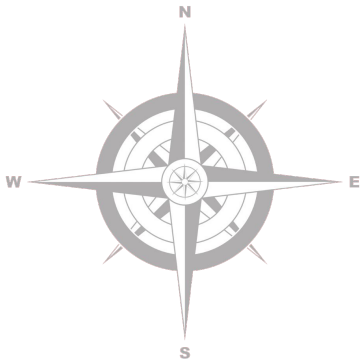

Reopening Focus Group Themes

Administration Council Presentation
July 20, 2020



WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Learning • Caring • Innovating

Educator Focus Groups Teaching & Learning

SEL & Wellness, PK-5

- Large number of concerns about staff stress and safety
- Desire to screen individual students' situations and strengths
- Teachers don't feel best suited to support families at this level of need
- Seeking guidance about building relationships both remotely and under safety restrictions, and before academics
- Training, protected time, and clear message from admin that anti-racism conversations are welcome

SEL & Wellness, 6-12

- Prioritize SEL, connection, and relationships for all, before curriculum and across courses and modes.
- More prominent, longer, and frequent non-academic advisory at both schools
- Educate parents about the importance of SEL.
- Concern about vulnerable students - outreach to all families now to identify needs
- Staff - mix across departments for collegial support
- PD: training for conversations about anxiety, teacher self care, trauma informed teaching

Curricula, PK-5

- Curricular impact of modes and shifting among modes
- Prioritize connection and SEL over curriculum and formal assessment.
 - Make a strong statement that we will have to cover less.
 - 1:1 time with each student
 - Integrate connection, SEL, and assessment into curriculum.
- Insure students have materials and books at home.
- Collaboration across the district - divide and conquer
- Need for closed captioning and translated information
- PD: collaboration, remote learning pedagogy, equity & inclusion

Curricula, 6-12

- Very clear, standards-based grading to encourage progress
- Small groups for engaged live or in person sessions
 - Department-standardized asynchronous content delivery and assessment
- Vulnerable students: multiple points of contact daily, SEL, teacher support, alternative school experiences
- Information to all as soon as possible: plans, schedules, changing teaching & learning

School & Student Schedules, PK-5

- Large number of safety & logistical concerns
- Concerns about specials logistics and the safety of specialists.
- Concerns about managing in-person and remote learning simultaneously
- Prioritize younger students, IEP, student needs
- Prioritize SEL, particularly when in person
- Team approach to instruction so students know multiple adults
- PD/support: time to prioritize curriculum, standardize safety procedures, tech tools

School & Student Schedules, 6-12

- Simple, consistent schedule, with minimal transitions
- Flexibility for teachers regarding livestreaming
- Customized schedule for each discipline (e.g., lab classes)
- Customized schedule for vulnerable students
- PD: Long-term consistency across tech, collaboration

Student & Staff Recovery and Support, PK-12

- Opening of the year: vulnerable student practice runs, phased opening, consistency and structure, building relationships, rebuild social/community skills.
- Many staff and student health concerns
- Stress of uncertainty and inability to plan in advance
- Consideration and protection of Black students - affinity space
- Outreach to identify home struggles
- PD: staff mental health, safety protocols, building community remotely

Student Supports: Special Education, ELL, Interventions; PK-5

- Many health concerns with special education
- Modes, grade levels is a lot for special educators; increase teacher collaboration to support
- Concern about addressing social skill IEP goals
- Many concerns about service delivery - where and when. Clinical model?
- Necessary materials at home
- PD: behavioral expectations shift, changing curriculum, previous grade curriculum (need admin support)

Student Supports: Special Education, ELL, Interventions; 6-12

- Increased anxiety for students, many who have emotional disability, and teachers - new behaviors.
- Prioritizing social emotional wellbeing needs to be communicated to stakeholders.
- Record student progress, deliver feedback, consequences for not showing up
- Many concerns about providing services effectively and without far beyond the MOA, and scheduling
- Safety concerns: wearing masks, full time programs, touching, restraining, motor breaks

Anti-Racism Work, PK-5

- Education and discussions about race and racism need to be a required priority.
 - Teachers, students and parents
- Review curriculum in each subject area to decentralize the White experience and broaden representation.
- Identify and stop microaggressions.
 - Do not expect student to be the expert on their racial group.
- Pedagogy that supports all students
- Develop positive academic identities for students.

Anti-Racism Work, 6-12

- This work needs to be a daily non-negotiable for staff and students, from all administration, in all areas.
 - High level of clarity about to do/not do
 - Ongoing PD groups
 - Hold staff accountable.
- Amplify existing voices in buildings, on social media, in current events and maximize the existing moment.
- Top priorities over curriculum in every subject area: trauma informed teaching, anti-racist practices, building community.

Educators: Technology

Curriculum and Outreach for Remote/Blended Learning; PK-5

- Pedagogical concerns: engagement, collaboration, accountability, 1:1 time, range of abilities/engagement
- Simplify home curriculum, increase student independence
- Parent education: technology, supporting their children
- Toolbox of tangible materials at home
- Some vulnerable students need FT in person or 1:1 remote support.
- PD: Flipped, assessment-feedback-retake tool, videos, effective Zoom meetings, SEL on Zoom

Curriculum and Outreach for Remote/Blended Learning; 6-12

- Need the plan in advance as well as pedagogy guidelines for high quality lessons
- Differentiated parent education/communication: more for incoming 6th graders, SWD, those unfamiliar with tech; also reinforcing standards
- “Camera on” requirement for students was debated.
- TAs/Paras in Zooms for breakout room support
- Closed captioning, clear masks
- Separate remote-only department, different PD

Technology, Support, & Access for Remote/Blended Learning

- Centralize location of remote learning and educate stakeholders; single LMS (Learning Management System, e.g., Canvas) platform
 - Particulars of use issues in each platform were discussed.
- Device and bandwidth availability varied across students, staff. Some need >1 device (SWD). Some families did not communicate needs.
- Interest in livestreaming and materials at home
- Visual feedback on assignments (circles, etc.)
- Parent training on LMSs.

Parents

Parents: PK-5

- Return students to school, at least part time: learning plan, rigor, emotional safety, better for youngest kids
- Remote portions: more live instruction, more interaction with classroom teacher, more personalized feedback, offline work, more 1:1
- In person: maximize connections, play time
- Consider new options: not one teacher: one group of students; leverage student interests, breakouts
- Outside time to get to know one another
- Consistent communication to parents

Parents: 6-8

- Hybrid model: who will be the point person if the teacher is in school, weekly packets, stress concern
- Remote portions: more small groups, structure and consistency between teachers (e.g., deadlines, platforms), SEL, accountability (grades/feedback/attendance), more communication.
- Support with new routines and new teachers; continue WMS structures and programs.
- Offer electives in any scenario.
- Streaming with other adults or parent volunteers moderating breakout groups; needs codes of conduct

Parents: 9-12

- Emphasis on full in person model.
 - Students are socializing in town all week anyway.
- Remote portions: all-day online experience, more accountability, more content, study groups for connection
- Supportive of cameras in the classroom to watch live.
- Within week model is preferred.
- Orientation: new teachers, new to high school
- Academic support is necessary if rigor is increased.

Students

Students: 9-12

- Remote schedule: longer blocks, no class/lab overlap, later start/night classes
- Engagement: easier live, feedback is motivating, easier participation in small groups (can read the room)
- Cameras: some feel listened to, but more noticeable to be a student of color
- Support: 1:1, labs, frequent check ins, 9th gr outreach
- Grades: clear expectations, feedback is needed
- Coordination: consistent platform, standardized practices, coordinated due dates, consistent schedule

Overarching Themes

Overarching Themes

- SEL/relationships before assessment/academics
- Educating, training, and messaging to parents
- Collaboration, teaming, and collegial support
- Health and safety concerns, even with protocols
- Anxiety and stress concerns
- Consistency and coordination across all aspects