

Remote Learning Community Group
Virtual
April 16, 2020, 5:00pm – 7:00pm
Draft Meeting Minutes

Group Members Present: Atnre Alleyne, Community member; Christine Alois, DDOE; Susan Bunting, DDOE; Tammy Croce, DASA; Kevin Fitzgerald, Superintendent; Virginia Forcucci, DDOE; Monica Gant, DDOE; LaRetha Odumosu, Principal; Laura Schneider, Principal; Jeff Taschner, DSEA; Student, Red Clay School District.

DASA: Delaware Association of School Administrators
DDOE: Delaware Department of Education
DSBA: Delaware School Boards Association
DSEA: Delaware State Education Association

I. Welcome

Dr. Bunting called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm, welcomed participants, and shared information on how to participate since this is the first time the Remote Learning Community Group meeting has been virtually held.

II. Introductions

Dr. Bunting introduced each member's name in order to take attendance.

III. Plan Outline

Dr. Bunting shared how the initial group was put together to immediately address the two-week closure. Feeding was the first task on the list. By Tuesday or Wednesday of the first week, food distribution started. In the last two weeks of March more than 300,000 meals were served. Next, items such as how to address hourly workers and extensive cleaning were addressed; then the group moved to remote instruction. Two complications arose: What do we do for our special needs students, and how do we deal with the varying degree of access to internet and devices. Discussion ensued, and DDOE received information related to

1. US Department of Education relaxed concerns to support work in some capacity rather than nothing at all.
2. News that we would receive a waiver for state assessment and accountability

IV. Submitted Plans Recap

The group, composed of a variety of members from DDOE, OGOV, districts, charters, DASA, DSEA, DSBA, decided to allow each school district/charter to develop a remote learning plan for what would work best for its community. The resulting plans were submitted to DOE by April 3rd. Districts/charters were asked to provide start date, how the code required hours would be achieved, end date for students, end date for teachers, and an overview of teaching model.

V. Calendar Overview

A chart of remote learning plan dates had been previously sent to committee members.

VI. Discussion

Meeting participants were invited to think about and respond to the following questions:

1. Can you share some of the positive aspects of remote learning that you might have heard?

- As a building leader, cutting out fluff, looking at new ways to deliver content and being more strategic. Reaching out more strategically with all members of the community. Combination of both packets and online. We are using Google Classroom and mailing out packets. Called every single family.
- Applaud all the teachers for using all the different platforms. Adapting and growing your toolbox from home. People on DE Online and Facebook sharing best practices.
- Renewed appreciation for schools and teachers. Many see the value of what goes on in our buildings every day.
- Seeing and hearing that teachers are building stronger community with students. More of an ability to personalize instruction. Building relationships more intentionally. Hoping some of the best practices that we are exhibiting won't go away when we get back to our traditional school setting.
- Districts were able to conduct more IEP meetings online and see this as an encouraging practice to conduct IEP's more with parents in future.
- Our organization is reviewing all plans. Districts are reaching out to parents. There is a lot of talk about poverty, now it can be quantified.
- More parent involvement in learning.

2. What resources are you aware of that may help to support and/or strengthen current implementation of the district and charter remote learning plans?

- Accessibility and devices.
- Even with connectivity, more worried about how work gets done at home. Families are overwhelmed with basic needs. School is not a concern. Too many Dojo messages. I can give students devices, but not connectivity. We have a large Haitian Creole population so they can't read what we send. Some we planned for being there; some we did not. Parents doing double shifts. Not sure if it's appropriate to send devices for them anyway at the young age.
- I can echo that. Overwhelmed families. Trying to work from home as well. Social emotional health of students. School provided the space to share concerns with family, etc. and not able to do that.
- Are there social emotional supports available from community services?
A: Schools using what was already in place.
- Need to be more forward thinking, parents losing jobs and losing family members/friends.
- Districts need to connect better with groups that are out. We have reached out to do pulse checks. Students felt like they didn't have a say in what was happening, feel like things are being done to them. They feel grief. Connecting with organizations in community is important.
- We don't even know timelines; hard to talk to others when we don't know.

- Mental health distance learning - students feel more overwhelmed with support they need. They have communicated that when they go into sessions there may only be one person there, so they can't work with them.
- Teri Lawler, DOE, putting together information for current SEL/TI training etc. for teachers and planning transition as well.
- Stay in touch with Beau Biden Foundation.
- Faith community is available to leverage a platform for disseminating information and inspiration.
- Consistent messaging and transparency... in some districts people aren't hearing anything. We can use teachers as social emotional support. How can we make superintendents and building leaders more aware of need to reach out to students and teachers? Some teachers don't want to be the touch point. Valuable resources in teachers. Tap into rock star teacher leaders. Overwhelming getting all the information from multiple sources.
- There are also social/emotional learning resources on the DDOE COVID-19 website in the Educator Support Resources section.
- Trying to keep communication consistent, putting out info to districts; television partnership...hope to have teachers tape lessons.
- Weekly outreach to students is not only allowed in my building; it is expected...by voice - not just digitally.
- I have been talking to DETV about doing something like this. Let me know if that would be of interest.
- The DDOE Educator Resources can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/DOEsupportsdoc>
- Sharing across districts and charters. Such variation in plans across districts how to share.
- How to reach all students... what can we do? Need to focus on our most vulnerable students.
- Principal group meeting for chat and chews to discuss.
- Districts talking about how to keep kids engaged.
- Article discussing reading loss will be high, math higher <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/opinion/coronavirus-schools-closed.html>

3. Outside of working directly with members of this team, what is the best way to communicate and gather feedback from the groups you represent?

- Schoology polls.
- Know about different forums so we can join.
- Wednesday 7:30 Facebook Live session, surveys of parents and students, Rodel, Etc.
- DASA – appreciates being involved, helps with consistency of messaging.
- DSEA – meets with leadership group, communication solid.

- Chiefs – Good communication across DOE and districts; will bring back info to help spread communication across districts
- How soon will we know a timeline? Having a runway to plan is helpful. Think of safety of teachers, etc.; hard time getting people to want to come back.
- OGOV receives so much information every day, it changes and evolves; want more time to get whole picture before making that decision.
- One group shared: We are preparing for the worst, December. Shouldn't we all be planning ahead for the worst?
- I don't have the size of staff to have multiple plans.
- So many different scenarios
- Governor understands we need time to open; let's make time to plan moving forward; we have to take small steps right now... even remote learning is an evolving process, etc.
- Governor meets with superintendents every two weeks.

4. How can you personally help make remote learning more successful?

- Step out of my role and listen to other people from a 360 perspective – three interests – keep everyone safe, continue with instruction, mitigate or minimize this being an economic hardship. Be open that anything is a possibility.
- Be cognizant of being a parent and teacher; keep teachers in mind.
- Parents working all day long and then coming home and being teachers.
- I don't think that at every level that people are talking and listening the way everyone is on this call. Administrators are popping in on Zoom, etc. just to show they care... That would be valued; be personal with teachers who are working to learn how to build community on an online platform. Teacher leaders doing PD would be helpful.
- Need to talk about early childhood parents and support; television and Facebook Live... Would like to help parents to learn the nuts and bolts... how to be a parent teacher... room for growth for district/charter plans.
- Senior in high school – I have been concerned as I am going to college and have to be on my "A" game. We want to reach out to our teachers; we are meeting once a week; the work we are getting is excessive. Friend at another school hasn't had a single meeting with her teacher because it is not required. In our district we are not really getting graded, and she is and has no connection with teachers. If there is anything that we can do to better that, it would be appreciated.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

Dr. Bunting thanked the group and announced the next two meeting dates. Due to a posting conflict, the dates were changed. The next two meetings will be held on April 30th and May 6th.

Jeff Taschner moved to adjourn; Kevin Fitzgerald seconded the motion, which all participants supported.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.