



February 8, 2021

**Educational Services and Instructional Improvement Plan
Washington Township Public Schools, February 6, 2021**

Dear Washington Township Families,

I apologize for the short notice on this morning's switch to remote instruction. I am also aware that we had a glitch in our communications system and some of you may not have received all three communications - text, phone, and email. **Please check your Power School Parent Portal to ensure it has the correct contact information for you.** Our desire to open was well intended. Our facilities staff worked all day yesterday to plow and shovel our schools, only to find much of what was shoveled and plowed had iced over. I could only imagine what our developments and sidewalks looked like throughout the community. I knew my development and those I observed at 4:00 AM this morning was hazardous; therefore, the call was made to switch to remote instruction.

Given the timing of this call, the ability to flip to a remote Wednesday schedule as we did last week is not possible; therefore, to keep the instructional schedule on track, we cannot alter the schedule this week. Cohort A will report to in-person instruction for Tuesday, followed by a remote schedule for all on Wednesday, and Cohort B will report to school on Thursday and Friday.

Our crews are doing all they can to salt and remove icy spots but given the temperatures, it is likely we will encounter icy conditions tomorrow as well. Please plan accordingly and proceed with caution. School will be open, and if we need to alter that decision, which I hope we do not, you will be notified via SwiftK12 in the early morning.

The Road Back - When we worked as a district to establish a schedule and instructional program for this school year, we referenced it as the **Road Back Plan** - a way in which we could return our children safely to school for in-person instruction and eventually normal instruction as we once knew it. To that end, it is incumbent that we continue to make strides by expanding our capacity to increase quality instructional time, supportive services, and live access to instruction for all learners, whether remote or in-person. Therefore, we are introducing a three-phase approach, spanning the month of February into the beginning of March.

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Phase 1

1. **Student Support Services, Week of 2/1/21** – Under the direction of Jennifer Grimaldi, our District School Counseling Department has entered a partnership with Rowan University’s Counseling in Educational Settings graduate program to extend free social-emotional learning (SEL) support to all students, parents, and teachers during evenings hours. The WTPS press release has been shared and an email was sent to all families with details on how to take advantage of these supports.
 - a. Additionally, parents were encouraged to reach out to the assigned school counselor for academic, social-emotional or career development support.
 - b. The WTPS Community Resources list was emailed to families as well, which is posted on every school counseling webpage.
2. **Special Needs Resource Room Students to Cohort C, effective Monday February 8** - Students in Cohorts A, B, and D who receive pull-out resource room instruction have the option to join Cohort C to extend in-person instruction to 4 days per week. Students joining Cohort C will attend all classes within their schedule.
 - a. Transportation and Principals were consulted to determine feasibility of the plan.
 - b. Information was shared with the staff.
 - c. A survey was developed and sent to the parents to determine interest.
 - d. Child Study Team reached out to families that did not respond to the initial survey.
3. Brett Dinovi Clinical Associates are providing behavioral supports in the home during remote instruction for identified special education students unless the student is quarantining.
4. If a school pivots to fully remote instruction due to staffing concerns, classified students in Cohort C can continue in-person instruction in the building. If the school or class is quarantined, Cohort C will be remote.

Phase 2

Live Synchronous Instruction at the Elementary Level, week of February 22 – All K-2 students will receive live sessions focusing on social-emotional learning, morning meetings, and/or whole group activities for a minimum of 30 minutes a day with their classroom teacher. All remote education facilitator (REF) sessions will remain for our primary learners, and our primary teachers will continue to connect with their off-cohort and remote learners at the end of the day. In grades 3-5, off-cohort and remote learners will no longer receive live instruction from the REF. All intermediate grade students will receive their live instruction from the classroom teacher. We have been piloting this concept for the past two weeks. There are technological concerns that we are overcoming. For example, establishing clear audio for our online learners has been our biggest issue. We are in the process of ordering additional technology supplies to overcome these obstacles. Currently, all students in grades 3-5 receive about one hour per day of live instruction from a REF. Now our intermediate grade students will receive daily instruction from their classroom teacher. Therefore, live instructional time will remain the same in grades K to 2 and will increase by 60 to 90 minutes in Grades 3 to 5.

Phase 3

Wednesday Becomes a Live Day of Instruction for all Grades, week of March 1. Starting the week of March 1, all hybrid learners will attend in person instruction for 3 days instead of two, every two weeks. We are focused on two models to accomplish this:

- **Model 1 -**
 - In week one, Cohort A students will attend Monday through Wednesday. In week two, Cohort B will attend Wednesday through Friday. In other words, Cohorts A and B will attend every other Wednesday. Cohort C will attend all 5 days, except for pre-school which will continue to attend 4 days.
 - Off-cohort students and/or students in the remote cohort will receive synchronous instruction as outlined in Phase 2 for elementary students. Secondary students in the off-cohort and the remote cohort will continue to receive synchronous instruction as they have been.
 - *Implications* - Model 1 is the preferred model at the elementary level. In this model, high school and middle school students who are in Cohorts A, B, and D will cycle through eight periods. Currently, in the remote setting, these periods are 30 minutes in length. These would have to be shortened to 25 minutes for the arrival and dismissal time to remain the same. This is not optimal. This model also creates a complication for teachers at the secondary level that travel to different buildings. The secondary level prefers Model 2.

- **Model 2 - Two consecutive day rotating model.**
 - This model would have Cohort A attend in-person instruction for two consecutive days followed by Cohort B for two consecutive days. This means that each week would be different in which days the cohorts come to school, but each cohort would have either two or three days of in-person instruction every week (same amount of in-person instructional days as **Model 1**).
 - *Implications* - The concerns here are primarily at the elementary level who believe the alternating schedule will provide childcare difficulties.

We have the ability to provide Model 1 at the elementary level and Model 2 at the secondary level.

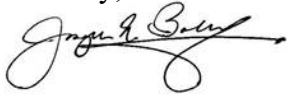
Please note: Under either plan, students in Cohort C will attend in person instruction 5 days a week, except for pre-school which will continue to attend 4 days a week. Arrival and dismissal times will remain the same (following the current half-day instructional schedule).

Survey – A survey is being developed that will be sent to all staff and families specific to the two models. We will make a final decision based on the feedback we receive. It is important to note that if we do different models at different levels, families who are in the same cohort with children at different levels will have children attending live instruction on different days. We recognize this may create additional childcare issues, which is why the survey is so important.

What Lies Ahead

Monitoring the effectiveness of these strategies will be critical to shape potential expansions later this school year. We will also need to monitor changes and progress in staff vaccinations, social distancing guidelines, and lastly, student vaccinations. Our long-range goal would be to begin collapsing our cohorts and bringing all students who are attending live instruction back to our schools 5 days per week. This would be phased in over time beginning with our youngest learners.

Sincerely,



Joseph N. Bollendorf
Superintendent of Schools

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