



PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IN FALL 2020

UPDATE #5

June 22, 2020 meeting

***NOTE:** *This article is a result of the weekly discussions of the Pearland ISD Return to School Committee. It serves as insight into possible contingency plans the committee is preparing for. As the 2020-21 school year approaches, definitive plans will be further released.*

Realizing that the current COVID-19 pandemic has radically affected “normal” school operations, and that social distancing restrictions may remain a necessity next school year, Pearland ISD is planning to maximize educational opportunity by planning for 3 intertwined possibilities:

- **On-campus instruction to students - with required social distancing measures in place.**
- **Remote/distance learning from home**
- **A Hybrid system whereby students are both on campus in smaller numbers and learning through remote methods when away from school.**

ALL THREE OF THESE POSSIBILITIES MUST BE AVAILABLE TO MEET A SURGE IN INFECTIONS OR IN CASES WHERE A STUDENT/STAFF/CLASS OR SCHOOL BECOMES INFECTED. We have been continuously warned that surges in the pandemic or other realities may require further temporary closures of school campuses next school year. Thus, we must be prepared for a combination of on-campus, distance, and hybrid learning next school year, realizing we may have to make rapid changes/additions to the district’s calendar of instruction. In our planning efforts, we have established a large “Return to School” committee comprised of leaders and advisors from each major area of district operations, as well as parents.

Here are some of the major issues we discussed this week:

STATE GUIDANCE

Last week, Governor Abbott announced that kids would be returning to school in the fall. He also said that if parents want to keep their kids at home to learn remotely, that option will be available to parents through the school district and will be eligible for state attendance funding. Further guidance will be provided to superintendents across the state later this week. It is important for us to continue planning for all three options as they will all be in play as we go into the 2020-21 school year.

PARENT SURVEY

Kim Hocott, Executive Director of Communications, reviewed the parent survey draft with the committee for feedback and input. The parent survey will be available for parents to participate between June 29 – July 11.



DAYCARE PROVIDERS

Daycare providers explained it would work for them to have alternate day (A/B schedule) for the elementary grade children. With the every-day, half-day model for elementary schools, our schools would need to find a “holding area” for students as they transition to go home or arrive on campus at mid-day in order to maintain social distancing and accommodate day care bus schedules. The district would likely use large areas of schools such as the gym, cafeteria and outdoor areas (weather permitting) as students transition from the AM to PM session.

The district is also looking at partnering with daycare providers to offer training on helping students with district instruction when the student is doing remote learning days.

FINE ARTS/ATHLETICS

UIL has put in place guidelines and restrictions for Strength & Conditioning which began June 8 with limited participation for student athletes. Facility capacity allowances and other reductions to practice restrictions are changing per UIL guidelines and will likely depend on pandemic realities over the coming two months. The protocols provide for differences in outdoor and indoor workouts. Limited sports-specific training also has guidelines in place from the State. Coaches and athletic trainers are working hard to ensure sanitation and cleaning guidelines are followed for the safety of student athletes.

Summer marching band has decided to wait until late June or early July to begin. They must follow many of the same guidelines from UIL that have been provided to athletics.

1:1 TECHNOLOGY

The committee was provided an overview of the plan then proposed to the Board of Trustees (on Tuesday, June 23) for iPads (grades PK-1) and laptops (grades 2-12) for each student in the district. Subsequently, at the board meeting (June 23), the plan was approved for administration to move forward with lease/purchase plans.

Administration is working with vendors/providers on leasing versus buying options. Parent opinion will be sought in the upcoming parent survey regarding their desire to lease or purchase the device. (When the district has ownership or control of the device, the district is better able to provide necessary hardware and/or software updates.)

STUDENT OUTREACH

Susan Holloway, Director of Student Outreach, shared how her department reached out to kids during the spring. Ms. Holloway shared that her department made 88 home visits from March until the end of the school year to ensure seniors reached the finish line and other students remained engaged in learning. This summer, her department has been reaching out to students who were not engaged or contactable during the spring to provide assistance. Parents often share the following challenges they face with helping their student learn: unfamiliarity/discomfort with the technology, engaging multiple children in the home and parent/student language barriers.



SUMMARY

The Communications Department will be sending a parent survey that will be open from June 29 – July 11. Parent feedback is crucial as we plan to proceed with opening schools under uncertain and changing conditions.

There is still much to consider and a great deal of work to be done over the summer. We will continue to prepare for a “mix” of the 3 scenarios listed above – in case each is needed. Decisions will be communicated as timely as possible. Our goal remains to provide our students with a World-Class education despite the challenges we currently face. We know that with the dedication of our staff, teachers, parents and community, Pearland ISD will continue to provide the best for our students.

ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT SINCE LAST “RETURN TO SCHOOLS” MEETING:

The day after our “Return to School” meeting of June 22, the Texas Education Agency provided school districts further information on the requirements for funding when districts conduct remote learning options for parents:

https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/overview_of_remote_instruction_guidance_for_sy_20-21.pdf

*The Return to School Committee will not meet next week.