BOARD ACTION

CONSIDER EXTENDING VIRTUAL LEARNING BY AN ADDITIONAL FOUR WEEKS UNTIL OCTOBER 5, 2020 IN ORDER TO FACILITATE A PHASED OPENING OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION AND MITIGATE COVID-19 RISKS.

Details About the Waiver

- Unless the TEA waiver is approved, all students that chose in-person are coming back on Sept. 8.
- Districts can start year virtual for four weeks, plus additional four weeks with Board approval.
- Within the board-approved waiver, we must bring some students back to school.
- After the waiver period, we could apply for a "case-by-case" waiver to remain fully virtual.
- Any student can choose to remain 100% virtual for the entire year, with access to in-person learning at designated points (end of grading periods)
- If the positivity rate decreases to 5%, we would eliminate the phase-in and allow students who choose in-person to return.
- All staff are required to return in person starting Sept. 8 unless they have an approved accommodation through HR.
**FOCUS GROUPS**

**WHO**
60 participants: teachers and parents at elementary, middle and high school

**WHAT**
Reviewed the phase-in plans and provided guidance, asked questions

**FEEDBACK**
Health/safety, cleaning/custodians, siblings, seniors, substitute teachers, secondary learning model

When you can take the time to explain the phase-in process and rationale, it is a logical recommendation.
After reviewing the information about the Leander ISD return to reopening starting Sept. 8, what questions and comments do you have for our administration and Board of Trustees to consider?

Consolidate Collection Points
Gather Robust Feedback
Transparency
Thoughtexchange uses an algorithm to ensure every comment gets an equal distribution of ratings. Because people can submit an unlimited amount of ideas, the intent is to find common ground and identify themes, not to see which single comment will get the most ratings. The tool works to give all participants an equal voice.
Participation

4,828 Participants
71% Parents/Guardians, 23% Teachers/Staff, 4% Students, 2% Community

6,065 Thoughts
194,989 Ratings

Distribution

84,413 Delivered
61,190 Read

Messaging and survey in English + Spanish
COMPARING USER GROUPS

Highlights areas of tension or division in your exchange and often mirrors dynamics in your organization or community.

This tool helps leaders understand the size of the division and how demographic answers relate to each group. The common interest thoughts showcase topics or values that can help bring your organization together.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GROUP A ★</strong></th>
<th><strong>COMMON ★</strong></th>
<th><strong>GROUP B ★</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I wonder why we are not pushing back when students return to campus. Based on the number of positive cases in the area, it seems reckless to open and risk the lives of students and teachers. Ratings: 5.0 ★ 1.1 ★</td>
<td>The teachers are doing an outstanding job in a less than ideal situation! We are incredibly grateful for the time, creativity and efforts being put forth by the incredible educators! Ratings: 4.8 ★ 4.4 ★</td>
<td>Please open September 8th. This is important for the wellbeing of the children. Ratings: 1.1 ★ 5.0 ★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t go back Sept. 8. Ratings: 5.0 ★ 1.0 ★</td>
<td>I care as much about the health and safety of staff and teachers as I do of my student(s). Ratings: 4.7 ★ 3.4 ★</td>
<td>Please open. Ratings: 1.0 ★ 5.0 ★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a parent and a teacher for Leander ISD. I want the school to wait four more weeks. It is too early to put so many at risk. Ratings: 5.0 ★ 1.0 ★</td>
<td>If a student or a faculty member is high risk, let them stay home. The faculty members that are high risk can teach the virtual classes. Ratings: 4.6 ★ 4.0 ★</td>
<td>Ready to be back in person. Ratings: 1.1 ★ 5.0 ★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are a hotspot. Why are we moving forward with in person classes? If we’re at 2x the CDC hotspot Guidelines, we should not be planning for reopening. Ratings: 4.9 ★ 1.1 ★</td>
<td>Why can’t virtual teachers who are high risk work from home? Ex, elementary teachers. It reduces unnecessary people in the building and helps keep them safe. Ratings: 4.8 ★ 3.4 ★</td>
<td>We want our child to start in person school. Virtual school is not effective for most students. Ratings: 1.2 ★ 5.0 ★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I chose to keep my kids virtual because I don’t think it’s fair to teachers to work under these conditions right now. Ratings: 4.9 ★ 1.1 ★</td>
<td>If it is expected for teachers to teach simultaneously, we should be given appropriate technology tools. Actual cameras, mounted on tripods, microphone systems (because we’ll have masks on). You want us to conduct a Zoom meeting with a mask on?!?! Ratings: 4.7 ★ 3.6 ★</td>
<td>Let the kids go back to school &amp; learn. They need the normalcy. Ratings: 1.1 ★ 4.9 ★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not return to school. Let’s keep our kids and community safe. Ratings: 4.9 ★ 1.0 ★</td>
<td>The lack of custodians is alarming. How will Leander ISD ensure that ALL classes and common areas are regularly and deeply cleaned? Ratings: 4.9 ★ 3.4 ★</td>
<td>Our students NEED to be back in school. The unintended consequences of closing schools will become more and more with every day our schools are closed. Kids need the ability to go to school. Ratings: 1.2 ★ 5.0 ★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top Thoughts

Thoughtexchange sorts thoughts using the Bayesian Average for their star ratings.

Where the Simple Average is the total number of stars a thought received divided by the number of times it was rated, the Bayesian Average is weighted to reflect the idea that more ratings equals more confidence in the result. Put simply, it ensures that your top-rated thought was seen by more than a few people and thoughts that have a small number of ratings don't appear above ideas with wider-reaching support.
The teachers are doing an outstanding job in a less than ideal situation! We are incredibly grateful for the time, creativity and efforts being put forth by the incredible educators!

I care as much about the health and safety of staff and teachers as I do of my student(s).

Parents have not been informed of what "in person" learning will truly look like. Secondary parents need to understand that their children will not be going back to class as normal. All students will still be learning through zoom.

Please enforce the mask policy. I have two family members working in LISD and they are coming in contact with other employees with no mask on.
I absolutely feel the SCHOOL needs to screen students/staff for symptoms/temps. I work in a local hospital, we self-screen and 1000% positive not all are truthful in the screening, esp. w/checking temp. It is FAST to have students screened prior to entering school. Esp. if start times are spaced

Schools don’t seem ready to me currently working in a school building. No signs of being ready for kids entering. Only sanitizer is the small bottles we carry from our personal stash

What if staff gets sick where will substitutes come from?

My campus only has one custodian during the day. She already struggles to be everywhere because it’s a big school and we have lots of kids. How will she be able to keep up with cleaning and disinfecting common areas and classrooms. Restrooms, office areas, lobby areas, classrooms playscapes
Why have parents and the community not been told the reality of what school will look like in-person? Have they been told that students will have assigned seating everywhere? Have they been told that they will simply have virtual learning in a class?

Zero support or PPE for teachers We have been told we can’t use plexiglass shields we provide OURSELVES to protect ourselves. This is ASININE!
TOP THOUGHTS: PARENTS/GUARDIANS

If in person learning will be miserable with restrictions please truthfully let us know what that will look like My child’s mental health matters too

Since September 8 was the initial date for those to return to school in person, it should remain as such. It should remain as-is since that is when kids are now expected to return to school. Why change it? They want to go back, so the sooner the better.

Families with multiple children will have different start-back dates. Working parents who have older students returning before young ones do not have child care.

Why is the “dress code” even discussed at this time? How is even that even a discussion when our kids aren’t in school. Wasted time. It is irrelevant at this time
**TOP THOUGHTS: PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

The teachers are doing an outstanding job in a less than ideal situation! We are incredibly grateful for the time, creativity and efforts being put forth by the incredible educators!

I think the people that don’t feel comfortable sending their children back to school should stay virtually and I appreciate giving families options.

We think that respecting the family choice is very important. Every family have a different view and approach to the present circumstances.

If teachers are too concerned for their own well being they should teach online. Those that aren’t should be allowed back in school with students. This allows flexibility for those truly concerned or those in the high risk category and gets our kids back to school.
Suicide rates, child abuse, and domestic violence cases have all gone up because of covid and quarantine. We need to give these kids a safe place to land every day and not worry about this virus- with a 99.99% chance of not dying, kids & teachers should be in school!

We should all be able to choose what works best for our family. I thought that was what was happening but now it seems to be taken away. My children need and beg to go back to in person learning. They are not thriving in this Virtual learning. Let us choose if we want to take the risk!
The "do it for the kids" mentality should stop when you’re asking some teachers to risk their lives. Some of us are high risk individuals. We should not be asked to put our lives on the line, when teaching from home is fully possible.

Research & data have shown that large groups 10 or more in small places can contract virus much easier than individuals that practice quarantine. Opening schools at this time would be counterintuitive to all stake holders, the losses would be detrimental.

Why is the school district even thinking of reopening when it is clear that we are a hot spot and all data points to staying closed? Look at the numbers. Infection rates are still too high to safely open. How many people will get sick or die before we listen to the science?

As a teacher, we are just now perfecting virtual and it is going very well. Don't change it up so soon. It's too soon. I am frustrated by the constant change.
Health and safety first. There is still community spread documented cases of asymptomatic children and adults spreading the virus. Because we can prevent illness and death by extending all virtual learning.

I understand not “wasting” money protecting teachers. But not allowing us to buy protective equipment is absurd! We have been told we can’t use plexiglass or any other protection. How is this safe or legal?

Teachers and students would be returning to school shortly after a holiday. COVID cases spiked 2-3 weeks after Memorial Day and Independence Day. Symptom onset and testing lag weeks behind date of infection and people are most infectious right after exposure. We should wait longer to open.

Why are you considering bringing students back on campus when the pandemic is worse than in the spring? Let’s follow the health guidelines - no gatherings of groups larger than 10 until December 15!
**Top Thoughts: Teachers/Staff**

**Be a decent person** Don't put someone else's life at risk for your comfort. Push back the September 8 date!

[Rating: 4.5/5 stars, 14 reviews, ranked #9 of 5279]

**Staff has been told they have limited PPE and hand sanitizer and there is no budget for more. How can you keep staff safe without that? If teachers are being treated like Frontline workers we should have the same PPE.**

[Rating: 4.4/5 stars, 18 reviews, ranked #10 of 5279]
THEMING

Highlights areas of tension or division in your exchange and often mirrors dynamics in your organization or community

This tool helps leaders understand the size of the division and how demographic answers relate to each group. The common interest thoughts showcase topics or values that can help bring your organization together.
Health and Safety
Concerns about health, spread of the virus during in-person learning.

Health Response Protocols
Questions, concerns, and comments about protocols for social distancing, PPE, and cleaning/sanitization. There were also questions about teachers bringing their own supplies (ex. plexiglass).

In-Person Learning: Operations
Requests and questions about describing the social distancing, use of technology, and functionality of in-person learning.

In-Person Learning: Support
Requests to provide staff developing and equipment/technology to support in-person learning, especially at secondary where teachers simultaneously lead in-person and virtual instruction.

Insufficient Staffing
Concerns about substitute teachers and custodial support staff during in-person learning.

Phase-In Process
Questions and comments specific to the phase-in plan for in-person learning.

Support Teachers
General comments and words of support for teachers, instruction, and the work of schools.

Teacher/Staff Choice
Questions and comments of support for teachers and staff having choice to work virtual and not in-person.

Transparency
Questions and comments about transparency and open reporting, sharing of information about decisions and positive COVID cases.

Virtual Empowered Learning
Questions and comments regarding virtual learning.
**THEMES**

- Health and Safety, 4.1 rating
- Support Teachers, 4.1 rating
- Health Response Protocols, 4.1 rating
- In Person Learning - Operations, 4.2 rating
- Virtual Empowered Learning, 4.1 rating
- Other, 4.0 rating
- Staffing Concerns, 4.1 rating
- Teacher/Staff Choice, 4.0 rating
- In-Person Learning - Support, 4.2 rating
- Transparency, 4.0 rating
- Phase-In Process, 4.0 rating
**RATIONALE**

**PHASE-IN PLAN FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING**

1. **Open and Stay Open**

2. **Initially Reduce Student In-Person Numbers**
   - If we can minimize person-to-person contact, we can minimize spread.

3. **Implement and Refine Protocols**
   - Allow school administrators and teachers an opportunity to apply the health guidelines with a smaller group of students will help when we welcome back larger groups of students.

4. **Align with Public Health Guidelines**
   - Our local public health agencies indicated an on-campus, positive case will result in a large group of students, teachers, and staff being quarantined.
   - Smaller numbers allow us to adapt to these scenarios.

5. **Honor Family Choice**
   - Families who choose Virtual Empowered Learning can stay learning at home.
**UPDATES FROM HEALTH AGENCIES**

**TRAVIS COUNTY**
- Recommended school start at 25% to ensure safe opening.
- Moved from Phase 4 to Phase 3 response, allowing for up to 50% students to return in-person.
- Reported positivity rate at 7.6%.

**WILLIAMSON COUNTY**
- Reported positivity rate at 8.1%

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**CDC Level of Community Transmission**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Transmission</th>
<th>On-campus Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>No to minimal transmission</td>
<td>Up to 100% on-campus learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Minimal to moderate transmission</td>
<td>Up to 75% on-campus learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Substantial, controlled transmission</td>
<td>Up to 50% on-campus learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Substantial, uncontrolled transmission</td>
<td>Up to 25% on-campus learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Widespread uncontrolled transmission threatening our healthcare infrastructure</td>
<td>100% virtual learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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AustinTexas.gov/COVID19  Published: August 5, 2020
CLARIFICATIONS

REPORTING CONFIRMED CASES, TRANSPARENCY

- Share positive case data.
- Notify parents, staff who come into contact with a person who tests positive.
- Any confirmed case may require an entire classroom to be quarantined.
- Quarantining and contact tracing done with the local health departments.

IN PERSON LEARNING - WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

- Masks will be required for all students and staff.
- **Elementary** - Masks, social distancing, handwashing will dictate behavior and activities. Students will be in class only with other students who are in-person.* **We can’t guarantee a maximum class size.**
- **Secondary** - Teachers will be supporting both in-person and virtual students. Instruction will be delivered virtually for all students. Students will switch classes throughout the building. Goal provides instructional continuity for students. **We can’t guarantee a maximum class size.**
- **Special Education** - We are operating to meet requirements in IEPs. We are continuing to provide services, inclusion, mixing between in-person and virtual learning.

*During the phase-in process, there may be some schools with mixed classrooms with students learning in-person and virtual.
CLARIFICATIONS

TEACHER/STAFF CHOICE
● When we give families choice for their students, the consequence is we have limited choices for teachers and staff.
● All teachers and staff will need to be in-person starting Sept. 8 unless they get an accommodation from HR.

HEALTH RESPONSE AND PPE
● We will have masks available for all students and staff.
● Teachers and staff may bring their own protective, portable or personal equipment and classroom materials if they get approval. Campus and District administrators will approve so we can assure safety (ex. fire code).
**Phase-In Plan**

**For Families Choosing In-Person Learning**

Red indicates changes from Aug. 20 presentation.

### Phase 1
**Sept. 8 - Sept. 18**
- Students served in Special Education
- Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, First, Sixth, and Ninth Grades
- Students with no internet access
- Children of staff Members

**Phase 2**
**Sept. 21 - Sept. 25**
Phase 1 Students in addition to:
- Second, Seventh, and Twelfth Grades
- Students receiving direct dyslexia services (504)

**Phase 3**
**Sept. 28 - Oct. 2**
Phase 1 and 2 Students in addition to:
- Third, Eighth, and Eleventh Grades

**All other students selecting in-person, join on Oct. 5th.**

**All other students remain in Virtual Empowered Learning**
**Timeline**

**All Students Can Return In-Person October 5 or Remain Virtual Empowered Learning**

- **Sept. 8**: Open with Phase 1
- **Sept. 16**: Confirm and Communicate Phase 2
  *We could adjust our plans for phase 2 based on guidance from our public health partners.*
- **Sept. 18**: End of Six-Week Grading Period for Middle and High Schools
- **Sept. 23**: Confirm and Communicate Phase 3
  *We could adjust our plans for phase 3 based on guidance from our public health partners.*
- **Oct. 5**: Students Who Choose In-Person Can Return
- **Oct. 9**: End of Nine-Week Grading Period for Elementary Schools
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS