



What We Now Know (2/19/2021)

Is vaccinating teachers a priority to GUSD?

Not really. The district acknowledges that bringing back students in March is a higher priority than vaccinating employees who work with these students. They are committed to supporting a vaccination rollout once vaccines are available, but repeatedly restated that they are following CDC guidelines to reopen prior to vaccinating everyone. They were unable to answer our questions about how the vaccine will be offered to GTA members or how members will be prioritized.

What would instruction look like?

GUSD's proposal uses the phrase "concurrent instruction" to describe a hybrid model with some students in-person and others remote. The district wants teachers to use technology to provide an interactive experience for the remote students. The district said they would provide videos to assist with the instructional shift, emphasizing that the Distance Learning PD will "still be usable." There would be no mandatory/paid PD or trainings. Aside from the two web cameras and the omnidirectional microphone, GUSD would not promise additional supplies for TK-6 teachers; additional personnel/classroom assistants such as are being currently used in GUSD's pilot programs are not guaranteed.

Would instructional minutes be changed?

Maybe. The district proposal allows for instructional minutes to be reduced to the state minimum: 180 minutes for Kindergarten, 230 minutes/day for grades 1-3, and 240 minutes/day for grades 4-6. The district has not yet released their own proposed/model instructional schedules, but school sites would have the option to craft "alternative" grade level instructional schedules that must be approved by the principal in consultation with the superintendent by March 24, for implementation starting March 29.

How often would students report to campus?

It would be a site decision whether hybrid students would report to campus 2 days/week, 4 days/week, or 5 days/week. There would be no maximum class size, but spacing must allow for 6 feet between individuals, or 4-6 feet if physical barriers are introduced -- GUSD confirmed that they have a supply of transparent barriers that may be used for this purpose.

Could students be assigned to more than one stable group/cohort/pod?

Yes. The district is planning to assign some students to multiple groups/cohorts/pods throughout the day or week: this includes their hybrid class (for instruction), a Technology Learning Pod (for child care), and/or a EEELP cohort (for aftercare). The district emphasized that they are not breaking any rules by doing this. These groups/cohorts/pods could intermix different rosters of students.

What would GUSD supply students who return?

The district was not ready to share details about what supplies (including Chromebooks, additional textbooks, writing utensils) GUSD plans to provide students to use on campus.

What if a member needs to take a leave of absence?

The district is preparing for a large number of teachers to take a leave of absence. They currently have 200 substitute teachers and are ready to work with an outside placement agency to hire more. Members who are not comfortable working in-person would need to contact Human Resources regarding taking a leave of absence. Depending on individual circumstances, the leave may or may not be paid.

Would masks be required?

Yes. Everyone on campus would be required to wear a mask. The district said that they are in the process of replacing signs on school sites that indicated bandanas and scarves were allowable face coverings. Signs will now indicate that masks are required.

How much time would teachers be given to get their classrooms ready for in-person instruction?

The district would repurpose the March 22 professional development day to allow elementary teachers to set up their classrooms for distance learning. Furthermore, the district would give teachers up to six additional hours at sub rate to set up classrooms afterschool, during the weekend, or during spring break. These six hours must be used by March 24.

Do members need to report safety concerns on campus?

Similar to reporting instances of sexual harassment on campus, GUSD proposed that GTA members would be mandated to report violations of safety protocol by colleagues, students, and/or administrators to GUSD Covid Compliance Officers.

What is the current status of HVAC upgrades at all sites?

The district has not repaired any inoperable classroom windows, including windows that are painted shut. They stated that all preschool, elementary and middle school sites have updated MERV-13 filters and all classrooms will have a portable HEPA air filter.

What about using outdoor spaces for teaching?

There would be at least one outdoor classroom space that is designated at every site. The schedule to use that space would be created by the principal.

What would the morning health screening look like?

The district has not formalized a plan for conducting morning health screenings systematically. The district is piloting a mobile screening app for employees and plans to pilot a different app for students.

Does the district have enough custodians?

The district says that they are currently fully staffed in custodians and that they have enough substitute custodians to avoid ever being understaffed. They said that, earlier this year, they hired 36 additional custodians (approximately 1 per school) and they do not have plans to increase custodial staffing when campuses reopen for in-person instruction.

Does the district intend to regularly test students and employees?

The district established a partnership with Valencia Labs and is piloting a self-administering nasal swab test. They are considering making it available on an optional basis for employees and possibly students.

Would teacher prep time change?

Yes. The district intends to reduce planning time for elementary teachers. 8:00 - 8:20 would be converted to supervision time while students enter the classroom after their health screening. In addition, the PE/Mindfulness block, 11:40 - 12:15, might be repurposed--they will get back to us. We will ask about office hours at a later session.

Would teachers need to use sick time if they have COVID?

Possibly. If the member is well enough to work remotely, then they may work remotely during the duration of the quarantine. If the member is not well enough to work remotely, then the member may quarantine without using sick time ONLY IF the exposure can be proven (through contact tracing) to have happened on campus.

Would visitors be allowed on campus and in classrooms?

The district assures us that orientations will happen before Spring Break, and most school tours would be virtual. No tours or orientations should enter classrooms. Parent volunteers would not be permitted on campus. We are waiting to hear if administrators or other school personnel may enter the classroom.