



Summary Report:

Community Circles: Gathering Thoughts About Reopening from the East Haven Community



East Haven Public Schools collaborated with Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) to support a proactive approach to planning for school buildings reopening in Fall of 2020. This work was designed to ensure that our plan was designed from a “with” stance. This means that we believe it is best for people in positions of authority to do things with others, rather than doing things to them, for them, or not doing anything at all. The Social Discipline Window, pictured below from the International Institute for Restorative Practices, reminds us why it is important to operate from the “with” space, as we want positive and productive relationships with our constituents.



East Haven follows a restorative model with a strong belief in it being best to allow those who might be affected by decisions to have the opportunity to be heard and ask questions, and use their thinking to build a plan together. Our school community is happier and more cooperative when we follow a “with” process that affords everyone an opportunity to engage in a conversation leading to clear expectations in future plans. This, along with a complete and populated FAQ document that answers the important questions that were posed by families, was the intended outcome from the various reopening circles we held July 7-13th. Our FAQ document will follow up with this.

Date and time of Session	Number Registered	Audience	Archives
Tuesday, July 7 3:00-4:00pm	27	Parents, welcome to all with specific focus on K-5	Video session (password-8V!*O4\$p) chat
Wednesday, July 8th 1:00-2:00pm	28	Parents, welcome to all with specific focus on K-12	Video session (password-6U.754#9) Spanish translation chat
Thursday, July 9th 1:00-2:00pm	60	Staff	Video Session (unavailable-computer issue) chat
Thursday, July 9th 5:30-6:30pm	27	Parents, PK-12	Video session (password- 9p*=@\$8D) Spanish translation chat
Monday, July 13th 1:00-2:00pm	49	Staff	Video session Chat (password-2c\$93@14)
Monday, July 13th 7:00-8:00pm	105	Parents, PreK-12	Video session Chat (password-8z*g3*yx)

Definitions:

Distance Learning: the model our district used for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year after the Governor's executive order to close school in March 2019

Full In-person instruction with health and safety protocols: Model 1 of our district's plan, our district would elect this option if public health data indicates there are low rates COVID-19 transmission in the community, this would be the preferred model as it is ideal for the academic and social emotional needs of students to be on site if it is healthy and

Hybrid Model: Model 2 of our district's plan. Our district would elect this option if public health data suggests there is moderate spread within the community, in an effort to reduce the number of students in buildings and to allow for

Full Virtual Learning: the model our district will use in the case of high community spread. This model will be separate and distinct from the emergency mode of instruction used on 2019-2020

Remote Learning Option: This option may be selected by families concerned about the threat of COVID-19 and wish to supervise their children's learning at home.

Summary of Frequently Occurring Concerns and Questions from our Community Circles

Culture & Climate

- Many families reported being concerned about social emotional learning of students, and expressed interest in creating structures that made children feel more comfortable with new social distancing guidelines
- Face to face connections, and rituals and structures to promote student interaction and conversation in virtual environments
- Our families valued including predictable routines and structures to support any needed transition in between models, and providing supports for the transition back to school
- The social emotional health of students was also brought up by many people in attendance. Some parents mentioned their children feeling worried about going back to school, and wondered how that might be eased and monitored throughout the school year.
- Parents valued the options to be able to make choices for their family, and expressed an interest in some support for a virtual option if the district goes to an online platform. Live teaching was requested as a component of this option
- Parents who are uncomfortable sending their child back to school will have access to some sort of remote learning.
- Several parents had ideas how to normalize the norms around mask wearing, supporting students to get used to new routines and procedures.

Impact on our plan: As a result of parent feedback and input, our plan includes connections to social emotional learning and building a strong classroom community.

Academics:

- Distance learning was a great concern related to academics. Many parents asked about the equality of curriculum being implemented in person and online. Ideas included more live streaming of classes and opportunities to meet face to face with teachers.
- Parents wanted to know how we would improve our distance learning.
- Many also raised concerns about specials. Are they going to be offered? If so, how might they look different given the restrictions of mask wearing and social distancing?
- There were a few parents concerned about students who may have fallen behind during distance learning. How might we catch students up while continuing to challenge/push students who are on track or ahead?
- One parent noted “For virtual learning I would like it to be a teacher who can be on at a set time and kids required to login the same time.”

Impact on plan: On-site academics will allow for a weekly instructional cycle. We heard parents describe the value of synchronous, face to face instruction. Therefore, our

hybrid and Full Virtual learning includes options for a plan including face to face instruction. As a result of the feedback from students and parents, our focus to build a strong academic program is on Academic Acceleration that helps prepare our learners for appropriate grade level instruction.

Considerations for Diverse Learners

As a result of the feedback from teachers and parents, our focus is on clear communication

- Parents reported that they appreciated an opportunity to explore what in-person school was like, as a result of summer school. The feedback was that many children may have sensory challenges and will need additional assistance with mastery.
- Parents valued high quality feedback from teachers. They wanted an opportunity to get proactive feedback that was actionable, and wanted to be informed about their progress.
- Parents wanted clarification on guidance for PreK students, and we will seek to provide that guidance at the school level from Deer Run and Overbrook in the coming days. The Superintendent was able to clarify information about whether or not
- Guidance from the state department of education requires that students wear masks
- Communications should consider the needs of English Learners, and extensive efforts

Impact on our plan: The plan includes extensive efforts to support students, communication, and specialized support for students to adjust to many changes within the school environment. East Haven will use multiple means of communication, in multiple languages, to ensure equal access to all information.

Technology

- Some parents and staff members wondered if there might be more opportunities to teach outside when the weather permits. What might be the strength/quality of internet access outdoors?
- Parents expressed interest in receiving more information on Google classroom and other online platforms to support ongoing learning.
- Professional development and support for parents and training on google classroom and other online learning platforms was recommended.
- Communication systems and signage were considered important, and additional supports would be needed to properly cleanse and sanitize items.
- Additional wireless capacity was appreciated, as were efforts to reach out to families.

Impact on plan: Our district will use ESSER and CARES Act funds to ensure technology capacity meets student needs. Our phone system will support ongoing reminders and announcements about handwashing and social distancing.

Operations

- **Nutrition & Food Service**

- Parents expressed interest in still being able to access food via a dropoff site somewhere in the center of town. If school were to return face to face instruction, would families who did not feel comfortable returning still be able to access food?
- Many people wondered how the process for lunch during the school day might change. Would lunch take place in classrooms instead of the cafeteria?

Impact on plan: Lunch plans at the building level will be crafted in response to the concerns outlined to the building principals.

Transportation

- Many parents expressed concerns regarding bus capacity, and whether or not there would be sufficient safeguards for students. Many participants wondered if there would be an option for bus transportation monitors.
- Parents wondered whether or not temperatures could be taken on the bus.

Impact on plan: The district is currently exploring options to support individuals to support social distancing, health, and safety measures on the bus.

Health & Wellness

- There were a large number of parents concerned about protecting the health of their children. Many people inquired about the plan to enforce the wearing of masks and social distancing as much as possible. They wanted to know what would happen if children were not adhering to the safety precautions, and what other precautions might be put into place. Will there be hand sanitizing stations, increased sanitizing of classrooms and bathrooms, mask breaks, temperature checks?
- Many parents also wondered about the process and procedures that might be put in place to share information if someone in a school does become ill/tests positive for Covid-19. How would it impact those who had come into contact with the individual? Would entire classes have to quarantine? When/how would they be informed? How might we ensure that sick children are kept at home and/or picked up from school when they need to be? What happens when teachers are sick? How will substitutes be handled?
- There were also some concerns about how mask wearing might be difficult for younger children, those with sensory or health issues such as asthma, and how the plan might be tailored to needs such as these.
- Parents identified open and available restrooms were a priority.

Impact on our plan: As a result of parent feedback and input, our plan includes connections to social emotional learning and building a strong classroom community. Building level plans will account for specific protocols around mask breaks, outdoor classroom spaces, sanitizing stations. All schools will have additional guidance forthcoming.

Questions? Please contact:

Erica Forti

Superintendent of Schools

eforti@east-haven.k12.ct.us

Jennifer Murrhy

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

jmurrhy@east-haven.k12.ct.us

Julie Church

Family and Community Engagement Facilitator

jchurch@east-haven.k12.ct.us

Rochelle Cobb

Professional Learning Specialist- Restorative Practices

rcobb@aces.org

Margaret Stevens

Professional Learning Specialist- ESL; Spanish Translation

mstevens@aces.org

