

Forum # 1 - June 3, 2020

Questions from the audience members: Sorted by Category

Answers posted June 10, 2020

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I. Daily Scheduling & Distance Learning

1. *If we were to go with a hybrid model, would it model a traditional school day of education vs. what we are currently doing?*
2. *If the kids do not go back in September, is it possible for teachers to teach the classes through the Google Meets just as if they are in the actual classroom? In other words, can they follow the daily schedule and teach every day virtually instead of a 30 minute Google Meet 1-2 times per week.*
3. *At this time, Live sessions have been brief and much less frequent than our kids usual class schedules.*
4. *Why has it been so difficult to do remote classes following a more regular schedule?*
5. *I am wondering if the possibility of online school schedules similar to "in person school" is being planned in case September opening is not possible (I'm afraid it may not be).*
6. *If total distance learning needs to continue in the fall, what improvements do you foresee?*
7. *Will the distance learning model change to REQUIRE teachers to teach and students to attend? Currently in AMS many are optional and are only Q and A . Students are teaching themselves material and it's a challenge*

We are still a bit ahead of ourselves with regard to determining exactly how we will schedule our days, but there are two things we are quite certain of for September,

regardless of whether we are in a fully remote learning environment or in a Hybrid Learning structure.

We will be incorporating multiple daily live teaching interactions with educators at all grade levels so students are learning and connecting directly with their teachers. At the secondary level this would mean live contact with each teacher daily; at the elementary level this would mean multiple live interactions with their classroom teacher daily. In addition, we will provide more structured days for students and instructors that mimic, to varying degrees, our in-person learning schedule of a normal school day. Details are yet to come with exactly what that means for each building, but we understand this is desired, and will be beneficial for our students and families.

II. Model - Logistics, Flexibility & Choice

8. *Can you elaborate on what a hybrid model would look like for CRS? Would students attend every other day?*
9. *I've heard other districts discuss sending k-6 to school and spread throughout the buildings in the district and teach 7-12 remotely. Is this being discussed in ardsley?*
10. *If it's a split session, will they go by last name and keep continuity across all schools?*
11. *Splitting the day into shifts would be challenging for many working parents. Would it be a consideration to have a typical in-person class for parents that are comfortable with that and then to also have dedicated virtual classes for parents that prefer that?*
12. *Rather than splitting which creates so many scheduling issues, can parents opt into traditional live school vs all virtual classes?*
13. *What happens if school does reopen but some parents are still not comfortable sending their child?*
14. *We want a choice to continue distance learning in case.*
15. *Do you anticipate you'll be able to be flexible about accommodating families with immunocompromised members that may have a different level of risk tolerance*
16. *How do you think you might handle the student who discovered that they do better with distance learning than attending classes?*
17. *Will you consider installing cameras in the classrooms to allow for students to learn remotely if they need to be isolated? (If a family member becomes diagnosed with covid)*

These are all real issues that we know our families are concerned about from our survey responses. We know that many of our community members are at different comfort levels with regard to a physical return to school, with a variety of concerns.

While it is still too early to determine what will be recommended by the state and what may be embraced throughout Westchester County and by health professionals regarding reopening logistics, all of these questions point to options under consideration. As noted in the webinar, we are also looking closely at what has succeeded in other countries who are ahead of our timeline.

Bearing that in mind, especially in a hybrid learning model, we believe that it would be possible to provide some flexibility for members of our community as needed. We continue to evaluate a variety of technical solutions so that students can interact with a teacher more effectively whether they are home or in the classroom. Our instructors believe in the value of face-to-face interaction, and we want to ensure that all students will have that option to the best extent available. We are investigating what those options may be as we look to align our remote learning with in-person learning experiences. We also are mindful of how this affects health risks, transportation costs, and a consistent and equitable experience for our students.

III. Programming - Assessments

- 18. How will you adjust the curriculum to meet children where they are at? For ex: if a child is behind in reading, will they automatically receive literacy support?*
- 19. Will assessments be done online if we are not in the classroom?*
- 20. Will progress reports return? And will teachers be required to return work so they know where they need to improve? And how will this be monitored?*

We are addressing the issue of gaps and learning loss, sometimes called “the Covid Slide” by education professionals and the press, through pre-assessment and curriculum adjustments.

We plan to benchmark students K-8 in the fall in reading and mathematics to understand their needs. Teachers will adjust the curriculum accordingly to help meet students where they are.

At the secondary level where subjects are taught sequentially, teachers will determine any gaps through pre-assessment at the beginning of a unit, and adjust instruction to support gaps in content and skill.

IV. Programming - Summer

- 21. Will teachers be able to provide packets of work for parents to do with their children this summer? Even if they could email worksheets for parents to do that would be extremely helpful.*
- 22. Will the district provide recommended or suggested resources for students to front load content in an effort to offset difficulties that may occur with the hybrid model?*

We often publish recommended summer reading lists. This year, we would strongly encourage our students to engage in reading activities.

We recognize that there is anxiety among parents and students about being “behind” and being “unprepared” for the fall. Our curriculum leaders are striving to provide the community with additional learning websites by the end of June that our students may enjoy over the summer. In addition, the resources listed on the Panthers Link will remain active all summer. In general, we encourage students of all ages to engage in reading, mathematics review and practice as well as pursuing “passion projects.”

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V. Childcare

- 23. Will there be afterschool programs or childcare help if there are half days?*
- 24. How do you solve childcare with hybrid?*

Because the afterschool program is privately run, please connect with the Ardsley Children's Center to find out their latest planned approach. We imagine they need to wait to see what is happening with school reopenings prior to announcing finalized plans.

We have been providing childcare for first responders since the start of the pandemic, and will continue to support any state directed programs.

VI. Timing of Decisions

- 25. Are there dates of when we should expect to hear about September? or fall? or how much lead time would we get to prepare for each scenario?*
- 26. Is there any anticipated change in the school start date?*
- 27. When will a plan be locked in for the fall? So the community knows what to expect for September?*

As of now, we are not expecting to change the first day of school, but that is a variable for which the state may provide input. However, the need for additional professional development days for teachers and staff to learn new technology tools may necessitate the need to delay school a few days. Labor Day is late this year, so we plan to open school for students that week, unless we hear otherwise from the State.

Finalizing a plan is not an “event” we can lock down, but rather a series of decisions. We will be transparent with the community as we inch closer to understanding our options and we will share all decisions in a timely manner. The Building Task Force Teams will begin meeting June 22-30. You can expect regular updates from both the District Team and the Building Teams as plans solidify. We will hold a second Re-Entry Task Force Forum during the week of July 13th and will notify the community as soon as a schedule is set.

VII. Health & Safety

- 28. What developments would it actually take for the district to seriously consider opening schools fully in Sept? You began by saying it's unlikely - realistically is it off the table without a vaccine?*
- 29. Do you think that even half capacity, you can achieve social distancing? Are there schools/countries doing it well that have kids back more in full capacity we can look at. Or have you considered temperature checks/tracing models, especially as camps are opening, etc.*
- 30. If it is every other day school-doesn't the teacher still get exposed to all the kids and therefore all the kids will be exposed to everyone?*

It is our current understanding that a full opening is unlikely without an available vaccine. While opening on a reduced capacity may present unique challenges, we will be following the CDC recommendations as far as safety procedures and measures (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>). This will most likely include the wearing of masks, social distancing, enhanced cleaning

procedures, reduced sharing of materials and equipment, availability of hand sanitizers throughout buildings, and other new policies. The CDC refers to “stacking” training, practices, and policies to amplify the protections from infection and spread. Testing and contact tracing are important details where we are still currently seeking guidance. In all, these measures will reduce the risk of infection and spread.

However, our first survey shows we have not reached consensus as a community to this important question: “What constitutes an acceptable level of risk for our students, our staff, and our families?”

VIII. Student Voice

31. How soon before you ask for student input regarding what they'd like to see for their schooling come September? We are given an opportunity here to construct new experiences and improved ways of reaching our youth in education, and to learn from their own first-hand experience of this situation. I think the discussion here must include their voice regardless of what parents, educational, and State authorities deem appropriate and necessary. What community resources, such as our public library, can we also incorporate for offsite learning? Thank you all...

This is a great question and we agree that direct feedback from our students is very important. As noted in the webinar, in addition to the District Task Force, there will be building-level task forces which will include student voices. In addition, many teachers gathered student feedback throughout the spring. We plan to incorporate this into our planning in June and over the summer.

IX. Sports & Physical Activity

32. Saddened to learn that the modified sports program needed to be cut from the budget. Is there a way to revisit this? I know that parents would be willing to pay into this means having parents pay into the program.

33. It would be great to see intramurals at the Middle School level for sure.... if sports can't be played with other schools. (Like club sports...)

As a public school district, we cannot operate a program that is “pay for play”, to address the first question above. There are both budgetary and health considerations with regard to sports and athletics, and Mr. Ramponi and our coaches will be looking to engage our students as early and fully as possible. Our plans will be framed around the idea that all of us, students, staff, and community members benefit from regular physical activity. If regular teams and athletic contests cannot proceed in the fall, we will find as

many safe and engaging activities as we can for students to do in school, after school, and home. Please be patient as we work through our options.

X. Other

34. Will the session be recorded and available in Spanish?

35. Inform the community who their representatives are, so that they can provide a voice.

The Re-Entry Task Force Forums will all be taped for viewing at any time and is housed on our website, www.ardsleyschools.org/taskforce. Below are links to the first presentation and video.

[Re-Entry Task Force Forum Presentation - June 3:](#) This presentation provides an overview of the Re-Entry Task Force objectives, structure and scope.

We also invite you to view a video of the presentation by [following this ZOOM link](#). You must enter the password **7r^E84sf** to access. Note: The Forum began with an overview, an introduction of the presenters and the survey results. Since we jumped between websites to show the survey results, the video began recording slightly after the beginning of the presentation. Please view the first few slides in presentation format.

Please send questions for the Task Force to taskforce@ardsleyschools.org.

These public questions and answers can be made available in Spanish. Please contact us at taskforce@ardsleyschools.org to request a copy.

Community Leaders:

- County Executive: George Latimer (CE@westchestergov.com)
- Legislator: MaryJane Shimsky (<https://westchesterlegislators.com/district-12>)
- State Legislature Senator: Andrea Stewart-Cousins (scousins@nysenate.gov) and [Thomas Abinanti](#) (abinantit@nyassembly.gov)
- House Representatives, [Eliot L. Engel](#) and [Nita M. Lowey](#)
- Senators: Charles E. Schumer (<http://www.schumer.senate.gov/>) and Kirsten Gillibrand (<http://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/>)