

Remote Learning Task Force Expert Advisory Panel 2: Support to Address the Whole Child Experience

Meeting of July 14, 2020

Minutes

Attendance: Lauren, Bryan, Rebecca, Beth, Amanda T, Amanda G, Hiroko, Maria L, SWD, Mariah, Rebecca, Sanjli, Ellen, Amanda G

Yes to minutes from 6/30: Lauren, Bryan, Rebecca, Beth, Amanda T, Hiroko, Rebecca

DESE guidelines discussion

- 6 ft vs. 3 ft. – seems that many districts are leaning toward 6 ft.
- Lindsay: Guidelines focus on prioritizing in-school, and on the need for mental health support. It's not known whether in-person with masks and social distancing will have the same social and peer benefits.
- Lauren: Some BEEP parents not planning to send their kids back for this reason, they think it will be stressful for young children to be together but unable to touch, be near each other, or help each other.
- Beth: economics of PPE is a challenge, who will pay for these costs?
- Amanda: It will be a process for children adjusting to in-school setting being different

Presentation by Sanjli, Rebecca, Ellen, & Lauren: **Extracurriculars and Community Building**

- Survey parents for demand, would they participate in socially distanced in-person extracurriculars (whether or not child is in-person at school) and/or in remote extracurriculars?
- plan for fluidity, seamless transitions between remote & in-person so there's consistency
- Needs to work without parent involvement
- Service learning builds empathy and strengthens community ties. Kids need a place to process anger/frustration and community service can help. Benefits to sense of community & to mental health / morale of service learning.
- Do good from home – recycling, gardening, etc.
- Extended day programs – operated successfully remotely. Zoom small-group clubs were the most effective
- Idea of BHS students leading extracurriculars like obstacle courses marked in advance, creative writing groups, virtual music lessons.
- Local businesses to deliver activity kits (e.g. Hipstitch)
- Could PSB hire a camp director to train & lead student volunteers? Could PTOs subsidize materials as needed? Could offerings be free of charge?

Discussion

- Beth – Brookline Teen Center put together summer youth service corp – social justice component & community service projects for HS students – run by Wes Kaplan

- Hiroko – BHS clubs are mostly during the day and run by BHS teachers. This partnership would maybe need to be led by BHS teachers.
- Meaning making, storytelling theater etc. Education for parents on how to work in partnership with educators to make sure signaling same messages
- Can BHS students get credit so it helps them as well
- BHS SWS could be a great place to start
- What about Middle Schoolers? Can we get students behind nationwide causes across age ranges, have students connected to bigger global issues at different levels (HS or MS mentoring younger kids)?
- Racial justice & listening to students should be centered in community building efforts

Key Points

1. In-person school and extracurriculars with masks and social distancing cannot be assumed to have the same social development and peer interaction benefits as regular school.
2. Transitions during the school year are very possible, and there need to not be abrupt disruptions in children's extracurriculars as this further contributes to loss of community and student stress
3. Service learning benefits mental health and morale, builds empathy, and is especially important to create a space for processing when students are angry and frustrated. There are ways to do good at home.
4. Parents have very limited bandwidth for remote extracurriculars or community activities.
5. It is important to identify leaders for community and extracurricular activities. Could these be teens, through partnerships with Brookline Teen Center or BHS course credit? Could someone be hired, like a camp director, to lead these volunteers?

Recommendations

1. **Extracurriculars should be designed to be fluid between school and home**, so that an in-person activity can go remote without notice and without loss of continuity.
2. **Lower time and money barriers to entry for extracurriculars, because all students need the community and sense of identity that extracurriculars provide at this time.** Minimize need for parent involvement in remote activities, and minimize costs, e.g. by volunteer leaders or by PTOs subsidizing materials costs.
3. **Prioritize service learning (community service and social justice) including racial justice initiatives for all students, both in-person and remote.** Service learning builds empathy and helps students process negative emotions. It is critical to promote mental health and raise morale.