

Return to Instruction Plan: Amendments Update

Board of Education Meeting January 25, 2021

What were the proposed amendments on 11-23-20?

As Soon As Possible: *Bring the students in grades K, 1, and 2 who are currently in the blended learning model to school every day.*

Around the End of January: *Shift the bell schedule for the district back to the traditional full day times (including Wednesdays) and maintain the cohorting system of the blended learning model.*

Around the End of February: *Seek to offer before/after care to students on days that they report to school for instruction.*

Continue the 100% all virtual program for all grades.

Longer Term: *Bring remaining grade levels of blended learning model students in every day.*

Where are we with these amendments now?

As Soon As Possible: Bring the students in grades K, 1, and 2 who are currently in the blended learning model to school every day.

- KG is currently coming to school daily without cohorting effective January 19
- Grade 1 will be able to offer daily instruction starting on Monday, February 1
- Grade 2 will be able to offer daily instruction starting on Wednesday, February 17th
- Approximately 15 students per class and/or use of larger spaces
- Resectioning is required and some students will be assigned to new teachers

Where are we with these amendments now?

Around the End of January: *Shift the bell schedule for the district back to the traditional full day times (including Wednesdays) and maintain the cohorting system of the blended learning model.*

Parents were issued a selection form and asked to make a commitment in

Scenario 1: in-person full days on the cohort system or virtual.

And also in...

Scenario 2*: in-person abbreviated days without the cohort system or virtual.

*Since as of January 11, the in-person/virtual mix was at about 55%/45% across the district, it seemed that it may be possible to provide this option, this was the reason it was included in the selection form.

Scenario 1 vs. Scenario 2

- We know that social distancing is attainable in Scenario 1 since students would only come to school on the cohort system. However more time eating in school is a concern as is the numbers of students eating lunch at one time. So we used the selection form to look at the numbers of students eating at the same time. Scenario 1 also involves more social contact throughout a full school day, loss of afternoon tutorials/meetings and longer time on Zoom for remote students.
- In Scenario 2 the question becomes whether or not we could achieve our social distancing goals or if the class sizes would be too high if both A and B day students came in daily. Lunch would not be served in scenario 2, so the focus was to look at the selection form results relative to class sizes.

Selection Form Responses

Anticipated Responses: 3834 (Students in Blended A, Blended B, 100% Virtual)

Actual Responses: 3340

Responses after Data Scrubbing*: 2933 (76% of anticipated responses)

- 780 3-5
- 2153 6-12

*Many parents did not complete the selection form. Other forms were completed incorrectly, some submissions were duplicates, some responses were submitted unnecessarily (51 daily students).

Scenario 1: Implications

- Students would need to spend more time without a mask on while eating
- Students would eat in classrooms or in controlled seating spaces such as the cafeteria
- More time would need to be invested in cleaning between rounds of students
- Students would spend a full day in school wearing a mask
- Students would interact with more peers and teachers throughout the longer day
- Virtual students would need to commit a longer portion of the day to connecting to school remotely
- Teachers would not be available for afternoon tutorials

Scenario 2: Students in Classes, Elementary School

The table below indicates the average class size based on the selection form.

School		Grade 3 Class Size Range	Grade 4 Class Size Range	Grade 5 Class Size Range
CHS	In School	12-13	16-18	16-17
	Virtual	29	29	21-23
LCS	In School	13-21	15-17	14-16
	Virtual	23	15-20	24
MPS	In School	19	16-19	14-17
	Virtual	20	26-27	26
OSS	In School	16-18	19-20	18-19
	Virtual	20	13	14

Scenario 2: Elementary School Implications

- Rebalancing of sections involving some students having new teachers, especially where staff are being added (this needs to happen in both virtual and in-person sections)
- Mitigate largest class sizes by:
 - Utilizing nontraditional teaching spaces that are larger than the typical classroom
 - Rotating a group of students out of the regular classroom to a learning lab
 - Attempting to find more staff
- Less social distance between students as class size increases

Social distance in a classroom...

- Classroom Square footage varies
- Elementary vs. middle vs. high school pupil size
- Classroom layout
- Fixed/built in furniture
- Teaching space
- Entryway
- Bathroom

The A-Day/B-day cohort system was designed with about 12 students/classroom in mind to strive for 6 feet of social distancing. As class size increases we are taking measures such as adding barriers to classrooms but actual spacing may reduce to less than 6 feet depending on the number of occupants and the size of the teaching space.

Scenario 2 - Students in Classes, Middle School

The table below identifies the number of sections each period where there would be more than 15 students in a classroom based on the selection form.

	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3		Period 4		Period 5		Period 6		Period 7		Period 8		Period 9		Period 10	
Class Size	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +
# of Sections	4	1	4	2	4	3	9	8	7	4	9	6	7	2	6	4	7	6	7	3

Scenario 2 - Middle School Implications

- Possible rebalancing of sections involving some students having new teachers
- Mitigate largest class sizes by:
 - Utilizing nontraditional teaching spaces that are larger than the typical classroom
 - Rotating a group of students out of the regular classroom to a learning lab
 - Attempting to find more staff
- Less social distance between students as class size increases

Scenario 2 - Students in Classes, High School

The table below identifies the number of sections each period where there would be more than 15 and 16 students in a classroom based on the selection form.

	Period 1		Period 2		Period 3		Period 4		Period 5		Period 6		Period 7		Period 8		Period 9		Period 10	
Class Size	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +	15 +	16 +
# of Sections	10	9	14	10	12	9	5	4	13	10	9	7	6	3	6	3	9	7	15	13

Scenario 2 - High School Implications

- Possible learning lab assignments to mitigate largest class sizes
- Less social distance between students as class size increases

Recommendations Short Term

- 1) Bring back all in-person elementary school students daily on the abbreviated day schedule as soon as possible (with the goal being by the end of February).
- 2) Grades 6 to 12: Maintain status quo at least until CALI score shifts to Yellow and Local Health Department and District Physician supports more in-person instruction at these grade levels, at that time consider removing cohorting and having students come to school on a daily basis on abbreviated days.

Where are we now?

Around the End of February: *Seek to offer before/after care to students on days that they report to school for instruction.*

Primary focus is on instructional programs right now, however we would like to bring back this program to at least some degree this year.

Continue the 100% *all virtual program for all grades.*

The 100% virtual program will remain available for this school year (barring executive order).

Longer Term: *Bring remaining grade levels of blended learning model students in every day.*

Once all in-person students are in school daily on abbreviated days, shift to full days and include lunch in-person. The timing of this shift is hopefully 4th marking period/spring, when staff have been vaccinated and/or the state is in GREEN and health officials are supportive of the change.

Personnel Action to support amendments

Board action tonight to hire 4 1st grade, 3 2nd grade, 1 3rd grade, and 1 5th grade staff member.

Potential for slight delay in start date as some of the staff members must give notice to their current employer.

Moving forward however...extremely difficult to recruit qualified/certificated K-5 staff; applicant pool is small.

Personnel: Remote/All virtual Staff

2 categories of remote staff:

- Temporary: Staff members may need to quarantine due to being a close contact or possible exposure
 - Lasts no longer than 2 weeks
- High Risk Medical: Approved by District Chief Medical Officer
 - Very small number of staff 6-12 (less than 15)
 - These staff members will be recalled this year when conditions allow

*Some K-5 needed to be all virtual to work with all virtual K-5 students

**District is currently exploring vaccine opportunities & encouraging staff to register though NJ Dept. of Health.