

Board of Education Special Meeting

Thursday, November 5, 2020 8:30 AM

Via Zoom *Members of the public can view the meeting by watching the live stream on the WPS YouTube channel. Please view the Google Calendar on the District website for link and agenda., 24 School Road, Weston, CT 06883-1623

I. Call to Order

**II. Update and Discussion on WPS Schooling
Scenarios**

III. Adjournment

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Weston, CT

Meeting Date: November 5, 2020

Information Only

Action Requested

Agenda Item Subject: Update and Discussion on WPS Schooling Scenarios

Submitted by: Lisa Deorio

Document Summary/Purpose and/or Recommended Action:

WHS Hybrid Extended Day Recommendation document for Board review and discussion.

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<https://meeting.cabe.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=47&AgencyTypeID=1>



WHS HYBRID EXTENDED DAY RECOMMENDATION

November 2020

After much thought and reflection, the WHS administrative team recommends a different hybrid extended day schedule beginning on November 16th. This decision was reached after careful study and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data including a student directed survey, teacher input, shared perspectives from VDL, in-person, and at-home students, curriculum instructional leader feedback, and health metrics. The WHS administrative team recommends this new schedule that lends itself to an efficient transition to full remote as well as full return.

Dr. McKersie and Dr. Craw have reviewed and support this recommendation. It is important that the Weston Board of Education has the opportunity to review and ask questions about this recommendation as well.

This recommendation is based on the following considerations:

- Overwhelmingly in their survey, students expressed concern with being online for 6+ hours on their off-cohort day in addition to homework time in the evening. (458 respondents grades 9-12)
- Student and staff support a return to a “drop 2” schedule, with 6 of 8 periods meeting daily. The pacing of instruction, assessment, and homework obligations work well in this model. Student stress is reduced.
- In these unprecedented times, the school community has identified social-emotional needs as a priority, and this new schedule reflects these needs.
- The transition out of the current half day hybrid schedule must be to one that easily adapts to a fully remote model in order to avoid unnecessary transitions and confusion. A full day hybrid would not meet student needs if applied to a full remote scenario.
- There is a need for a formal extended learning block for students to connect individually with their teachers. Academic teachers, special education teachers, and school counselors expressed concern about how to better meet the needs of struggling students as well as VDL students given the difficulties associated with remote learning. Students’ performance in quarter one supports this need in the number of Ds and Fs and period absences.
- A 56-minute class in the full day model is challenging for teachers when working with 3 groups simultaneously (in-person/VDL/at-home students). Teachers prefer slightly shorter class periods to maximize and sustain engagement
- Students expressed concerns about eating lunch at school. They are well aware that quarantine cases are increasing. They are also worried about the return of college students to town.

The new schedule accomplishes the following:

- Six classes meet per day/drop 2/class length of 40 minutes
- Screen time is reduced (4 hours 40 minute class time/70 minute break/1 hour extended learning block vs 6 hours 45 minutes for full day hybrid with 30 minute lunch)
- Extended learning hour daily for all students (VDL, in-person, at-home cohort) for drop-in extra help, required intervention/support, extended learning opportunities, conferencing

by appointment, scheduled support for VDLs. This time can also be flexed to include advisory, class meetings, guidance seminars, assemblies, and virtual field trips without disrupting scheduled class time.

- Time for in-person cohorts is increased.
 - Current Half-Day Hybrid =1760
 - New Extended Day Hybrid =1920 (+480 minutes/8 days for extended learning) = 2400 minutes overall total
- Students that wish to stay through on a given day or do not have alternate transportation, may eat lunch and access teachers in the afternoon in-person (12% of families surveyed in October stated they used afternoon transportation. 96 students/2 =48 students).
- Lunch time will be provided for students who remain in school. Lunch may be purchased.
- A Wellness Break will be scheduled, during which snacks will be sold and students may take a mask break.
- Some students will be required to stay in school all day on their given cohort day and/or every day. These students will be identified based on demonstrated needs and may include special education students, 504 students, students in need of social/emotional support and counseling, students who are unable to work independently. A structured individual program will be developed by counselors, SPED case managers, and administration.
- Fluid transition to a full-remote scenario if necessary (schedule remains without cohort repetition).

WHS Hybrid Extended Day								
<i>Class Schedule - all students participating, location determined by cohort</i>								
	A/E	A/E	B/F	B/F	C/G	C/G	D/H	D/H
7:45 - 8:25	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
8:30 - 9:10	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2
9:15 - 10:05*	5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3
10:10 - 10:50	6	6	6	6	4	4	4	4
10:55 - 11:35	7	7	7	7	7	7	5	5
11:40 - 12:20	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	6
DROP	1&2	1&2	3&4	3&4	5&6	5&6	7&8	7&8

Extended Learning Hour - all students

Drop-in extra help, required intervention/support, extended learning opportunities, conferencing by appointment, scheduled support for VDLs

1:30 - 2:30	ELH	ELH	ELH	ELH	ELH	ELH	ELH	ELH
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*Wellness Break (mask break/snack break/movement break scheduled by classroom location)

1st Wave: Break 9:15 - 9:25, Class 9:25 - 10:05

2nd Wave: Class 9:15 - 9:55, Break 9:55 - 10:05

WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Weston, CT

Meeting Date: November 5, 2020

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Action Requested

Agenda Item Subject: Update and Discussion on WPS Schooling Scenarios

Submitted by: William McKersie

Document Summary/Purpose and/or Recommended Action:

CSDE Addendum 4: Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together document for Board review and discussion.

For more Board of Education Meeting and Committee Meeting Information, visit:
<https://meeting.cabe.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=47&AgencyTypeID=1>

Addendum 4

Adapt, Advance, Achieve: Connecticut's Plan to Learn and Grow Together

Connecticut State Department of Education



Updated Guidance for Decision-Making Regarding the Use of In-Person, Hybrid (Blended), or Remote Learning Models in Connecticut Schools during COVID-19



Revised October 21, 2020

In order to guide decisions on remote vs. in-person learning for Pre-K–12 education, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) have developed key metrics and considerations for informing local district decision-making. Decisions on whether districts will operate in a full in-person model, a fully-remote model, or some mix of in-person and remote learning (hybrid) should be based on indicators of the spread and prevalence of COVID-19 in the community and on the physical and operational ability of school districts to implement critical mitigation strategies. Decision-making should happen in light of these considerations and in consultation with local health departments, school medical advisors, and municipal leaders.

For the key leading metric for community spread, we recommend using the number of new cases, adjusted for population ([Table 1](#)). Although thresholds are suggested here that align with the Harvard Global Health Institute's publication *The Path to Zero and Schools: Achieving Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning Spaces*, these benchmarks are not absolute, but rather should be viewed as a continuum, and in the context of school-based mitigation strategies, to assist district administrators in making decisions that are appropriate for their individual school dynamics. In addition, there are several secondary indicators that can help inform decisions, when considered for the directional trend and speed of change of the data.

Because the size of Connecticut's population is relatively small in comparison to many other states, infection and disease rates for many conditions (including COVID-19) can become extremely unstable as statewide statistics are analyzed by smaller geographic areas. As such, analyzing any of the suggested leading or secondary indicators at the individual town or school district level in our state may result in rates that are too unstable to be of any use in continuous decision-making. In addition, assessment of data metrics on a daily basis can lead to unnecessary action on the part of schools due to the variations in case reporting day-over-day. As such, DPH will provide analysis on a weekly basis of the average daily metrics for the previous complete 14-day case reporting period, in order to smooth datapoints over time for case numbers that can be highly variable.

Table 1: Leading and Secondary Indicators of COVID-19 Infection Levels in Communities for Consideration of Learning Models for School Reopening in Connecticut.*

Leading Indicator	MORE In-Person Learning	Re-assess strategies to determine appropriate balance of in-person and remote learning (hybrid learning)	LESS In-Person Learning
Number of new cases of COVID-19 (14-day average of new cases per 100,000 population per day)	< 10 new cases per 100,000 per day	10 to < 25 cases per 100,000 per day	25+ cases per 100,000 per day

Reduce Person-Density in School Buildings

Secondary Indicators	MORE In-Person Learning	Re-assess strategies to determine appropriate balance of in-person and remote learning (hybrid learning)	LESS In-Person Learning
Percent positivity rate (# of positive tests/ # of total tests, 14-day average)	Secondary Indicators trending down to flat	<u>Direction of Change:</u> Secondary Indicators trending flat to upward	Secondary Indicators trending upward
Number of new COVID-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 population (14-day average)	No statistically significant changes to Secondary Indicators	<u>Speed of Change:</u> Any statistically significant changes upward to Secondary Indicators	Consistent, statistically significant changes upward to Secondary Indicators
COVID-like and Influenza-like Illness (CLI and ILI) Syndromic Surveillance			

* Originally adapted from: the Harvard Global Health Institute’s publication *The Path to Zero and Schools: Achieving Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning Spaces*, July 2020 and revised in consideration of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance document *Indicators for Dynamic School Decision-Making*, updated September 15, 2020

How should these metrics be used?

Raw data pertaining to the Leading and Secondary Indicators identified in this guidance will be updated and published by DPH on a weekly basis. School district administrators should review updated data and consult with their school medical advisors and local health director to discuss ongoing mitigation strategies and any changes to the person-density in school buildings that may be appropriate. District and building-level decisions will ultimately be made at the local level, and every locality will need to analyze the data available for both the community and the schools.

On October 16, 2020, DPH announced a new weekly [Town-Level COVID-19 Response Framework](#) to support municipal decision-making, which is a color-coded COVID-19 alert system for every city and town in the state. The new weekly alert level is also accompanied by municipal-level guidance on recommended actions for individual residents, institutions such as schools, houses of worship and community organizations, municipal leaders and local health directors. It is important to note that, although the Town-Level Response Framework and Addendum 4 utilize some of the same data metrics to direct action, each of these systems is designed to address the unique circumstances in two different settings — the highly controlled and essential setting of schools versus other community and social settings, where less oversight and compliance with mitigation strategies can be expected.

The DPH “red” alert level in the Town-Level COVID-19 Response Framework identifies towns experiencing elevated community spread of COVID-19 with data showing 15 new cases per 100,000 population per day (14-day average). At this level of community spread, district administrators and local health directors should be engaged together to discuss the robustness of current mitigation strategies in school buildings and to consider what new strategies or changes in learning models is appropriate. However, the level of community spread that would prompt action in non-school community settings is not necessarily indicative of a need for schools to suspend in-person learning.

The experience in our state since school reopening began indicates that transmission has been a rare event inside of school buildings even in communities with elevated transmission rates, likely due to the high-level of planning and compliance with mitigation strategies designed to prevent transmission between individuals. This same level of planning and compliance is not necessarily in place in other settings outside of school buildings, and so engagement in general community activities requires more caution.

At the level of 25 new cases per 100,000 per day or more, DPH recommends that district administrators, medical advisors, and local health departments discuss the appropriateness of an increase in remote learning, in the context of the additional considerations below. However, should a district determine not to provide any in-school option prior to this level of community spread, an exception review is required from a panel with representatives from the CSDE, the State Board of Education and DPH. Superintendents should develop a local structure to include the school medical advisor, the local health director, and school nurse leader to consult when making decisions.

Additional considerations for school decision-making:

While leading and secondary indicators give school decision-makers a sense for the level of COVID-19 spread in the community surrounding their schools, there are also many structural and procedural considerations within school districts and individual school buildings that administrators should assess on a continual basis, as these may also influence whether school districts should consider more or less in-person instruction. As part of their decision-making process, district administrators, local health directors and elected officials, and school medical advisors should include consideration of the following “Other Key School Characteristics.”

- **Design of the physical space:**
 - Classroom space available for physical distancing
 - Outdoor space
 - Entrance/Exit design to avoid crowding
 - Overall population of school
- **Cohorting:**
 - Ability of the school to consistently group students in small cohorts and minimize interaction with other cohorts throughout the school day
- **Compliance with self-screening:**
 - Frequency of students and staff arriving at school with symptoms of COVID-19
 - Frequency of students and staff attempting to return to school with symptoms of COVID-19
- **Ventilation (Central and Non-Central HVAC):**
 - Well-functioning and maintained central HVAC system(s) (or the functional equivalent) are in place
- **Cleaning and Disinfection:**
 - Plans in place in accordance with DPH and SDE guidance regarding cleaning protocols
 - Adequate supplies and implementation of Cleaning and Disinfection plan
- **Person-density:**
 - The number of individuals present inside the school building at any given time
 - The effect of increasing or decreasing person-density on the ability to fully implement mitigation strategies (e.g., per-person ventilation, cohort sizes, cleaning schedules, etc.)
 - Person-density can be reduced either through programmed hybrid scheduling or as a result of students voluntarily “opting-in” to remote learning