

Distance Learning Effectiveness Committee

Committee Report and Holiday Break Proposal





Objectives and Principles



Objective: To ensure academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of all students are met during the pandemic

Goals:

- Minimize educational and social disruptions
- Minimize academic loss
- Ensure continued health and wellness of all members of school community
- Preserve continuity of all essential district functions

Guiding principles:

- **Health and wellness of students, staff, and community is our highest priority**
- **Recognition that learning needs vary student to student and school to school**
- **Recognize that family circumstance also vary**
- **Due to the unpredictability of the virus the plan must be fluid**
- **Decisions will be based on data and guidelines obtained from NH Department of Education (DOE), and NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**



Findings and Feedback To Date



Parent and staff feedback regarding distance learning trends *

- Internet connectivity issues and/or technical issues during class time
- Dual platform teaching creating difficulties for staff and students
- Hybrid students struggling with inconsistencies r/t remote vs. in person instruction
- Attendance accuracy related to technical issues
- Parent compliance with guidelines put forth by district and the state has varied, non-reporting has caused some concerns
- As student in-person attendance has risen ability to maintain recommended distance has decreased
 - Kindergarten, first grade, and some middle school classrooms are at maximum capacity.
 - Student enrollment has increased by 20 students district wide since first day of school
 - Second grade has now exceeded capacity

* According to the feedback inquiry sent in September and discussions from committee meetings

Areas identified in need of immediate review:

- 1) The benefits vs. risk associated with families and staff traveling and socializing during the holiday season and develop a proposal to present to the School Board
- 2) Reevaluate the current model for sustainability throughout the school year and create a new model that will
 - a) Provide a more equitable education for all district students
 - b) Allow all students to attend in person while still providing a safe environment as described in guidelines put forth by the Department of Education
 - c) Ensure appropriate staffing coverage to prevent loss of direct instruction hours



Holiday Break Proposal



Holiday Break Concerns

- The district cannot legally restrict families, students, or staff from traveling or hosting events while on their **PERSONAL** time
- In the event that any member of the school community (staff or student) leaves New England a quarantine is required prior to return to the buildings in accordance with state and local requirements and District protocol
- As stated in the State issued guidance documents*
 - “Exceptions to quarantine requirements following close contact to someone suspected or confirmed with COVID19, or travel outside New England for non-essential purposes are not recommended and should not be standard practice.”
 - In order to qualify for quarantine exception “The employee cannot conduct essential functions remotely”

*<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>.

Holiday Break Concerns continued

- The district currently has 2 substitutes willing to cover staff absences
 - Community outreach has one promising lead that could result in additional substitutes
 - Staffing agencies stated they are unable to provide coverage due to “liability concerns”
 - **Substitute information:** <https://www.sau63.org/domain/73>
- With area schools going remote teachers who are also parents may no longer be able to teach in person
- According to Dr. Chan state epidemiologist “it doesn't take traveling outside of NH or New England for someone to pick up COVID-19 and bring it back to school... the risk increases locally as community transmission increases”

Community feedback regarding holiday break*

- We received approximately 88 responses which represents approximately 15% of our student population
- 53 respondents did not agree with going remote (9% of student population)
- 35 respondents did agree (6% of student population)

*Number based on information included in board packet and enrollment number as of 10/27/20

What staying in person may look like:

- If additional staff absences occur related to illness, family need, other districts closing etc. the Superintendent will be forced to move to remote without notice
- At WLC if there are more than 3 absent teachers the space in the gym needs to be used and students are supervised but direct instruction does not take place. This already occurs weekly
- At FRES teacher absences have been covered by specials teachers and specials classes do not meet and classroom teachers go without PLC time
- If we do not teach PE, Art, Tech, or Music we do not meet our state standards from the DOE
- LCS has a bit more flexibility since PARAs are not part of any individual students IEP and therefore can cover a classroom, however lunch and recess time do not have adequate coverage within that scenario



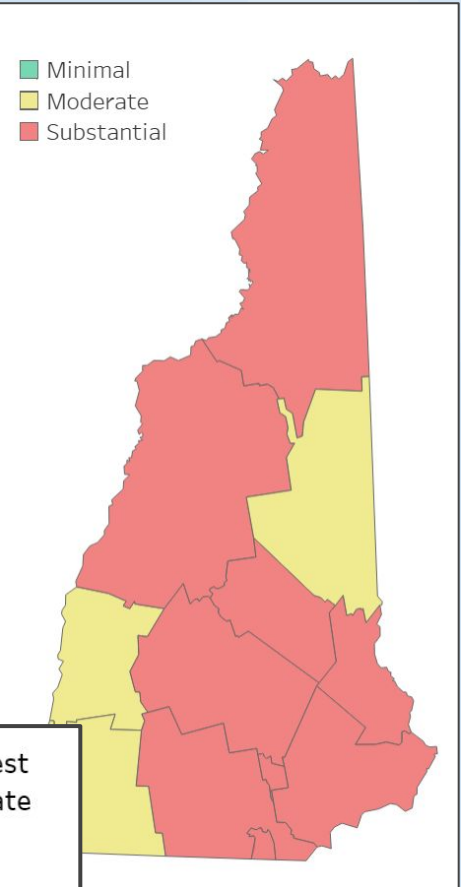
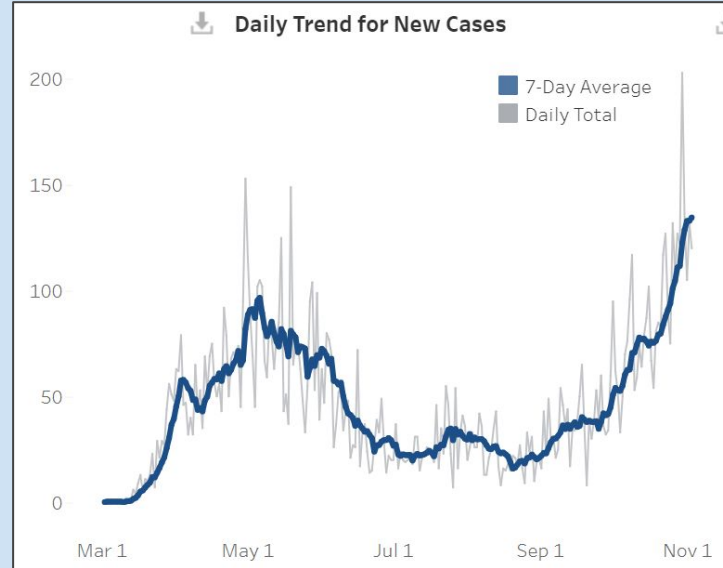
Supporting Data



Current Coronavirus Data in NH

All data represented here was obtained from NH DHHS website 11/05/2020

-The high risk of spread with small home gatherings (ie. the holidays) is currently a real concern, according to Dr. Chan, State Epidemiologist, NH DHHS



Level of
Transmission

Substantial

New Cases per 100k
over 14 days

123.4

New Hosp per 100k
over 14 days

1.5

7-Day PCR Test
Positivity Rate

1.8%

Models Currently used in Area Schools*

- Bedford: Hybrid model, recently decided not to continue to phase 3 of reopening related to increased community spread
- ConVal Regional: Hybrid model, all students remote from Thanksgiving Recess through January 15th. Winter and spring vacations combined with a 3-week period of remote learning after.
- Hillsborough/Deering: Hybrid model, going remote two weeks following December break
- Milford: Hybrid model, going remote as needed; last meeting canceled due to a positive case, no decision yet
- Souhegan: Hybrid, actively discussing holiday break no decision yet
- Mascenic: Hybrid, actively discussing holiday break no decision yet
- Manchester: Going full remote
- Timberlane: Going full remote
- Hudson: Currently remote, discussing going full remote
- Nashua: Full remote

* According to Department of Education website and SAU Superintendent Offices



Conclusion



Recommendations:

- Students will receive remote instruction Monday November 30th through Monday January 18th
 - Special Needs students will be given the opportunity to come into school 4 days per week while they attend classes remotely along with their peers
 - District will create a plan to address needs of students with no internet access
 - Co-curricular athletics could still be run if the NHIAA moves forward with the season
- School Board to consider increasing the daily substitute rate*
- Committee will work to create a recommendation for a more sustainable year long model for the School Board to consider. Presentation will be completed for the School Board Meeting on December 15th
- Committee to create a decision tree for the Superintendent to utilize in the decision to go remote due to COVID; Board to review at November 24th meeting

*See handout for district comparisons regarding rates



Open Discussion



Family Programs Available

- ★ Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 :
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave>
- ★ Holiday Drive supported by WLC and the Wilton-Lyndeborough Women's Club. Families encouraged to contact a.kovaliv@sau63.org if interested
- ★ Open Cupboard Pantry in Wilton if interested please call Linda and Roger Ladouceur at 809-6114
- ★ SHARE <https://www.sharenh.org/share-services/important-contacts-and-services/>