

Vaccines and Masks and Cohorts.....Oh MY,

Can you believe it has almost been a year since the beginning of this crazy pandemic or on the flip side can you believe it has only been a year? Some days it feels like it has been a 5 year process. As we are watching positivity rates and death rates decrease, we are all very hopeful we will get back to normal "soon".

During this 1B phase of COVID Vaccine rollout, teachers and support staff were able to go on a list to receive the vaccine. Most of our staff opted into that list and many have had their first doses with some others waiting until their health care provider is able to clear them to get it. My first vaccine was super easy. The shot itself didn't hurt at all, but my arm was VERY sore for the next 24 hours. After that I had no side effects. As our staff receives their shot, they are offered the day off afterwards (paid) so they don't have to worry about having side effects while working. Being able to get the vaccination felt like such a gift and a step towards normalcy. I was a bit giddy about it and thinking about how things may start to get smoother. The next day I was a bit more realistic (and sad) and realized that we just don't know when this will be over or what rules will be in place for us next school year.

I am operating under the assumption that we will have less policies and procedures to follow, less rigid rules around volunteers and illness and more ability to have mixed groups. I don't know for a fact that these things will be more flexible, but it is a logical assumption given how things are trending. I do think there will still be mask wearing at the start of the school year and it wouldn't surprise me if that stays in place until children are able to be vaccinated the following year. Our board has strategic priorities to get back to as many Ruth Washburn Way practices as soon as possible. The big ones on our radar are to offer Afternoon Explorers (no cohorting), have parent helpers in the classroom (be able to have volunteers), and to have families be able to be in the building (social distance requirements). Those things would help us to feel like we are moving towards being our best Ruth Washburn. What are you most looking forward to? What are those core Ruth Washburn practices that you have missed this year?

Sincerely,

Jen Filonowich

Executive Director