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### **I. Health Monitoring Metrics & Decision Making**

#### **How did DSST come to this decision?**

- We sought the input of our students, staff and families, and learned that 70% of DSST families have expressed interest in sending their children back for in-person school
- We consulted with local health officials, have watched the [Health Monitoring Metrics](#), and have closely studied comparable school environments that have reopened, all of which have led us to believe that we can safely partially reopen at this time.
- Additionally, Denver Health Doctors who lead the Denver Department of Public Health recently affirmed that it is safe to carefully return to school at this moment in time even with the recent spike in cases. Please see their [public letter here](#).
- **Finally, this decision is conditional**, as we will be revisiting our health metrics and the current state of COVID in Denver and Adams counties in consultation with public health doctors on Friday, October 16th. If it becomes clear that it is unsafe to partially return to school, at any point throughout the year, we will all return to E-School.

## II. Health & Safety Resources & Procedures

### ***How will we keep staff and students who are in-person safe and healthy?***

- Before entering school buildings:
  - We will require daily health assessments for all staff and students prior to entering buildings (DSST Daily Online Health Screening & Thermal Camera Temperature Checks)
- Throughout the school day, we will require the following:
  - Mask wearing
  - Physical distancing
  - Supervised arrival, transitions and dismissal
  - Student groupings into cohorts, with limited contact between cohorts
  - Mandatory isolation for anyone who becomes symptomatic or exposed
  - Frequent hand washing/sanitizing
  - Regular disinfecting of all common spaces
- After the school day, we will:
  - Ensure that no materials are left in the building by students or staff
  - Clean and sanitize the building

### ***How does the DSST Daily Health Screener tool work?***

- When you select in-person learning, you will receive an email link to download this application (can be completed via computer, phone browser or mobile app).
- The DSST Daily Health Screener tool is an online health questionnaire designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by requiring all community members to evaluate & confirm that they have not been exposed to or have symptoms related to COVID-19.
- Staff and students will be required to complete the Daily Health Screening questionnaire and verify completion before entering a DSST school building each day. Please ensure that your student has completed this questionnaire, and we encourage you to help them with any questions.
- If your student does not complete the DSST Daily Health Screening before arriving on campus, an administrator on duty will help your student complete the online self-screening survey upon arrival after going through the thermal camera scanner\* at the entrance to their school building.
  - \*Thermal Camera Scanning equipment will be placed at the entrance to each DSST building. This equipment safely assesses each person's temperature from a safe distance in a matter of seconds.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

### ***If I have a student that attends a DPS school, can I just use that screener tool instead?***

We ask that all students/families complete the DSST-specific questionnaire for their DSST students daily. This tool, when used correctly, will minimize the lift for both families and staff in correctly tracking and ensuring the health of our community.

### ***What resources will you have available to support my student in staying healthy?***

- **Masks:** DSST will provide students who are attending in person with 2 masks. Students may wear their own mask provided they fit snugly against the side of the face and allow for breathing without restriction. If you accidentally forget your mask, each school will keep a supply of disposable blue masks.
- **Hand Sanitizer:** Every classroom will be stocked at all times with a gallon pump jug of hand sanitizer and a spray bottle of purell-style surface disinfectant.

### ***How will schools be cleaned and disinfected?***

DSST works in close partnership with Denver Public Schools (DPS) or Aurora Public Schools (APS), who own and operate our buildings. Both districts use hospital-grade disinfectants that are safe for schools. All spaces will be disinfected nightly using electrostatic sprayers for all high-touch surfaces. Facility staff will disinfect restrooms at least 3 times daily. All spaces will be stocked with high quality and safe disinfectant for staff to use in their rooms throughout the day.

### ***Have HVAC systems been updated?***

DPS and APS are updating filtration in all schools' HVAC systems to MERV 11 filters or higher in alignment with CDC standards for COVID

### ***What should I do if my student has tested positive for COVID-19?***

Alert your student's School Director immediately. Your student's school will provide information for remote learning (if your student is well enough to attend) while we work with your family to determine when your student is able to return to in-person learning (that will require a doctor's note and 14 days to pass, including 48 hours of being fever-free).

### ***If a sibling is sick, does every DSST student in my household have to quarantine as well?***

Yes, anyone who believes they may have been exposed or who has symptoms should remain home and participate in remote learning (if they are well enough to do so). When you notify your school that your student has been exposed to, is symptomatic or tested positive for COVID, your school will share instructions for how your student will join a remote learning cohort.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

***How will you enforce these protocols?<sup>1</sup>***

DSST requires that all students and staff on campus wear a mask at all times. For students who intentionally violate our mask-wearing expectations, we have developed [a policy](#) which will move students to 100% virtual learning.

***My student is exempt from wearing a mask. Can they attend in-person hybrid school without a mask?<sup>2</sup>***

No. All persons will be required to wear a mask for the duration of their time on campus. There are only a handful of exceptions to this expectation, specific to students who have an IEP or 504 that provides accommodation and/or exemption from this policy. Please see the Special Services section below for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> guidance differs for students with special needs - please see section below

<sup>2</sup> guidance differs for students with special needs - please see section below

### **III. Cohorts & Limiting Contact**

#### **How will you ensure safety during transitions between classes?**

- At each school, staff will supervise transitions and ensure masks are being worn and that 6 feet of physical distance is being maintained at all times. Additionally, we will make sure that students move promptly from space to space.
- Transition plans will focus on having one cohort transition at a time to reduce contact among cohorts.
- Signage and floor markings will be used, as appropriate, to keep everyone moving in one direction to the greatest degree possible.
- Schools will designate separate stairways to only have up or down traffic flow.
- Students must not congregate in halls or common areas or touch, hug, or high-five one another.

#### **What are the guidelines for pickup and drop off?<sup>3</sup>**

##### **Arrival:**

- We will stagger entry and/or use designated entries by cohorts
- It's imperative that students arrive at their assigned time to facilitate students getting safely and quickly into the building
- Parents who drop their students off are asked to stay in their car and not to approach the school building.
- If a family member needs to talk with a school's staff member, please call to schedule a time to talk.
- Students must maintain 6 feet of distance from others in line to pass a checkpoint thermal scanner to confirm you have completed your screening and are wearing a mask.

##### **Dismissal:**

Dismissal will be staggered by grade levels and cohorts. Siblings will be released together.

- Students who are picked up will be grouped outside with their advisory or last class to ensure physical distance is maintained and supervision is in place until their guardian pulls up in their car, unless there is inclement weather.
- Students who walk home must immediately leave campus & may not congregate inside or outside of the building.

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<sup>3</sup> guidance differs for students with special needs - please see section below

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

### ***For my middle school student, what do the cohorts look like?***

- A “cohort” will contain a max of five teachers with 34 students per week.
- In order to limit the number of students a teacher interacts with in a given week, we will use an A/B week model where students will attend in-person for a week and then remotely for a week.
- An additional way to limit interactions will be to have some of a student's classes taught in-person in the building and some will be taught still online but proctored in the building.
- If your student attends a Center Program, they will be assigned together and not a larger group.

### ***For my middle school student, can I request that my student be part of a specific cohort?***

At this time, this is not an available option. However we will consider whether this is possible in the future.

### ***For my middle school student, when will I find out which cohort my child is in and their schedule?***

We will provide schedules to students and families the week of October 19th.

### ***Can my student attend in-person for part of the day but not all?***

If a student is enrolled in in-person school, they are expected to attend for the entire day unless they need to be excused due to illness, required appointments, family emergency or other essential reason.

### ***Can I switch which weeks my student attends in-person?***

No, due to cohort restrictions, you will need to stick with the assigned schedule

### ***If my student is enrolled in virtual school, are they able to go to school special help/in-person office hours sometimes?***

No. At this time, students who are remote only can request help or office hours via Teams.

### ***Can my high school student attend virtual classes from the middle school?***

No, due to the limitations of cohorts, only DSST middle school students can attend an in-person learning option. We are currently offering in person learning centers at our high schools for some students, and are exploring options for safe “in-person/hybrid” learning for high schools. More information will be forthcoming.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

***For my high school student, what is a learning center?***

Learning centers are structured learning spaces with an adult, available to about 20% of high school students, where students can receive onsite support, internet access and study space.

***For my high school student, are they guaranteed a spot in a learning center?***

Given the cohort size guidelines from state and local officials, we may not be able to accommodate every student who wants to participate in our learning community. While we hope to be able to serve all families interested, we currently plan on providing these services first to our most vulnerable learners, then expanding to all families interested depending upon space, cohort guidelines and staffing capacity.

***For my high school student, what additional in-person support will be available?***

- College Advising
  - Students and families should work directly with their College Advisor
  - Advising is available through scheduled appointments only
- Mental Health or Social/Emotional Support
  - Please reach out to your Advisor or School Administrator to schedule an appointment.

## ***IV. Communications Questions***

### ***How will you inform families on school-based COVID cases?***

- We will send immediate communication to all families and staff in the impacted cohort, as well as to anyone believed to be exposed, informing them of their need to remain out of the school building for up to 14 days. As needed, the impacted individual(s)/cohort will automatically revert to remote learning (E-School) for the period of the required quarantine (up to 14 days).
- We will communicate to the entire school community within 24 hours that a student/team member at your school has tested positive for COVID (but will not communicate any individual's name(s) to respect privacy).
- We will be keeping track of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and will share any confirmed cases on our website (anonymously, to protect the privacy of the individual(s) involved).

### ***When should we expect updates on if we will return to remote learning completely?***

In the event that your school must temporarily close due to a suspected or confirmed COVID case, we will let you know that your school will return to remote learning as soon as we possibly can.

### ***V. Students with Special Needs (Special Services)***

#### ***What support will be available for students with special needs?***

##### **a. Students who attend center programs**

- i. Positive Classroom Culture: Coming back to school after 8 months can be very challenging for our students. Teams will support students in the return to school with fun and engaging lessons and activities. Staff will scaffold each student so that we may slowly reintroduce them into lessons and skills that they might find challenging.
- ii. Small Classroom Cohorts: Students in center programs(MI, MI-A, MI-S) will typically be in their own classrooms with their classmates(6-15 students-depending on center program). If identified in the IEP that general education time is required, IEP teams will contact families to make specific decisions regarding attendance in a general education class.
- iii. Mask Tolerance: Mask wearing is highly encouraged for students who have the ability to tolerate or could learn to wear a mask. There are exemptions for students who have a disability that limits their ability to engage in this skill. [DPS Mask Guidance for Students](#)
- iv. Socially Distant Classroom: Programs will utilize environmental strategies to design the room to support social distancing.
  1. Putting small groups that learn together at opposite sides of the room
  2. Using furniture to divide the room and visually support a traffic pattern
  3. Using visuals to support routines and expectations

##### **b. Students with IEPs**

Special Education services (including specialized math and literacy instruction and related services like speech and language, OT, PT, etc.) will continue to be provided to students learning in person and virtually. If services as outlined in a student's current IEP must be adjusted, Special Education Teachers / Case Managers will collaborate with families to make informed decisions.

##### **c. Students with 504 plans**

504 accommodations and supports will continue to be provided to students learning in person and virtually. If services online in a student's current 504 plan must be adjusted, 504 Coordinators will collaborate with families to make informed decisions.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

### **d. ELD supports**

Students who are eligible to receive support as an English Language Learner will continue to have access to English Language Development (ELD) courses and Language Acquisition services, regardless of whether they are learning online or in person.

### ***How do mask-wearing requirements differ for students with special needs?***

There are exceptions to mandatory mask-wearing, as defined by [DPS Guidance](#). For students with an IEP/504, the IEP team will provide accommodations and will work with the student and family to determine a plan that best meets the needs of the student in question.

### ***How will social distancing work for students in our center programs?***

Configuring the learning environment to support students in a center program will be a one of the most proactive strategies to support social distancing.

### **Environmental Set-up**

- Classroom corners will be used for groups of students that can most likely learn together throughout the day.
- In this area of the room, desks will be set up 3 feet apart.
- We will use furniture, shelving, and other dividers to separate learning areas.
- We will use colored tape to signify boundaries in the classroom.

### ***How will transportation work for students with special needs?***

Students who have a documented need for transportation listed in their 504 or IEP will have access to transportation to and from school.

### ***What additional supports for arrival, drop-off, and dismissal are available to students with special needs?***

#### **Arrival:**

- While parents who drop their students off are asked to stay in their car and not to approach the school building, students who need assistance as per their IEP will be met at the vehicle by a teacher or paraprofessional.
- Students must maintain 6 feet of distance from others in line to pass a checkpoint thermal scanner to confirm you have completed your screening and are wearing a mask. Students that require accommodations to this will be supported fully with the needs they have, such as using an alternate entrance, going straight to the front of line, etc.
- As a reminder, transportation will only be provided to students who have this documented through their Special Education IEP or 504. See more information [here](#).

## Frequently Asked Questions for Families

### **Dismissal:**

Dismissal will be staggered by grade levels and cohorts. Siblings will be released together.

- Students who need assistance with meeting a parent/guardian at a vehicle (per their IEP) will be escorted by a teacher or paraprofessional.

### ***Are students in the Middle School Center Programs running on a A/B schedule?***

Due to the nature of our students in the Center Program and their learning styles, our current thinking is that Center Program students will attend in-person weekly Monday through Thursday, and will be remote on Friday, consistent with the rest of the school. Alternative spacing may be required, such as an extra room.

### ***Are students in High School Center Programs running on a remote schedule?***

Due to the nature of our students in the Center Program and their learning styles, high school students in Center Programs will attend in-person weekly Monday through Thursday, and will be remote on Friday.