

DPAC MEETING
Thursday, May 21, 2022

Will social distancing between students be in place?

- Our health and safety guidelines include a number of physical distancing protocols including adherence to density limits as prescribed by WorkSafeBC, staggered pick-up and drop-off times, avoiding close greetings, reminding children to keep their hands to themselves, classroom design, scheduling, monitoring and supervision as well as outdoor play.
- Staff will provide supervision outside and in hallways to guide students into classrooms and monitor distancing.

Will there be a recess and, if so, who will ensure social distancing outside? How will recess and lunch be dealt with? Will children be going outside to play in the playground?

- There will not be scheduled recess times, rather individual classroom teachers will schedule break times for their students.

How will teachers teach online at the same time as teaching in class?

- Our half-day model supports teachers in tending to their remote learning responsibilities for daily half-day portions.

How many students are you really anticipating returning in June? What about in September?

- At this point, we have about a 50% interest in returning to school in June.
- At this time, our ministry is hopeful that we will have a full return in September but of course we will have to wait to receive further guidance from the ministry of education and PHO.

I have asked 2 teachers already and neither is aware of the answer: what will the instruction look like? Will these students be doing something different or doing the same as what is being done online just getting in-class help with?

- We are continuing to work with our teachers to develop learning plans that support a blended learning model. How do we take advantage of the face-to-face time to enhance learning? This likely will depend on the grade level of the students and the amount of contact time that we have.
- The time in class can be used to provide feedback, modeling, and support with the projects and assignments students are completing. It will also be a time to provide additional guidance on new assignments.
- There will also be a social component to the return, an opportunity for our grade 12 students to get some closure.

What are the hours and days of the week looking like? What has been determined?

- At this point, the morning sessions will be 9-11:30 and the afternoon will be 12:30 – 3:00.
- Final schedules will depend on numbers of students returning as well as staffing logistics.

Are masks mandatory for staff and/or kids?

- The guidance we have received is that masks are not required in schools; however, we do have PPE available for circumstances in which they are needed due to a medical situations.
- We are supporting staff and students in making their own choices regarding masks.

A. K-5 Related Questions

- 1. Will there be a recess, and, if so, who will ensure social distancing is happening outside?**
Recess will be staggered on a classroom basis to restrict the number of students in one place at one time. Teachers will guide when it is time for their individual classrooms to take breaks.
- 2. Will my child in grade 2 go back to school for 2 full days, 3 full days or a mix of part days? I need to know this as we need childcare when I go back to work in June.**
We are moving to half-days in elementary, middle and secondary schools. Students in elementary schools will attend school for half-days, five days per week.
- 3. In September, do you anticipate having rolling closures of schools?**
We are currently working towards Stage 1 for September. Stage 1 represents a K-12 return to school on a full-time basis. Should we enter a second wave within the COVID pandemic, the Ministry of Education will provide guidance to school districts on how to respond.

Q&A from CHAT:

- A. We were told from BCED group that special needs children will get full-time rather than half-time. Is this true?**
Our students with special needs who require access to instruction 5 days per week will be entitled to full-time attendance.
- B. Are there set days? Will we have a schedule?**
Yes, we will. Principals will send that information out next week.
The following half-day schedule will be followed district-wide:
AM Session: 9:00 – 11:30
PM Session: 12:30 – 3:00
 - There may be need for slight adjustments to allow for staggered start and end times.
 - Students will attend based on grade and/or division
 - Elementary students will attend for 5 half-days based on a 50% density model
 - Middle and Secondary students will attend for 2 half-days based on a 20% density model
 - We need to strictly adhere to the density requirements. There is NO wiggle room on these requirements. For example, a school of 500 (FRMS) will have a maximum capacity of 100 students per day including child care needs
 - Children of essential service workers and students requiring additional support will have full-time access to attend school
- C. Will families go at the same time if their children are in different grades?**
Not necessarily, this will be dependent on the school. This will depend on how each school is organizing the am/pm attendance. For example, it may be by division or grade and will depend on the number of students returning at each school.
- D. If I have multiple children at the same school, will it be possible to have them be on the same schedule to facilitate pick-up and drop-off?**

We'll do our best, but the logistics for 4 weeks are quite challenging. We're doing our best to get students on a part-time return and currently coordinating those schedules. When we get into finer details (coordinating for multiple children & so forth), that will need to be addressed at the particular school with your school principal. To clarify - this is for June only.

E. My kids are both K-5 and I'm an essential service worker - how will this work?

Essential Service workers (ESW) are entitled to have their children in school on a full-time basis (9:00 – 3:00). In addition, our child care provider will be operating the before and after school child care and will be able to support ESWs. Our staff who are also parents of school-aged children in New West Schools are now considered ESWs and will also have access to full-time school attendance and childcare.

F. What is the maximum number of students in class? To clarify: the rules are around student density.

- K-5 = 50% within a given day for students in our building
- Grades 6-12 = 20% of total school population is what we're permitted to allow in our buildings per day.

G. Am I clear that it's 5 days a week (half-days) for K-5?

Yes, half-days 5 days a week for elementary schools.

H. Currently elementary students share desks, will they be given their own desks to work at?

Students will be at individual work spaces.

I. Will school counsellors be available to students on site for K-5?

Yes, our counsellors will be on site for all students and will also continue with remote support as needed.

B. Middle and High School Related Questions

1. For middle school children it is two half-days of school in June?

Yes, it will be 2 half-days at all middle schools (EGMS, FRMS, QMS)

2. Is it really only 1 day a week at NWSS?

- NWSS students will be invited to attend 2 half-days per week
- Grades 9 & 10 – Monday to Thursday mornings (2 of those days for particular classes)
- Grades 11 & 12 can choose 2 afternoons per week
- Half-days are organized by subject area
- Students needing extra support beyond this schedule are invited to make appointments with their teachers
- Students with exceptional needs, who require additional supports will have full-time access to school attendance to support their needs

3. How realistic is it to expect a full return to high school classes in September?

At this point, we're told to expect and anticipate a full return to Stage 1 in September.

4. Will the district delay occupancy of the new school for a full year even if the school is actually ready for occupancy prior to September 2021?

We want to open as soon as possible! Our number 1 focus at this time is to accurately assess the scheduling impact that COVID-19 has had. Ideally, we would like to provide an update before this school year concludes. If the school is ready to open prior to September 2021, we will look to begin the move during the school year as opposed to leaving the new school empty.

5. What is the new estimated date of opening of the new high school?

At this time, we cannot honestly provide a date, but we are hoping to do so as soon as we can.

6. If students are to stay in the old NWSS, what maintenance or repair can be expected on the current building?

The old NWSS school is still a safe building. We will repair anything that is necessary for health and safety reasons to ensure that everyone in the building continues to be safe. NO extra repairs are expected. The maintenance is fairly minimal; we will not put resources towards a building that is eventually going to be decommissioned.

7. What security and safety measures are being put in place to ensure that students are not impacted by the Homeless shelter in the Massey Gym?

First, some context about how the shelter came to be...

- The ERC was activated as a result of a provincial call to action. On April 2, 2020, the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General forwarded a letter to all municipalities. The letter requested that local governments work in collaboration with BC Housing and their regional health authority to ensure that there are local plans in place to accommodate emergency shelter.
- The City identified 3 potential sites for which the Massey Complex was deemed to be favourable due to amenities and space available. The city approached the school district as we are community partners to see the shelter could be accommodated.
- AP 166 Pandemic Response gives the superintendent the authority, under the guidance of provincial and federal direction, to temporarily suspend current practice and operating guidelines. So while we did not go through a process of consultation given the provincial and municipal states of emergency declared and playing our part to support the efforts, we did engage in a comprehensive communication protocol as follows:
 - Under the lead of BC Housing, all partner groups (The City of New Westminister, Fraser Health, Lookout Housing and Health Society and ourselves) collaborated to create communications materials to help speak to the project.
 - Each partner group identified the stakeholders they wanted to communicate with; providing each of them with information and a contact point to find out more if they needed it.
 - From the School Board side, we made sure to engage: NWSS staff, NWSS PAC, Trustees, New Westminister Teachers' Union, CUPE, Graham Construction, and we sent a note from Bettina with the BC Housing documents to all parents at NWSS (in addition to posting it on our website).
 - The City took on responsibility for surrounding neighbours, appropriate business organizations, the adjacent seniors' centre and more.
 - We've been responding to all individual inquiries around the ERC and will continue to use appropriate channels to communicate with our various communities as required.

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Naturally, this has raised questions for people. So here are some more details about what the shelter is delivering for vulnerable people, a bit about all the safety measures in place, and more about what this will mean as we look at the limited, voluntary shift into Phase 3 of the return to school plan...

- The shelter opened May 11th (running for 2 months, thus terminating on July 11th) and currently has 20 guests (and is set to accommodate up to 40). It is done by a referral process from Fraser Health only, no walk-ups. BC housing is fully managing the centre with no school district staff involvement in managing the site.
- For those staying in the shelter, Fraser Health is helping facilitate access to addiction medicine services for patients, on a case-by-case basis. It is a measure to help support people who use drugs and may experience withdrawal symptoms while seeking safe shelter and self-isolation. Lookout staff have set up a safe consumption space on site that is for ERC guests only, and will help make sure it is supervised and ensure it is *contained within* the emergency response centre.
- There is also a fenced-in smoking area for ERC residents, set up on the North-West side of the building. *We note that yes, this is unusual, but again, we're playing a part in delivering an innovative solution in unprecedented times. And for this temporary community support, it was the appropriate decision.*
- Our safety process thus far has included the following but will be further enhanced as we edge closer to June 1.
 - Outside security to walk around the perimeter of the school.
 - Requests from the SD to the City to send additional bylaw or police patrols around NWSS.
 - Daily calls with all community partners (Fraser Health, BC housing, the City, Lookout) to discuss matters arising.
 - Maintenance staff do a drive-by at 6am to ensure no encampments or shelter guests are lingering where they shouldn't be.
 - On May 22nd, the district led a call with BC housing and Lookout (operator) to talk about the gradual return on June 1st and to speak about what we can do to ensure safety and comfort of staff and students on site. We are making strong recommendations, supported by our agreement with them, for more enhanced security come June 1st, especially at pick-up and drop-off times to reduce interactions.
 - The facility is staffed by a combination of Lookout staff, supervisors, medical professionals as required, custodial, and up to four security guards to take care of needs both inside and outside the building.

- What we now know is that there is a voluntary Phase 3 return to in-class instruction of 20% for the high school come June 1. We're anticipating there will be a high number of families and students who choose to continue with remote learning, and with the amount of space available to us in the separated, main part of the school, we're not currently anticipating needing to take the additional space back in order to complete the school year.
- All of that said, as we continue to shift into Phase 3, we will look at what the responses to the survey tell us about the actual needs of the site. We'll consider all our options (perhaps including tasking some of the additional staff we have right now to help support the already established efforts to keep the spaces and different needs separate), and move forward with the safety and security of students as our top priority.
- Additionally, regardless of the ERC, in order to also increase safe social distancing and reduce gatherings, all students who do come back will be encouraged to leave the school and return home as soon as their limited and partial return to classes is over. This will be an additional measure that will reduce overlap of the two spaces.
- The good news with the ERC operating alongside the school is that we already know this is working.
- In Phase 4 that we are in now, some of the students with diverse needs have been coming back already (under all the new COVID safety protocols) to do things like yoga and receive some additional support where remote learning hasn't been enough. This is also true of families of about 100 kids from across the District who depended on the lunch program, as the high school's cafeteria staff have stepped in and are preparing daily meals to help support them.
- We've heard great things about how we've been able to balance and help support multiple vulnerable populations in our school community at the same time.
- And while we'll continue to evaluate the situation daily, also alongside evaluating the needs of Phase 3 return, we're not currently anticipating a problem ... in fact, it's a really lovely example of how we really have been "in this together" as we navigate this crisis as a whole community.

8. Any further information regarding the shelter in the Massey wing of NWSS would be appreciated.
See answer to #7.

9. Has approval been given from the Cemetery Regulator for the new use of NWSS (homeless shelter)?

The Massey Theatre and gym are not designated cemetery land and, as such, do not fall under the regulations of the Cemetery Act.

Q&A from CHAT:

A. Could you clarify class sizes?

- Class size - we have not been mandated a particular class size. The Health Authority has said 50% - about half the class size
- Density is the core issue

B. If high school students return, can they sign up for a week at a time, or is it for the whole 3 weeks?

Your student is able to attend the first week and if you change your mind, there is no obligation to continue. Remote learning will continue and in class attendance is voluntary.

- C. What if you can't fit half the class in the room with 2 meter distancing between desks? Will students be moved into different (less full) classrooms?**
We will be making arrangements to spread students out into other classrooms when required.
- D. If more than 50% of a teacher's class decides to return, is there a chance they would be put with a different teacher to comply with the density numbers?**
Yes, if classes are above capacity, students may be with a different teacher.
- E. Will the Massey building be closed to students? If so, how do band and drama students access their instruments and personal items?**
Our re-entry plan for NWSS will include the scheduling of classes in different areas of the school as appropriate. This may mean adjusting where some of the classes in Massey are held.
We hope to move some equipment to the main building.
- F. Is summer school cancelled?**
No, summer school is scheduled to move forward. It will be a blended learning model will include some in-class time and some remote learning. Registration is now available. Please visit the District website for further information. Further information will be added to the website as it becomes available.
- G. Are there any special schedules for IB students?**
IB students will be invited to attend 2 half-days per week, but can also make additional appointments with teachers on Fridays as needed.
They will continue to be supported remotely.

C. Sanitation, Hygiene and Social distancing

- 1. Will social distancing between students be in place?**
We are following the guidelines of the Health Authority and the Ministry of Education. Guidelines for physical distancing in the classrooms will be somewhat challenging in the K-12 settings, particularly with younger students. Our focus is on reducing density in the school and the classrooms. We will also be encouraging physical distancing through measures such as the use of less shared items, individual work rather than group work, desks spaced apart, visual cues throughout school and increased outdoor time.
- 2. How will cleaning be handled?**
Since spring break, we shifted our evening custodians to cover day and evening to enhance cleaning practices while staff are on site. This will continue as more children will be introduced into the schools.

We will follow all Work Safe guidelines. This includes a daily full comprehensive cleaning and a minimum of two cleanings of frequently touched surfaces.
- 3. What are the schools doing to ensure hygiene and social distancing, e.g. providing hand sanitizer at entrance, staggered start times, removing every 2nd desk, etc.**

This will be customized site to site, depending on needs. Where classes do not have a sink, we will be providing hand sanitizer. The reduced density, staggered pick-up and drop-off times, and use of multiple entrance points will help with physical distancing. In addition, we will space desks, move large furniture items to allow more floor space and remove hard to clean items (carpets, toys,). We will also encourage students not to linger at school once class is dismissed.

- **The washrooms are a main common area. How many times a day will be the washrooms be cleaned?**

We are following WorkSafe guidelines in regards to cleaning protocols and they are recommending that high-touch areas such as washrooms are cleaned 2 x daily.

Q&A from CHAT

- A. Will teachers be required to clean?**

No, custodians will do the cleaning as they have the appropriate training to do so.

- B. Will water fountains be operating?**

NO, water fountains are a high touch area, therefore, they will be closed. Parents will be asked to send water with their students.

- C. Will there be someone supervising students when they use the washroom similar to the k-5 playground monitor?**

Staff will maintain social distancing when possible. Appropriate support will continue for students who require one on one support.

- D. In K-5, will 30 minutes be enough time to do the cleaning?**

Our half-day models allows ample time for classrooms to be cleaned once students have left the building. The morning and afternoon groups will likely use different classrooms. All sites will have a daily deep cleaning once students leave the classrooms.

- E. Will kids continue to have gym, library, and music time?**

This will vary from school to school; however, we are generally encouraging outdoor times for physical activity. Libraries will not operate in the same way as they may be used to provide additional classroom space at some sites.

Teacher librarians and music teachers will be there to support classes, but not in the same fashion for this 4 week period.

- F. How will daycare workers and adults maintain social distancing during pick up and drop off of younger children?**

We are looking at those staggered starts, signage, and markers in order to reduce congestion. We are acutely aware of this and are still working through the best way to do this. The details of each site will be shared by your school principal. We do ask all parents not to enter the school buildings but to call the school instead.

G. What contingencies will be in place if parents are late in picking up their children?

We will navigate and work with individual families accordingly. We really need to rely on parents to do the pick-up / drop-off on time so we can ensure smooth transitions. We will all learn in the first week and respond as needed.

H. What happens if a student gets ill?

It is important that students who are ill remain at home. Parents will be asked to do daily medical check on their children. The District will provide a checklist for this. If a child appears ill while at school we will be following the recommended protocol which includes the student remaining in the medical room until they can be picked up.

I. With new suggestions that everyone wears masks - will the students, teachers and staff be following this?

As no additional PPE is required or recommended in the school setting to reduce COVID 19, wearing a mask will be a personal choice for all staff members or students. This is in keeping with our WorkSafe guidelines.

J. How many daytime custodians will there be in elementary schools?

The number of custodians will vary from site to site given the size of the school. We will follow the guidelines as per WorkSafeBC.

D. Staffing related Questions

1. How will teachers teach online at the same time as teaching in class?

The AM/PM model allows for most teachers to have time each day to engage in remote teaching. We will continue to work with staff to ensure that workloads are manageable while maintaining continuity of instruction for all students.

2. Has anyone asked the teachers how they feel?

We are lucky to have a strong relationship with our unions. We have engaged in weekly meetings with union presidents and principals to ensure that everyone has the latest information. All principals meet weekly with their staff to share information and respond to questions and concerns.

3. Do teachers have a choice to come back to the classroom or are they mandated to do so?

Teachers are expected to resume their work. They are required to support the in-class instruction component; however, we will work with employees on a case by case basis to address any unique circumstances. We've begun this process through sending correspondence from the Human Resources Department to all staff asking them to reach out if they have individual circumstances that they would like to discuss.

4. What will the in-class instruction look like, will these students be doing something different or doing the same as what is being done online, but just getting in class help with?

Thank you for the great questions. In-class instruction will look different when students return to school; however, we are working to make sure our students have a positive experience.

- K-5 level: teachers can take advantage with 50% face-to-face instruction to supplement the remote learning. This time will also support reconnecting with students.

- 6-12 level: Because of the 80/20 model, remote instruction will be the primary mode of instruction. However, all students will have access to their teachers so that they can receive additional support with remote learning.

E. Other Questions

- 1. Isn't the opening in June really only for the students whose parents have to go back to work? And if so, how are parents expected to only work for a couple hours if their child is only able to return for half-days?**

The opening in June is for all students. All students are invited to attend 50% of the time K-5 and 20% of the time for Grades 6-12--not just the students of parents who must return to work. It is understood that a half-day program may be challenging for families, but it is the safest approach for cleaning and distancing and avoids potential safety issues with students eating lunch on site. Child Care Centres are also opening in this Phase and parents may be able to secure more flexible time slots at their regular day care site. Students of ESWs and vulnerable/diverse students will be offered support from 9-3 in their regular school and will be able to access before and after school care as needed.

- 2. How many students are you really anticipating returning in June?**

Our survey results indicate that almost 50% of our families are planning to return. Parents will receive details from their principals, then have another opportunity to confirm or to decline their child's in-class attendance for June 1st.

- 3. How many students do you anticipate returning in September?**

At this time, we are planning for a full return to school in September. These same health and safety guidelines are expected to be in place until there are further updates from the Health Authority.

- 4. If my child does go back to school in June, could you confirm if they can expect to have their own / same teacher as before.**

Our goal is to work towards that. However, some employees may be unable to return to school for in-class instruction. In that case, we have a re-deployment strategy and we will be looking at other teachers to provide that instructional support.

- 5. Why would we risk children getting sick - it is really worth it to send them back for 3-4 weeks of part time school?**

The Ministry of Education has made the return to in-class instruction optional. Dr. Henry & her team have stated it is safe for students to return to school in this controlled fashion. If you want to keep your child at home, we understand and respect that choice and again you will not be disadvantaged. The remote learning will continue. For those that choose to return, this an opportunity for us to get back to some sense of normal with some face-to-face instruction before we conclude the school year.

- 6. Is the school district planning to do any mental health classes to help the students deal with the anxiety of returning to school, or an online assembly to inform and reassure the students what it will look like when coming back into the school (i.e., what are the cleaning, social distancing protocols?)**

Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health and Wellness are an important part of the K-12 curriculum. Teachers will continue to support students and integrate/embed these topics in their learning activities. Clear communication regarding health and safety protocols will be sent to parents and will be shared with students when they are back on site. Teachers will share information with their students remotely before June 1 and also on a daily basis with those who return to school. Schools may plan welcome activities to support the re-entry.

Counsellors and Child Care Workers have already been connecting regularly with our vulnerable students and families both remotely and through face-to-face connections at school sites. They will be available onsite for continued support for all students who return and will also continue with remote support as needed for students who are not in attendance.

Teachers, Counsellors, and Child Care Workers have been involved in a number of online Professional Development events over the past several weeks to support the re-entry of students back into schools. These sessions have focused on supporting social-emotional learning skills, relationship building, mental health literacy, and trauma informed practice.

7. How does the district know if someone in a child's home is showing any of the above signs of sickness?

If a child has not developed symptoms they will be excluded from school unless there is a confirmed case of COVID 19 in the home. Again, parents are asked to complete a daily health assessment of their child to identify symptoms of COVID 19. If a child shows any symptoms, they are asked to remain at home until they have been examined by a doctor. If a child develops symptoms while at school, we will be following guidelines from the BC Center for Disease Control which involve isolating that child until they can be picked up.

Q&A from CHAT

A. Are any other user groups able to access the schools in the next while?

All rental groups are on hold. Our focus is on the return to in-class instruction in June. We will get guidance from the health authority regarding what would need to be put in place to allow safe return to our site users. We will review this over the summer.

B. Will in-class assignments be the same as the remote learning?

Yes, really in-class learning and remote learning will be covering the same content, context, and skills. Instruction will simply be done using a different delivery method. Teachers will continue with their weekly learning plan - for both online and in-class students. Students will not be disadvantaged regardless of the choice they make.

C. The turnaround time for the survey to parents regarding students attending in-class instruction was short; how will schools account or plan for students who need / want to attend but weren't captured in the survey?

Any parents who did not have a chance to respond to the survey are welcome to contact the school principal. In addition, when details about the return to in-class instruction are sent to parents next week, they will have an opportunity to respond with whether or not they will be attending.