



**Ogden Preparatory Academy
Monthly Administrative Board Report
COVID Addendum**

Date: March 11, 2021

Junior High Schedule Updates and Recommendations

As COVID has progressed over the year, I am hearing from more teachers and parents inquiring about the schedule for the remainder of the year. The Board voted to maintain the staggered schedule for the rest of the year, but also planned to revisit it as things progress. Below, I would like to lay out all the factors that need to be considered, and then my recommendation for the Board's consideration. Since there is a lot to discuss, I feel it's beneficial to provide this in advance of the Board Meeting.

CDC Recommendations:

The CDC has updated reopening guidelines for schools and created an easy to read document [HERE](#). Here are some highlights from the document.

1. Schools should determine the transmission rate of their area.
 - a. Utah is currently in High Transmission (red); Weber County recently moved down to Substantial Transmission (orange); Davis and a few surrounding counties are still in High Transmission (red). For Weber County, the average daily cases per 100,000 put us into substantial (orange), but our marker for positive test rate is still within the High Transmission (red) level.
2. For the CDC recommendation for Middle and High Schools, our current plan fits the criteria for both Orange and Red. Although we do not fully meet a few aspects for the Red requirements, we meet most of them; since we have already reopened we are permitted to stick with that plan.
3. The document acknowledges that elementary schools pose a different set of logistics than middle and high schools. Therefore, the document pushes more in person opportunities for elementary schools, while middle and high schools are given more hybrid options until transmission levels decrease.
4. Strategies prioritized by the document:
 - a. Physical distancing to 6ft
 - b. Universal, correct use of masks

- c. Sanitation
- d. Quarantine protocols
- e. Prioritization of in-person school options over extra curricular options.
- f. Virtual options offered to students and staff with health concerns
- g. Diagnostic testing

Current Junior High Plan as Related to CDC Recommendations:

1. In most cases, we are able to physically distance within classrooms. Some class periods with 14+ students currently do not allow for full distancing, but most do.
2. We are not able to fully distance during lunch, and at that time students are not wearing masks. However, we are able to use camera footage to assist with quarantines if there is a positive case and the student in question ate in the cafeteria.
3. Teachers have been diligent about sanitizing.
4. We have attempted to procure tests, but these are currently being allocated to large high schools only, and mostly for the use of sports teams.

JH Scheduling Clarifications:

Our current plan has required some unique scheduling arrangements in order to allow us to use our current teaching staff to teach all in-person and online courses without hiring new or additional staff.

- By contract, we pay full time teachers to teach six sections of classes with two preparation periods.
- For core teachers, their in-person classes were spread out over 6 classes to reduce class size, and they were given a stipend for teaching additional online only classes.
- For elective teachers, their in-person classes were scheduled into 5 sections and their online was scheduled for one section, for a total of 6 classes. As a result, class sizes are a larger concern with elective teachers.
- Our counselor worked hard to keep class sizes 12-16 students for each staggered day. However, overall class sizes (if the A-L and the M-Z days were combined) are sometimes as large as 28-30 students.

Vaccine Update:

- Many of our staff have had their first dose of the vaccine.
- Some will be getting their first dose this week 2/16-2/18.
- With the two week post-vaccination waiting period for full protection, we are looking at the first week of April as the time when most staff will have had both doses and allowed the immune response to develop.

- Some staff are choosing not to get the vaccine until it is FDA approved, or waiting indefinitely due to other concerns.
- Quarter 4 starts March 22nd.

If we keep the staggered schedule for the rest of the year, here are the implications on the CDC recommendations:

- Ability in most cases for students to be distanced from other students within the classroom.
- Ability for teachers to distance from students during direct instruction.
- Class sizes maxed out at 12-14.
- 50-60 kids per lunch period eating without masks (spaced as much as possible with a max of 8 kids to a lunch table).
- Kids grouped into cohorts (A-L, M-Z) to reduce quarantines.
- All masking and sanitization procedures can be followed.
- All quarantine procedures can be followed.
- In some grade levels, we may have the ability to move more kids from online to in person by request for Q4.

If we bring back all in-person students four days per week, here are the implications on the CDC recommendations:

- Inability to distance within classrooms, including inability for the teacher to distance from students during direct instruction
- Class sizes maxed out at 28-32.
- 100-120 kids per lunch period eating without masks (current table spacing of 8 students per table would have to be adjusted with more kids at each table).
- All masking and sanitization procedures can be followed.
- All quarantine procedures can be followed.
- We would not have the ability to offer any more in person spots for our online only students if requested for Q4.

Other Factors:

- **Financial:** The Junior High has not seen a significant decrease in enrollment due to COVID throughout the duration of the staggered schedule. In fact, we recently did a lottery pull for online learners and added to our enrollment. Although enrollment is slightly below target for a regular year, the school has not suffered financially due to the staggered schedule.
- **Academic:** While academics have been a challenge state and country wide, we have implemented several supports, including an off day help room to help 9th graders

recover credit and a Friday helproom for all levels of students. Teachers report that although there are academic frustrations, they are able to cover more material in an 85 minute class period with the staggered schedule due to the low class sizes and lack of classroom management issues.

- **Staffing:** Overall, staff retention is still high. Teachers are hard on themselves when kids struggle to meet their potentials, so this has been a hard year for teachers. They want kids to learn, and they know that in a non-pandemic situation, in-person learning is best for our population. However, they have a lot of class size and scheduling concerns regarding bringing all our in person kids back full time. Of the teachers I heard from via email and at a work session we held for all interested staff, 92% were in favor of keeping the staggered schedule until the end of the school year while continuing to offer extra support for kids who need it. The main reasons given were safety and consistency (of schedule).
- **Community:** I have heard directly from five parents since the end of October regarding the staggered schedule. Four were in favor of more in-person learning. I was able to offer the help room to these parents, but I know several would prefer 4 days per week. Most area schools are in person every day. There are some middle and high schools in the state, particularly in the Salt Lake area, that are totally remote or hybrid. One parent was in favor of keeping the schedule as it is. Outside of this small sample size, several families have moved their kids to online only due to concerns of exposure at school, while other students have moved to in person.

Recommendation:

After reviewing staff input, communication from parents, the timeline for staff vaccinations, enrollment data, financial outlook, class size data, and the CDC guidelines, my recommendation is to continue the staggered schedule at the Junior High for the remainder of the year.