Education and Childcare Committee Additional Recommendations for the ReOpen DC Advisory Group
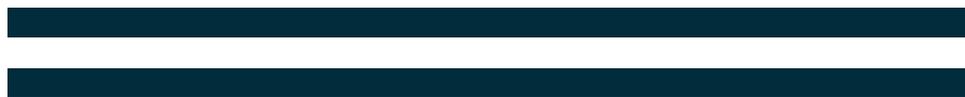
May 21, 2020

EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE COMMITTEE

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The Committee engaged stakeholders across the District including students, families, teachers and school staff, LEA and school leaders, childcare providers, leaders of local colleges and universities, health officials, city agencies, community members, and non-governmental staff.

More respondents to the city's online public survey shared feedback for education than for any other committee. Resident responses ranged from parents who wanted an immediate reopening of schools, to those who wanted to wait until a vaccine was available. In addition, the Committee spoke with Councilmember David Grosso, who provided additional community feedback he received through his position as Chair of the DC Council's Committee on Education. In all, the Committee collected research and feedback from 34 organizations and groups, along with thousands of survey respondents. In total, the report's recommendations reflect dozens of 1-on-1 discussions between the 25 committee members and the community, as well as feedback from 12 focus groups, responses from 11 surveys, the review of 14 local reports or resources, and 14 research articles and reference materials from jurisdictions outside of Washington, DC.

STAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the report's primary guidance and universal safeguards (e.g., physical distancing of at least 6 feet, use of masks in public spaces - including when in schools and higher education institutions - stringent sanitation and hygiene practices), the Committee recommends the following guidance for the subsectors listed below.

GROUP	INITIAL STAGE	SUBSEQUENT STAGES
PK-12 schools	Distance learning	**Schools partially reopen, starting with select schools to strengthen their health operations and to work in person with some students ('Orange' phase)** — Select schools can open (families could decide to continue learning at home) — Focused on students who might benefit most from in-person instruction (e.g., students in transitional grades, students of workers who must return to work) — Modified schedule should be implemented (e.g. A day/B day). — Limit of 10 people in a classroom, including adults and children — Strict physical distancing measures and enhanced cleaning routines — Expanded health expertise in all schools

- Health trainings and direct lines of communication between schools and DC Health liaison(s)
- Eliminate non-essential travel

Expanded reopening of additional schools ('Yellow stage') with continued "blended" instruction

- All students can return to schools (families can decide on their preferred learning models in person or learning at home)
- Capacity limits of 10 per room (including adults and children) and modified scheduling apply
- Strict physical distancing measures and enhanced cleaning routines remain in place

GROUP	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
Childcare Centers	Limited childcare centers open (e.g., for children of workers who must return to work) — Childcare providers who are open must follow guidance developed by OSSE in partnership with DC Health and based on CDC guidance for childcare facilities — Limit of 10 people per room, including adults and children — Daily symptom screenings — Staggered drop-offs and pick-ups — Strict dismissal criteria in the event of positive cases	Additional childcare providers encouraged to open — OSSE childcare guidance remains in place, including limit of 10 people per room, including adults and children	Nearly all licensed child development facilities open — 10 people per room recommended, including adults and children, with potential for consideration of larger rooms or group sizes

GROUP	INITIAL STAGE	SUBSEQUENT STAGES	
Higher education	Continued limited on-campus activities permitted, as today Institutions should develop campus-specific plans, including proposed modifications to residential settings, campus facilities, scheduling, class sizes,	**Actions for each institution will vary and may range from reopening campuses to continuation of distance learning.** — Return of students to campus permitted per agreed plans — Residential housing limits may pertain — Congregation or high contact areas to remain closed or restricted, such as fitness centers and student unions	

	etc. which then are discussed with and reviewed by the city	— Expanded health capacity at Student Health Centers for testing, etc.
	Most dorms remain closed	— Isolation and quarantine facilities fully operational
	Strict physical distancing measures and cleaning protocols in place	

GROUP	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
Libraries	— Select libraries to provide "curb-side" service; customers remain outside of buildings	Some libraries reopen with expanded services and capacity limits, with focus on areas where the digital divide is the most pronounced — Allow a controlled number of customers into the buildings to use a limited number of computers, and print/copy jobs — Allow limited customer access to seating areas and reconfigure spaces to maintain appropriate physical distancing — Support use of "learning hubs" – spaces within libraries for students to work in, and be chaperoned, while their families are at work, with strict physical distancing	Most or all branches open — Increase customer access to all library spaces with safeguards and physical - distancing practices — Increase the number of computers available to customers

RECOMMENDED SAFEGUARDS

The committee also recommends adoption of the sub-sector specific safeguards outlined below.

SUBSECTOR	TYPE OF ACTIVITY OR STAKEHOLDER	ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED MITIGATION GUIDELINES
All schools	Travelling to and from schools	Limit student interaction on public transportation — Avoid public transportation, particularly during high-volume times — Identify one parent/caregiver to be the designated drop-off and pick-up contact

		Cancel or reschedule outside events
		— Cancel field trips and other scheduled school-wide or class outings or convert them to virtual activities
		— Cancel sports tryouts, practices, and games until further guidance from public health officials
		— Eliminate non-essential travel for staff and teachers
	Entering and exiting school	Adjust how students enter school buildings
		— Stagger scheduled student arrival and dismissal times
		— Conduct health and symptom screenings as students enter each day
		— Open additional doors for entry and exit
		— Create clear space delineations for student lines as students enter and exit
	Classrooms and hallways	Reconfigure school activities to facilitate safe distances
		— Rearrange desks so that a minimum distance of 6 feet is present between desks
		— Utilize partitions or dividers per DC Health specifications and review to create more opportunities to maximize space
		— Implement one-way pathways in classrooms, using stickers or tape for demarcation
		— Repurpose large spaces such as gymnasiums and libraries for student learning
		— Rotate desks, including the teacher's desk, so that they all face one direction
		Reduce or eliminate transitions between classes
		— Rotate teachers between classrooms, rather than students, to keep students in small and consistent cohorts to the greatest extent possible
		— If the lunchroom must be used, stagger lunchtime into groups of students from the same classroom cohort and disinfect in between
		— Eliminate or reduce elective classes to diminish student intermingling and movement
		— Hold breakfast and lunch periods in student classrooms
	Limiting outside interactions	Avoid unnecessary external factors
		— Revise the process for receiving mail and packages
		— Reduce or prevent outside visitors from entering the school
		— Require teachers to conduct meetings with parents virtually

	Maintaining a healthy environment	Implement schoolwide healthy strategies
		— Increase the frequency of full school cleaning and disinfecting efforts
		— Make hand and other cleaning supplies readily available
		— Prepackage lunches, including silverware, napkins, and seasonings, or serve meals individually plated
		— Teachers, staff and students to wear facemasks per guidance from DC Health
		— Remove shared supplies. Provide all students with their own materials
		— Establish policy that if a household member has a pending COVID-19 test, the student/staff should remain at home until receipt of results
		— Designate an area for students, teachers, or staff who exhibit symptoms and keep separate from the area used for routine healthcare
		— Close or restrict common areas such as staff breakrooms
		— Increase air circulation only where safe and possible and ensure proper ventilation systems Educate students on proper health strategies
		— Have students wash or sanitize their hands when entering and exiting a classroom or between activities
		— Enforce a "you touch it, you take it" policy
		— Have teachers reinforce the proper cleanliness techniques
		— Have tissues readily available in classrooms
		Install additional infrastructure to prevent cross-contamination
		— Install no-touch fixtures and equipment where possible

ADDT'L EQUITY CONSIDER-ATIONS	TYPE OF ACTIVITY OR STAKEHOLDER	ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES
All schools	Students (in-person and remote learners)	Ensure all students have access to technology and the internet, including technical support
		Ongoing outreach to remain in touch and ensure progress – require a 1st and 2nd level of contact for every student, testing contact information at random to ensure delivery of material
		Enable community- based supports for physical and mental health, including telehealth
		Assure safe travel to and from school
		Facilitate safe school environments, including provision of PPE, etc.
	Teachers	PPE, hand sanitizer, and classroom set up to enforce physical distancing
		Professional development aligned to improve remote learning and understand the new safety guidelines needed to implement physical distancing effectively

		Ensure safe travel to and from school
		Allow dispensation for teachers who cannot be physically present in schools
	Staff	Provide training on health risks and creating a school environment to lessen health risks
		Ensure safe travel to and from school, provision of PPE, etc.
	Families	Ensure safe travel for their students to and from schools
		Provide training and support to help caregivers support their students' technology needs
		Enable access to necessary physical and mental health supports, including telehealth
		Provide community-based support for other needs (e.g., recruiting tutors for additional needs)
	Vulnerable Populations	Implement supplemental academic support, especially returning citizens and homeless populations
		Allow meaningful enrichment and career pathway/employment opportunities
		Provide mental health services for youth and their families
		Enable streamlined communications for caregivers that are translated for families for whom English is not their primary language
		Facilitate technology and internet access
		Assure safe travel to and from school including provision of PPE, etc.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS AND 'BIG IDEAS'

The committee and its members propose several important initiatives and ideas for consideration, which include:

- **All schools across the city should adopt the same schedule** (e.g., A and B days, or A and B weeks), along with employers in the District and, ideally, Maryland and Virginia. In a similar way, LEAs should consider coordinating on their school-year schedules, with common start and end dates and the inclusion of a "pause" of in-person learning to assess health effects (if deemed essential by DC Health).

- **All schools will need to build and sustain strong remote learning capabilities**, as all students continue to learn at home at least some of the time. LEAs should consider collaborating on virtual instruction to meet new scheduling demands. Toward the goal of equity, the Committee recommends the city prioritize high-quality remote learning opportunities for vulnerable populations, particularly those who are at most risk of falling further behind or disconnecting from school.

- **The city should introduce new ways to support learning-at-home**. Every student must have access to internet through a combination of hotspot purchases, partnerships with internet providers, and select

expansion of public Wi-Fi. The city should ensure needed technical support for families. "Learning hubs" should be established in government and employer buildings, with internet access, meals, and adult supervision. The city should also produce co-op guidance for families that want to safely coordinate shared childcare.

— **The city should coordinate closely with DDOT and WMATA around students and families who are commuting to school**. This may include coordinating transportation timing and capacity, or the allocation of dedicated space on transportation routes for students commuting to and from school.

— **The city should ensure childcare providers get further guidance**, peer-to-peer learning, training, and technical assistance as they deliver high-quality care and education to DC's youngest learners in this new environment, particularly given the enrollment and revenue constraints under which they operate.

— **The city should implement a consultative approval process for each college and university's reopening plan**, given campus complexities, high numbers of students converging from around the world, and high-risk factors.