limitations - drivers and buses
 - Bus service available to significantly fewer students
 - Contracts available for 'eligible' riders not served by a bus route
- All buses cleaned each day

School Meals - General

- Importance of Program
- Federal program and guidance
 - National School Lunch Program--NOT summer feeding program--currently in place
 - Free and reduced applications - PLEASE submit an application!
 - Nutritional requirements
 - Discussions ongoing at the federal level

Elementary & Middle School Meals

- Food options:
 - Prepackaged meals will be offered (i.e., sack lunches) for purchase through the School Foods program
 - Students may also bring their own food from home
 - Remote learning students may pick up a to-go meal during designated times from their school
 - Pre-packaged breakfasts available at WH, IR, HY, SMS, and CJMS
 - Menus will be available at bsd7.nutrislice.com starting 8/17
- Each building will determine where students will be eating meals to accommodate current safety guidelines.

High School Meals

- Food options:
 - Students can purchase complete meals, ala carte, and breakfast from School Foods
 - Students may also bring their own food from home
 - Remote learning students may pick up a to-go meal during designated times from their school
 - Menus will be available at bsd7.nutrislice.com starting 8/17
- Safety:
 - There will be posted signage and safety instructions for students entering the serving area
 - Various food stations will be available for to-go or customizable meals
 - No self-service
 - Social distancing will be mandated
 - Students will scan their student ID at the point of sale
 - Lunch tables will be set up for social distancing. Students may also eat throughout the buildings or outside, at the principal's discretion
 - All tables and surfaces will be disinfected between uses

Health - Stay home if sick

Staying Home if Sick: Staff and students must stay home if:

-tested positive

-symptomatic

-until they meet criteria for return

- Staff and families should conduct personal symptom screening on a daily basis.
- School staff will conduct a daily covid symptom check-in with students.
- School visitors, deemed essential, - screened by office staff.

Health - If Illness at school

- Sick/symptomatic students will be sent to the office and placed in an isolation area for evaluation. Student should be picked up within an hour.
- Individuals with COVID-19 [signs or symptoms](#) will be referred to a healthcare provider for evaluation on whether testing is needed. The Gallatin City Health Department will then notify the school if the test result is positive and subsequent quarantine actions will take place per current recommendations.
- Many children who test positive for COVID-19 have very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. Some children will become ill from influenza, the common cold, or a host of other causes. This will make the coming school year difficult and stressful for some families.
- Diligent social distancing, hand washing, and surface disinfection are always important.

Contact Tracing - A Scenario

Elementary student with symptoms, sent home to get and referred to get tested.

- Parent could refuse to have the child tested - recommendation is to remain isolated 10 days plus symptom resolution. No contact tracing. School would code the absence as covid-quarantine.
- Child gets tested - wait time for test results, currently up to 7 days.
- At the elementary level, the GCCHD recommends considering all within an student's core class as a close contact.
- Classroom teacher would be a close contact.
- PE, Chorus, Band - classes with exhalation particles... consider staff as a close contact, unless they can be outside and/or maintaining 6 ft distance.
 - We don't monitor the contacts of contacts.
 - Sped/Intervention pull-out group - if they can all be spread out, they wouldn't be close contacts.
- All close contacts of primary case would be excluded for 14 days, even if they have a negative test.

Contact Tracing - A Scenario (MS/HS)

- If we don't have universal 6 ft. distance, we would use seating charts to identify students that are 6 ft. from the "case" student.
- Teacher instructs from a designated space. Can do quick 1:1 assistance for under 15 minutes and not be a close contact (not cumulative).
- Lockers - upper and lower. A/B models could help us differentiate top and bottom lockers, or at least reduce density.
- Lunch - blended gives us half the number of kids in the lunch room.
 - Grab and get outside under 15 minutes
 - Would be interviewing primary case to identify contacts of lunch friends

District-GCCHD-Home Communication Flow

1. GCCHD will know about the primary case and perform interview to identify close contacts.
2. GCCHD will notify school of identify of case and close contacts.
3. School nurse and principal will work with school secretary and tech to send letters to close contacts.
4. In addition to school email to close contacts - based on resource capacity, there would be follow up calls.
5. School secretary will code absences.
6. School sends joint BSD7/GCCHD letter to the school community (staff and families) notifying them of case (no identifying information of primary case or contacts).



Questions?