

January 22, 2021

#ReopenStrong Community Corps Spotlight: Roosevelt High School

Spotlights

Written by Justin Ralston, Principal

Who participated in your Reopen Community Corps and what was the planning process like?

We place value on the representative role that LSAT has at Roosevelt High School. We worked with LSAT to determine that it made the most sense to use LSAT as our Reopen Community Corps because of the diverse stakeholders that were already elected to their positions. We began the engagement work through holding multiple LSAT/RCC public meetings and then engaging a series of Townhalls over the course of 2 weeks for staff, families, and students to gather feedback. We then developed core components of our plan that consisted of minimal disruption to high school schedules, emphasis on voluntary return for teachers, staff, and students, as well as using an argument shared from a parent as to why we should not reopen and from another parent pleading for support with her 9th grade child at Roosevelt High School.

Our belief was that if we could accomplish the needs of both perspectives from families in a safe environment, we can collectively develop a plan. The entire Roosevelt Reopen Plan for Term 3 was written by LSAT/RCC with Principal Ralston's support throughout the process. We are continuing to engage the RCC in the Operational Plan that was developed in the start of January. We have also made the draft operational plan and the Term 3 Reopen Plan that we developed fully available to staff and stakeholders. This has helped provide a level of transparency and feedback that has helped strengthen our commitment to safely reopening.

What are some highlights of your school's reopening plan?

We were able to develop a student support model plan that highlights need for four groups of students:

1. Students identified in self-contained special education programs
2. Students identified as newcomers to the United States since September 2019.
3. Students identified as homeless.
4. Students with special circumstances through student self-referrals, family referrals, and/or staff referrals.

Our 25% reopening plan consisted of guaranteeing seats for the first 3 categories above and the fourth category was a flex category depending on safe. We are pleased to report that as of January 21, 2021, EVERY student that has been identified within the category that expressed interest in returning for in-person support has been given a spot.

Who participated in your Reopen Community Corps and what was the planning process like?

LSAT/RCC fully participated along with guests as all meetings were public. We worked to ensure there was a "public comment" section at each meeting so that guests could also be heard with their ideas, concerns, and questions. We have held 5+ meetings in a month with our RCC/LSAT regarding reopening planning. Chancellor Ferebee helped kick off our first RCC/LSAT meeting and was able to immediately address questions that were raised as well as emphasized the opportunity for our school community to design a plan that will work for our students, families and staff.

How did your Reopen Community Corps lead with equity to prioritize your highest need students?

Roosevelt High School is a diverse school. It was important to our entire RCC and Principal Ralston that students identified in one of our 5 self-contained programs, newcomers to the United States, and students that were experiencing homelessness automatically had the opportunity to return. It was equally important to our community to allow special circumstances to be considered. Thankfully, based on student/family surveys, we will be able to meet the needs of all students that expressed an interest in in-person support on February 1, 2021 based on survey data as of January 21, 2021.

How can families learn more about Term 3 at your school?

Information about Term 3 for Roosevelt HS can be found on our school website theodorerooseveltdc.org (<https://theodorerooseveltdc.org/>), Twitter @RooseveltHSDC and IG, @RooseveltHSDC, or by contacting our LSAT Chair and School Social Worker, Ms. Cartledge at Erica.cartledge@k12.dc.gov (<mailto:Erica.cartledge@k12.dc.gov>) or Principal Ralston at justin.ralston@k12.dc.gov (<mailto:justin.ralston@k12.dc.gov>).

How did your Reopen Community Corps lead with equity to prioritize your highest need students?

Equity has been an ongoing conversation at Roosevelt High School. It was important to determine certain groups of students that should automatically have access to returning for in-person support in Term 3 but we also recognize the unique hardships that many of our families are experiencing. This is why we heard from our teachers, staff, parents, and students that we should have a "special circumstance" category added to help take into account the complex environments that people are living in.

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