

Since my story about waivers couldn't run last week, and it's obviously a fluid situation, I thought it might be good to focus on the broader question of reopening. If the county moves to Tier 2 (red), when school districts will be allowed to reopen for in-classroom teaching without a waiver, would you want to reopen? What would be necessary to reopen, and who should make that decision?

I think that we all want our schools to reopen and see our kids back in classrooms. But we have to contend with the reality of the pandemic. There are many metrics and safety protocols that public health officials are constantly putting forth and revising as the evolving science around Covid informs our knowledge. Returning to some model of in-person teaching will require having a few well developed plans at the ready that can be implemented when certain metrics are met.

These plans should include **specifics** about masks, social distancing, smaller group cohorts, utilizing outdoor spaces as much as possible, using schedules to minimize numbers on campuses, testing, contact tracing and quarantine protocols.

Having just gone through a covid scare in my household, I will say that part of any re-opening plan needs to include **details** on how to manage what happens when a student or staff/faculty member becomes sick and what will be the protocols for a suspected/possible covid case and for a confirmed case. Easy access to frequent and reliable testing for everyone will be essential to dealing with suspected cases and for monitoring the virus. Not having this testing ability will make the safety of in-person school fraught with uncertainty. The District needs to work with the State and County to ensure this.

Any plan will need to allow for quick adaptations as the situation will most likely remain fluid for some time.

In formulating these plans, the District should have a covid task force and advisory groups consisting of parents, faculty/staff and administrators, and possibly older students from the High School. I think that all the groups (teacher/labor, parent and community organizations) that need to weigh in for the waiver process need to do the same for any re-opening plan. Teachers absolutely need to feel confident in the safety of returning to in person teaching. As do parents, and there should be an alternative plan for parents who do not feel comfortable sending their kids back to the classroom to keep continuing on with remote learning.