

July 14, 2020

Amphitheater Reopening Proposal





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Meeting a Complicated Challenge

- Once in a century event.
- Unknowns and uncertainties abound.
- Unsettling trends in data.
- Divergent, even competing opinions on issues.
- Recent experiences having impacts.
- Last year's emergency shift to online – unprepared for and sub-optimal; parent concerns.
- Parent needs and expectations for reopening of in-person schools.
- Parent concerns about health and safety risks.
- Staff concerns about health and safety risks.
- Business and community needs.
- Conflicting public health observations and data.
- Social-emotional impacts on students, staff, and community.
- Student desires to return to school, friends, activities.
- Student worries about their futures and opportunities.
- Digital access inequities.
- Food insecurity.
- Traumatic experiences for students.



Evolving Situation

Since we formulated the proposed reopening plan released a few weeks ago, circumstances have changed. COVID cases continue to rise sharply; our staff members are growing more concerned, and our parents and community are becoming more cautious. A few factors to consider:

The Governor has announced schools will remain closed until at least Aug. 17 and has since repeatedly called that date “aspirational” and dependent upon a decrease in the spread of COVID in the State.

COVID cases continue to rise in Arizona, with some reports saying Arizona has among the worst infection statistics in the country. The Governor did say last week that the numbers may be looking better, but hard numbers have not been shared yet. Data reporting has begun to lag behind.

A statewide petition is circulating calling on the Governor to delay the in-person opening of school until October. It has been signed by Governing Board members from districts throughout Arizona.

District leaders are hearing from teachers and parents concerned about the health implications of returning to school. We have also heard from parents worried about the health and educational implications for children if they do *not* return to school.



Amphitheater's Approach

The District has weighed all of the factors—COVID numbers, health issues, well-being of children and adults, health needs, learning needs—and has formulated what we believe to be the best plan for our community.

- 1** Delay opening of school to August 10. This provides opportunity for two extra days of training to prepare instructional staff for greatly enhanced remote learning.
- 2** Stand ready to implement “In-Person Learning” choice when conditions allow for safe reopening. Open in the “Remote by Necessity” model until “In-Person Learning” choice is available. Ensure we can provide the safest environment possible to our students and our staff -- whether that be in August, September, October or another timeframe, as guided by our public health officials.
- 3** Offer families “Online by Request” model to meet the needs of our families who do not wish to have their children attend school in-person even when it does become available.

Choices for Families

Amphitheater Public Schools will allow families to choose to have their children attend school in person (when possible) or entirely online through the District.

1 In-Person Learning model with health and safety measures in place

2 Online Learning by Request model

1A: When school buildings are closed, this shifts to the Remote Learning by Necessity model.





1A: Remote Learning by Necessity

Students who choose the traditional In-Person Learning model will begin the 2020-2021 school year in the Remote Learning by Necessity model. This is the model that the District will use any time in-person education is not possible. Learning will be provided online or through written materials for families who cannot access online education, even with District assistance to help them connect electronically.

Elementary School

- All students will be assigned to a District teacher and classroom. This will be, in general, the same teacher they will have when In-Person Learning is possible.
- Scheduled, live-streamed instruction.
- Common, consistent learning platforms. (K-1: See Saw; and 2-5: Google Classroom). Advance training and information for students, teachers.
- Comprehensive program of education, including Art, Music and PE.
- Five-day per week attendance and instruction.
- Accommodations and special services provided.
- Regular assessment and grading of student work.
- Special Education teams will work directly with families to schedule required in-person or remote-location therapies.
- Non-athletic extracurricular activities may be offered through online participation.
- Imbedded social-emotional learning.
- Compliance with State Educational Standards.
- Computers available for checkout for students needing them.
- Students have the choice of returning to In-Person Learning when it is available.

1A: Remote Learning by Necessity

Middle and High School

- All students will be assigned to a District teacher and class. This will, in general, be their scheduled “in-person” teacher and classmates.
- Scheduled, live-streamed instruction and blended learning modalities.
- Common, consistent learning on Google Classroom. Advance training and information for students, teachers.
- 5-day per week attendance and instruction.
- Comprehensive program of education, including AP, IB, Cambridge, CTE and Arts courses.
- Accommodations and special services provided, including in-person and remote therapies.
- Extracurricular activities may be offered, as permitted by AIA and public health guidelines.
- Imbedded social-emotional learning.
- Computers available for checkout by students.
- Clear grading practice standards provided to parents and students at the beginning of the year.
- Regular assessment of student progress.
- Compliance with State Educational Standards.
- Students have the choice of returning to In-Person Learning when it is available.



1A: Remote Learning by Necessity

Elementary and Secondary Schools (No Internet Access)

- Every effort made to help students obtain access.
- Students will be assigned to an Amphitheater District teacher and classroom.
- Prepared lessons will be delivered to students at home. These will be materials that correspond with students receiving work online under this model.
- Teachers will contact their students on a regular basis (minimum contact expectation set by District).
- Special Education will be provided as appropriate.
- Imbedded social-emotional learning.
- Grading practices clearly articulated to students and parents at the beginning of school year.
- Elementary school children may participate in extracurricular programs to the extent possible. Middle and high school activities may be offered as permitted by AIA and public health guidelines.
- Compliance with State Educational Standards.
- Students will move to the In-Person Learning model when it is available.



1 In-Person Learning

When school buildings are permitted to open, students selecting traditional education will move from the Remote Learning by Necessity Model to the In-Person Learning Model.

Student-Related Matters

- The traditional learning model will be implemented. All essential elements of remote learning will occur in this model also.
- Students will attend school in buildings every day.
- Transportation will be provided when eligible.
- Recess will be provided as feasible.
- Extracurricular activities such as clubs and athletics will resume as permitted under safety guidelines.
- Blended Learning Labs continue at school.
- Option for students to transition to full online instruction (Scenario 2) available.

Health & Safety Protocols

- Schools will implement new required health and safety protocols to include:
 - Frequent handwashing (schedule will be set).
 - Enhanced sanitation and cleaning protocols.
 - Physical distancing as feasible.
 - Personal sanitizing gels and liquids.
 - Face coverings as required.
 - Limited sharing of supplies.
- Facility enhancements will be made for improved ventilation where possible.
- Spaces will be expanded for meal breaks.
- Visitors/volunteers will be limited.



2 Online Learning by Request

Families who wish to have their children attend school online on an extended or permanent basis will have that option through the Amphitheater Academy Online, the District's State Approved Online K-12 School.

Student-Related Matters

- Students will register for classes to attend through the Amphitheater Academy Online.
- Students will receive full-time instruction via a mixture of live interaction and lessons with an Amphi District teacher and digital curriculum resources.
- Special education teams will work directly with families to schedule required in-person or remote-location therapies and other services.
- Support services will be provided to eligible students.
- The most flexible option for students, this model allows students to work at their own pace with instructor guidance, and at anytime of day or night.

School/District-Related Matters

- Teachers will provide students and parents with specific information about what to expect regarding homework, lesson time, grading and delivery of instruction.
- Extracurricular activities such as clubs and athletics will be offered under the same conditions as in the In-Person Learning model.
- Social and emotional supports will be available as appropriate to promote student, staff and family wellness.



Consistency

Under all scenarios, we have consistency in several areas:



Technology

The District is working with families to help them find resources for internet access.

The District purchased 4,000 Chromebooks to extend the availability of loaner laptops for students.

The District has ordered 700 web cameras in the event we need to expand online teaching.



Curriculum/Assessment

The District will use common platforms across grade levels.

Families will be provided information about classwork, contact with teachers, testing, and grading.

Staff will work to bring students up to appropriate levels at the beginning of school so that students can be successful with new content.

Advanced learning opportunities will be available.



Social-Emotional Learning

The District will provide supportive, age-appropriate curriculum to students to help with the impact of COVID-19.

Amphitheater will continue ongoing staff training on social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices.

Employees will continue to be eligible for support services at no cost through the Employee Assistance program.



Support for Special Populations

Teachers will work with students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and REACH (gifted) students to provide services.

Education may include in-person specialized instruction.

Counseling, social work, psychology, and other special education support services will be available.

Other Model Considered

The District considered the possibility of providing a model that mixes in-person and online instruction, where students would go back and forth between in-person and online. This model should not be confused with blended learning through which in-person students supplement their in-person courses with prepared online lessons. The “hybrid” or “back and forth” model was not feasible for multiple reasons.

1 State laws for school funding do not currently support switching children back-and-forth between in-person and remote learning models.

2 Switching back and forth between in-person and remote education is not optimal for all students, especially those who do not have internet access.

3 The Governor has ordered that schools with a hybrid model, where students alternate in-person and online, must provide students educational experiences on campus when they are not in class. This requirement presents insurmountable logistical and financial burdens.

4 Teaching some students in-person and some online could create an unreasonable workload for our teachers – double planning, etc.





Key Points to Remember

1

We must be flexible. We are prepared to make changes to this plan as necessary depending on the situation in our community, state, and nation.

2

Amphitheater will follow orders issued by national, state and local leaders as they apply to the District and the reopening of schools.

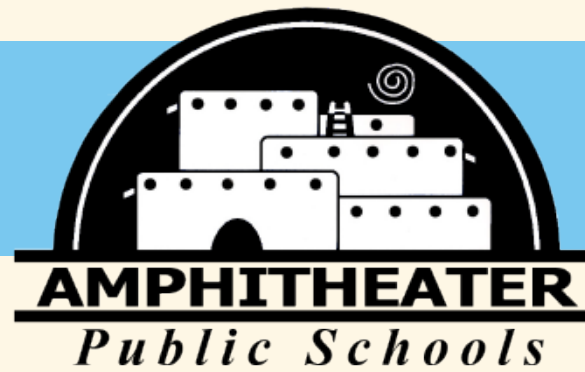
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Amphitheater's reopening plan is guided by the Arizona Department of Education's Roadmap for Reopening and the Centers for Disease Control guidelines for reopening.

4

Pima County has ordered everyone over 5 years old to wear a mask when they cannot maintain 6 feet of physical distancing (with some exceptions).





Informed Safety Protocols





Details



We know that many people have questions about the details of reopening. Here are a few highlights, chosen based on the common questions we receive:

Desks in classrooms will be separated as much as possible.

Hand-washing will be built into the day. The District will be providing additional hand-washing stations at elementary school.

Students who ride buses to and from school will sit no more than two to a bench. Buses will be cleaned regularly.

Children will eat meals in expanded seating in cafeterias or outdoors if possible. Teachers will have their normal lunch breaks.

Recess will continue, with equipment sanitized between classes.

Classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized regularly at all grade levels.

Employees who feel their work stations need to be modified for safety concerns may fill out a form requesting a review.

Teachers will not be expected to provide in-person and online instruction at the same time.

Staff will be trained on the technology and curriculum they are expected to use.

Masks will be provided for special circumstances and when supplies are available.

Registration information will be provided to families as soon as possible.

Amphitheater's teachers and employees are dedicated to students and ensuring children get the best educational and emotional experiences possible.



Surveys

We sent a survey to families via email through the ParentLink system and through our Amphi Connection Newsletter, and we sent an Employee survey via email through our Outlook system. We also posted links on our website and alerted employees and families to the survey via our ParentLink phone system. The survey for families was distributed in English and Spanish.



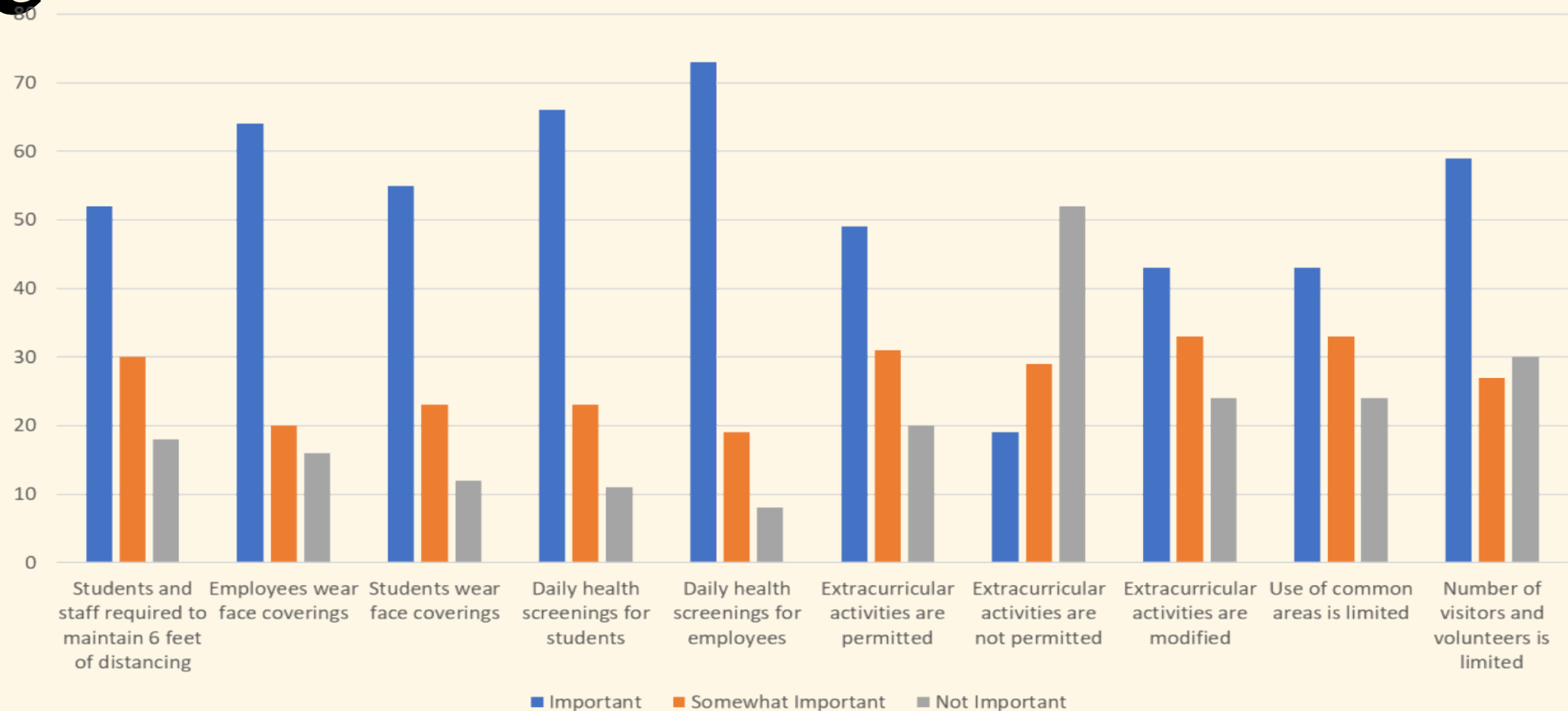
5,470 →
FAMILIES

← 1,269
EMPLOYEES

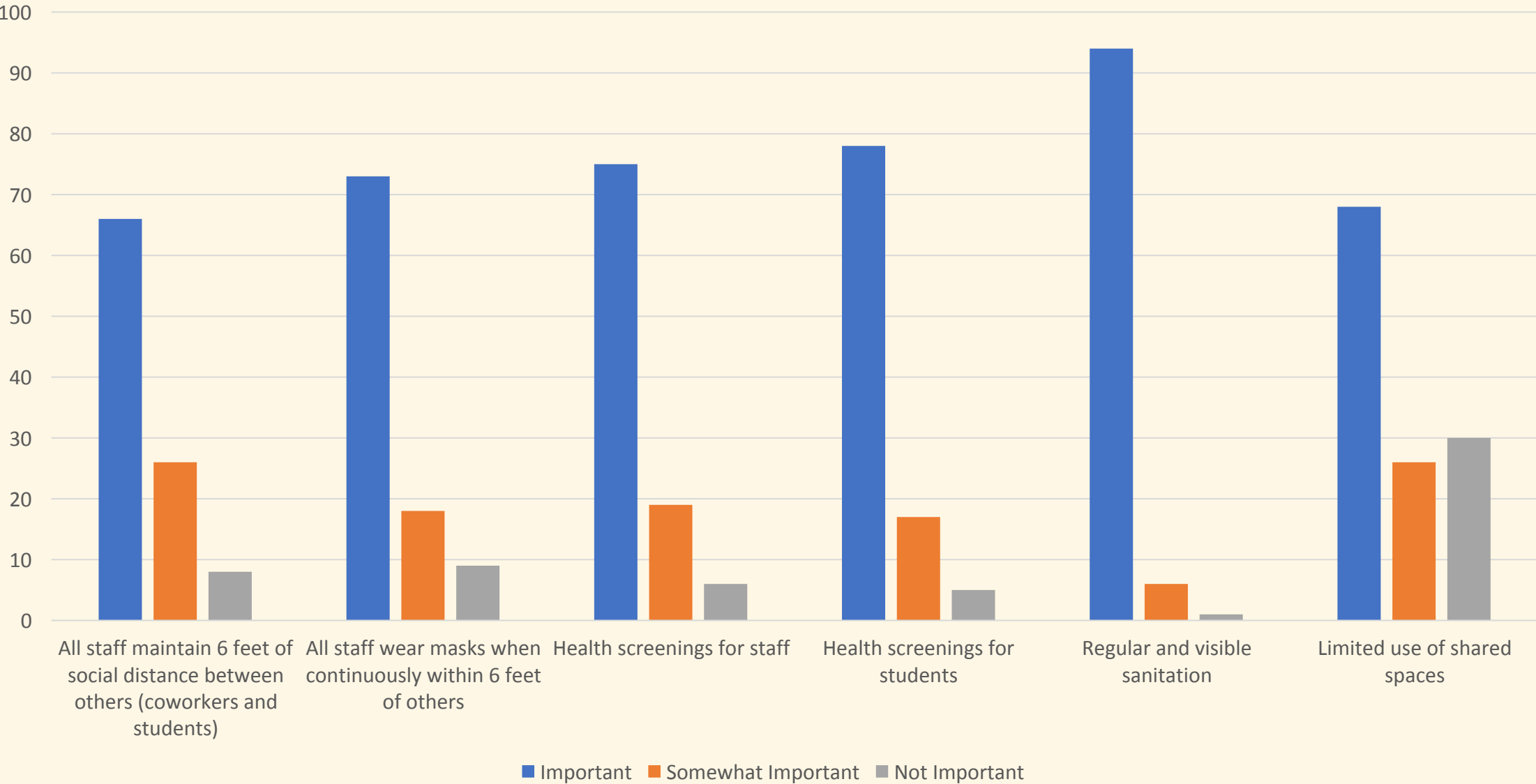


Survey

Q We asked families and employees to rate some of the commonly discussed measures for reopening. Families said:



Employees said:





Main Takeaways

1

Health and safety are main concerns for families and staff.

4

Some families are in situations where they must have a remote schooling option.

2

Students need the consistency and support provided by in-person education.

5

Class sizes and the ability to provide social-distancing are common concerns for families and employees.

3

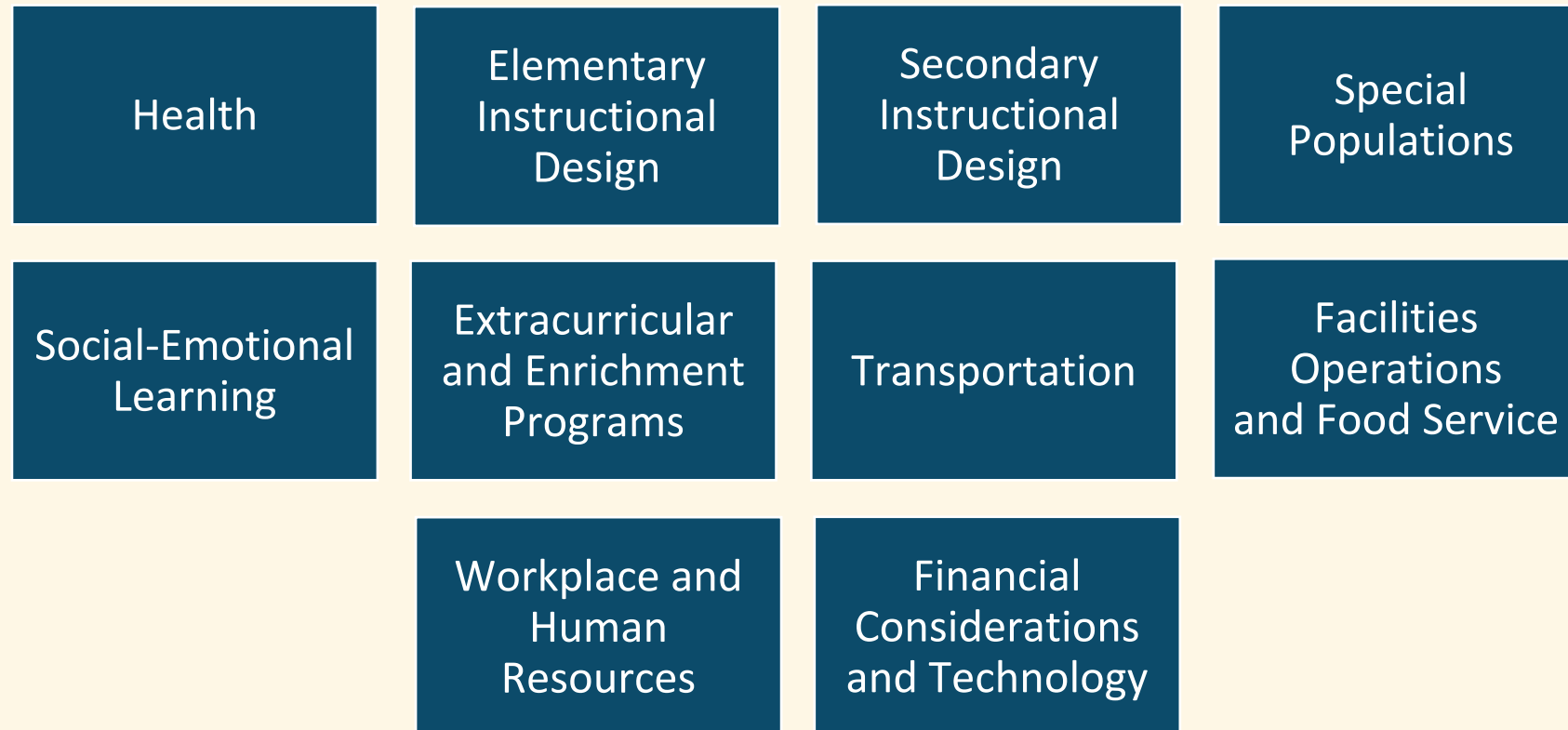
Most people are willing to wear masks and social distance when possible if that means students can attend school in-person.

6

Finding solutions that work for everyone is impossible, no matter how hard we try.

Contributions to the Plan

We invited community members to serve on our Blue Ribbon Task Force to help us create the reopening plan. More than 230 people volunteered, and from that list, we formed 10 subcommittees made up of parents, teachers, support staff and students. Each committee submitted recommendations to the leadership team.





Final Thoughts—for Now.

