

What worked in your preparations for your district?

Including a significant number of administrators, community members, teachers, parents and others to create our Return to Learn Plan.

The number of individuals involved assisted greatly. We covered Child Nutrition, Facilities and Maintenance, Technology and Connectivity, Building Practices, Workplace and Employee Guidelines, Health Services, Transportation, and Building Use. Each took a significant amount of planning, but it has paid off as we have completed almost 25% of the school year and things have gone well.

Safety measures in the classroom and school, such as wearing masks, distancing whenever possible, and cleaning, have been critical to success.

The COVID-19 preparations that worked well for our school district were the **sanitation processes and general layout of classes and common spaces**. General distance learning planning and logistics worked better than expected in some cases, and much was learned from the spring shutdown in terms of better practices and mitigating challenges. Five-day a week delivery has worked very well and to the benefit of students and families with no relative impact on COVID-19 cases.

“Once we knew the decision of going Hybrid we began planning. Working with groups like yours helped us really think about our facility from a non-emotional stance. That was a game changer in getting the ball rolling and considering the space we would really need to make lunch happen in a building this big.”

The district did an amazing job with the moving targets surrounding COVID and guidelines. There were many different reports as to issues such as masks, social distancing, numbers etc. Balancing the physical health of all involved with the mental health of all stakeholders was the most difficult task. **Looking at numbers in the schools now compared to the larger community** (we are doing much better than the community) we know we made the right decisions regarding mandating masks and social distancing.

Giving time for teachers to plan for hybrid and virtual learning and administration to work on physical plans like common spaces was essential to having a smooth start. Specifically, at the middle school the furniture is all made of material that is easily cleaned and flexible.

The garage doors on classrooms have been extremely beneficial to allowing more space for social distancing.

Very wide hallways!

Starting early in July instead of waiting until the Governor's Announcement on July 27.

- | **Utilizing all licensed staff** for active supervision in morning and afternoon including SPED and EL.
- | **Frequent communication** to staff for feedback on fluid plans during the summer.
- | Teachers had to go through their classrooms to **determine what they really needed**.
- | **Less students in the hallways** increased safety and supervision of student.
- | Having non-licensed staff **extended hours for four days**.
- | **Having the plans prepared by JLG and access to JLG** with questions helped in planning gave us credibility.
- | **Not having to determine the space capacity** — having that done for us by someone else — took a daunting task off the table. Also was nice that a third party entity — not principal, but an expert — determine the capacities.
- | Nice that everyone in the District was **able to be in the same place**, consistent across the district. Also was helpful that the secondary principals would talk with each other, and with other secondary leaders in the area — and we really appreciated the district-level support.
- | **Key advantages:** Uniform response across the district; school colors for the PPE and signage in the building, and the signage made the building “warmer,” more welcoming, and friendlier; Reduced clutter which helped with the social emotional response of the students and staff.

“**The cafeteria’s flexible seating has made social distancing much easier. We were grateful for the help the architects did give in spacing in the commons and other areas of the building; it made the seating design much easier for us to visualize.**”

- | **One-way traffic flow** worked well in our building.
- | We are learning with **Schoology** that we can get feedback and contact from people all over the world. It’s become an Educator back channel: you type in Biology and connect with teachers all over the country.
- | What is great now is we have permission to try things — **there are no “errors”**. This is leading to new and better ways to do things.
- | Bringing in an architect early. **Having plans with capacities and an early understanding of the issues** (intersections, corridors, passing) allowed the district to develop protocols based on data and information. The plans gave building principals confidence to move forward consistently. Care room, traffic pattern discussions and what the district was able to communicate to teachers, principals and communities gave them “street cred” to talk with staff and communities.
- | **Bringing in the principals early**, in two groups — secondary and elementary — and giving them a presentation on their buildings and the methodology behind it. Responding to their questions at the meeting and afterwards (and the quick response JLG gave).
- | **Addressing the HVAC system**, and getting air purifiers for the CARE rooms.
- | Custodial and maintenance staff **manufactured plexi-glass dividers** — DIY!
- | **Developing an online school system in conjunction with MAPS**, 1800 students enrolled with their own online principal. With online student body not in the building, the rest of the student body was able to fit into the buildings.

The defined **flow of communication** from the Department of Health to our school and into the structures of implementation.

Kids wear masks with very minimal issues, they are better than the adults.

Autonomy of each building to operate is nice, but to **have an expert to provide overriding standards and guidance** across district was successful.

You can build the relationships to weather the crisis during the crisis. Flow of information relies on the previous relationships and systems established.

Discipline has gone to zero with half the kids in the building. **Space has allowed for calmer interactions.** Kids have made new friends now.

What hasn't worked like you planned? What adjustments did you make?

The delivery of technology as quickly as we would like. **We have retained older equipment to get us by.**

The ability of staff to **create virtual lessons at home.** We provided training and ordered laptops for all teachers.

Internet access for all. We continue to work on this and I believe an announcement is coming.

Most of the items that have not worked have **centered around personnel issues** (quarantined staff due to daycares, close contacts etc.) and students struggling with organizing for off-site work.

Distancing in classrooms has been a challenge with 6' goals... classrooms simply didn't have the flexibility to distance and still maintain basic functionality. Classroom infrastructure in terms of audio were limitations with synchronous teaching methods and required other efforts.

“We have seen a large number of mental health concerns in students due to the lack of activities and not being in school full-time. We are constantly adjusting to try and work with these problems.”

Our locker bays are a huge hinderance. There is no way to social distance. We don't use them and are not planning on using them.

We need **sinks in every room.**

Some of our frequently-used spaces (gyms, theatre, etc) only have **one point of entrance and exit.** The bottleneaking can't be avoided. If you look at our gym space in comparison to the design of SHS...there are multiple entrances on all sides at SHS gyms and we only have one side of entrance /entrance.

| **Front drop off and pick up** — need for identification of students.

| **Class lists have become more challenging due to class size restrictions.** In a larger building, when you cluster students, you don't want classes with only one learning style. Our four EL teachers are spread really thin to make schedules work.

| **Need for support to DLA** (Distance Learning Academy) program impacted administrative tasks for clerical. Assistant Principal became DLA Principal, making August really crazy busy as it was like running two separate registrations. Then several (24) DLA students decided to move back into the building, which was not simple.

| **Staff meetings and prep time with small groups** of staff has been challenging due to lack of space.

| Primarily instructional.

| DLA (Distance Learning Academy) as separate entity from scheduling staffing; **creating that plan on the go** as it was rolled out was difficult.

| **Coming and going of student enrollment** was exacerbated. Had to move a lot of classes around due to capacity. Change was high, stress was high.

| Planning was kind of surprising to staff; It would have been **helpful to have more time** to plan.

“... Distance learning, in general, has shown its limitations and requires levels of teacher/student interaction which is challenging when doing face-to-face at the same time.”

| With kids not being able to be in large groups and pods not being able to mix, **we could not use our standard practice** of kids being in the commons, gym, walking track when they arrive. Kids go straight to their rooms. This time was typically our teacher prep time. First idea was to allow teacher prep to continue and paras provide the supervision. But — having kids come to the classroom, unload their backpacks, and sit in a chair right away was tough on kids. So, we are going to start allowing the kids on a rotating basis to use the gym, the Pier, the media center, and the STEAM lab on arrival so they do not just have to sit in a classroom.

| **First day — parent pickup lasted an hour.** Now down to 20 minutes. Still working on improving the traffic flow and temperature taking.

| PE teachers, Art teachers, Music teachers **cannot be collaborative together** because we cannot mix the pods. Still working on this one.

| **Getting lunch was taking too long**, 3rd graders saying the number thru mask (hard to understand), and the time involved in typing it in. Created bar code ID cards for each kid and ordered lanyards for them to put them on. Have ordered scanners — they are still coming (everything takes a long time to get).

| If I had a do over — **discussion with teacher union president early.** They quickly became skeptical, were concerned about PPE, etc. And when we asked the teachers to remove the personal items they brought into their rooms, they wanted to get paid to remove them (District told them “we didn't pay you to put those things into your rooms”). Should have had the teacher representative at the table early and then the teachers might have been more on board.

- | Should have had an **early meeting** with the cleaning folks, non-teacher unions, and engineers.
- | HS hybrid plan: AA, BB, CC schedule. **Burned out the teaching staff**, didn't staff time scheduled for working with online kids. MS had that figured out. They are switching to an AA/BB schedule to make the scheduling easier.
- | There were multiple scenarios that we didn't have figured out, mainly around contact tracing. Also, situations like men that have wives going in to have a baby needing to quarantine for two weeks. **The rules and scenarios kept changing.**
- | Our Principals don't know as much about their buildings as we thought they did. Instructional leaders look at building capabilities differently than facility staff. Maintenance and custodial staff don't answer to principals, but rather facilities. **So there is a disconnect.**
- | Principals have the mindset of a teacher, they are territorial. If you can't fit a class in a particular room, **they don't like to switch the space.**

What challenges arose that you hadn't anticipated?

- | We anticipated it, but it is always hard considering the number of students or staff that could be out due to **close contact protocols** from close contact outside and inside school settings.
- | We knew it would be **hard to contact trace** in a school setting, but we thought we would get a greater amount of DOH support that has not occurred.
- | **Delayed deliveries** on some necessities for cleaning.
- | The human dynamic of change and **varying levels of comfort** in a health-related situation. Mitigating the challenges of distance learning is substantial and varies from family to family. Establishing consistent communications to respond to misinformation and perceptions that are common in this situation — accountability with distance learning is a challenge as well as keeping students engaged consistently.
- | We were fortunate to have a brand-new building with large open spaces and flexible furniture. The things we didn't anticipate really have little to do with structure of the building — more personnel issues and **student success.**
- | Air intake — **fresh air.**
- | **Windows that don't open very wide.**
- | Expected more families to drop off but **number did exceed expectations.**

| **Serving students in their classrooms** is more of a challenge for our nutritional staff as they are not used to moving around the building.

| Need for **more walkie talkies** due to pick up (\$3,000).

| Lawn maintenance overlapping with recess time (can it be done after students leave). Didn't see that happening.
| **Schedules of the maintenance staff conflicted with student times.**

| Phones for Licensed Staff working in **unconventional areas** (cafeteria).

| People have had to get used to the idea that **they can't own their own room**. This may be an advantage down the road.

| Ahead — **ready and willing to bring all students back** — with social distancing. Not sure how we could do this.

“ **Finding ways for students and staff to have social experiences while maintaining distance is a challenge that is emphasized with youth and teachers that typically thrive on social interactions.**”

| Trying to figure out what **Hybrid learning is appropriate for 3, 4, 5 grades**. What works at 30,000 feet does not work as well at 10 feet; lots more details to work out.

| **SPED populations** — difficult with IEP via Zoom.

| Underestimated the number of kids who must **quarantine with minor symptoms**.

| The number of **storage units requested** at the buildings, almost entirely for teacher personal items.

| Buses and drop off — **more kids rode cars than busses**, and while we knew that, we didn't anticipate the great numbers of parents dropping off students, which has led to dangerous situations at some of our sites.

| **Fall sports!!!**

| **Events.**

| Guidance changing from the State, CDC, etc. meant **updates on the fly for implementation**. Live websites, checks and balances daily with building staff, scheduled weekly.

What have you learned that you will continue to use after COVID-19?

- | Potentially keeping the first two days be held with **half the students one day, and the other half the next day.**
- | **Virtual meetings.**
- | **Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences.**
- | **Personalized learning options** which blend technology and in-person instruction (such as virtual academies and personalized, online learning supports) will likely continue after COVID-19 and this situation expedited the idea of using technology at a higher level to support, but not replace, in-person learning. The need for greater social/emotional resources and facilities to support it will continue after the pandemic and was exposed at higher levels during this time.
- | **Flexibility of all the furniture** items and having the team spaces if possible.
- | All students will **report directly to first period.**
- | **No milling around** and congregating in spaces that are unsupervised.
- | **One way traffic** through all hallways and spaces.
- | **“Using technology to provide streaming services for all of our activities (wiring gyms for this during construction).”**
- | Easy access points to the outside **spaces for brain breaks** (mask breaks currently).
- | **Use of entire playground.**
- | **Use of technology** for meeting with staff and parents.
- | More videos for parents to procedures (**Skylert**).
- | When we bring all students back, we don't want to lose the idea of a **staggered release**. Now a winner, will always do. Not only good for staff, but the students like it as well.
- | **Passing time.**
- | **Loving the block schedule.**
- | Continue to utilize the Learning management system — **Schoology** — better and more completely. Make us nimbler. Teachers before were only using it for content. Now using it for delivery, team meetings, etc. Should continue to expand how we use it.

May continue to have a **large planning block once a week** and no planning block the rest of the week. Seems to be working well for teachers once they got used to it.

Parent drop-off to the rear of the building and bus drop off at the front of the building. Removed staff parking from the rear area.

We have had instances where a teacher has had to stay home because they were quarantined due to an exposure or a family member exposure. In those instances where the teacher was not sick, we have had the **teacher Zoom link in and used airplay to teach with a para in the room**. This has worked well. We may continue this practice in the future so staff doesn't have to take a personal day, and we don't need to get a sub. We might also use if staff cannot get into work due to bad weather.

We may use what we have learned with distance and hybrid learning to **eliminate snow days**.

Continue to use the **Bar Code ID's** to speed up lunch and avoid errors.

Used non-playground spaces as **multiple spaces to be outside**.

We should have **sinks in every room**.

Improved and more **flexible HVAC systems**, with better filter systems.

“**Nurse stations more carefully designed to protect ill students, and student who may not be ill.**”

More **easily-cleaned materials** on all surfaces and furnishings.

Cameras in our secondary buildings have been great for contact tracing; we should add to elementary schools.

Drinking fountains vs. **only bottle stations?**

Hand dryers vs. paper towels.

Walk by **temperature taking built-in** at the entry to the school.

Hand sanitizers as a given in the building throughout.

More consideration given to the **cleaning of athletic equipment**.

Manipulatives cleaning – throw in sink and then throw on towel.

Sink in rooms (to allow for cleaning).

Dryers and washers more prevalent so more can be cleaned each day.

Car and bus separation is really important, both for safety and to reduce corridor load.

More staff used to move kids into the building so there can be more ingress locations. (However – this also comes at an increased cost for the staff as their hours are increased. Not sure how this is funded in non-COVID times).

Bi-polar ionization of mechanical systems. Any future remodeling and new construction this will be the standard.

Flexible areas will get even larger in the buildings.

- | Love the opportunity for teams to **connect on a regular basis**, even if it is short.
- | Need a space for district leadership throughout the district to meet and touch base. TEAMS has worked well for this. **Protocols for TEAMS** keeps the information flowing and accessible later.
- | **Personalized competency-based learning.** Choice-ready vs just college-ready.
- | **Flexibility is now standardized.**
- | **Relationships and Flexible Learning.** We can trust kids to actually learn on their own! Ownership in learning.
- | You can add structure into your learning spaces and still have it be a fun place.

How have your facilities helped, or hindered your efforts?

Hindered:

- | **Space available** in classrooms has made it difficult to space out classes.
- | Water bottle filler stations are being implemented, but they **should be standard** in buildings.
- | We have needed to add some HVAC processes to **better clean/filter the air.**
- | **Additional seating options** in lunchrooms would also greatly assist.
- | No hand **sanitizer stations** built into the school.
- | **Everything requires hand touching** (water fountains, restrooms, classrooms, all entries).

“Number of bathrooms is a challenge for 525 students (A/B schedule).”

- | The extra wing makes **traffic pattern** somewhat challenging.
- | Only one playground with six zones was not enough. Not always able to send out the same grade level. Kindergarten gets mixed in with the 4th grade kids; kindergarten gets the playground; 4th grade does not. **Two playgrounds in a K-5 school would be best** – even going forward. This is always a problem and was simply exacerbated by COVID.
- | Not enough **space for EL Teachers** and related service providers — had to move them to the cafeteria.
- | Classroom sizes are wonky — not much **consistency in classroom sizes** in the existing building which created even more change for staff.
- | **Our smaller classrooms are a hinderance.**

- | **Personal items are a hindrance:** water coolers, microwaves, other stuff. There was great reluctance by the teachers to remove their personal items.
- | **The design of the buildings** with intersections, single loaded corridors, and L-shaped buildings.
- | **The older the building, the more challenges.**
- | **Smaller conference rooms** don't hold a lot of folks with distancing (however — they have been useful for folks taking a “mask break”).
- | **Open office concept** — consider — does it contribute to virus spread? Should we have more Plexiglass or barriers between work areas?
- | **Space** was not an issue before, there has been more of it now.
- | **Mech issues** with classroom unit ventilators, struggle to get the air turnover.
- | **Need wider corridors,** need multiple ways in and out, for safety. Larger stairways needed.

Helped:

- | **We have great buildings** and our facilities staff keeps them in great shape.
- | Facilities have helped when open/flexible spaces are available to accommodate alternative plans and innovative efforts. **The collaborative areas have provided great value** in a pandemic in which distancing and flexibly use is critical. The ability to have additional space and capacity has been vital to a school district our size to accommodate 5-day a week programming and limit contact tracing issues. Spaces such as the HS theater and intervention rooms provided options that are not available in our other buildings. Additional bathroom options and hand washing stations has also helped with the health and safety plan objectives.
- | The **fabric of the furniture allows for easy cleaning** and wipe down.
- | The flexibility to be able to move around and open up classroom with the **garage doors** has been key to helping with the social distancing.
- | Having the **team centers in every pod** has been beneficial to spacing students and having places for mask breaks and work areas.
- | Having a **large campus** is helpful.
- | Did not want the space to feel sterile, even though we were sanitizing. Worked hard to make it feel homier (**using school colors for new elements** helped).
- | Ours was the only school that had families and staff come into the building – **soft opening**. Helped family feel at ease. Would do that again every time. It also gave staff practice on screening folks coming into the building.
- | Having the Pier and STEAM Lab has really helped as **additional spaces**. Multiple activities can go on simultaneously, safely.

- | **Curtain in gym** means two pods can safely be in the gym.
- | **Media Center has been absolutely been amazing**, kids are getting excited about literacy and books. Space is all moveable furniture; space gets reconfigured daily.
- | We have been able to use the Pier for staff meetings as we can spread out.
- | **Energy Management systems** on some of the buildings made it easy to get building flushes going. It was about a week to reprogram the systems. They now have a “quick button” to do an immediate flush. On-site facility person can do that as well as main facilities can do it.
- | Ours is a good example of why **commons spaces need to be generous**.



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