

Family Q & A
February 4, 2021

Introduction

Thank you for joining us tonight to learn about the initial plan for secondary students to return to school and to have your questions answered. Thank you for responding to the survey we sent out and for submitting your questions.

We looked at three key elements to develop the plan:

- **Safety-** We have to bring our students back safely and in order to do that we worked with our nurses, district administrators, teachers' union and the health department to establish safety procedures.
- **Social Emotional Learning-** Our students need to be back to school in order to get back to a routine, back to a schedule, to be able to interact with peers and connect with teachers. They need to be back so there isn't such a sense of isolation and so that relationships can be reestablished
- **Academic Support-** Because we don't know how the pandemic is going to progress, we needed to make sure that we could move seamlessly from distance learning to in-person learning and back again if necessary. Keeping distance learning as the constant right now allows us to do that.
- Students will be divided into A and B cohorts in order to return safely. They will attend in person for two periods 7:20- 9:25 each week and will participate in distance learning where new instructional materials will be taught. The in-person time will be about supporting the learning from google meets, receiving assistance from their teachers and social/emotional support.

Secondary Hybrid Family Q & A

Q: How did you arrive at this plan?

A: A return to school plan inevitably changes working conditions for our staff, which necessitates negotiation with our labor groups. We began working with our teachers' association (SCEA) last June to create these plans. Based upon health district guidelines, we created plans for our elementary schools first. Students are generally in one class and so have limited exposure to other students. When in a hybrid model, we can limit student contacts to 12 classmates per week. This is more complex when you begin scheduling secondary students who attend 6 periods per day. Students and teachers may experience up to 90 different contacts per week even in a hybrid model. This doesn't include exposure occurring during passing periods and lunch. The other complexity with secondary students include graduation requirements, singleton classes (classes that are only offered once per day), Running Start, Career and Technical Education classes, and other specialty classes. Our students need to have a full array of classes in order to fulfill their graduation requirements. Classes such as foreign language, and fine arts classes need to be offered regularly for students to acquire the skills.

Not offering some form of in-person learning was not an option. We know our students need to make connections with their classmates and teachers to protect their social emotional health, but it had to be done safely. Rotating classes allows students to connect with all of their teachers and classmates every three weeks and significantly reduces the number of contacts. Avoiding a lunch period also significantly decreases risks as students can remain masked for the duration of the time at school.

This plan provides social, emotional, and academic support. It keeps our students and staff safe by reducing contacts, and provides us with an opportunity to perfect our systems before bringing our students and staff back for more time.

Q: Why are the kids not at school all day like elementary school?

A: The risk of transmission of the virus is much greater at secondary schools than it is at elementary when students are with one cohort all day. At the secondary level, students would be in six different classes thus mixing with six different cohorts. Our first priority is safety and the ability to manage the virus. This model is a way for us to transition into school, manage the virus and be able to work toward a more expanded schedule. This is the first step.

Q: Example week one kids have 1st and 2nd period. Will they work with those teachers in the classroom for instruction or will they work independently in a classroom on whatever assignments they have from whatever class they have left to do for that week?

A: The idea is that students would receive academic support from the teachers in those specific periods. However, students may have completed that work if there is no additional support required by the students- they may work on other classes.

Q: How are kids supposed to get all assignments done when now they will only be at school an hour and a half- then lots of wasted time for transportation- then return for meetings. Seems like this will take actual assignment time away.

A: Attending in-person is a choice for students and parents. The time in class will be devoted to academic support for the specific classes students are enrolled in. Distance learning is continuing in order for all students to have access to instruction and to allow for a seamless transition if the metrics do not allow for in-person learning. Attending in person will also add to opportunities for students to receive social emotional support. Social emotional connections will also happen which is critical right now.

Q: Why are the last names divided up differently than the elementary school AA and BB schedule? That's going to make things difficult for parents who rely on older kids to help with childcare.

A: The initial alphabetical split is the same at elementary and secondary schools. However, elementary schools made some adjustments to help balance out class sizes.

Q: How can we request to switch our students' days to line up with our other kids already in school?

A: Parents needing to request a change to the A or B cohort may contact the student's school office and make this request. Schools will do their best to accommodate these requests while still keeping class sizes as balanced as possible.

Q: If my student(s) start hybrid learning and it isn't working out can I pull them out and go back to online only learning?

A: Yes, all students will remain in distance learning and will have the option of attending in-person support.

Q: Will each of my child's teachers be at school for support or will it be a paraeducator?

A: Students' teachers will be in the classrooms during the support time. In some cases paraeducators may accompany the teacher as well. If a teacher is unable to be in class, we will provide a substitute teacher.

Q: If a child rides the bus and answers yes to any of the questions, will the bus take them back home or does the parent need to come and get them?

A: The parent, guardian or identified contact will need to pick the child up.

Q: Are students allowed to stay on campus for Google Meets?

A: No, students will not be allowed to stay on campus and must ride the bus home or be picked up by a parent/guardian. There may be special circumstances that are worked out at the school level if there are extenuating circumstances.

Q: What does this schedule do to resource students that were coming to school for google meets 2/week?

A: Resource students will continue to have the opportunity to come on Wednesdays as they have since fall. There are some special populations that will attend more. Schools will be in contact with those families.

Q: Was the community involved in the support of this new model?

A: The development of this model was created between the District and the Stanwood-Camano Education Association.

Q: Other local districts have managed to bring kids back a full 2 days, why can't we?

A: Safety has been our top priority throughout the pandemic and this is the model we arrived at for now. This is an initial model for in-person academic support. We hope to continue to work on a more expanded schedule if we are able to manage the virus and the metrics in the county allow it.

Q: For the sake of not disrupting the current model, did the community have choices/alternatives to the new model that could have been voted on? Not to include the choice of continuing to stay home, we need our kids back in school on a more structured level.

A: This is an initial model that the District and the Stanwood-Camano Education Teachers Association were able to agree to as a starting point. A variety of other models were considered, however, this model allows us to determine if we can manage the virus and move toward a more expanded schedule.

Q: Can you please clarify the schedule? Middle school kids who attend go at 7:40 and return home after 9:25? Or do they stay at school longer and complete Meets there?

A: Students will attend school from 7:40-9:25 and will be transported home to participate in their google meets.

Q: Why is the District worried about changing the kids' schedule? This new proposal seems more disruptive. Just let the kids go back all day on the AA BB schedule like the elementary schools. The teachers can hold in person class with the kids who are there and have those at home join on via Google Meet.

A: The primary concern at this time with attending all day would be the mixing of cohorts. If students were to attend a full hybrid schedule, students would be in close contact with about 80 to 90 people each day. The schedule we have is a starting point but keeps contacts down to around 25 to 30 per week. We will be monitoring this closely to see what adjustments can be made as we move through the spring.

Q: If my child is doing okay with work at home should I send him, or is it mainly for kids who need extra support with assignments?

A: This is up to you. The in-person opportunities are for academic support, social emotional support, and to help students transition back to a school environment after being away for so long. Social emotional needs of students are addressed by this model as it allows students to get back to a routine and back to a schedule. It allows them to interact with their peers and connect with their teachers. It will give them a sense of belonging and diminish the feeling of isolation. We know that students all have different needs during this time. We trust families will make a decision about what is best for their students.

Q: Will students have the opportunity to tour their school before the 22nd? I imagine for the High School kids, 6th graders and any new move-ins they will be completely lost and chaos will ensue that first day back.

A: We are discussing this with building principals. We will communicate further if opportunities for tours are made available.

Q: If a student signs up for the in-person model, are they required to attend every day?

A: We will be tracking attendance for the sake of following up with families regarding potential illnesses. However, missing an in-person class will not count against a student in any way. When students are absent, we will be contacting families to ask if the absence is health related. If a student regularly attends, schools will need families to notify the school the reason for the absence.

Q: My student would only need transportation one way. Is that important to note at this time?

A: That's not a problem. Transportation will plan routes for all eligible bus riders. It will be fine if some students don't ride sometimes.

Q. You mentioned (for right now) only "special populations" are going to be considered for in-person High school students at SHS and LHHS. What classifies a "special population"? I have been following the metrics, and if I am correct, the numbers are well below the needed 200 per 100,000 for the high school students to attend in person.

A: SHS will start with students who are qualified for special education, McKinney-Vento (students qualifying as homeless), English Learners, and students with two or more failing grades. Lincoln Hill High School will start with seniors with failing grades, McKinney-Vento, and English Learners. You are correct, the rates are below 200 per 100,000 as of Monday 2/1/21. If those rates hold up, we will be able to bring back all high school students soon after our phase in on 2/22. According to the DOH Decision tree, school districts must demonstrate the ability to limit transmission in the school environment, and may add more high school students when case rates are below about 200/100K/14 days. The general guidance has been to pause 2-3 weeks between adding additional cohorts of students.

Q. If kids opt to return for the two days a week (7:40-9:25), do they have to attend both days each week or can they randomly attend on certain weeks or days when they would like to? Example, can they only come one day a week? Is attendance taken or mandatory if signing up to return? Do they have to let a teacher know ahead of time if they aren't coming on a certain day?

A: Students and parents may decide to attend the in-person support or not. It is critical if a student has attended previously to let the teacher know they are not planning to attend because the schools need to know if a student is staying home due to illness. Schools must keep track of illnesses to determine if they are COVID related. Attendance will be taken.

Q: Will students still be expected to do approximately three hours of work each day outside of in-person class and meet times? If so, are there suggestions for how to best manage their time? If not, will the assignment load be lessened? If the assignment load is lower, will they still be covering all the necessary lessons and concepts?

A: Yes, but students may be able to do some of the work during their in-person time.

Q: How will you balance classes if the ratios don't work out based on last names? Going through our son's classes last night, only one of them had roughly a 50/50 split. If there is a huge disparity, as there were in a couple, how will that be addressed?

A: We are watching survey results to see what percentage of students are going to be attending in-person support time. We will have to balance classes as needed.

Q: Will there be band ? If so, will the kids be able to play? If there is not going to be an ability to have band, what will those kids be doing during those class periods?

A: We are working on securing the personal protective equipment to allow for band. There are specific social distancing guidelines related to band and covers for musical equipment.

Q: Will drop off take place in the bus line or will there be a separate drop off for cars? If we do arrive after a bus, how long will it take to have my child screened, if we are waiting for a bus load of kids?

A: At the high school, the buses will drop students off at the lower level and the car drop off will be in the upper level agriculture lot. At the middle schools there will also be separate areas for cars and buses to drop off students. There will be separate screeners for busses and parent drop offs so this should not cause a delay.

Q: Our middle schooler has a previous arrangement with SCSD that allowed on site assisted work during the scheduled Google Meet hours. Will this arrangement continue under the proposed plan?

A: No, we will not be able to continue the assisted work during google meets due to transportation capacity.

Q: Is there a plan for full day onsite learning in work for the 2020/21 school year? Same question, 2021/22?

A: The largest barrier to full day onsite learning is the requirement for social distancing. Should the metrics change in the county, this could happen. We would like to move toward this of course. Our hope is that we are able to return full time in 2021/22. This will depend on the status of the pandemic, vaccinations and health department requirements.

Q: Will the Wednesday resource slot be onsite in person? Transport provided?

A: Yes, this will continue as it has all year.

Q: Will students who opt out of the proposed plan be graded differently than those who opt in?

A: No, they will be graded the same.

Q: Is there parking for high schoolers. If so will a parking pass be needed and where do we get that?

A: Yes, there is parking at the stadium. There will be no fee or parking pass required.

Q: Why can't the Google Meets be taught during this time?

A: This is something we considered but decided that the time would be better served as added support. This concept is something that could be considered as we move forward.

Q: When middle school students have PE in person, will they have the opportunity to be active?

A: Yes, but they will need to follow proper safety protocols like social distancing and mask wearing. Students will not be required to dress out.

Q: When middle school or high school students have an elective class in person, will they have any hands on opportunities (ie: shop classes, home ec, etc)?

A: The hands on opportunities will support the learning that takes place in google meets and yes, they will have those opportunities.

Q: What about the students that are already attending now for support. How will this change their days and times?

A: Our special education students who are attending for support on Wednesdays will continue. Students attending on other days will attend the new schedule and will no longer have the other support.

Q: How do you plan to expand on this if this goes well? Is there a plan in place with tentative dates to move forward with more in person time?

A: Our eventual goal is to get all students back all day every day. We will look to take steps in that direction as conditions allow. The next foreseeable step could be moving towards additional periods in a day.

Q: You guys sent out the example schedule for classes 1-6, what about 0 period. When would that take place?

A: Zero period and 7th period will not have in-person opportunities initially. Adding these to any of the days would have resulted in increased contacts. We will look to add these along with other modifications to the plan.

Q: Why are we not prioritizing getting high school in-person when so many are falling through the cracks? These are their most important years academically, and they are not being prepared for college.

A: Health department guidelines permitted elementary students to return first. The metrics for allowing high school to attend were much more stringent. Their reasoning has been that high school students are more likely to spread the virus.

Questions from Chat:

Q: Was there any consideration given to putting kids in smaller cohorts and let them attend all their classes in person with their cohort. Ex kids in the same math class go through all their classes together. I feel our kids need in-person classes.

A: We agree that students need in-person classes. The difficulty with this idea is that students that have the same math class most likely not have shared classes in other content areas in order for the cohorting to occur. We did look at this carefully as it is a good idea except that students have so many different classes.

Q: If I excuse my student from a morning of in-person (or a single period), will it count as an absence on a student's attendance record? Or can I "attest" that they are doing learning at home that day?

A: It will be important for you to let the school know that your child will be absent and what the absence was related to. Attendance at the google meet or attestation will be acceptable.

Q: How will families be notified if someone in the class tests positive for Coronavirus?

A: Families will be notified by letter by the district and by phone by the health district if their child is a close contact. The district also sends tertiary letters if students are a close contact of a close contact.

Q: What date would this proposal format include high school students?

A: Special populations (special education, McKinney-Vento, English Language Learners, students without connectivity and students with two or more Fs) are scheduled to enter the high school on February 22nd if all metrics continue to support this. High school students could begin in this model two weeks after if the metrics allow and the district has demonstrated the ability to manage the virus.

Q: What about Saratoga school? they usually have one day on site per week and they've reintroduced 1-5 as of this point. Will they be extending that opportunity to secondary students as well?

A: Yes, Saratoga will also have opportunities for secondary students.

Q. Does the band room in the middle school have enough room to accommodate spreading the kids 9 feet apart. If not, is there another space they could use? I thought I heard bell covers would be supplied by the school, is that correct?

A: We are currently working on this question. We do have room but it may not all be in the band area. There may be other spaces we can use. We are also exploring covers and costs. More information will be provided.

Q: How many covid incidents have occurred in the district already this year?

A: The district doesn't have this number; however, what we do know is that there have been no transmissions of COVID in our buildings or on transportation. Our protocols (masking, social distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, screening) are protecting our students and staff from transmission.

Q: Is there a deadline date to when we need to sign up for opting to return?

A: We asked for the survey to be turned in by Friday, February 5th, but parents can still respond. The sooner the better to help our planning process.

Q: I haven't heard anything about sports. What about football/basketball for middle school?

A: Middle school athletic directors are meeting on 2/5/21 with other school districts in our region to discuss sports for our middle school students. As soon as we have information, we will share it with our families.

Q: It is really difficult for working parents to have students have a bus for only one way to school and not coming home. How can that work for a working parent?

A: The buses will transport students both to and from school.

Q. Will there be scheduled mandatory hand washing between the two classes to stop the spread of germs or washing of tables?

A: There will not be mandatory hand washing, but there will be hand sanitizer throughout the buildings. We will remind students to use the sanitizer.

Q: Will the kids who don't go in person be receiving less instruction than kids who go in person?

A: All students will receive their instruction related to new learning during Google Meets. The time students come to school will be support time and work time.

Q: What do you envision it to look like during a typical high school class period? If there is no new teaching, will students be welcome to visit/socialize? I'm not asking about masks and social distancing. I know this will be happening.

A: Students will have time to ask questions of the teachers and receive support in areas they might be struggling. There will also be time for students to complete work. As time and the teacher allow, students may have time to work/visit with peers.

Q: Can the wireless capacity at the school handle all of the students at once?

A: Yes, all of our schools have excellent capacity.

Q: Can the kids bring their own computers?

A: Students can bring their own computers, but we prefer that students use the district Chromebooks to avoid the possibility of damage to their own device.

Q: High school times switch also on 2/22? So until high school comes back, they will be getting less Google Meets time and no in-person?

A: All Google Meet times will go to the new schedule on February 22nd. The Google Meets are closer together as the breaks are shorter but they are only actually 5 minutes shorter each.

Q: Will the high school give SAT and ACT testing?

A: The high school has scheduled SAT testing this spring but we do not offer ACT administration.

Q: Who is going to ensure my child is safe, if another child doesn't comply with mask/social distance rules?

A: Schools have procedures to follow to ensure that students are complying with social distancing and mask guidelines.

Q: Will you be following the same closure we experienced after Winter break for spring break?

A: No, that is not our current plan.