

Cohorting

SEA Proposal Dated February 22, 2021

Pre-K – 1st grade In-person and Special Education Intensive Pathways Cohort Models

The District is committed to partner with the Association to implement a model for in-person instruction that provides for a cohort instructional model.

COHORTS

Current work will continue in remote instruction. On-site educators working remotely and/or in-person with students will follow all health and safety guidelines for building or site programming with fidelity under the guidelines below. All health and safety efforts will be made to minimize the number of staff and students that interact with each other in and across cohorts.

General Guidelines:

Schools and site-based programs will submit plans to organize cohorts with priority to meeting the needs of:

a. Restorative Tiers – Organizing cohorts needs under a *Maslow before Bloom*, developmental five-tier model of human needs. As a district wide approach to cohort groupings for students and staff, these decisions will be informed by site-based data. A whole child initiative as a District will concentrate on systems investments that address the priority of needs for our students, families and staff would include racial equity across:

1. Communication of basic physiological and safety needs.
2. Emotional belonging and interpersonal relationship need.
3. Developmental considerations for socializing.
4. Self-motivation and confidence in learning experience in a flipped model.
5. Academics growth and goal setting.
6. Independence, community relationships building and community goal setting.

SPS Proposal Dated February 18, 2021

Pre-K – 1st grade In-person AA/BB Cohort Model Proposed

The District is committed to partner with the Association to implement a model for in-person instruction that provides for a cohort instructional model utilizing an AA/BB hybrid schedule.

- Phased-in return to school will begin with special education services in intensive pathways on March 1, 2021 (see Intensive Service Pathways proposal).
- Pre-K – 1 students will return to in-person services no sooner than one week after the return of special education services in intensive pathways.
- Staff transitioning to the AA/BB hybrid model will be given two school days prior to their first day with in-person students to transition their classroom and instruction. Students will engage in two asynchronous days to allow for staff preparation and planning.
- Employees will receive a Health & Safety Training provided by the District as well as complete designated COVID module(s) in SafeSchools. Additional training will be provided as needed during work hours.
- When requested, coverage will be provided to allow employees a break to allow for use of the restroom.
- District leadership will work with Public Health to prioritize vaccinations for educators and utilize district space for dissemination.

Intensive Service Pathways (Full Day In-Person Instruction four days a week)

This model supports all students receiving special education services in intensive pathways (SEL, Moderate Intensive, Focus, Distinct, Medically Fragile, Bridges, and Special Education Developmental Pre-K) to receive on-campus instruction consistently provided by certificated teachers with support from paraprofessionals. K-12 Special education students who are choosing in-person instruction will receive in-

b. Cohort decisions will be made at the site level. All students welcome; preference given to students based on assessments as determined by site-based evaluations and IEP progress. General education cohorts will be inclusive of all students and will be determined at school/program sites with proper supports. Cohort considerations shall include racial equity analysis on MTSS data, IEP Team including General Education Teachers and Special Education Assistants will be part of the decision-making process, family engagement survey, and family engagement outreach to provide informed consent across building/ program sites.

c. No disability category or service model designation will universally prescribe whether a student will be in a special education or general education cohort. The IEP team, including Special Education Assistants and General Education Teacher, will determine which cohort setting will best serve the student. The complete IEP Team will consider ability to wear a mask, risk of impulsive behaviors such as elopement, and staffing needs to support the student. IEP Teams must be inclusive of special education assistants. Documentation is required in decisions about enrollment to in-person services, including informed consent of all students and staff participating.

d. When students and staff are eligible for certain disability categories that are more likely to have difficulty wearing face coverings, staff will consider the combined risk and unique needs that arise and how to appropriately support their access to FAPE, (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder, Other Health Impairment, Emotional Behavior Disability, Orthopedic Impairment, Sensory Processing Disorder.) In-person appointment-based services and remote services may be offered in combination to fully meet needs.

e. For any cohort which includes students who are unable to follow health and safety protocols (e.g., mask-wearing, inability to social distance, impulsive behaviors and/or other behaviors which may necessitate CPI hold), preparation for re-entry will include identifying alternate settings for the cohort to use, smaller group instruction settings and a safety plan to use in response to emergent behavior. Alternate settings may include designated additional classrooms, offices, designated hallways to take a walk (separate from other cohorts), or any other location then the

person instruction for the full day four days a week. Wednesdays will be reserved for remote instruction, which will consist of synchronous and asynchronous activities. Developmental Pre-K will follow a half-day schedule. The hours worked in a contractual workday and workweek will remain consistent with the provisions provided in the Certificated, SAEOP, and Paraprofessional CBAs and include a 30-minute duty-free lunch.

All staff who are assigned to intensive pathways, including ESAs, teachers, and instructional assistants will return to buildings to provide both in-person and remote services to students. School special education teams will work in collaboration to plan and provide services and will flexibly determine staffing across pathways for certificated and classified staff based on student needs.

Staff seeking remote accommodations should refer to the MOU section regarding Accommodations, Leaves, and Benefits.

Classroom setups must follow all District health and safety guidelines and protocols, including those outlined in the 2020-2021 School Year MOU.

assigned cohort general setting as the instructional team and IEP teams determine may be necessary.

f. General expectations

Once cohorts are established, they cannot be modified without a formal process. Remote learners will not be visitors to in-person cohort instruction.

Students will not eat meals on campus. A brown bag lunch, including a breakfast for the following day, will be offered to all students for take home, regardless of FRL status.

Outdoor time or recess will be included in the students' 2-hour 50 min in-person school day.

No staff member shall be required to remain on campus while providing remote/asynchronous instruction.

Staff may choose to remain on campus to provide asynchronous instruction. Staff who choose to work on campus will be provided separate workspace from other staff members and students (e.g., settings with multiple adults serving the same cohorts; IAs, co-teaching situations.)

Anyone outside of the cohort visiting for appointments or small groups must arrange each visit in advance with the educator and the COVID Site Supervisor, then complete an attestation form upon entry to the building.

Administrators visiting in-person instruction cohorts must wear the required PPE and maintain physical distancing.

Visits should be limited to no more than 15 minutes, whenever possible.

Guidance on Cohorting

The CDC defines Cohorting as one of many mitigation strategies that schools can use to limit mixing between students and staff and to limit the spread of COVID-19. A cohort or pod is a distinct group of students that stays together during in-person learning, or over the course of any pre-determined period of time, so that there is minimal or no interaction between groups. This practice can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by limiting cross-over of students and teachers and can:

- Decrease opportunities for exposure or transmission of COVID.
- Reduce the number of people touching shared surfaces.

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- Decrease opportunities for exposure or transmission of COVID-19

Facilitate more efficient contact tracing if a person has COVID.
Allow for targeted testing, quarantine, and/or isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases.

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