

Health & Safety Steering Committee Meeting Notes - September 29th, 2021

Read full meeting agenda and member list [here](#).

Superintendent Booker welcomed everyone and provided an update on COVID developments in the District since their last meeting on September 8th.

The District has experienced positive cases over the past three weeks, including Havens Elementary resulting in the need to test nearly 200 students. These cases have definitely tested the staff but they have always met every challenge and every incident teaches us how to better build out our capabilities. PUSD has also updated its Dashboard on the District website to include cases of in-school transmission as well as links to cumulative data.

At its September 22nd meeting, the PUSD Board of Education approved a COVID [student vaccination requirement](#). Superintendent Booker thanked the Board for taking this stance to protect students and staff. The District previously asked families to provide proof of vaccination for age-eligible students so much of the work has already been done. The policy was written to adjust as younger students become eligible for the vaccine. A similar policy directed toward PUSD staff will be brought to the Board at its October 13th meeting. Currently, over 95% of staff have already provided proof of vaccination.

There has been one case of staff-to-staff transmission in the District but nothing involving students.

The District will, in all likelihood, honor any family's request to leave the District due to the vaccination requirement, but it will be interesting to see if refusing to comply with a vaccination requirement will qualify as a 'hardship' - especially for student-athletes seeking opportunities to play at other schools.

Medical exemptions from the COVID vaccine have been easier to obtain than from other vaccines since it is not yet a legal requirement. These exemptions have, in large part, been coming from a handful of physicians - many who are now being disciplined by the state. Currently, students with medical exemptions will be allowed to play sports provided they are tested weekly.

Discussion Topics:

Modified/Shortened Quarantines - As the District is not seeing in-school transmission among students, we have been able to expand use of Modified Quarantines where

students are able to attend school and Schoolmates (no other extra-curricular activities) in-person for the 10-day duration. If students test negative starting on Day 5, they may return from quarantine starting on Day 8 (Shortened Quarantine). In some cases, nurses and health clerks have been able to perform the testing themselves, speeding up the process.

In the Havens case...When testing that many students, could a positive COVID test really be attributed to the original positive case? There were no resulting positive tests in this instance, but if there had been, staff would work with the family and backtrack its activities to determine if the exposure came from somewhere else. District nurses and health clerks expressed their appreciation to members of the Committee who assisted with the testing efforts at Havens.

New guidance from the California Department of Public Health has allowed nurses to perform rapid antigen tests to help clear students at a faster rate.

As Modified Quarantines become the norm, there are concerns of pushback from families placed in Standard Quarantine where students are not able to attend school in-person. There are also concerns over whether families are taking the conditions of Modified Quarantine seriously.

In-Person Meetings/Conferences - As PUSD approaches Parent-Teacher Conference season, the Committee was asked its opinion of in-person meetings. While masking, social distancing and use of the District's health screener would provide a safe in-person environment, parents/guardians providing proof of vaccination (currently not required) would provide an additional layer of safety. Suggestion was made to keep everything as simple as possible - provide proof of vaccination or meet on Zoom. Meeting online should be an option for all families as well as teachers. Additional suggestion that if the District is requiring proof of vaccination for age-eligible students and staff on campuses, it should be consistent and require it of parents/guardians as well.

AQI Over 200 - At its September 8th meeting, the Committee recommended that when faced with the choice of students eating AQI rises over 200 (Very Unhealthy). Typically, when AQI rises to that level, the Superintendent would confer with the Board of Education and County Superintendent to determine whether school should be cancelled. The consensus of the Committee was school should not be cancelled as students are, in general, better off indoors in facilities with working HVAC systems and filtration than isolated in homes potentially without HVAC. If sufficient indoor space is not available, the Committee recommended students continue to eat outdoors provided the

duration of time is short, students are not exerting themselves and accommodations are made for students with respiratory issues.

Other Discussion:

Data regarding expanding COVID vaccination eligibility to 5-11 year olds has been submitted to the FDA and hope to hear a decision in the next three weeks. Once approved, the District will work with the County to provide mobile vaccination clinics, but will message families not to wait and to get the vaccine wherever it's available.

Next meeting - Wednesday, October 20th, 8:30am