

## May 14, 2020 AccelerateED Task Force Meeting Minutes

### **Members Present**

Kathy Coleman, Chairman, Superintendent Molly Spearman, Tanya Addison, Alan Walters, Chanda Jefferson, Scott Turner, Chuck Saylor, Harrison Goodwin, Latoya Dixon, Brian Newsome, Sherry East, Sherry Eppleshiemer, Missy Campbell, Patrick Kelly.

### Kathy Coleman, Chairman

Gave overview of subcommittee work for the week.

### Superintendent Spearman

Thank you to everyone for all of your hard work. I would like to give an overview of what AccelerateSC has been doing this week. Currently there are 29 pots of money coming from the federal government. Our goal is to spend the money appropriately and not duplicate requests. The SCDE requested: PPE, extra food service requests. The SCDE will receive approximately \$21 million of the \$216 million districts receive (10%): expansion of an LMS repository, money sent to some of our special schools that were not included (governor's school), transportation costs, and supplemental materials. One of the big questions is about reimbursable money. We are looking at how to best do this, and hoping that they state will give some flexibility on this. Our overall goals are:

1. Run an operation that is safe, specifically with the health of students and staff at the forefront.
2. Get back to school as normal as possible as soon as possible.

### Fenton Overdyke (Chernoff Newman)

#### Update on Parent Focus Groups

- there were two focus groups conducted with parents.
- this was a statewide study and we looked at how do schools get back to normal and stay healthy. From a survey of 500 people, 79% said they were satisfied with communications, 76% were satisfied with the quality of instructions and 70% feel their children are getting prepared for next year.
- this is not a one size fits all approach.
- parents were appreciative of being included.
- there was great support for summer camps and summer learning. The desire was for these to be in person. Parents indicated they did not want their children to participate if they are virtual.
- parents were also supportive of adding additional days to the calendar and spending some extra time next school year for their children to catch up.
- there was skepticism on the A/B day scenario.

### Chuck Saylor

-how many people in the survey had children?

Fenton: 126 people

-since this study was done online, those without broadband wouldn't have been able to participate. Can you elaborate on the demographics?

Fenton: we did not ask for that information. This was a statewide study though.

Patrick Kelly

How long was the online survey conducted?

Fenton: April 13-18

So the online survey indicated that 70% of parents were satisfied with the learning their children were receiving, but the focus group did say they felt their children were falling behind?

Scott Turner

We have invested heavily in safety and security measures, when you say parents want us to be fully operational, are they willing to sacrifice security? We need to look at that.

## **Subcommittee Reports**

### **A. Building and Student Services (Alan Walters)**

The comments made just now are very relevant to the discussions we have been having. We have safeguards in place and need to look at communicating this effectively. In addition we need to get administrators, staff, parents, and students involved in this process once this is given to the districts. We also need to look at how many school nurses we have in districts across the state. School safety threats have shifted from needing SROs to a health threat. Our immediate concerns are:

1. PPE (this is a top priority)—we believe this needs to be a state level function
2. Cleaning and training
3. Front office (Plexiglas added)
4. Look at isolating the nurses area
5. Students will need a separate area for tele-medicine and tele-psychiatry.

(One way to look at doing this is through infrastructure grants.

There are also some key points from the DHEC guidance:

1. “to the extent possible maintain 6 feet between each person.” (Districts will need to use their discretion and common sense.
2. Masks are “strongly encouraged and to be used as much as possible.” (we will need to look at how this will affect our students with disabilities.
3. Routine screening is NOT recommended.
4. Routine cleaning.

We also need to look at what mental health protocols will be in place. We want to make sure these are readily available and people know what they are.

Chuck Saylor

That is an excellent point related to the DHEC qualifier. We need to effectively communicate this so that we don't raise concerns with parents.

Chanda Jefferson

As we prepare for summer programs we need to have guidance counselors available for students to assess their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Superintendent Spearman

This is a great report. We will have our staff check about the number of school nurses in schools and report that information back to you.

Patrick Kelly

Should we look at PPE being done with central purchasing in order to get a better price? What about the use of hand dryers that don't work in a lot of schools. Need to look at how students will be able to sanitize. What will the teacher supply checks look like? We will need to look at the various entry points in the schools, because it will be hard to social distance.

Alan Walters

Entry points are really more of a visitor access point. With regard to sanitizer and cleaning, I think this would fall under those infrastructure needs.

Tanya Addison

How are we going to proceed with fall sports?

Superintendent Spearman: we have been in communication with Jerome Singleton at the SCHSL. He has a group pulled together looking at this.

Missy Campbell

With regard to PPE, will districts purchase and be reimbursed?

**B. Instruction Subcommittee (Patrick Kelly)**

1. Learning activities for summer: we are recommending to continue traditional summer programming. Face to face is preferred but digital may be an option.
2. Non-traditional programming: summer enrichment. Look at using pre-service teachers at tutors in a one on one setting (Ex. What Tennessee is doing). We also recommend promoting a summer reading initiative for all students, summer SEL with tele-counseling, specific learning needs with CATE students, and encourage the SCDE to take the lead on resources and help with a guide for parents.
3. Identification: districts need to identify students with learning loss beyond data that is available. Especially need to look at those students who have not been engaging.
4. Encourage districts to develop a local task force: look at the digital divide with students and develop professional development to target distance learning, social and emotional needs, and trauma informed practices.
5. Districts need to develop a backup plan for fall closures.
6. SCDE needs to review regulations and see if seat time requirements can be relaxed.
7. Transition: The SCDE needs to develop learning progressions, seek additional testing waivers (benchmark assessments), and expand VirtualSC offerings to students in Elementary and Middle school grade levels.
8. Districts need to develop learning recovery plans.

Latoya Dixon

Our goal with these proposals is to create flexibility because we know every district is different.

Sherry East

We need to be mindful that teachers do not have access to broadband, not just students.

Superintendent Spearman

School may not look like it has always looked. We need to be adaptable. I just want to add that there is a huge push right now to improve affordability for broadband and internet in this state.

**C. Operations Committee (Scott Turner)**

We are grateful for the AccelerateSC requests and just want to relay the urgency of getting guidance out to districts.

1. Human Resources: we looked at the types of positions in summer programs. We know that every school will need a nurse, and school staff will need at least a day of training before students come back in the building.
2. Transportation: 26-49 students on a 77 passenger bus. We are also recommending assigned seats and load buses from the front to the back.
3. Summer Learning: 12-18 students per classroom. We need to look at students with food allergies for meal service in classrooms if that is what we go with. How do you maintain privacy for students? We also have looked at recess (walking loops or large fields instead of playground equipment).

Superintendent Spearman

Thanks for that report Scott. There is certainly a great urgency here. I am going to do the best I can to get a commitment on this funding.

Harrison Goodwin

There is a vast difference in the types of schools in this state.

Katie Nilges (SCDE, Legislative Liaison)

The Continuing Resolution was passed by the General Assembly on Tuesday. There are 3 main takeaways that affect the Superintendent and districts (section 4)

1. Waiver of statutory requirements re: testing, assessments, etc...
2. Inclusion of all distance learning in the 180 day count
3. Flexibility for districts (carryforward authority)

Kathy Coleman, Chairman

Thank you to everyone. We will work in pulling these recommendations together and will work first on summer learning.