

Larry B. Hammond, Superintendent
Board Report
February 16, 2021

Last month I discussed the reopening in the Hybrid model and the benefits of the plan. With the evolution of COVID and the ongoing modifications of the guidance, our discussion at the Board Retreat was definitely appropriate. Returning for 4 days in-person classes March 8 with Fridays remaining for small groups and scheduled appointments is an appropriate plan. This allows for 2 full weeks after staff have received the second dose of the Moderna vaccine. In addition, the guidance now states the staff that took the vaccine will not need to quarantine if exposed to a positive case of COVID if they remain asymptomatic. Our current number is 33.8 which continues to trend downward. The use of emergency days as approved at the January 19 meeting will be used very little as we move forward. In the absence of special circumstances, I foresee staff that declined the opportunity to receive the vaccine taking leave days provided by board policy (sick, personal or emergency). We will continue adhering to the Healthy at School Guidance with less restrictions than previously required such as the social distancing of students. Currently, the guidance says if the physical space in the school does not allow for spacing of students 6 feet apart, space desks as far away as possible. All desks should be arranged so students' seats face the same direction. Cloth face masks will be the expectation for all students unless medically waived. The relaxing of requirements will also be a plus for transporting students.

Approval of the revised calendar with the last day for students being May 13 allows the planning of a more structured summer school for students in need. Students that obviously have lost ground will have an opportunity to regain some of the skills before going into the summer months. In addition, students that have not met the standard to move from one grade to the next will have another opportunity to make up some of the work and be promoted. We remain convinced that students should meet the standard and cannot be promoted without earning the right to move from one level to the next. The possibility of another session in July could prove beneficial as well. I feel confident in the equity of classified and certified staff when considering the shortened school year for students. We addressed this issue February 12 in our administrative meeting and will discuss individual concerns with staff as they are raised in the coming days.

An old-fashioned snow day has been a point of concern/discussion that I believe is covered with the current arrangement. Currently, students are counted through participation and do not necessarily remain in live sessions all day long. They have lots of opportunity to complete work later and enjoy playing in the snow. Some parents have posted on Facebook on both ends of the spectrum. Their perspective is dependent upon their level of understanding the flexibility granted with remote classes. If we grant any snow days without continuing virtual instruction daily, our plans for summer school will need to be altered. Your approval of the calendar we discussed at the retreat is essential for the high school to make graduation and prom plans. In the absence of a surge in COVID cases, we remain optimistic toward a somewhat normal graduation ceremony.