

# **School Reopening Meeting – 1:00PM**

## **June 11, 2020**

### **Attendees Scheduled:**

Dr. Cook; Deborah Johnson; Lisa Schlenker; Gina Berzal; Joseph Jimick; Benjamin Bragg; Nicole Chaluisan; Kerry Overbaugh; Junait Shah; John Rivers; Don Marino; April Ormerod; Holly Hebb; Rebecca VanAlstyne; Stacy Hallam; Lisa VanDyke; Kelly Konsul; Suzanne Ribsamen; Sheri Whitney; Erin Holdridge; Tammi Kellenbenz; Doug Lampman; Christa Dedrick; Michelle Storrs; Jodi Chirkis; Joe Crocetta; Christie Berard; Colleen Nabozny; Cheryl Cinatti; Christine Penet; Cherie Dottino; Tammy Morrow; Heather Schindler; Diane Ashley; Alissa Hackett; Mary Jo Verdichizzi; Cynthia Nash; Stefanie Loomis, Alex Standish; Barb Erceg; Kelly Marino; Thomas McNamee; Eve Hines; Kim Jones; Nancy Palmateer

Dr. Cook opened the meeting at 1:00; he said the Governor is asking for a re-entry plan sometime in July. He would like viewpoints expressed. Many things need to be taken into consideration. Three weeks ago, Dr. Cook forwarded a survey from the ThoughtExchange via Dr. Cruz, Questar III BOCES, District Superintendent. He shared the feedback generated from the survey. There were 37 BOCES involved to generate ideas on their thoughts on reopening schools. There were at least 61,394 participants. There were 2.2 million ratings, and 80,000 thoughts expressed. 61% of parents participated; 33% faculty and staff participated.

The main themes mentioned were in-person instruction is important; remote instruction has pros and cons; cleaning and disinfecting issues, as well as social and mental health, budget and funding, safety, schools as support systems, sick students. Dr. Cook then went over other Questar III themes and thoughts. Dr. Cook said additional support will be necessary.

SPED concerns –

fears of regression of skills, and students connecting with students in person.

ENL concerns –

At risk population not getting services they need; adequate supervision not present during the day to provide safety and structure.

Elementary – deep cleaning every day; digital format does replicate in person learning

MS – open school. Remote learning not substitute for in-person education.

HS – children showing symptoms should be sent home immediately. And not all students thrive in distance learning environment.

Dr. Cook put up the link for this information.

Dr. Cook referred to the principals for their input. He said the Governor will provide us with direction. Two to three different models were reviewed (blended instruction, virtual learning, and an “a” “b” schedule). Mr. Bragg spoke about the “a” “b” day schedule. He said several discussions were done; as well as using day 1 and day 2, dividing by the alphabet, and do an alternating day schedule and embed the virtual piece. Also, students could receive 4 days of instruction with the 5<sup>th</sup> day being virtual. Cafeteria time would be split with the gym and cafeteria. 21 minutes each.

Kerry said they are working on a similar scenario as the high school; but the "a" "b" may be confusing, but the schedule done by the day of the week. Friday would hold office hours for teachers. On virtual learning days, aides and assistants could help. Physical education would be in cafeteria (21 min) – there is no physical education classes periods 5, 6 and 7. The nurse's office will be moved into the MS Conference Room.

John Rivers said CES would like all the kids back but practicing all safety; option 2 is "a" "b" schedule, lunches take place in the classroom; recess could also be done rotating and practicing CDC recommendations. John stressed they would like to limit the foot traffic to the nurse's office.

Dr. Cook asked Mr. Jimick to speak on buildings and grounds, and cleaning. Intensive cleaning has been done, along with painting. The floors have been stripped back to the base tile and waxed. The HS is almost complete, and the crew will then begin at the MS and ES. The hallways in the MS/HS annex are being painted. A thorough, deep cleaning of all spaces was done, technology equipment included.

Rebecca VanAlstyne provided an update regarding the purchase of mist machines for sanitizing. They are back ordered. The vendor will let Rebecca know when the remainder of the machines are shipped. One machine was delivered. Five machines are on back order. Our custodians will be trained on how to use the machines. Regarding transportation, Rebecca said other districts suggest alternating trips; adding aides to all buses to monitor health symptoms. Scenarios are being planned.

Holly Hebb and Joe Jimick spoke on PPE's and other devices; Joe said a number of forehead thermometers were purchased. Holly explained how to use the thermometers. Holly feels the nurses should not be separated as there may be several issues going on in the nurse's office. Dr. Cook said we are still waiting on a response from SED. Don Marino said the tech department cleaned all the equipment in classrooms and offices. Chrome books were handed out to all students who needed them (400) and collection process will begin on Monday, June 22, 2020. Google classroom usage increased as a result of the remote learning. Technology will be ready for September. Dr. Cook said additional chrome books were purchased. A staggered return schedule will be made under a tented area behind the High School. Dr. Cook provided the committees with a copy of the ThoughtExchange results.

Dr. Cook then opened the floor for conversation. Gina Berzal asked about custodial staff being adequate upon the opening of school? Dr. Cook said some re-shifting of current staff may need to be looked at. President Johnson asked if more staff would be needed, or used from lawn crew, etc. She stressed we be cognizant of the cleaning aspects. Ms. Johnson asked about the opening of windows on school buses in September as it gets warm; she thinks the heat is not good for our students and would like to see bus windows being opened. Rebecca said that increased sanitizing on buses is needed. Ms. Johnson said adult protocol should be similar to that given to students. i.e. teachers coming to work ill. The rules for staff to come back should be spelled out before the return; Dr. Cook totally agreed.

Stacy Hallam said during the Kindergarten team meeting a concern mentioned was the consistency among school districts. The team suggested Monday/Tuesday staggering schedule be used, Wednesday for cleaning, and Thursday and Friday staggering again.

Stefanie Loomis inquired about technology and internet access in the fall. Dr. Cook mentioned that secured hot spots. Junait Shah said Autism Connection will sponsor our SPED students for access; so we will need to look into the future finances of this. Dr. Cook said we will still need funds as a District to support virtual learning. Stefanie asked about 1:1 chrome books. Dr. Cook said we have enough. We had 1900 prior the school closure period and purchased an additional 250 at the last BOE meeting. Don Marino said we have enough for each student. Stefanie asked about the mask policy for students and teachers. Dr. Cook said we will continue to use PPE. Masks can be used when the restrictions are lifted. Nevertheless, at this time we do need to use masks. The HS Science Department likes Monday, Tuesday. instruction, Wednesday for cleaning, and Thursday and Friday for instruction.

Eve Hines asked about plans for teachers that do "specials" and pushing into classrooms. This includes reading, specialist, etc. Dr. Cook said this will be thought out.

Alissa Hackett asked about families having students in different grade/building levels; Kerry Overbaugh suggested using addresses as the determining schedule factor so that students/families are on the same schedule.

Alex Standish spoke of using headphones for virtual learning. Dr. Cook said if purchased, they wouldn't be shared. Each student would be assigned their own headphone and stored individually in plastic bags. She also suggested having 1 day allotted for cleaning and online support. This would mean each grade level would have a day, and rotate. This may impact children that have siblings.

Nancy Palmateer asked if there was a prioritized list for returning from the Governor. This may work better than "a" and "b" days. Maybe use empty classrooms with smaller classes and tweak the playground/specials. She asked if it would be a state-wide decision, or Questar. Dr. Cook said Gov. Cuomo does daily briefings; if we are allowed to return in September. They will be parents who keep their children at home, until a vaccine is available. Dr. Cook said CES has space for class size adjustment, but CMS wouldn't have adequate space. CHS has limited space.

Lisa VanDyke asked about teachers/staff/students that have underlying health conditions; Dr. Cook referred to Ms. Ashley/Ms. Hebb to address this. Dr. Cook will discuss this with unions/BOE. Diane Ashley said if you have an underlying condition, you shouldn't put yourself in jeopardy. It all depends on what the underlying medical condition is.

April Ormerod asked about keeping children socially distant and the difficulty that will present. Dr. Cook acknowledged the difficulty this presents at all grade levels, which is why we are looking at other options. We have additional classes at CES. We may divide our children into groups, spacing in the classrooms, etc. Alex Standish said we are all adaptable and children will be able to acclimate.

Cherie Dottino spoke of the importance about our students that don't have home support. We need to think about those students. Dr. Cook said home visits were made. Junait said his home visits were more for issuing hot spots for chrome books. Some of the homes he visited didn't have English speaking families. Some families are just unreachable. Nicole Chaluisan enjoyed visiting her students and is willing to continue.

Dr. Cook said that our traditional credit recovery program will be facilitated virtually over the summer for High School students. No other summer programs will take place this summer. Ms. Johnson mentioned a situation with a student that is now failing. Distance learning works for some students, but not for all. Dr. Cook referred to the lack of socialization currently. Many of our students thrive on the competitiveness.

Heather Schindler said parents don't seem to be overly concerned about distancing and that parents want a September return. She said normalcy in being a kid again is important. Dr. Cook said there will be a small population of families not wanting to send back their children.

Michelle Storrs has done home visits and she spoke from the students' perspective. She said that students want to come back. They miss the routine and structure. Whatever schedule is made, it needs to be consistent, so students don't sleep in. They are expected to show up on Google Meets, etc., in a structured regiment and routine.

Alex Standish also asked about the learning standards. This probably won't be a major academic year. Hopefully state testing will be postponed. Dr. Cook stressed safety and security first, as well as meeting

the social emotional needs of our students and staff. He said that when and if we do come back the academic components will be different. Skill recovery will be needed, as well as social/emotional pieces. We need to get people back into the flow. Alex also said the current social disruptions going on will be a part of the return. The students will look to their teachers for answers and follow their lead.

Junait asked if Questar will provide us with return to school guidelines. Dr. Cook responded that clear guidelines will be issued. Dr. Cook feels that we need to continue to strategize as a District, so we are ahead of the game and not awaiting a decision from the Governor.

Nancy Palmateer/Michelle Storrs mentioned that students pick up on teacher's cues; positivity is necessary to ensure students are in a safe and healthy environment.

Tom McNamee feels online learning should be the focus. He said a resurgence of the virus in the fall may occur and we should be prepared. He feels with technology it can still be successful. Those that don't have resources at home, small rooms in the school be made available for instruction. Dr. Cook replied that we are at the mercy of the CDC and the Governor. Various options will need to be planned. We have to prepare either way as we won't know what decisions will be made.

Dr. Cook closed the meeting 2:30pm, reminding the group that June 25 at 1:00 is the next scheduled meeting. 44 participants attended this meeting.