

## GSS Parent Forum Notes - 12/14/20

### Second Semester Transition and Family Questions

Meeting Began 6:05pm

#### 1. Explanation of Rationale of decision to go remote at GSS (current situation)

- a. Thursday 12/10 received news of + COVID test in our community. Notified all families of students in same cohort. Students and staff in contact with positive test were sent home. Mrs. Speno and Nurse Julia were in contact with Dept. of Health to identify which students and staff would need to quarantine for 14 days. Dept. of Health said we could have school Friday, but it seemed prudent to close school Friday to give more time for cleaning and make sure no more positive tests surfaced over the weekend. Whole bldg was disinfected over the weekend. Plan was to reopen Monday 12/14.
- b. Sunday 12/13 - Nurse Julia learned of member of school community who had family member test positive for COVID. This person was “presumed positive”. Other people in the school community were close contacts and were pending test results as well. Most prudent decision was to close school until break. Based on contact tracing, at least 4 staff members would have had to quarantine. Difficult to safely staff the school. Mr. Speno sent out a call on Sunday night around 6pm.
- c. Nurse Julia shared that schools are very safe places to be. Generally the spread has not been linked to schools. If there were + activity within the school / district that was high enough, 4 days will not happen until it is safe.
- d. Questions / comments about this timeline were encouraged.
  - i. Some parents expressed gratitude and relief for the decision to close at this time through the week after Winter Break.

#### 2. Discussion of Survey Options for S2 (4 days in person or fully remote) - goal is to have finalized #'s by Winter Break. #'s overall and #'s in each grade level cohort.

Questions / Comments Raised	Discussion Points
With 4 day shift, will there be more chance of shutdown more often? What would be the cause of another school shutdown for S2? (What's the likelihood that we'll end up being	When back 4 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3 foot spacing between students</li> <li>● 6 foot distance between adults and kids</li> <li>● If another + case, you are considered a “close contact” if you're a student or a teacher in a COVID + classroom (would need to quarantine if deemed a close contact).</li> </ul>

remote anyway? Worried about the yo-yo)	
When is GSS getting recommendations to close the school?	Do we have enough staffing (per classroom / grade)? Contact tracing will start with just one classroom → unlikely we'd need to close school with just one classroom impacted. That class of students / teacher would likely need to quarantine for 14 days and go fully remote.
Are there contingency / substitute plans in place in case teachers need to quarantine?	We have 4 full time substitutes in the building (have had this all year). Designated to GSS only.
I'm concerned with more students in a room in the winter with masks off for lunch. How will lunches be scheduled, how many kids will be in the room?	Just that classroom group eating in that classroom. At 3 ft spaces, there would be a maximum of 18 kids in a classroom. Nurse Julia says this is not enough time to constitute a high risk spread.
What about cohorts that are larger than 18 students?	Likely will not be the case at GSS.
Concern about going to 4 days with twice as many kids in the classrooms. There is conflicting evidence out there about level of risk.	Could the "research" be shared with our parent community?
If my child needs to quarantine and isolate, would this be a required 4-8 absences without ability to switch to remote learning during that time? Would individualized learning plans be available?  Seems a bad time to double the students and faculty when COVID is on the rise. 2 days in person has been an advantage.	Mr. Speno shared that teachers have been great in putting work together to support students while they are quarantining. Hope to continue this.  Nurse Julia shared that these absences are marked as "absences".  Molly Sauvain shared that evidence of work completed can offset absences.  If a whole cohort went remote, the teacher (if also quarantine based on "close contact") would likely also transition to lead remote learning.
What if one child has to quarantine because of exposure? Does the other child (sibling) also have to quarantine?	Current guidelines do not say siblings of quarantine close contacts has to happen. Only the person deemed a close contact has to quarantine. Unless the close contact/quarantining person tested positive, then the sibling DOES have to also quarantine.  Mask wearing and social distancing is encouraged if one sibling is quarantining.

	<p>If a parent has to quarantine, their child does NOT also have to quarantine (unless parent tests positive and child is considered close contact).</p>
<p>Will kids be wearing a mask in school other than lunch?</p>	<p>Yes - all times (students and staff), including outside, recess and PE. Only time they come off is when they are eating. Adults help accommodate "mask breaks" with kids, ideally outdoors, when needed.</p>
<p>What are the metrics that determine if we go back at 4 days or 2 days or fully remote? (district wide)</p>	<p>Currently VT is operating at "Step 3" - which is pretty open. State or communities at some point could pull this back to Step 2. Likely when we get to 4 days, we stay at 4 days. Possibly if there is enough "COVID positiveness" in the community, moving to 4x week might not happen. The clear metrics for this are not available.</p>
<p>What was the logic of moving from 2 days to 4 days? (vs 3 days, then 4 days more gradually)?</p>	<p>We are being encouraged by the state of VT to bring kids back to school as many days as possible. Recommended in October (waited to see how it went the first several weeks of school). Since no COVID transmission in any schools in VT, encouragement to go to 4 days and with 3 ft spacing to bring more kids back. There has been a reluctance of going to 3 ft spacing which is why it took a while to move to agreement on the 4 days.</p> <p>Moving first to 3 days was hard to plan for and allocate evenly between 2 cohorts.</p>
<p>Can you share articles / literature about the 3ft distancing?</p>	<p>Yes - Nurse Julia will share.</p>
<p>Are Weds still for cleaning?</p>	<p>Yes - will continue to be ½ day remote day and disinfecting day.</p> <p>Deep cleaning in the middle of the week is no longer required, but it's something our school and district chooses to implement.</p> <p>These are the only days for staff members to meet (due to inability to meet in person and limited specials which allow for teacher planning time). Only day we are able to meet as a whole staff.</p>
<p>Dilemma: keep in school or keep home - hard to make the decision now. Can I choose one thing and then change my mind?</p>	<p>This is a "binding" decision. If information or circumstances change, contact Mr. Speno and we work together to make a plan to meet the needs of your child. Transfers from one learning environment to another takes at least a week to put things in order to</p>

	facilitate a thoughtful transfer for the student, family and teacher.
Will the student be with the same teachers they've been with if I choose 4 days or fully remote? Will kids work with TEAMS of teachers?	<p>Likely there will be teams working with the children.</p> <p>The hope is that yes, children will have the same teacher if same learning option is chosen. Depends on the responses on the learning survey (due Thursday 12/17). Should have clear understanding of staffing just before or during winter break. Goal is to keep students with teachers who they have built relationships with over the fall.</p> <p>Would be a disservice to the remote communities to pull those teachers to be back in person.</p> <p>There are certain classes where the specials teachers are filling in- might change some teachers.</p>
Is there a cap for the # of students who will be in the remote classes?	It has been published at 25. This is an opportunity to revisit staffing (based on numbers) to try to offer additional teaching support to the remote classes to reduce group size. A lot will depend on numbers.
A parent of a student who was fully remote might have wanted to return to 2 days. 4 days feels like too much. Is it possible to keep the current hybrid model?	<p>The target date for going 4 days is 1/27/21. This might change based on what's happening in the community.</p> <p>Nurse Julila offered to bring this sentiment to the admin leadership team.</p> <p>What about re-evaluating based on quarters, not semesters?</p>
Mr. Speno asked by show of hands how many would support the idea of 4 days as a quarterly decision (keep as 2 days for now...move to 4 days later).	<p>Reminder that this is one small school forum for the entire district. Mr. Speno will relay that feedback.</p> <p>Guidance is to take the survey now as published, assuming it will be for the semester option. We should assume the plan is 4 days unless we hear otherwise from Mr. Skarzynski.</p> <p>Parents shared that logically this makes more sense</p>
Covid is not going away...what is the benefit of waiting another quarter?	After winter when kids can be outside more, there might be less transmission.
What if we had a lottery - at GSS cap the rooms to keep spacing?	<p>Likely we'll not reach that cap anyway as long as 1/3 continue to choose remote.</p> <p>If there were ever a need for students to attend (or not),</p>

	hope there'd be a way to evaluate need based on factors in play (vs lottery). IEP needs, etc.
Could we have FEMA trailers to allow more students in and that would allow more spreading out?	Staffing could be challenging. Need to get the #'s develop a plan and consider the options.
Should families still be vigilant about keeping kids home if there were immunocompromised individuals in the households?	Nurse Julia says she believes kids up to age 11 are not at a risk of high level of transmission or getting seriously ill.
There could be families not present at this forum that have the desire for 4 days, especially if their childcare or job depends on the 4 day option. Something to consider.	Could come back at 4 days now, and others who chose remote could re-evaluate in the spring to choose to come back?