2020-2021

Small Cohort Site Plan

September 24, 2020

This Small Cohort Site Plan has been created with the intent to provide our most vulnerable students with an equitable, accessible and engaging educational experience; to prevent further learning loss; and to make meaningful connections in our learning community and to best prepare for the uncertainty that is ahead of us.
Overview

The Small Cohort Site plan has been developed to outline a variety of actions necessary to open small instructional cohorts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Every effort has been made to create a plan that is reasonable and practical while maintaining a balance between a safe learning environment and effective teaching models. Safety and health, both mental and physical, are of utmost importance, and the District is preparing to adhere to all county and state health orders.

Our goal is to appropriately share safety strategies, reasonings, and expectations with families, students, and staff; the District recognizes the importance of consistent, timely communications, which will be available in a variety of formats including translation to multiple languages.

On August 24, 2020, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued Guidance Related to Cohorts (Cohorting Guidance), which sets minimum health and safety guidelines across multiple sectors serving youth, including childcare and schools (public and private).

Background

On March 4, 2020, the Governor proclaimed a State of Emergency in California as a result of the impacts of COVID-19 to make additional resources available and help the state prepare to respond to an increasing number of individuals requiring medical care and hospitalization as a result of a broader spread of COVID-19. Since that time, the State Public Health Officer and the CDPH have issued multiple public health directives to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including, on July 17, 2020, the COVID-19 and Reopening In-Person Learning Framework for K-12 Schools (Framework). The Framework prohibits in-person instruction at schools operating within a county in Tier 1 due to high rates of COVID-19, and permits elementary schools in those counties to request a waiver to permit reopening for in-person instruction where conditions and safety plans permit. On August 3, 2020, CDPH provided further guidance to the July 17 reopening framework and detailed information regarding the elementary school waiver process. The August 3 guidance noted that additional guidance was forthcoming to identify conditions in which schools otherwise prohibited from reopening for full in person instruction
can offer in-person services to small groups of students. On August 24, 2020, CDPH issued the Cohorting Guidance regarding permissible small-group in person services.

The Waugh School District Small Cohort Site Plan was developed with the intention to align with the following:

- Sonoma County Health Orders
- CDC Cleaning Guidelines
- California Department of Education “Stronger Together” Opening Guidelines
- Sonoma County Road Map to Reopening Schools Safely
- COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Program (7/17/2020)
- CA Assembly Bill 98: Education Finance Trailer Bill
- Cal/OSHA COVID-19 General Checklist for Schools and School Based Programs (7/17/2020)
- Providing Targeted, Specialized Support and Services at School (8/25/2020)
- Providing Targeted, Specialized Support and Services at School (UPDATED 9/4/2020)

Guiding Principles
These overarching principles will guide the plan through future decision-making processes:

- Protect student, staff, and community health
- Foster student learning and progress
- Maintain positive learning environments
- Foster student emotional health
- Care for our most vulnerable populations

Health and Safety Communication Information
Providing regular and transparent communication within the school community is critical to building and maintaining trust, especially during these difficult times.

Communications will be provided in multiple formats to address the need for multiple languages and alternative communication methods based on connecting with all families. The formats include but are not limited to communications through Aeries Communication, telephone, text messaging, email, video-conferencing, flyers, website, social media and in-person. It is vitally important that parents and guardians keep their emergency information updated in
the Aeries system and that school office and district staff coordinate the information system to keep it constantly updated and accurate.

Mike Gardner is the District designated COVID-19 Coordinator who will:
1. Coordinate notification of staff, students/parents (following Public Health Guidelines) when there has been a COVID-19 exposure at a school site or other district worksite.
2. Collect and report data to the Sonoma County Public Health Office.
3. Be a single point of contact for concerns and questions from staff, parents, and students via a telephone, email or video conferencing during the day.
4. Support and coordinate Contact Tracing in conjunction with Public Health guidelines.
5. Provide for the dissemination of related communications.
6. Set up COVID-19 related training for students, parents, and staff.
7. Coordinate a COVID-19 testing schedule for staff

This will include health screening and self-assessments protocols to determine when students or staff should remain at home instead of coming to a school site or other district worksite. The school site Principal or department directors will act as their respective site or department lead to inform and receive information from the COVID-19 Coordinator.

Any staff who report to work at a school site should be tested once every 1-2 months. 25% of their onsite staff will be tested every 1-2 weeks.

**Reducing the Spread of COVID-19**
Using multiple resources, Waugh School District will adopt the following steps to promote healthy behaviors to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Staying home when appropriate. This applies to students, staff, parents, and members of the community.
- Educate staff about when they should stay home, families about when their child(ren) should stay home, and when either staff or a student can return to work or school
- Require employees and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact (longer than 15 minutes) with a person with COVID-19 to stay home.
- Outreach to communities particularly impacted by the pandemic and guiding access to resources and educational opportunities.
- Posting educational signage from the CDC in handwashing areas, offices and classrooms
• Training of all staff on preventing the spread of Covid-19
• Scheduling student hand washing routines in all classrooms during in-person instruction
• Installation of hand sanitizer dispensers in all classrooms and other school areas
• Cleaning and disinfecting all school areas between class sessions using high-speed disinfecting equipment and non-toxic, odorless cleaning agents
• Scheduling frequent bathroom surface disinfecting
• All staff members wearing essential protective equipment
• Students wearing masks while indoors as required by Department of Public Health or California Department of Health orders.
• Facilitating physical distancing practices
• Health screening for all staff and students, including symptom and temperature checks before entering campus
• Limiting non-staff adults or volunteers that are allowed on campus
• Adjusting all HVAC systems to maximize outside air flow, switching fan settings to constantly circulate fresh air into all buildings. Requiring open windows and doors for classrooms during student hours. All HVAC systems are equipped with HEPA filters.
• Staff have the opportunity to participate in antibody testing. This will give Public Health an idea of how much COVID-19 infection there is/was among this work group and will establish a baseline to understand potential infection rates as schools reopen and school staff get recurring COVID testing going forward.

**Face Coverings**

Face coverings must be used in accordance with CDPH guidelines unless a person is exempt as explained in the guidelines, particularly in indoor environments, on school buses, and areas where physical distancing alone is not sufficient to prevent disease transmission. Districts are required to:

• Teach and reinforce use of face coverings, or in limited instances, face shields.
• Students and staff should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently.
• Information should be provided to all staff and families in the school community on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
• Training should also include policies on how people who are exempted from wearing a face covering will be addressed.
Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Face Covering Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 2 years old</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years old – 2\textsuperscript{nd} grade</td>
<td>Strongly encouraged**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} grade – High School</td>
<td>Yes, unless exempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Waugh School District holds the discretion of what is considered “safe” for Small Cohorts. Accordingly, the district holds that to be included in a Small Cohorts, ALL individuals wear masks/face coverings.

- A cloth face covering or face shield should be removed for meals, snacks, naptime, or outdoor recreation, or when it needs to be replaced. When a cloth face covering is temporarily removed, it should be placed in a clean paper bag (marked with the student's name and date) until it needs to be put on again.
- In order to comply with this guidance, schools must exclude students from campus if they are not exempt from wearing a face covering under CDPH guidelines and refuse to wear one provided by the school. Schools should develop protocols to provide a face covering to students who inadvertently fail to bring a face covering to school to prevent unnecessary exclusions. Schools should offer alternative educational opportunities for students who are excluded from campus.

Staff

- All staff must use face coverings in accordance with CDPH guidelines unless Cal/OSHA standards require respiratory protection.
- In limited situations where a face coverings cannot be used for pedagogical or developmental reasons, (i.e. communicating or assisting young children or those with special needs) a face shield can be used instead of a cloth face covering while in the classroom as long as the wearer maintains physical distance from others, to the extent practicable. Staff must return to wearing a face covering outside of the classroom.
Workers or other persons handling or serving food must use gloves in addition to face coverings. Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.

**Small Group In-Person Services**

The Cohorting Guidance authorizes small-group, in-person services in controlled, supervised, and indoor environments, such as those operated by local educational agencies (LEAs). The Cohorting Guidance applies to schools that cannot reopen for in-person instruction pursuant to the July 17 Framework, including elementary schools in those jurisdictions that have not received an elementary school waiver through the local public health office.

**Targeted Students for Small Group Cohorts:**
The purpose of the CDPH guidance is to establish minimum parameters for providing specialized services, targeted services and support for the most vulnerable students while schools are otherwise closed for in-person instruction. Specialized services are determined by LEAs and include but are not limited to occupational therapy services, speech and language services, medical services, behavioral services, educational support services as part of a targeted intervention strategy or assessments, such as those related to English learner status, individualized educational programs and other required assessments. This group of students is a very small percentage of the total population.

The determination of what students are served is made at the LEA- and school-level based on the needs of students. Students with disabilities should be prioritized by the LEA and school for receiving targeted supports and services. In addition, English learners, students at higher risk of further learning loss or not participating in distance learning, students at risk of abuse or neglect, foster youth and students experiencing homelessness may also be prioritized.

**Cohort Size**
In the K-12 Schools setting, cohorts are stable groups of students with no more than 16 individuals, who are meeting for targeted supports and intervention services, under the direction of the LEA, while the school is closed to in person instruction and in addition to distance learning. Regardless of the name (e.g., “learning hubs” or “pods”), all of the provisions in the Cohorting Guidance must be
followed for such cohorts to meet, whether they are operated by LEAs, non-profits, or other providers.

The cohort must operate so that students and supervising adults within the group only have physical proximity with members of their cohort during the day. Supervising adults and students must not interact with other cohorts. This practice decreases opportunities for exposure to or transmission of the virus; facilitates more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case; and allows for targeted testing, quarantine, and isolation of a cohort instead of requiring the suspension of all such groups operating on a site in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

Cohorts are limited to no more than 16 individuals total (children and youth or adults) in the cohort. The number of students and staff who make up a cohort should be based on student needs. Cohorts can – and often will – be smaller than 14, staffed by 1 or 2 consistent adults. For example, a cohort could be 6 students with 1 adult or 8 students with two adults that stay together throughout the day. In addition, a cohort can be divided into subgroups of students that may interact with one another during the day, as long as there are no more than 16 individuals in that cohort overall. The number of adults assigned to a cohort should be minimized and is ideally limited to two. However, cohorts may include more than two adults, provided the total size of the cohort does not exceed 16 individuals (students and adults together).

Groups must be no larger than can be accommodated by the space available in the facility to provide at least 6 feet of distance between each person, including staff, but in no instance larger than 16 individuals total. The smaller the group, the less risk of spreading disease. As cohort groups increase in size, or as they have any contact with other cohorts, the risk of spreading disease increases.

**Cohort Mixing**
Group stability is important to minimize exposure and for effective contact tracing so students and supervising adults cannot interact with different cohorts. Separation between cohorts is maintained either by having each cohort in a separate room or in its own space created by partitions. Given the layout of K-12 schools with multiple classrooms, schools should generally maintain separation between cohorts by assigning each cohort to its own classroom. Outdoor space or other dedicated space may be used when it allows for separation from other cohorts and adequate physical distancing.
Cleaning

Cleaning and wiping surfaces (e.g., desks, door handles, etc.) must be maintained between multiple student uses, even in the same cohort. For additional guidance around health and safety standards including cleaning and masking, refer to CDPH, local health guidance, and the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 General Checklist.

Highlights from the CDPH, local health guidance, and Cal/OSHA Checklist in concordance with the LEA’s discretion of what is considered “safe” include the requirement that all individuals wear masks/face coverings, have daily temperature checks, daily health screenings, and ensure all maintain the ability to remain 6 feet from one another.

Assessment and 1:1 Services

Students may receive one-on-one services and supports from other qualified adults. These additional supports and services must be done individually and cannot be done with other students. Staff who are providing specialized services or targeted support – such as speech or physical therapy or special education assessment -- should be assigned to work with students in as few cohorts as possible and must observe appropriate precautions to prevent transmission, including wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as specified in the industry guidance for Limited Services. It is also important to prevent other staff people (e.g., administrators, counselors, or nurses) who are not a supervising adult in a cohort or providing one-on-one services from interacting with cohorts unless necessary to respond to exigent health or safety issue, as they can transmit the virus from one cohort to another, thus greatly increasing the number of contacts for any given case.

What Happens if Someone Becomes Sick or Tests Positive with Covid-19?

Each school site will identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19. Any students or staff exhibiting symptoms will immediately be required to wait in the designated isolation area until they can be transported home or to a healthcare facility.
If a staff member or student becomes sick, and a family member cannot be reached or is not available to pick up the individual, 911 will be called if the severity of illness appears to be immediately life-threatening.

Staff and Students who exhibit COVID-19 should not return to school or work until they have been cleared by their physician.

Isolation Rooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day if used.

If someone is confirmed to have contracted COVID-19 and has been in an Isolation Room, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the Isolation Room for at least 24 hours.

**Sonoma County Health Notification for Student/Staff Illness**
Public Health Nurses will notify a school/district when a student or staff member is confirmed positive with COVID-19 and will lead contact tracing efforts as needed. Waugh School District, through the designated COVID-19 Coordinator or School Nurse, will work with the County Health Department through their existing protocols to conduct testing and contact tracing, as needed, and identify whether quarantine of impacted students and staff is necessary. Contacts will be identified based on the duration of the contact, the proximity of the contact, and the number of people.

**Partial or Total Site Closures**
The need to quarantine an entire cohort or school site will be determined by Sonoma County Public Health officials depending on the extent of exposure (duration, numbers exposed, the closeness of contact, and other factors). For reference, see the Sonoma County Draft Flow Chart.

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, the classroom or facility may need to be closed for at least 24 hours before it can be cleaned and an alternative area to continue class will be provided. When a student, teacher, or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposes others at the school, the WSD COVID-19 Coordinator will work with Sonoma County Public Health to determine next steps.
Changes to Food Service

Food Service
Food service will continue in the Small Cohort Site Plan. Not all cohorts will remain on campus for meals however, students have access to lunches grab and go style. If Cohorts are on campus through a meal time, students will eat outside (weather permitting) 6 feet apart. Students will be able to remove their mask during the duration of eating. For days with smoke or weather requiring inside meals, students will eat at their desks 6 feet apart with plexiglass dividers. Rooms will be sanitized after eating inside. The cafeterias will not be used for either direct food service to students or as eating spaces.
References

CDC Guidelines on Coronavirus Prevention (This site is available in English, Spanish, and Chinese)

Sonoma County Health Orders

CDC Cleaning Guidelines

California Department of Education “Stronger Together” Opening Guidelines

Sonoma County Road Map to Reopening Schools Safely

COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Schools and School-Based Program (7/17/2020)

CA Assembly Bill 98: Education Finance Trailer Bill