To: Board of Education  
From: Chris Gdowski, Superintendent  
Date: July 28, 2020  
Re: Recommendation for Fall 2020 Learning Model

Executive Summary

This executive summary and the following memo provide my analysis and further details regarding the recommendation for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Recommendation

The recommendation for the Fall 2020 learning model is to provide remote learning for all District students through Sept. 25, with Sept. 11 set as the date to determine if we would continue with remote learning for the rest of the first semester or move into a fully in-person or hybrid model in late September. The learning plans for district charter schools may be different. Please check with your child’s charter school for more information. Outlined here are key points regarding this recommended learning model:

- Use of remote learning for all students through Sept. 25 will avoid disruption caused by frequent and large scale quarantines of student/staff cohorts and will allow more consistent, predictable and productive instruction than an in-person or hybrid model under current rates of virus transmission.
- Delaying the start of the school year by one week will allow staff time to become familiar with the Florida Virtual School (FLVS), give them time to plan for supplementing those materials, and will allow time for those staff members teaching courses/content not supported by FLVS resources to prepare for effective remote instruction.
- Starting the year with all students in the remote format will keep peer groups/friend groups together which will be helpful if remote learning is extended through the conclusion of the first semester. In the event that in-person instruction, through hybrid or full-time models, is to be implemented in late September parents can express preference
for either in-person or remote, based upon current public health conditions and their beginning of the year experience with remote learning.

- In-person Back to School meetings will be conducted for preschool students, elementary students, and students transitioning to middle and high school (those students entering 6th and 9th grade).
- In-person meetings between students and educators will supplement the remote learning experience and help develop community and relationships between students and between students and teachers. The schedule for these in-person meetings is still under development and more information will be shared with staff, students and families in the coming weeks.
- Delivery of some in-person instruction for students with disabilities, students with advanced learning plans, English Language Learners, and other specialized student populations will be provided as staffing is available to mitigate heightened challenges for these students resulting from extended use of remote learning.
- No cost, in-person Learning Pods at some elementary, K-8 and middle school buildings will be offered, pending enrollment interest and staffing availability. Learning Pods are a no-cost, in-person option during the standard school day hours for students who need access to internet connectivity and/or students who need a safe and productive place to engage in remote learning. Substitute teachers and District support staff without other duties for remote learning will staff the Learning Pods.
- Students participating in athletics and activities will be able to continue to practice. Interscholastic competition will be determined by the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA). Quarantines of these groups, as necessary, will pose a less significant adverse impact to the core work of the District than quarantines/disruption of core instruction.

On Wednesday, July 29, 2020, I will share a slideshow presentation outlining the key points of my recommendation at a special board meeting.

Additional Documents
Following this executive summary is a longer memo that sets out my analysis and further details regarding the recommendation to commence the school year with a remote learning model for all District students. Aside from my recommendation, you can find links below to the following supplemental documents:

- **Onward Remote Learning Model**, outlining the district’s plan to use the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) curriculum as the foundation for remote learning.
- **Onward In-Person Comprehensive Guide to Reopen Schools**, outlining the district's plan for safely operating schools, if and when in-person instruction commences.

These documents will also be linked from the slideshow presentation shared at the special board meeting on Wednesday.
It is my recommendation, after careful consideration of current and projected rates of COVID infection within our state and in the communities we serve; our experience in providing summer services to small groups of students; current guidelines for responding to/quarantining students and staff members following a positive COVID case; a review of the positive and negative implications of full in-person schooling, hybrid in-person/remote learning models, and fully remote learning models; and the parameters for in-person instruction developed by the 16 subcommittees that convened this summer and that are reflected in the In-Person Onward Guide that accompanies this recommendation, that the Board of Education:

- Approve a delay in the return to school for all students from August 20, 2020 to August 27, 2020;
- That for the period from August 27, 2020 through September 25, 2020 instruction for students is provided through a remote learning model;
- That for the period from August 27, 2020 through September 25, 2020 some elementary, K-8 and middle school buildings will be open to provide Learning Pods. Learning Pods are a no-cost in-person option during the standard school day hours for students who need access to internet connectivity and/or students who need a safe and productive place to engage in remote learning;
- That students, parents and staff be notified on or about September 11, 2020 about the means by which instruction will be provided on/after September 25, 2020 (e.g., full in-person; mixed in-person/remote (hybrid), or fully remote);
- That the decision regarding the approach to education on/after September 25, 2020 be based upon the following factors:
  - The numbers and rates of COVID infection within Colorado, Adams County and Broomfield, including trends in infection rates and projections;
  - The number of positive COVID results for staff members that are reported through the voluntary testing program described further below;
  - Then current provisions regarding quarantine scope and duration in a school setting in event of a positive COVID case.

If these metrics indicate that consistent, productive and safe educational services may be delivered in an in-person or hybrid setting, the following additional factors will be considered in making a decision for services on/after September 25;

- Preferences of students/parents regarding the desired instructional model through surveys that would be conducted in September;
- Feedback from students, parents, and staff members regarding the effectiveness of the fall remote learning model (we will still be in the early days of school when this data would be collected);
Data regarding the number of staff members i) needing health-related accommodations that would exclude in-person schooling assignments and ii) the number of staff unwilling to provide in-person schooling services.

More detailed information regarding remote learning, learning pods, athletics and extracurricular activities, and other components of the August 27 through September 25 time frame are presented at the conclusion of this report. In the next sections I set forth information and analyses that I've considered in making this recommendation, including i) key public health data, public health guidance provisions, and our district's experience with in-person summer programming; ii) preliminary data regarding staff and family preferences regarding fall schooling options; and iii) analysis of positive and negative implications of various schooling options analyzed by senior leadership this summer with input from parents, staff, public health experts, and dialogue with individual board of education members.

**Key Public Health Data; Public Health Guidance Provisions; and District Experience with In-Person Summer Programming**

- In late May 2020, Colorado was averaging approximately 165 positive COVID cases per day. In Adams County, we were averaging approximately 44.7 cases per day at that time. Broomfield was averaging approximately 2.4 cases per day.

- The District's ESC staff returned for in-person work duties beginning June 1 two days per week. From June 1 through July 27 we progressively increased the in-person reporting obligations for staff to full time status. ESC occupancy throughout the summer was lower throughout the summer than the levels that would occur during the school year because most of the staff in curriculum, student support services, and ELL support have nine to ten month contracts and have the summer off. Moreover, a number of other ESC personnel from IT and Facilities were out in school sites throughout most of the summer addressing facility and technology needs in our schools, and approximately ten ESC staff members worked from home through the summer as an accommodation for COVID at-risk factors documented by their health care provider.

  During the first week of these limited in-person operations at the ESC a staff member tested positive. The individual took leave to recover from the virus but other staff members were not placed on quarantine after consultation with public health officials because this employee did not work in close proximity to other staff members and there was not evidence of other staff members having an "exposure" — a 15 minute or longer interaction between the infected person and another person within six feet.

- The District began providing school-age care services through our summer BASE program starting on June 15, 2020. We have served approximately 469 elementary school-aged students in this program throughout June and July at 10 sites, 45 classrooms, and with approximately 140 staff members, 80 of which worked directly with
students and 60 part-time staff who provided program support. Maximum student class sizes/cohort sizes in this child care program are 10-12, and the classes/cohorts do not intermix.

During the first week of the summer BASE operations we had two staff members, at two different school sites, test positive for COVID. Given that these staff members had worked with cohorts of students within an indoor setting for a period of many hours during the 48 hour period before the positive test result, public health advised us to quarantine all other staff members who had worked with the employees who tested positive -- and all students in their classroom cohort -- at home for 14 days. District staff members spent nearly 30 hours over the Father’s Day weekend contacting parents and staff members at these two sites to let them know about the positive cases, quarantine requirements, testing options, and responding to questions/concerns.

- Student athletes and marching band participants began voluntary conditioning and practicing on June 8, 2020. Initial parameters limited student group sizes of up to 25 for 1 hour per day up to 3 times per week and limited activity to the outdoors. On June 22, 2020 some indoor activities, such as weight room use, were permitted with group size limited to 10 students.

During the course of summer break, nearly 1,300 students, supported by 128 coaches, participated in workouts and practices.

In late June a coach for one of the student athletic teams tested positive. The group's activities had all been conducted outdoors, and the coach did not have prolonged interaction with students at a distance of less than 6 feet, and so the coach was placed on quarantine and the team members were allowed to continue practicing with a different coach.

- The District provided in-person Extended School Year (ESY) services for approximately 53 students with special needs on Monday through Thursday mornings throughout the summer. One administrator, and a total of 52 certified and classified staff members, provided these services.

There were no cases in which a student or staff member tested positive in this summer program. There was one case in which a student's parent had attended a group event over a weekend that was attended by a person who later tested positive for COVID. No exclusion or quarantine was required, but significant staff time was necessary to coordinate with public health officials on this event and to respond to staff questions and concerns.

- Meal distribution efforts continued through the summer months at five schools and ten mobile locations. Approximately 85 staff members supported this program.
In June two staff members at one meal distribution site tested positive for COVID. Both worked indoors in food preparation efforts and were not engaged with the public in food distribution efforts. Public health officials guided us to place these two employees, and their two coworkers, on 14 day quarantines. Nutrition Services senior leadership staffed the program/prepared food in their absence.

- Guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) regarding quarantine and school closure in event of a positive case or cases is expected by the end of the week. Throughout the summer, Tri County Health and Broomfield Public Health directed that in the event of a positive COVID test, all students and staff members who have attended class with the positive individual within 48 hours prior to the start of symptoms, or who have participated in an activity (e.g., football practice or band practice) with that individual within 48 hours, should be placed on a 14 day quarantine.

- Student cohort sizes at the middle and high school levels, in both 5 day per week in-person schedules or 2-3 day per week in-person schedules, are likely to range up to 150 students as measured over the 48 hour exposure window. Given current rates of infection, Denver public health officials estimate that these cohorts would need to be placed on 14 day quarantines every month to every other month.

- As of July 26, Colorado is averaging approximately 514 positive cases per day based upon a 14-day average [week of 7/11-7/24]. In Adams County it is 55.2 cases per day and in Broomfield it is 2.9 cases per day. The rate of positive tests, as a percent of total tests administered, is 9 percent for Colorado; 12.2 percent for Adams County; and 6.3 percent for Broomfield.

  Dr. Douglas, the Executive Director for the Tri-County Health Department, indicates that these rates within Adams County are "high" and "of concern."

- The Colorado COVID-19 Modeling Group, which includes public health, medical, and epidemiological modeling experts, updated its model on July 16 and predicts significant growth in infection rates and hospitalizations over the next several months based upon recent transmission rates. Dr. Herlihy, the state epidemiologist, has also predicted increased infection rates in coming months.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics, in its guidance about schooling issued on June 25, 2020, and the Center for Disease Control, in its school recommendations published on July 23, 2020, have recommended that students return to in-person schooling to better support their physical and mental health and their social development. These guidance documents also recognize that transmission rates within some communities may be at a level that makes in-person schooling difficult or imprudent.
The District surveyed staff members regarding their preferences for in-person vs remote learning in a survey open from July 16 - 21, 2020. Approximately 4700 of the District's 5700 full time, part time, and substitute teaching/support staff completed the survey. The survey asked employees to share their employee ID number so that we could track aggregate data by school/department and begin to support staff members who indicate the possible need for a workplace accommodation. Therefore, the survey was not anonymous. The survey was not accompanied by detailed information regarding safety measures and protocols that would be in place to support in-person services. Moreover, it was not accompanied by statements indicating whether or not staff members would be paid if the District moved forward with online services and the employee's services were not needed.

Some support staff members have communicated to me that they answered "yes" to in-person schooling, even though they have personal safety concerns and/or health issues, because they worried that they would be furloughed/terminated in a remote learning model. Others have reached out to indicate that they were not honest in their desire to not return in person because the survey was not anonymous. (Historically, some employees indicate concern that they will be identified/subjected to negative consequences even in anonymous surveys such as the one administered each year by Panorama.) Additional details re safety protocols might make a difference in the response of some staff members, and some might answer differently now if asked to make a binding choice or because of reassessment of risk given new information/trend data about the virus.

The survey indicated that approximately 57 percent of educators, 72 percent of administrators, and 76 percent of classified preferred to return in person.

The Colorado Education Association conducted a statewide survey of educators regarding return to work preferences near the time that the District survey was pending. The question posed was different than in the District's survey. Eleven percent of Adams 12 respondents expressed a preference for in-person schooling and 83 percent for remote or hybrid options.

On the District’s survey, less than 5 percent of the respondents in all three employee groups indicated that they would not return to in-person work assignments if so directed. The remaining 20-40 percent per employee group indicated that they would return in person if directed to do so but preferred a remote/online return. Of these respondents, approximately 29 percent indicated that they personally have one or more high risk factors as identified by the CDC and 33 percent said that someone in their household
has one or more of these risk factors.

- Twenty-six percent indicated that class sizes of less than 20 would be a positive factor for their return to in-person schooling. The remaining respondents indicated that fear/concern regarding the virus, unknowns about the virus and its future rates of transmission, a desire to know more about cleaning and sanitation protocols, and uncertain short term/long term health consequences, were significant reasons for preferring an online assignment and that class sizes were not a significant consideration for them.

- Approximately 750 of the 4700 respondents indicated that they would seek accommodations to address personal risk factors or risk factors within their households.

- The District has provided limited information to date regarding the Five Star Online option for those who wish to commit to that approach through semester one of the school year. Nonetheless, approximately 2650 students -- out of approximately 34,218 projected to enroll in District managed schools -- have expressed interest in participating in this option to date. Interest in this option is expected to grow as the District announces fall school plans/options; as parents are asked to make commitments for schooling for the fall; and with more detailed information being provided.

- Metro area districts that have recently asked parents to make choices between in-person, hybrid, and fully remote learning options indicate that approximately 65 percent have expressed preference for the in-person or hybrid option (as offered by that specific district) and 35 percent have preferred the full remote option.

Analysis of Positive and Negative Implications of Learning Model Options

I. Full Time/In-person Instruction
   ("Full Time/In-person Instruction" reflects instruction provided in the manner generally described in the Onward Guide, including cohorts of 90-120 at elementary school and 90-150 at middle and high schools. Both the middle and high school cohort sizes reflect use of block schedules of 2-3 courses per day.)

   **Key Positives:**
   - Allows consistent in-person interaction with peers and with staff members in support of physical, social, and emotional development.
   - Allows more frequent options for students to pose questions/ask for assistance from educators; likely to allow for more efficient development of understanding of instruction.
   - Provides for consistent supervision of students during the regular school day and a greater likelihood of consistent engagement and effort among a greater number of students than remote instruction.
• Eliminates child care challenges for parents, especially for students in elementary and middle school grades.
• Responds to parent interest for in-person schooling options.

**Key Negatives:**
• Depending upon level of participation in Five Star Online, typical class sizes may be at levels that 6 foot physical distancing between students and staff are not feasible.
• Depending upon level of participation in Five Star Online, large cohort sizes -- as measured by the number of distinct students within classes, groupings, and activities over a 48 hour period -- make it likely that cohorts will be placed on out of school quarantine for 14 days on a monthly/every other month basis. Quarantines cause significant and unpredictable disruption to instruction.
• Given large numbers of staff/students present daily in the school environment, school closures are more likely after multiple or sustained positive cases in school cohorts.
• Poses enhanced risk that sufficient numbers of staff will not report for duty or will report with health/safety concerns about the school environment that diminish focus on teaching and learning.

II. Hybrid Model
(The hybrid model, in addition to use of block schedules for the middle and high school levels and the modifications described in the Onward Guide to other aspects of schooling, such as changes to elementary specials schedules, would divide students in a elementary class or a secondary grade level in half and result in schedules that would require students to come to school every other day and engage in remote instruction on the days they are not present for instruction in their school building.)

**Key Positives:**
• Provides the benefits described in the Key Positives to Full Time/in-person Learning but at a lesser level.
• Reduces class sizes in a manner that allows greater distancing between students and classmates and provides more opportunities for physical distancing of six feet or more.
• Reduces cohort size at the elementary level so that fewer students/staff might be quarantined for 14 days when a positive case emerges within the cohort.
• Reduces quantity of people within the building during a school day and may reduce the risks of transmission between participants caused by larger numbers of individuals present in the same building.
• Reduces class size in a manner that may increase staff able/willing to report to duty based upon employee survey results.

**Key Negatives:**
• Does not allow a daily student supervision option for students at most elementary and middle schools because classroom spaces will be used every day for in-person instruction of smaller cohorts.
Teachers are not available on "remote days" for students to support instruction and answer questions, as teachers will be teaching the other half of the cohort in person on those days.

Instruction on "remote days" will be asynchronous, require greater self-motivation for students than in-person schooling, and require some at-home adult support based upon the student's age, technology skills, and academic needs.

On "remote days" students may be interacting with a variety of individuals outside their cohort and in a manner that does not follow physical distancing/public health recommendations. Some public health officials believe that hybrid models create greater risks of virus transmission because of student interactions on non-school days as compared to the more controlled environment in daily in-person instruction models.

Some nearby districts may provide full time/in-person instruction during the August 20-September 25 time frame; if so, it's possible that some parents will enroll in those systems instead of in Adams 12 schools.

III. Full Remote Learning Model
(The Full Remote Learning Model contemplates, for the August 27 - September 25 period, that students would receive daily instruction through the Florida Virtual School curriculum, supplemented by instruction provided by District staff members. Preschoolers, English language learners, students with an advanced learning plan and students with special needs would receive limited in-person instruction.)

Key Positives:

- Allows consistent delivery of instruction without interruptions caused by quarantines of cohorts and school closures.
- Use of the Florida Virtual School curriculum, supplemented by instruction provided by District educators, will result in more rigorous and consistent instruction than present in our Spring 2020 remote learning. It will also involve more extensive and consistent use of synchronous instruction than present in the Spring 2020 remote learning period which largely relied upon asynchronous instruction.
- Creates greater likelihood that sufficient staff are able and choose to report to work assignments than other options.
- Requires less expenditures for cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment (including masks, face shields, protective gowns, etc.), student transportation, etc. than full in-person and hybrid models.

Key Negatives:

- Some nearby districts may provide full time/in-person instruction, or hybrid models of instruction, during the August 27 - September 25 time frame. If so, it's possible that some parents will enroll in those systems instead of in Adams 12 schools.
- Student supervision for elementary and middle school students may not meet demand. Middle and high school students will likely have extended periods of unsupervised, self-directed time.
Students will have infrequent in-person interaction with staff and peers as recommended for optimal social, physical, and academic development.

In-person instruction for English language learners, students with an advanced learning plan, students with disabilities, and preschoolers may be more limited than needed to make adequate growth toward language acquisition, academic, and IEP goals.

Student engagement and focus are likely to be less than in other models, compromising progress toward learning objectives.

If continued for an extended period of time poses challenges in continued compensation for classified staff members in the event they are not providing needed services to support remote instruction and associated needs.

**Recommendation for Remote Learning to Commence the School Year**

**Analysis in Support of the Recommendation**

Our senior leadership team began discussions in May about which summer activities, if any, we should provide in person. The basic three pronged analysis we have used is to determine a) if we can provide a quality in-person experience for the activity that aligns with public health guidance; b) do we have staff willing to provide the service; and c) do we have students and parents who want the service given that health conditions will likely result in some modifications/restictions. Using that analysis we moved forward with summer child care/BASE programming; some in-person extended school year services (ESY) for special needs students; athletic conditioning and practices starting in early June; and in-person graduation ceremonies at Five Star Stadium. Given my conversations with other superintendents throughout the summer I believe that we’ve provided more summer programming for students than any other school district in the region.

This experience also gives us insight into the challenges that we’d likely need to work through if we scale in-person activities much larger than the ones offered this summer. In the three programs in which staff worked directly with students -- BASE, ESY, and athletics -- we had three positive COVID cases in six weeks among the approximately 320 staff members who worked with these students. (We have not had any reported student cases of COVID or transmission of COVID by/to students through our summer programming.) By returning to in-person schooling for our 34,200 students anticipated this fall, as compared to our service of about 1,820 students this summer -- and by increasing the staff involved in supporting in-person learning from the 320 who engaged this summer to our 5,700 full, part time, and substitute staff members -- it is not far fetched to expect that we would have ten to twenty times the quarantines that we’ve seen this summer in the first six weeks of the school year. In fact, given the increasing rates of transmission within our community in recent weeks -- and the projections showing infection rates growing larger as we head into fall -- it is likely that our quarantines would exceed those ranges.

Quarantine impacts during the school year will have much more significant impacts than those we implemented this summer. Our summer programming involved much smaller cohorts --
typically 12 or fewer for indoor settings -- than cohorts in the 90-150 student range that we would anticipate in full in-person learning scenarios. Pushing dozens of these cohorts out of our schools and into 14 day quarantines every six weeks would cause tremendous disruption and unpredictability for students, staff, and families. Moreover, the services at stake -- delivery of core instruction -- are at the heart of our work as a public school system. Consistency and focus have been essential ingredients in the District’s steady improvement in the state’s accountability system over the past five years, and I believe that frequent quarantines -- and multiple transitions from in-person or hybrid models to fully remote programs -- will set back our development of our students more than some of the negative implications that come with remote learning.

I am mindful of the two other parts of the analysis we’ve been using since May -- the parent interest in in-person services and the willingness of staff to provide the service. We have not surveyed parents to determine their preferences for in-person vs online delivery under current conditions, but I expect that such a survey would show that 65 percent or more of our parents would prefer in-person services given survey outcomes in other school districts in our region. The second piece -- the willingness of staff to provide in-person services -- is more challenging to predict given the mixed District/CEA survey results and the complicating factors I described earlier. In the end, while I am driven to make earnest efforts to meet parent interests, and while I am hopeful that we would have adequate numbers of staff members willing to serve in person to meet most of the parent demand for in-person schooling, I believe that the best path forward for the first month of this school year is to utilize remote learning as our instructional model given the significant disruptions to instruction likely with in-person and hybrid models due to frequent quarantines.

**Key Provisions of the Recommendation**

- Florida Virtual School (FLVS) curriculum will be used as the backbone/foundational curriculum for all students for the period from August 27 - September 25. District educators will supplement the FLVS online curriculum using the Adams 12 Units of Study. In addition, District educators will provide stand-alone instruction in areas that are not provided by FLVS, including band, choir, and some specialized/advanced core academic and elective classes. Schedules for the instructional day and week will be developed to give predictability to students, parents and staff about school activities and to help coordinate instruction for specialized student populations (e.g., special education and second language learners) and provide structure for learning pods described below.

This approach will give educators background knowledge about the FLVS curriculum so that they can use this resource most effectively if students remain in or transition to remote learning from time to time during the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

The one week delay in returning students to school (August 27 rather than August 20) will allow professional development and planning for educators in use of the Florida Virtual School resources, as well as the supplemental instruction and support to be
provided by District educators in a fully remote delivery model. It will also provide for time
to train staff who will support Learning Pods in elementary, K-8 and middle school
buildings.

- On or around August 5, parents will be surveyed to determine a) their need for a
  computing device to support remote learning for their child; b) their interest in the
  learning pods described below; and c) their need for transportation services for the
  learning pods and also in the event that the District transitions to full in-person or hybrid
  instruction on September 25. (Having this information well in advance of any transition to
  in-person learning will help assess demand and whether we would need to set priorities
  for transportation given bus capacity limitations resulting from physical distancing.)

Parents will not be asked to make a choice regarding preferences for in-person/hybrid
education vs a fully remote option at this time. We understand that parents believe it is
too early to make an informed choice regarding these options, and we believe there are
advantages to keeping all students in a school/grade level together to start the year so
that students remain with peer/friend groups throughout the fall should remote learning
for all students extend past September 25.

- Students and parents at the elementary level and transition grades at middle and high
  school (6th and 9th grade) will be invited to meet their teachers and classmates in
  evening, in-person meetings at their school between August 17 and August 24. Some
  classes may be split into two sections so that group size remains under 20 students.
  These gatherings will be similar to traditional Back to School night meetings but will
  occur outdoors, weather permitting.

- All secondary students will be assigned to an advisory group and will meet regularly with
  their advisor in a combination of virtual and in-person scheduled meetings during remote
  learning. More information on assignments and schedules will be forthcoming in the next
  few weeks.

- In-person meetings between students and educators will supplement the remote
  learning experience and help develop community and relationships with the purpose of
  a) developing relationships between students in the advisory cohort, b)
  discussing/problem solving student challenges with technology, assignment completion,
  etc.; c) identifying students who might need additional support to address
  social/emotional needs from a counselor or mental health professional on staff. These
  meetings will be held at the school of attendance and will be held outdoors, weather
  permitting. The schedule and more details for these in-person meetings is still under
  development and more information will be shared with staff, students and families in the
  coming weeks.
• English language learners, students with an advanced learning plan and students with disabilities will receive in-person instruction and related services during remote learning between one to three times per week when unable to receive educational benefit from online instruction which may be determined, in part, by the level of academic progress made by the student in the spring 2020 semester. Such services will also be dependent upon the availability of qualified staff.

Preschool students will receive in-person instruction two mornings or afternoons per week.

• The District will make best efforts to provide no cost, in-person Learning Pods at some elementary, K-8 and middle school buildings. Learning Pods are a no-cost in-person option during the standard school day hours for students who need access to internet connectivity and/or students who need a safe and productive place to engage in remote learning.

Learning Pods will be split up into smaller cohorts. These cohorts will be offered at a student's school of attendance, pending capacity, enrollment interest, and staffing availability. Each cohort will be limited to 12 students and total enrollment among cohorts in a school will be limited to 50 percent of a school's enrollment. Students from multiple grade levels may be assigned to the same cohort. Transportation to/from schools for Learning Pod attendance may be provided on a limited basis. District support staff and substitute teachers will be assigned to Learning Pod cohorts for the purpose of supporting students with engaging in remote learning. These staff members will not be responsible for direct instruction, but instead will keep students safe and engaged during remote learning. The primary teaching responsibility will remain with the student's assigned teacher or teachers.

Staffing for this student support program will be provided by a) staff in our before/after school programs (BASE); b) substitute/guest teachers, c) paraprofessionals who work with students in classrooms and in specialized programs, d) bus drivers, e) bus paraprofessionals, f) student monitors/campus supervisors, and g) PEAK staff, as staff in these job categories work closely with students during their normal job assignments. Additional staffing support will be provided, as needed, from other support staff without assignments to support remote learning and food distribution efforts.

Learning Pods will be supervised by building administrators with support from BASE site leaders.

More information about Learning Pod enrollment interest, options, and expectations will be shared in the coming weeks.

School-aged care services for periods before and after the school day will be provided
on a fee basis through our existing BASE program locations subject to parent demand and sufficient staffing.

- Fall sports practices and marching band practices will continue through the summer and during the August 27 - September 25 remote learning period. Interscholastic competition for sports/activities may or may not proceed as determined by CHSAA. Students may continue practices throughout this period even if CHSAA determines that contests between schools will not occur.

- All regularly employed staff members will be compensated during the remote learning period through September 11 provided the staff member is working per the terms of their employment agreement; has accepted and is performing alternative duties (e.g., child supervision or food distribution) as directed by District leadership, or qualifies for a paid leave pursuant to District policies, applicable contracts, or law. Guest teachers and classified substitutes will not be paid during this period unless they are providing services (e.g., assistance with learning pods) as directed by District leadership.

- All regularly employed staff members and substitute teachers/classified staff who are actively working for the District shall be eligible to participate, on a voluntary basis, in COVID testing on an every two week basis or if the employee is presenting with possible COVID symptoms. The testing will be paid for by the District provided the employee is tested by the contractor identified by the Gary Community Investments, the entity to be engaged by the District to provide this service at scale and at discounted rates, and on such terms and conditions to be further defined and communicated to staff by the District. (Contract negotiations with Gary Community Investments are ongoing.) Employee results will be shared with the employee’s supervisor to assist with contact tracing and quarantine implementation if needed.

Conclusion

I recognize that my recommendation includes a number of negative implications. If the Board of Education analyzes these options, and their positive and negative implications differently than I have, I will work with staff throughout the system to implement a different path forward, as selected by the Board in the most professional and responsive manner possible.

In the event the Board supports this recommendation, next steps will include a) communication to staff, students and parents about this decision; b) outreach to families so that they can make informed decisions about their needs for participation in a Learning Pod, transportation, and computing devices; and c) negotiations with DTEA and CSEA regarding any aspects of this plan that might require temporary modification to the master agreements with those respective groups.