



SAINT PAUL FEDERATION
OF EDUCATORS LOCAL 28

February 28, 2021

Chair Foster, Vice Chair Vue, Directors Allen, Brodrick, Ellis, Kopp, and Marchese:

Below is a summary of building concerns regarding the return to in-person instruction for the week of 2/21/21 - 2/27/21. A copy of this summary will be available on the SPFE website.

This week SPFE received a total of 18 concerns reported from building staff. Some reports contain more than one concern.

The following buildings reported concerns:

- Barack and Michelle Obama
- Bruce F. Vento Elementary
- Central High School
- Como Park Elementary
- Four Seasons A+
- Frost Lake
- Global Arts Plus, Lower Campus
- Humboldt Secondary
- Johnson Senior
- L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion Lower and Upper Campus
- Wellstone

There were 8 concerns regarding PPE

- Adults not masking
- Students not properly masked
- Inadequate cleaning
- Principals not supporting staff in enforcing mask usage with students – in one instance a student is repeatedly removing mask, coughing and spitting on other students. In the second instance a student has been running out of class, removing mask and refusing to put it back on. In both cases (separate buildings) this is a recurring issue.

There are 6 concerns regarding student social distancing and safety

- Distancing not occurring on busses
- Distancing is not possible with younger learners
- Classrooms are too small to distance 3 feet
- Adults not distancing from colleagues
- Students remove masks.

There is 1 concern regarding students coming to school sick. There was no nurse on site, and student was required to remain in the classroom for several hours until a nurse arrived



There are concerns regarding unclear quarantining practices.

- Lack of follow up from SPPS COVID reporting form
- Reporting of suspected cases not happening at all
- Unclear guidelines on who should be notified about potential exposure
- Concern that siblings that share living space not quarantining when one tests positive for COVID

It is unclear at what point students will be placed in VLS if they refuse to wear masks even though this is required by executive order and our MOU.

SPFE continues to maintain a supply of child size masks for use because the district is not providing adequate supplies.

When asked, the district either cannot or will not provide the total number of students have yet to be placed in VLS. Students are now receiving truancy notices because the still have not been placed in VLS. Additionally, a phone call to Student Placement revealed that 200 *new* families seeking to enroll in SPPS VLS have been turned away. At a time when enrollment is declining, how was this allowed to happen?

Despite having held two town halls for families, there has been no SPPS town hall or listening session held for staff.

In addition to the chart below, given the statement that SPPS will return to in-person learning for secondary students, SPFE members still have not received answers to the following questions:

- What will the daily schedule be?
- How will students that choose not to return to in-person learning receive instruction?
- What does “fully in-person” actually entail?
- What is the plan to keep secondary students 6 feet apart at all times?
- What is the plan for transitions within the building?
- What is the plan for lunch? Will students eat in classrooms?
- With the additional students using busses, what is the plan for cleaning?
- What is the plan for district-wide VLS?
- Currently buildings are increasingly being told to “figure it out” without adequate support from district staff. What is the plan to provide real support (including adequate supplies) for educators and building administrators?

Requirements

Challenges we know

Masks must be worn at all times (CDC, SLP)	Requires constant monitoring
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Social Distancing (CDC= 6ft; SLP 3 ft. at all times)	Facilities space is inadequate. This cannot be done fully in-person; will be difficult in hybrid; facilities space is inadequate
Adequate ventilation (CDC)	Nebulous requirement; no way to hold facilities accountable. Most SPPS facilities only take up to a MERV 11 filter when MERV 13 is the recommendation.
Documentation of lunchroom seating required (SLP)	All students eating at school will need to have assigned seating in any eating area
Highly recommended: 6ft distance whenever possible at meals	In addition to the assigned seating, this is nearly impossible with the cafeteria/annex space that is available in secondary schools; many more lunch periods would need to be added which messes up the schedule; annex space is coming from where, exactly when all classroom spaces need to be used?
Highly recommended: Cohorting of small groups for meal times with 6 ft. of distance	See above
Families are now encouraged to test themselves every two weeks	This is a good requirement, however we are trusting families to do this, there is no requirement, and no way to track so it will not be consistent or reliable data to really know if COVID is spreading in our schools. The state should provide on site testing for students like they do for staff.
Additional Logistical Requirements to Transition	
Scheduling changes to accommodate in-person and virtual learning students.	Even to get students in for quarter 4, this is a Herculean effort. All courses need to be adjusted for VLS and in person, regardless of hybrid or full return. (see staffing below) Campus staff need to start scheduling and rostering for next fall. When students register for a new school, the school needs to know what the schedule will be, what classes will be offered and how many sections of each



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	are needed. This can't wait until summer. Staffing, student counts, and people's mental health are all impacted by any delay.
	Transportation: Currently, the system as it is will work with the 230 bus routes that are in place. If secondary changes to an all-day hybrid or fully in-person, 50 more routes would be needed. There isn't currently staffing to support this.
	Staffing: A virtual learning option for students who wish to stay in a distance setting is a requirement of the state during the pandemic. As soon as you have anyone wishing to stay in DL, there becomes an issue with adequate staffing. Currently, at least 27% of all secondary students are enrolled as virtual students (VLS). That means that all those students need the correctly licensed teachers to support their learning in a distance format. The other 73% of students who will be in person, will also need the correctly licensed teachers to support their learning. There is no clear path to make staffing work nor is there the staff, to hire more teachers. That means that teachers will need to teach in person or in VLS. For students, this means that they will have some of their teachers (that they've worked with all year) change teaching assignments. This will cause a great deal of disruption to everyone in secondary, regardless of grade band.

Sincerely,
Nick Faber
President, Saint Paul Federation of Educators

cc: Dr. Joe Gothard, Superintendent
Jackie Turner, Chief Operations Officer
Dr. Kate Wilcox-Harris, Chief Academic Officer
David Watkins, Chief of Schools