



Irvington Community School, Inc.
Board of Governors Special Meeting

Monday, July 20, 2020 | 5 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Q&A Summary

(Q = Question, A = Answer, C = Comment)

Q: Will the all e-Learning option include Honors and AP classes for high schoolers?

A: Course offerings is one of the aspects we will weigh when selecting between the two vendors. Both vendors offer advanced coursework and we will be paying particular attention to AP offerings.

Q: Doesn't the hybrid option already have an eLearning component? If it does, why do you need an additional vendor to do eLearning if school is delayed?

A: The eLearning that is linked to the hybrid model is in partnership with the face-to-face instruction students receive. ICS will need to rely on an outside academic partner such as Edmentum or Apex Learning due to capacity thresholds as the ICS Hybrid Model and the ICS Academic Partner eLearning are two different programs. That said, ICS will allocate staff resources to ensure there is continuity in attendance requirements, student supports and support in meeting state academic standards.

Q: So I'm late coming in -- school is not starting Monday?

A: The ICS Board of Governors approved delaying the start date of the 2020-2021 School year. The new start date is Monday, August 10.

Q: Why not send cohort a to school on Monday and Tuesday-then clean school and send cohort B on Thursday and Friday? Less risk for kids.

A: The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools evaluated and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings. Further, having the students meet for two consecutive days and then be away for five more before reconvening does not provide the sense of continuity our students need now. Reestablishing an ongoing sense of connection with them after nearly five months of being away from the physical school building and their teachers is in their best interests.

- Q:** Our goal is to have our students learn virtually from our own teachers. We support a two-week delay. If we sign up for this elearning option, and Covid keeps increasing, what happens if all of school goes virtual before the start date? We would not want to be learning from the other company- but our own staff.
- A:** We are mindful of this conundrum for families. As we continue to speak to our eLearning vendors, and monitor the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on Indiana and Marion County, we will keep families posted on the deadline for making this important decision.
- Q:** There are cameras that follow a teacher around so we can have our own teachers teaching our virtual learners instead of a different company. The International School is using these. Have we looked into this?
- A:** Yes, we have looked into this option. Our primary concern with this option has to do with student privacy/confidentiality rights. While synchronous (i.e., real time) distance learning would have its advantages, the burden on teachers and technology capabilities is also a limiting factor.
- Q:** If you opt for e-learning, what happens with kids in Special Ed? Will they still get help from the special ed team at ICES?
- A:** Students in special education will continue to have their unique learning needs met as outlined in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A Teacher of Record (TOR) from the special education team will still manage that IEP and ensure all accommodations are met as outlined in the plan.
- Q:** Where are we at with plexiglass enclosures for teacher desks? We were told this would potentially be provided, and given the size of my classroom, it is impossible to set up and maintain a distance of six feet between my desk and student desks.
- A:** We are in the process of evaluating classroom configurations and determining which classrooms may call for a desktop acrylic barrier. Please be sure to contact the ICS Facilities Director about your specific questions.
- Q:** As a nurse the hybrid model raises red flags for me. What was the thought of doing M/Th and T/F rather than M/T and Th/F? From an infectious disease standpoint, it makes sense to have each cohort there two days in a row, deep clean, then have the next cohort come the following two days to prevent cross contamination of germs between the two cohorts. Also, what education is being given to the teachers and staff on infection control and proper donning of doffing masks because from what I'm seeing, one staff member has already contaminated herself multiple times.
- A:** The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools tested and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings. Additionally Community Health Network will be providing an in-depth training for all staff during our back-to-school professional development days.

It should also be noted that having the students meet for two consecutive days then be away for five more before reconvening does not provide the sense of continuity our students need now. Reestablishing an ongoing sense of connection with them after nearly five months of being away from school is in their best interests.

Q: If our children take the eLearning option will they still have their seat in January?

A: Yes. Students will still be enrolled with Irvington Community Schools regardless of the model families choose to opt for in the fall (Semester 1).

Q: Will elearning affect their 21st century scholarship or their graduation plan? Thank you.

A: We will be able to enroll these students in the courses that they need to stay on track. As long as students participate fully and earn the credits/appropriate grades in the eLearning classes, their participation in the 21st Century Scholars program and their graduation pathways should still be secure.

Q: If we choose elearning and the kids return in January will the curriculum be different with different teachers? Will they fall behind? Also, will these affect credits in high school?

A: The pacing and instructional activities will be slightly different between the two models. However, our staff will be working to align the eLearning model delivery to align with what our teachers are doing in the hybrid model to minimize the impact of switching back in January. The eLearning vendor options are approved courses and credits will count in the high school just the same as with the hybrid model.

Q: First question was if they go elearning will they be at risk of losing their seat at Irvington in Jan?

A: No. Students will remain enrolled with Irvington Community Schools regardless of the model chosen by families in fall.

Q: Do you know under what conditions, outside of the Governor closing schools, ICS would go full elearning?

A: As with the previous emergency shutdown last March, the Indianapolis mayor can impose that order, as can the governor. And as demonstrated recently by the Metropolitan School District of Washington Township, ICS has the ability to make an independent decision to go to a total eLearning model for all of our students. This would involve notifying our charter authorizer, the Indianapolis Mayor's Office of Education Innovation, as well as the Indiana Department of Education. As well, it would require the approval of our Board of Governors. Indeed, we would not make such a decision lightly, and would anticipate that before we reached such a conclusion based upon local COVID-19 conditions that the involved governmental agencies would determine this for us.

C: Yes, keep the hybrid model! Please!

Q: How will the eLearning platform look for students with IEPs that are on certificate track?

A: Students with IEPs will have the accommodations outlined in their IEPs met regardless of the model chosen by families. In the event that our eLearning vendor cannot meet those expectations, our staff will accommodate and develop an option that will.

Q: What types of PPE are currently on backorder?

A: The Clorox T360 disinfectant machines, Lysol spray, see-through masks, and bathroom sink dividers are all on backorder. We remain hopeful that the additional time afforded by our delay will allow these items to be delivered by our rescheduled reopening date. We have obtained defogging machines for disinfecting large areas as a backup to the Clorox machines should their delivery be further delayed. We also have some work to do on our containment areas for students who may be presenting COVID-19 symptoms; we anticipate having these set up by opening day.

Q: Is there a potential that as this continues that we may end up eLearning as a whole with no other option for in school days period?

A: Yes. Much like the rapid transition in March, we could end up eLearning as a whole again. ICS is prepared for such a transition having a successful transition last spring.

Q: Should each cohort not go in two days in conjunction vs Monday and Thursday? Say my child is Tuesday and Friday with school cleaning on Wednesday. If she is there on Tuesday and the other cohort was there on Monday all of those children are still cross contaminating before cleaning on Wednesday. If she comes on Tuesday then all of the students that were there on Monday she is essentially coming in contact with on Tuesday before the school is cleaned on Wednesday.

A: The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools tested and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings.

Q: Are there plans for getting student input? Should there be data on student anxiety levels prior to bringing them into a room together?

A: Social-emotional outcomes for our students are absolutely a concern of ours. In addition to specific curricula adopted last year to help coach our students with handling strong emotions (Second Step, K-8; and Structured Inclusion for our high school students), we have also hired a social worker this school year and have adopted a short assessment, the DESSA-Mini, to help gather that information you are referring to.

Q: If a significant number of families opt to go exclusive eLearning will that open the opportunities for families that choose the hybrid model to have their child to go an additional day in the classroom?

A: Possibly. The driving factor behind the need for a hybrid model was to be able to accommodate a sound social distancing safety protocol in our schools. If it is possible to have our students in school more days while meeting all safety protocols, we will indeed consider this.

Q: Do the families understand they are in charge of the e-learning?

A: ICS will be creating two detailed informational documents to share with families so that they can make a more informed choice for their students. The information will outline differences between the ICS Hybrid Model and the ICS Academic Partner eLearning Model. We will have dedicated staff to help partner with families to make eLearning successful for families adopting either the hybrid model or full eLearning model.

Q: How are you going to regulate students with cold or allergy like symptoms since children with Covid can only have these types of symptoms and are still contagious? Fever seems to be what the school is using for self monitoring but you may not have a fever with covid. I work in an ER with covid and symptoms can be all across the board, especially with younger people.

A: We understand that anyone can be infected with the COVID-19 virus and be asymptomatic. Fever is but one way to detect possible infection before being tested for the virus. Flu season will present some unique complications. Any child presenting with a fever will be sent home. The only way to determine COVID-19 infection is through testing. Please be sure to contact your family physician immediately should your child be sent home with a fever.

Q: I am with Keith in the belief that kids should be in school more. If enough sign up for e-learning will it open up the possibility of more class days for those who want to attend school in person?

A: Possibly. The driving factor behind the need for a hybrid model was to be able to accommodate social distancing in our schools. If it is possible to have our students in school more days while meeting safety protocols, we will seek to do so. We all look forward to the day when our children are all back in school together. Meanwhile, we will respect the science and take the necessary safety precautions so that day comes sooner than later.

Q: What are the thresholds or data markers that would have us shift from in person to 100% virtual?

A: As mentioned during last night's presentation, we will be opening up our eLearning option selection opportunity this Friday, July 24, running through Wednesday, July 29. Meanwhile, we will be projecting possible results from the eLearning option registration, and then see where we actually land, to inform our ongoing planning and decision-making.

Q: Delaying the first day of school seems unwise--the virus situation could very well be unchanged or even worse. Can we simply retain the scheduled start date of 7/27, but just go fully remote for all students? ICS is well set up for this, and this way, we don't lose time from the semester, AND everyone stays safe.

A: We agree that we are well set up for a transition to eLearning as a whole school if necessitated, largely due to our teachers' tremendous effort last spring. We are also positioned well to return to an all-in scenario as quickly as possible should the COVID-19 infection rates drop to levels that allow for a resumption of school as we knew it prior to March 13. Our goal remains to have our students back in person as much as is possible, while still following all safety procedures set forth, in order to produce the best possible academic and social-emotional learning outcomes.

Q: If the governor or mayor mandates school closure, what would happen to the hybrid-model students and the all-elearning students? Again, it seems simpler just to have all students do elearning through the ICS teachers rather than through a separate vendor.

A: The hybrid students would have an experience similar to what happened in Q4 of the 2019-2020 school year. eLearning-only students would stay with the eLearning vendor to finish their semester commitment. If we are directed to continue distance learning for the entirety of the second semester by the governor or mayor then all students would be in the same model of distance learning similar to what happened in Q4 of 2019-2020.

S: I would prefer e-learning for safety, but I love the ICS teachers, so I hate having to decide between the two.

S: Since the situation is so volatile, again, simplicity seems best--e-learning for all with ICS teachers; whenever the virus situation gets better enough, then students can return in hybrid or all-in model. That seems simplest, and doesn't have to change from day to day as the virus news fluctuates.

Q: Hello - I have a child enrolled in Cohort 2 (Tues and Friday). I'm concerned that Cohort 2 has a higher chance of exposure than Cohort 1. Cohort 1 follows the weekend deep cleaning and Wednesdays deep cleaning. Whereas Cohort 2 follows Cohort 1s attendance at school and less deep cleaning.

A: The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools tested and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings. Additionally Community Health Network will be providing an in-depth training for all staff during our back-to-school professional development days.

It should also be noted that having the students meet for two consecutive days then be away for five more before reconvening does not provide the sense of continuity our students need now.

Reestablishing an ongoing sense of connection with them after nearly five months of being away from school is in their best interests.

Q: Would it be possible to switch the schedule to Cohort 1 on Mon and Tues and Cohort 2 on Thursday and Friday? Just a thought.

A: That model was considered but reconfigured when we realized that students would have a five-day lapse between in-class days. We feel confident that our safety and cleaning protocols coupled with our 50 percent reduction in class sizes, masks, and social distancing will greatly reduce any risk of cross- contamination between cohorts.

Q: What percentage of ICS funding is from federal sources? President Trump has threatened to withhold funds to schools that don't fully open. He's a man who tends to make good on such threats or promises.

A: ICS receives 16.9 percent of its funding from the federal government.

Q: How will SPED and AP students BOTH be accommodated with the Edmentum/Apex models?

A: Students receiving special education services and students enrolled in AP coursework are not mutually exclusive groups of students. Apex, for instance, offers AP coursework and should any student with prerequisite coursework completed wish to enroll in an AP course, they may do so. Students receiving special education services will have their needs assessed by a case conference committee and we will meet those needs; this may be accomplished through Edmentum/Apex, or another delivery mechanism.

Q: Will eLearning be actual lessons dictated by a teacher, or will it just be assigned work, as it was last year? My daughter will be entering 3rd grade.

A: The ICS Academic Partner eLearning only students will be assigned prescribed Indiana standards material facilitated by a third party vendor and monitored by ICS staff. Students and families will have access to dedicated ICS staff during eLearning, but the primary driver of the content will be our vendor partner.

S: Agreed! I am very thankful that you all are adding this option. My children love their teachers and we don't want them to lose them. So thank you again!!

Q: If in school, a child or teacher shows any symptoms of Covid-19, what would be the requirements to return to class? And what if they ended up testing positive? Would the whole class quarantine?

A: As noted at last night's meeting, the guidance provided by the Marion County Public Health Department thus far states: "Report cases to your district health administrator (which for us is Community Health Network). *He/she will then contact the MCPHD for guidance regarding closure, cleaning, and parental notification.*" We continue to press the MCPHD for more detail. Mr. Mulherin will be participating in a virtual meeting with CHN nursing management and the Indiana State Department of Health this Friday to try and obtain greater clarity on this important question.

Q: State numbers are no better than they were in March. Why not just start this year as all eLearning, especially if you say that the school is ready to transition smoothly and quickly?

A: As mentioned at during the BOG's meeting, ICS built its Hybrid Learning Model following the public health guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Indiana State Department of Health, and the Marion County Public Health Department. All maintain -- if not strongly encourage -- that the aim is to get children back in school as soon and as safely as possible. We believe our Hybrid Learning Model meets those aims. And we are not alone. More area schools are going to this model (Warren Township, for example), as have several of the largest school districts in the country, including the largest, New York City Public Schools.

Q: Will there be live teaching sessions weekly?

A: The Google Meets that teachers offered last spring will not be offered in the same sense for students enrolled in the full eLearning option with a vendor this fall. Four days of the week the teachers that offered these will be managing an in-person classroom. In addition to content

provided by the vendor, we will have dedicated ICS staff available for students that need us during eLearning and this may include live one-on-one Google Meets, but not whole-group instruction.

Q: If 80-90% of parents choose e-learning what then?

A: As mentioned during the presentation, we will be opening up our eLearning option selection opportunity this Friday, July 24, running through Wednesday, July 29. Meanwhile, we will be projecting possible results from the eLearning Option registration, and then see where we actually land, to inform our ongoing planning and decision-making.

C: Thank you Staff for all your hard work.

Q: So if I decide to do the hybrid schedule would it change if enough parents went to all eLearning to where they go all 5 days? I'm comfortable with 2 days and 3 elearning. I believe they need to get some for time but full time I am not quite comfortable with as of yet. So don't want to do all elearning if we keep hybrid.

A: We will not have five-day in-person instruction until we can do so while meeting safety guidelines to ensure the safety of staff and students.

Q: Would the all virtual option follow the same calendar?

A: Yes. The calendar for eLearning and hybrid models would be the same as presented at the most recent board meeting. This will best prepare us to come back together, when appropriate, to learn together in person again.

Q: All of December is blocked out on purpose?

A: Yes, that is correct. We are following the lead of several State Universities and ending the semester at Thanksgiving. This will be the lead up to the flu season on top of a potentially lingering COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: If eLearning, will there be a virtual classroom included where the teacher will be giving instruction online to show examples of the materials and give students opportunities to ask questions in a "face to face" setting?

A: Our all-virtual eLearning option will be administered by a 3rd party education vendor, who will present video lessons, online activities, and virtual experiences through their Chromebooks. We will have ICS staff assigned as learning coaches, who will check on student progress, coach where needed, and work through tech issues with students.

Q: Would that same "face to face" setting also be available during eLearning during the hybrid model? My students struggled with eLearning and didn't do as well as I know they could have. Are options available for students to pick up extra courses to make up the credits they didn't earn last year?

A: Students who participate in the full e-learning option will have opportunities to meet virtually with their advisor and may set up virtual appointments for help with their online classes. Students participating in e-Learning may be able to take more than the typical 6-8 classes depending on how diligent they are with their e-Learning, how quickly they complete their assigned courses, and what their diploma completion needs are.

Q: Would the school reconsider the on campus days for the hybrid model by having the cohorts going to school consecutive days instead of staggered days? I would be more open to on campus hybrid model if my students could go consecutive days.

A: We understand that each family has unique circumstances and that we will unfortunately not be able to accommodate all -- try as we might! We do know that having the students meet for two consecutive days and then be away for five more before reconvening does not provide the sense of continuity our students need now. We believe that reestablishing an ongoing sense of connection with them after nearly five months of being away from school is in their best interests.

Q: During hybrid on campus days, will lunches be provided or will students need to bring a lunch from home?

A: Lunches will be available to students if they choose not to bring one from home. All lunches will be eaten in homerooms/advisories to maintain social-distancing precautions.

Q: Please clarify, if going with the eLearning only option, the students would not be taught by ICES teachers?

A: That is correct, students would be taught by a third party vendor but monitored by ICS staff. Dedicated ICS staff will also be available for assistance should students need to reach out.

Q: What are the kids expected to do on their non-school days?

A: The ICS Hybrid Model accommodates five days of learning. Two of those days (determined by the student's assigned cohort group) are on-campus for classroom learning. The remaining three days are treated as eLearning days and are an extension of what is covered during the on-campus days. Students will be assigned work and there will be deadlines.

Q: Best practices say that students should be collaborating as a best way to learn. If students have masks on, do they still need to socially distance at six feet?

A: The CDC recommendation remains masks and six feet of separation. This does not mean collaboration is gone. Our teachers are innovative and will likely find ways of including collaboration, with physical separation, in the learning environment without risking student safety.

S: Thanks to all for sincerely keeping students and staff in your forethoughts as you make decisions.

Q: Will you share the questions with all the parents who attended? Many parents may have the same questions.

A: Absolutely! ICS has prepared this document (Q&A Summary) to provide full transparency and access to all questions presented by the meeting participants (parents and staff), as well as responses prepared by the ICS Leadership Team.

Q: In an email I received, the statement was made that one cohort will go Tuesday/Friday or Monday/Thursday. Why not have one cohort go Mon/Tues, cleaning day Wednesday, and the second cohort go Thurs/Fri. It seems that the option you offered really increases the chances of cross contamination between cohort 1 and 2. The two days in a row for each group would appear to lessen the contamination from one group to the other. So, what is the reasoning behind your attendance in person plan? Thanks. I appreciate all of you and your efforts.

A: The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools tested and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings. Additionally Community Health Network will be providing an in-depth training for all staff during our back-to-school professional development days.

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S: Would like to humbly suggest Apex over Edmentum.

Q: If the school does 100% virtual learning will the calendar change to include December elearning days?

A: Great question. At this point, we do not foresee any further changes to the school calendar. But as we must continue to state, this is an unprecedented time of uncertainty. So we must remain flexible and nimble in our ability to make changes that meet the needs of the moment and the many factors which come into play.

Q: What's the last day you would need to know if we are considering removing our children from the school? We love Irvington, but with the highly unstable environment and weekly changes to your plans we have to consider other options available to us, including schools in other markets and homeschooling.

A: A parent can unenroll their student from us whenever they so choose. Mid-year transiency has shown significant impacts to student learning, so we would recommend that decisions be made prior to the start of school. However, parents should always make the best decision for their child regardless of the calendar. Please know that the ICS Leadership Team and ICS Board of Governors carefully weighs and evaluates each decision and adjustment as we work to move through impact from the pandemic. We have appreciated the patience and value each and every one of our families. We encourage any family experiencing uncertainty to reach out to their student's school leader for an open and honest conversation.

Q: If teachers are basically doing elearning five days a week, what is the advantage of bringing in an outside vendor? How will students be assimilated into ICS after the first semester?

A: Most of our learning is structured in three phases; "I do", "We do", "You do." This process demonstrates a structured release of who is doing the heavy-lifting of the learning from the teacher to the student. The hybrid model allows teachers to tackle some of this, and then delegate the others to eLearning days. For instance the teacher could opt to handle the "I do" and "We do" portions of learning in-person, modeling how to do something and then having students practice together with the teacher. Then, during eLearning days, students might be engaged in projects

where they are demonstrating mastery in the “You do” section. Without a third party vendor, just the eLearning portion of our hybrid model cannot stand alone as a viable educational product.

Q: How were teachers included in the decision-making process?

A: We like to think of our decision-making model as often being “principal driven,” with all decisions of significant magnitude, especially those that affect the entire school corporation, being vetted by the corporate Leadership Team, which includes the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. The success of the principal-driven model hinges upon the principal-teacher relationship, as well as upon open communication systems and interactions. As you can appreciate, such decisions are not subject to an employee vote, and ultimately the Board of Governors will determine whether or not we move ahead with any proposals of such gravity as this. But employee input is welcome, valued, and considered so as to better inform our planning and decision-making processes. We focus on maintaining a highly collaborative school culture, and decisions are never made in a vacuum.

Q: If schools are closed, will students transition to the elearning platform or continue in the teacher-led eLearning model?

A: In the event that another shutdown occurs, students in the hybrid model will move to the ICS Teacher-driven eLearning model that we had last spring. Students that were already on the full eLearning platform will continue uninterrupted.

Q: From an educator standpoint, I am concerned that using an elearning vendor will have students at different levels. I would much prefer an elearning model with ICS teachers.

A: We agree that ICS teachers would do a better job than any third-party would. Our goal remains to have our students in learning with us, where we know we can produce the best educational outcomes for them, as much as possible while maintaining adherence to safety guidelines. A hybrid model allows us to do this. So long as our teachers are engaged with students in-person, asking them to manage a separate model simultaneously is not in the best interest of our teachers and students.

Q: Why are cohort groups not attending school for two consecutive days, all have Wednesday off, then the other cohort group go on Thurs./Fri.? I just do not see a need for the groups to cross contaminate, if not necessary.

A: The ICS Safety Plan not only calls for extensive cleaning of buildings every Wednesday, but also includes sanitizing surfaces before transitions throughout each day. Additionally, the Safety Plan requires masks to be worn and for students and staff to remain socially distanced as much as possible. ICS has hired day porters in all three buildings, who will be cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day, and will have JaniKing custodial crews, who work every day to also clean the buildings. With more than 15 hours elapsing between cohorts leaving and then arriving the next day, in addition to the extraordinary cleaning and sanitizing efforts, we believe the transmission between cohorts would be minimal. We have also had the fresh air intake for our schools tested and have been assured by professionals that our schools meet or exceed the standards for air exchange in the buildings. Additionally Community Health Network will be providing an in-depth training for all staff during our back-to-school professional development days.

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Q: Do the cohorts break up actual class size, or does it just break down the total number of kids in the school each day?

A: Yes, class sizes are reduced by roughly 50 percent, so students will be in class with 10-12 other students on average, rather than 22-24.

S: Thank you all for your hard work! You accommodate so many with so much, it is above and beyond! The teachers need to be given time, this is so very hard and ICS has incredible teachers!