

HISD Strong Start Task Force Meeting: 8/7/20 @ 10:00 am

In attendance in person: Kendra Bennett, Scot Clayton, Joy Schaffner, Nala Chambers, Michael Smiley, Terry McCutchen, Angie Duncan, Paige Liggett

In attendance virtually: Brittanie Brown, David Smith, Debra McClure, Derek Leach, Jana Fletcher, Jeanette Holding, Jessica Hoffman, Joy Campbell, Kellie Harris, Sam Powers, Sarah Scribner, Tammy Weaver, Virginia Gaskey, William Holcombe

Feedback/questions over topics discussed previously:

Mrs. Gaskey had questions and concerns expressed to her about parents having to commit to virtual learning for 6 weeks. What if virtual learning is not working for their student? What kind of protocols do we have in place for students who are not being successful online? Progress monitoring will be done but we need to consider this as a task force. Do we want to consider reevaluating after the first 6 weeks? Parents will have to sign an agreement for their student to go virtual. If their student does not do what is expected for remote learning, they will be counted absent and truancy could become an issue. There are so many unknowns but we do not want to put teachers in a position where students are flipping back and forth. The family would have to feel comfortable with the student coming back; we would not want to advise them to do something that they are not comfortable with as far as their safety. You also may have a situation where a parent has to return to work unexpectedly during the 6-weeks period. This is something we may want to consider individually for each student and family. This was tabled and later discussed at the end of the meeting along with the remote learning agreement.

There were several updates this week to TEA's public health guidance. Our plan has been updated accordingly. Dr. Greer, our local health advisor, has also reviewed the plan and made recommendations.

Update on page 3: Head Start is a federal program and will have different guidelines than the state. There will be specific protocols for those students, and their parents are being made aware of those.

Mr. Clayton said we have to communicate and take direction from the public health agency in Arlington. Since we are a small county that does not have our own agency, we are lumped in with the regional group out of Arlington. Therefore, we may not hear about positive cases as quickly as we would like.

Commitment forms were sent out this week, and we have had a really good return. Mrs. Bennett is working through the list. 860 responses at this time, but some are duplicates.

- Approximately 90% have chosen on campus learning for the first 6 weeks. We still have people responding.
- 96% of families report that they have internet access, 97% can stream media
- 83% have sufficient technology devices
- 63% who have multiple children in the home would have sufficient technology devices for all children

- Supposed to get approx. 100 devices from the state and hot spots also. Met with Derek this week and discuss how to distribute devices to the teachers and students. Priority will be given to having plenty of laptops for teachers to check out.
- Mr. Smiley said parents are not taking this decision lightly. Those choosing remote are doing so for very legitimate reasons.

Changes to Draft Plan

- Page 3: Head Start
- Page 7: Definition of Close Contact per TEA, they added a lot to bullet b. Basically the public health agency will make the determination on close contact, but we may not hear from them in time so we may have to make decisions. Recommended practice is a face shield AND mask for staff—that could mean that you are considered not close contact even though you are in the same classroom. There will still be more clarification forthcoming on this.
- List of symptoms has gone back to a long list. Must consider if the symptoms are “not normal” for them. We cannot tell a parent that we think their child has COVID and that they need to go get them tested! This will be reiterated with all staff.
- Head Start students will be required to wear masks but it is still unclear if that will be all day or just at certain times.
- Page 11: Campus visitors—Dr. Greer recommended that visitors will have their temperature taken before they are allowed to come into the main school area. They will be required to wear masks on campus and in buildings. Their temperature would be taken by office staff. Staff are self-screening every morning, so why not require the same for visitors? Add statement of “just as staff are self-screening” to this section.
- Hand washing will be done upon entering and exiting classrooms (not just “frequently”). This provides more clarification.
- Masks will be highly encouraged for students entering and leaving cafeteria and while in line. To be consistent, this will apply to 5th grade and up. Younger students may still bring masks and can be highly encouraged to wear them during these times.
- School Events and Activities—masks are highly recommended whenever practical. We have to all do our part to make sure we can continue having these activities.
- Extracurricular—remote students coming up during the school day for activities must check in at the office.
- There is a webinar today over handling/selling tickets to extracurricular activities. There will be a specific number of spectators allowed and likely a flat fee for tickets rather than reserved vs. general admission. More details to come on this.
- PPE updates: face shields, gloves, and masks have arrived from TEA. Locally, we have done a lot of ordering to fill in the gaps. Joy Campbell has been testing out products for hand sanitizing. We ordered additional face shields and will have plenty. Those will be distributed to campuses so they can be distributed to staff. Hand sanitizing stations have been ordered for each campus and cafeterias.

Remote Learning Agreement

- Parents will be asked to meet with campus staff and sign off on this agreement which includes expectations for remote learners. Mrs. Bennett will check with technology to see if this form can be created online so an electronic signature can be obtained.
- Instructional schedule #1.d.—discuss this as an admin team, each different entity will have guidelines on whether or not their test can be administered remotely (examples: TPRI, Aimsweb, SAT, ACT, STAAR, etc.); admin team will decide on wording to clarify this bullet
- #2—more discussion is needed on this; some teachers will not be able to get to questions until 4:00 because they can't get to them during the school day; However, we want teachers to have time to themselves and not be responding to questions 24 hours a day. Mr. Smiley pointed out that there is a difference between an expectation and what teachers are actually going to do. We want to have a time guideline for parents so they can understand the expectation, and teachers may go beyond that if needed. This is different for elementary and secondary since at secondary the students are most likely the ones responding and interacting. For elementary, parents who may work throughout the day may not log on until after hours. This is a major concern for elementary teachers. Leave a time guideline/expectation (4:00) but also add that teachers will be expected to respond to parent/student inquiries within 24 hours.
- #5—add “average daily minimum”
- Material design—assessments will be comparable to those in the regular classroom
- Student progress--#4: Student feedback will be provided from the teacher at least weekly. What if students are struggling to make progress? Should their placement be reevaluated? Ultimately, this is a parent decision. Do we want to allow them to go from remote to in person before the end of the 6-weeks period? Committee members feel like we will need at least 3 weeks to determine if a student is successful on remote learning. If a parent chooses to switch from one to another, should the district implement a one-week transition period for the teachers/student to come back after the decision is made? Should this be limited to the 1st 6 weeks? Can we just say “case by case” basis? It is likely that decisions will be made case by case all year. We do not really have a choice since it is the parent's decision. Parents have already committed to the first 6 weeks of remote learning, but it would be nice to have safeguards in place on the remote learning agreement.
- #3—Parents will be committed for a 6 weeks grading period. Add wording—“For only the first 6 weeks, there will be a grace period of 3 weeks where a parent may choose to return their student to campus for in person learning.” Maybe add “after meeting with campus administration.” Or something like that.

Technology Use Agreements—our technology department is working on this

Plan of Action—

Scenario training for the admin team this afternoon

Screening forms and protocols will be finalized; admin and teachers trained

Posters and signage for campuses and to send home
Staff training during inservice
Survey families about bus transportation
Plan for how to handle meals for remote only students

Questions:

Will office staff be trained on how to handle phone calls received saying a student has tested positive for COVID-19? Yes. Jeanette has some forms the admin team will review. Jeanette said we will need to contact the health agency in Arlington within a reasonable amount of time after receiving this information. There will be a meeting to discuss with office staff at a later time.

When should we have task force meetings moving forward? Mr. Clayton proposed meetings every other week on Wednesdays at 4:00. This can be on TEAMS.

The teachers that are already on the DAT/CAT teams will stay the same; they will not rotate off as scheduled for this year to ensure continuity of communication and information. If anyone is unwilling or unable to serve, speak with campus principal or Mrs. Bennett.