

January 22, 2021

# #ReopenStrong Community Corps Spotlight: Stanton Elementary School

## Spotlights

*Written by Harold McCray, Principal*

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

In the Reopen Community Corps we had various stakeholders participate and share their ideas and perspectives. This included Early Childhood, Primary and Intermediate teachers. Additionally, we added a Special Education teacher, parents, community member, WTU Rep, LSAT Chair, a Mental Health staff member, an Inner Core teacher, and our Assistant Principal. The goal was to ensure we had voices that represented all parts of our school. The planning process was done with intentionality. Everyone had to ensure they were making decisions with a lens on safety and prioritizing instruction while keeping the social and emotional aspect of the reopening at the forefront. Having these combined voices focused made the planning that more meaningful. While having all of these members, one of the greatest assets was the voice of the parent. It was so critical for them to share their experience with virtual learning, the importance of reopening, but also their hesitation. We took that information to make the best decisions we could.

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

We wanted to make sure we chose an instructional model that was reflected to the data from our survey. It was no secret that many parents were unsure about reopening until they had more information and felt safe in our community. We also wanted to minimize the spread as much as possible. So, we chose model A in which one teacher returns with his or her 11 students. But that also included having other supports in place for our students. We wanted it to feel like authentic school again. So, our Dean of Students will be here to support our In-Person learning along with our Mental Health Staff and Culture Support Coordinator. We want to make sure that our transition for our staff and students was smooth and supportive. We also included having our Inner Core staff return as well (what student does not love Art, Physical Education, and Technology). We even created dedicated time where they will still be able to connect with their friends who remained virtual. That was important to us. So, our morning meeting, group assemblies, intervention groups, and culture events will allow for that to happen.

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

We lead with equity first by ensuring the voices on the team varied and not just one particular area of the school. We also discussed the impact it would have on students and families on how we reopened. We felt as a school team that this particular reopen plan was not what we wanted our Pre-Kindergarten students to experience, especially Pre-K 3. We also knew that our students with special needs were our greatest priority and we made the decision to bring back all of our special needs classrooms with their teacher and aides. That decision was unanimous. While the corps team did not have the list of students returning, we understood who needed to be back and that aligned with the thinking of the district. We even allowed for two seats to be open for the appeals process to ensure students who teachers felt needed in person learning support that had the quantitative and qualitative data to support the justification for the seat. The goal is to support those who were in severe need.

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

At Stanton we are providing two parent town hall meetings to go over our Term 3 reopening plan. We are mailing our plans home to each family prior to February. We are also sharing information via our social media platforms on Class Dojo, Twitter, and Instagram. In addition to that we are holding a school-wide assembly to also share the plan with the students as well, so they are aware of what is happening. Our teachers and staff are being provided with a FAQ to assist in case parents contact them with questions. They are also responsible for fielding in questions to the school so that we can add them to the FAQ and share that with families as well. Lastly, we will have a Back-to-School Night Part 2 which we will introduce our families to child's new teacher and review school expectations for In-Person Learning and Virtual Learning.

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