

**Hampton Elementary School District
Office of the Superintendent
380 Main Street
Hampton, CT. 06247**

**Covid - 19 and HES
Background, Concerns & Ideas**

**A Report to the Hampton Board of Education
May 27, 2020**

Written : 5/20/20 and is subject to change

LEVEL 1 - Background - Planning for Implementation of Distance Learning:

1. On 3/17/20, HES was required to close its doors because of the proclamation by Governor Lamont that all Connecticut Schools and universities had to be closed because of the pandemic known as Covid-19
2. The CSDE issued a recommendation that no on-line learning would be advised unless all students had equal access to online learning as well as all special education interventions could also be implemented without placing the school district at legal "risk" for not supplying equal access to a free and public education
3. From 3/17 to 4/1, Hampton followed this recommendation so no on-line program was put into place and no faculty or staff were required to work; however, the faculty realized that fundamental changes were coming and they individually began to try to understand what they were going to face in the use of distance learning with the encouragement of the principal who tried to answer their questions as the closure of school developed based on the rapidly changing pronouncements that were developing out of the offices of the governor and the CSDE
4. The Federal Department of Education and the CSDE made a clarifying set of statements on 3/19/20 that presented the idea that districts should begin planning for the implementation of on-line learning to the "...extent possible..." and that school districts be allowed to implement some type of distance learning that may or may not fully service all students equally
5. On 3/23, 3/27, the HES faculty was called together via Zoom to meet and formulate distance learning plans. Since some had already worked at developing their professional ideas and researching on-line possibilities, the planning meetings were successful at setting up ideas and resources for all certified staff - including teachers of art, music, health, and physical education - to begin their active planning for distance learning that the faculty named: *The Continuum of Learning*. These two days, faculty was officially called back to work by the superintendent since they were required to attend these two Zoom meetings that lasted for 1.5 hours and the rest of their contracted hours were official workdays.

The 3/27/20 date included three+ hours of training for the implementation of SuccessMaker and for a faculty meeting that lasted for 1.5 hours

6. Three teachers were asked to serve as “Go-To” teachers for all other teachers to ask questions about the complexities of the online teaching process. Each of the teachers was assigned a different aspect of the issues facing teachers: online curriculum, communication, and technology issues. Ms. Roberson served as the overall coordinator of this project and served as the link for parents who were facing various issues from the “home side” of online learning. Ms. L. Sorel served as the lead teacher for our Social, Emotional Learning coordinator. She presented SEL videos three times each school week for students to review
7. The distance learning curriculum plan was developed that had two distinct distance learning modules. The first module was named SuccessMaker software. This software presented curriculum content that was child-specific and presented to each student standards-based lessons based on where the student’s teacher felt that the students were academically at the time of the school shutdown in math, reading, and writing. This software tracks students and does not require active teacher implementation, only oversight. This software is designed to be a daily 15-minute activity for each subject and it can be completed any time a student accesses the software and it can be used throughout the summer. The second module is teacher-based and each teacher can present to their students a more interactive experience using, as an example, Google Classroom. This allows all students in the class to experience the lesson being presented and interact with each other in real-time
8. The faculty were trained in the use of SuccessMaker during a 1/2 professional development activity on Friday 3/27/20. A thirty-page training manual was supplied and hands-on activities were presented to all teachers in grades K - 6. The software does not have a component for Pre-K students
9. On 3/30 and 3/31, faculty were again officially called back to work by the superintendent for their full contract day and they implemented a “soft opening” of the distance learning process with their students for the purpose of understanding how prepared students and were at navigating this new learning process. Students who needed Chromebooks or iPads were supplied those items. Teachers also supplied packets of learning materials that parents were asked to pick-up outside HES’s front door
10. Full on-line learning commenced on Wednesday, April 1
11. The faculty also had weekly Zoom faculty meetings (first on Fridays and now on Tuesdays) to discuss all of the issues that have developed and it became an opportunity for faculty and administration to discuss and develop plans as the online modules were implemented over time

LEVEL 2 - Background - Implementation:

1. The formal opening of the HES Distance Learning curriculum began on Wednesday, April 1 and it seemed to run as expected - some students and

parents were already comfortable with the technology and had used some of these types of activities in Teams B and C. The more difficult issues developed with the Pre-K through Team A students.

2. Ms. Roberson handled many of the parent emails and she created workarounds for parents to get them started. The school was open each school day from 9:00 to noon to allow parents to pick-up computers, books, learning supplies outside the front doors
3. It is fair to say, during the month of March, that parents, students, and teachers were having a very difficult time mastering the sharp learning curve the distance learning process demanded. This was a very complex teaching/learning process in which few teachers have any experience handling. Parents were also having plenty of problems since many of them had to work at home as they tried to assist their children in their new learning process. Ms. Roberson was handling between 20 to 25 daily calls and emails seeking assistance from parents.
4. SuccessMaker also proved to be an appropriate tool; however, as the students were working on their preliminary assessments, parents seemed to be assisting their children in picking the correct answer to the math or English problems being presented. This preliminary assessment is to be used by the computer to determine what academic level the students were understanding and then move them forward or backward to the student's proper placement. With the parents assisting their children, their placements were determined to be very inaccurate. Parents were contacted to explain once again how important it was to assist their children by making sure they logged onto SuccessMaker and not assist them in any other way.
5. As each teacher entered the building, rules were put into place to limit their access (had to make an appointment). Mr. Nichols then had to wipe down every surface each teacher touched, especially the Xerox machine.
6. By the end of March, the teachers were discussing topics that were not necessarily only focused on technology issues or student/parent issues. They began talking about the implications that distance learning at HES was bringing to the forefront of concerns. The three major issues were: webinars and training rignorner to provide a more robust learning experience, How can we grade the students, and what exactly was the quality of the educational experience the students obtained and how did that translate into academic progress? These deeper concerns were discussed during the Zoom faculty meeting for all of March and April?
7. Throughout March and April, our EastConn food service has been offering free breakfast and lunch to our families. At last count, 58% of families are lining up each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to collect food for their children

LEVEL 3 - Key Reopening Concerns and Ideas:

Concerns:

1. Concern: How does a family's dynamics impact our students' learning?
2. Concern: How does age/grade levels impact learning?
3. Concern: With the inconsistency of our students' participation in the distance learning process, How can we assess what the students are learning as we present lessons?
4. Concern: When our students return and they are placed in the next grade from the grade they were in when we closed, how long will it take to assess their actual academic placement in math, reading, and writing?
5. Concern: What tools can we use to assess all of our students?
6. Concern: How can we be expected to offer "office hours" and then have the parents emailing us all times of the day and on weekends; how many hours are we to be expected to work in this environment?
7. Concern: How can we keep an active and positive relationship with each of our students?
8. Concern: When will this end and we return to normal?
9. Concern: How will we include the parents to create our distance learning program as it relates to students' ability to be online, engaged and to complete assignments? (LS)
10. Concern: Technology devices, best devices for ease of use for pre primary and primary students, if we are not sending our devices home then join in a program that parents can have the reduced purchase price - EastConn or a store like Best Buy has with some municipalities. (LS)
11. Concern: While the school plan was to have one teacher per team, COVID-19 has changed many aspects to our teaching and learning program. While many schools are looking for ways to reduce their class size in order to address the SEL and content area needs, we will be increasing class size for two teams. Our State Commissioner of Education stated at the Town Hall Meeting on WTNH - 5/18/2020, this is not the time to reduce teaching staff. (LS)
12. Concern: Our current teaching and learning plan has been misunderstood. Each team is different however as it pertains to content area classroom time, students are in mixed multi aged groupings. Team B are together for S.S./ Current Events, SEL, Reading, Writing, Science and Technology, and snack. Team C even more with math as part of their multi-aged classroom. (LS)
13. Will we have the faculty and paras in place to rebuild our students' academic skills?
14. Will parents be open to allowing their children to return to HES without fear of becoming ill and if not, how can we help to lessen their concerns?
15. As this closure continues, how can we assist teachers in coping with any DCF concerns?

Ideas: NOTE: all “ideas” are to be considered as possible actions that we are discussing with no actual confirmed implementation plan yet in place - we are awaiting the Governor and the CSDE’s directives

1. Idea: Continue to use SuccessMaker through-out the summer and have the students use it in the classroom as an individualized assessment tool
2. Idea: Creatively use technology to continue the education process in class just in case we need to return to a closed school
3. Idea: Use our 2019-2020 budget to the greatest extent possible during the post-June 10th closing date for the end of our normal academic year and offer the contracted \$40/hour pay rate to have as many teachers continue working for as long as the dollars are available and focus the funds so we can continue to rebuild our students’ basic skills and to continue to help parents understand their role in the education process
4. Idea: Continue the SEL activities like the parking lot gatherings by staff to wave to students as their parents drive by as well as Mrs. Sorel’s SEL segments on our website
5. Idea: Create the regular 3 teams we have now and subdivide students into 4 smaller skill based learning modules for math and ELA using the SRBI teacher to teach one of those modules
6. Idea: Have a robust sanitizing plan for the implementation of CDC approved practices for all student, bus, and building
7. Idea: Have a complete health safety plan in place created by our school nurse based on CDC guidelines
8. Idea: Have a complete bus transportation sanitizing plan for all HES students using our bus transportation system including but not limited to temperature checks, paras on bus to insure social distancing, the wearing of facial masks, and the appropriate entering and exiting of the buses
9. Idea: Offer a two school plan: one that is only distance learning and the other an in-school educational program for the 2020-2021 academic year

Revisions:

5/1/20

5/4/20

5/5/20

5/20/20