AccelerateED Task Force Meeting, June 11, 2020, Meeting Minutes

Members present: Kathy Coleman (chairman), Superintendent Molly Spearman, Tonya Addison, Alan Walters, Brian Newsome, Chanda Jefferson, Scott Turner, Harrison Goodwin, Sherry Eppleshiemer, Latoya Dixon, Patrick Kelly, Missy Campbell, Chuck Saylors.

Kathy Coleman (Chairman)
Thank you to everyone for their continued hard work. I would like to take a moment and recognize Palmetto Boys and Girls State which would have been this week as well as the FFA convention. I know the subcommittees are continuing to work and receive input which is invaluable. I would like to call on Superintendent Spearman for an update.

Superintendent Molly Spearman
I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Coleman and the other task force members. And thank you to the public for all of their continued input. As you know, I am a huge supporter of Palmetto Girls State and FFA. They are both wonderful leadership groups. The Senate Re-Open SC Committee met this morning. They are making recommendations and should be settled in the next few weeks.

Kathy Coleman (Chairman)
I would like to ask the subcommittee chairmen to give their report.

Building and Student Services Report (Alan Walters, Chairman)

We have been working very hard. I want to reiterate that these recommendations are a snap shot in time. We may have to provide revisions at a later date. Our main challenge is that we need all parties to believe safe to do so.

1. Districts needs to create a re-opening team that includes all stakeholders. Plans will be different for each district.
2. Re-check and update visitor policy
3. Develop communications plans
4. A school nurse in every school
5. The General Assembly remove the earnings cap on retired educators
6. Address the shortage of student services providers:
    a. Alternative pathways to certification
    b. Salary incentive program
    c. Funding additional elementary school counselors
    d. Caseload standards for school psychologists
    e. School communications to embed
    f. Develop health and safety infrastructure grants
    g. Webinars on using and reconfiguring spaces in facilities
    h. Develop cleaning protocols and assessing staff, equipment, and product needs
7. Building considerations: signage, instructions, traffic flow, staggering entry and release times, cut off water fountains, directions in hallways, adding additional time between classes, and mark floors in cafeterias. (possibly pre-packaged meals for half of the students, other half in the cafeterias)
8. Revisit emergency drills. (review to see what modifications need to be made)

9. PPE for all schools
10. Mental Health Crisis Response Teams and Triage Protocol for students and staff
11. Conduct a needs assessment for school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers.
12. Social and emotional check-in (SEL Plan)
13. IEP teams need to determine additional services for students with disabilities.
14. Identify additional English learners through ESSA-approved screening tools
15. Create a K-12 School Health and Safety Center

Patrick Kelly
Our first challenge is making sure its safe, then communication it is safe. I think it is critical that evacuation drill were included in this. It will be very hard with social distancing, the impact on instruction time (causing undue burdens), and will be difficult with 6 feet social distancing guidelines.

Superintendent Spearman
I have heard from a number of teachers, did you all discuss how desks, tables, etc… can be configured (placement of furniture).
Chuck Saylors: the administration in Greenville made scenarios based on different schools. I can share that with everyone.

Harrison Goodwin
Scheduling will have to look different. It will not be feasible to leave school schedules the way they currently are. Each of these things will have a cost associated with them. Bottom line, things are not going to look the same.

Instruction Subcommittee Report (Patrick Kelly, Subcommittee Chairman)
I want to thank everyone on our subcommittee. We met 5 times to talk about the fall recommendations. We conducted video calls with professional organizations, and believe schools should place the highest priority on learning while ensuring safe working conditions:

1. Ensure student and staff safety.
    a. Conduct a survey of staff (determine who is high risk)
    b. Prepare resources for the social and emotional needs of students and staff
2. Prepare for opening.
    a. Address the digital divide
    b. Staff training (evaluate the most efficient professional development)
    c. Professional learning (look at more in house rather than traveling)
    d. Completion of student evaluations (Special Ed and SEL)
    e. Develop a communications plan (procedures and safety protocols, back to school events, two way communications plans including feedback from the community, and most importantly create a distance learning contingency plan (handbooks or other resources)
    f. Supporting and partnering with education preparation programs.
    g. Determining student attendance (survey of parent/family preference, development of distance learning access policy, planning for potential fall distance learning groups, and including some sort of declaration of intent).

3. Resuming and extending learning.
    a. LEAP days (5 extra days at the beginning of schools)
        Learning (increase)
        Evaluation (diagnostic)
        Analysis (time to engage data)
        Preparation (SEL needs)
    b. Ongoing extended learning
4. Structuring and Scheduling Learning
    a. Evaluate 2020-2021 Calendar
    b. Scheduling distance learning practice days (1 or 2 in the 1st nine weeks)
    c. Grading practices
    d. Prevention of bullying and harassment
    e. Ensuring a well-rounded education (in person and distance learning)

    Scheduling Models

    A. Low or No Spread (traditional school)
        Communications Plan
        Class size caps
        Plans for class coverage
        Reducing Transitions
        Modified high school day
        Plans for self-isolation periods
    B. Medium Spread (Hybrid Learning)
        AM/PM Model
        Alternate Days
        Questions to consider: plans for communications, childcare, and families
    C. High Spread (Full distance learning)
        Waiving the defined minimum program and seat time requirements in addition to testing waivers.

Latoya Dixon
I want to thank you for your leadership and the work of our subcommittee.

Superintendent Spearman
Thank you for reminding us that we want to relieve anxiety.

Ryan Brown (SCDE Staff)
We still need to work with DHEC on this.

Tonya Addison
I want to say to parents, students, educators, that we are in unchartered times. It will be critical that we all work together. No plan will be absolutely perfect. Flexibility will be essential.

Sherry East
A big thanks to our team. I would like to echo the request for testing waivers.

Operations Subcommittee Report (Scott Turner, Chairman)

Thank you to everyone that served on our committee. This has truly become an international issue. We pulled recommendations from a number of other states as well (Indiana, North Carolina, Georgia, and Arizona)

- Schools will reopen with a continuum of options including on-campus and remote learning, depending on the level of COVID-19 community spread
- Levels of COVID-19 community spread include low, medium, and high categories
- Each district should consult with relevant stakeholders, legal counsel, and liability insurance carriers when making decisions impacting attendance or operations
- High levels of community spread: schools will be closed and all students served through distance learning
- Medium levels of community spread: schools should consider implementing flex or modified schedules which allow for social distancing within buildings and classrooms
- Low levels of community spread: schools are open and fully operational with some social distancing when practical*
- *(DHEC guidelines on bus capacities)

Communication

- Communication campaign for communities, families, students and employees:
- Self-screening for families, students, and employees for symptoms such as:
- Fever over 100.4, cough, difficulty breathing, chills, aches, sore throat
- A person with any of these symptoms should not attend school or work.
- DHEC will provide the final determination on exclusion list

Transportation

- DHEC Guidelines: The number of students on the bus should be a maximum of **50%** of standard capacity appropriate for the students' age.
- Assigned seating with loading from back to front
- Disinfecting/cleaning should be a minimum of twice daily and more often in high touch areas on the bus
- Maximize air ventilation
- Drivers should wear mask while mask may be worn by students
- Training for drivers, students, and parents on appropriate safety protocols

Operational Considerations for school sites

- Designated areas as entrances and exits only
- Consider staggered drop off and pick up times
- Limit gatherings in commons areas
- No visitors allowed past front office capture area
- Decrease the number of transitions for students within the building
- Consider one-way pedestrian patterns within the building where feasible
- Frequent disinfecting and cleaning in commons areas or high touch areas
- All employees should wear masks when not able to social distance
- Students should wear masks when social distancing is not feasible

Food Service Considerations

- Alternative meal serving models when social distancing is not feasible in cafeteria
- Providing meals to go when students will not be in attendance for face to face instruction
- Frequent disinfecting and cleaning in high touch areas
- Prepare for increased costs of food service with alternative delivery models

Human Resources

- Professional Development for all employee groups on proper hygiene and safety protocols
- Professional Development for all employee groups on trauma informed practices
- Educate employees on leave guidelines related to COVID-19

- State will assist with providing reusable masks for employees

Superintendent Spearman
The operations piece will be a challenge. We will need to work with the community.

Latoya Dixon
Our state is diverse, our teachers a resilient, but inequities still exist. We want the General Assembly to work on closing these inequities in our state.

Patrick Kelly
I would like to reinforce the equity issue and thank you for mentioning the injustices related to George Floyd. As people react to this report, we must commit to reopening. Please listen to your public health authorities.

Scott Turner
We want families to be invested. This will be tied to revenue for our schools.

Alan Walters
Our schools are safe havens for our children.

Superintendent Spearman
I would like to add that the SCDE wants to work with those districts that weren't able to implement a strong E-Learning plan.

Chanda Jeffferson
I would like to add that we need to utilize our teacher leaders, as they are strong voices. In addition the importance of SEL: we must have sustainable initiatives past COVID-19.

Meeting adjourned.