To whom it may concern,

I am a parent in Washoe County school district and I would like to voice my opinion about the upcoming academic year. There is no doubt that the 2020-2021 year will be a challenge because of the unknown concerning Covid-19, however, I feel very strongly that Washoe County school district can offer our students so much more than they received in the 2020 spring semester. The packets felt thrown together and no new material was covered. As we embark on the upcoming school year, I am asking you to please consider there following as you make plans:

1. Please allow the teachers to teach. Whether that is in person, on zoom, or through email and school work. Many other districts in other states used this model to challenge their students and allow them to continue their learning and progress. I felt that Washoe County fell woefully short in this area during the spring 2020 semester. Too much fluff and not enough work and learning.
2. Please allow the individual schools more authority and autonomy in making decisions that are right for their teachers and their students. What may be issues facing one student body in one school may not be issues facing another student body. This will allow local communities to pivot and use resources the best way their community can to support learning and families.
3. Please start school in August.
4. Provide accountability in school work of students. Not allowing for accountability for student work has set a low-bar for performance and desire to learn!

Kind regards,

Julie Riley
Please consider viewing this article from NPR. Preschools and daycares have been open since March with very little transmission. School districts and schools can do the same. Open schools full time, make class sizes under 20, make washing hand times required, and distance the kids as much as is possible. Have masks available when students need them (like using the restroom) and are not with their core group. Students and families who can and/or need to homeschool should be provided materials, content, and an "online teacher" or "coach". One size instruction will not fit all right now but it can be made to work for most. Let's look at whose been doing this successfully and how!


Brittany

Sent from my Huawei Mobile
To whom it may concern,

I am a parent in Washoe County school district and I would like to voice my opinion about the upcoming academic year. There is no doubt that the 2020-2021 year will be a challenge because of the unknown concerning Covid-19, however, I feel very strongly that Washoe County school district should offer regular school with a standard schedule.

We have 2 parent working household and we cannot be replacement teachers for our kindergartners. We are relying on the county to do as they are supposed to and teach our children.

1. Please allow the individual schools more authority and autonomy in making decisions that are right for their teachers and their students. What may be issues facing one student body in one school may not be issues facing another student body. This will allow local communities to pivot and use resources the best way their community can to support learning and families.

3. Please start school in August.

4. Please start school without the social distancing and face masks etc. If we are going off of science the virus does not effect children as it does adults. If there are children at risk please have an option for them to distance learn but do not punish the healthy children by distance learning.

This will be an absolute hardship on our family even with the unapproved hardship. We have a daughter with an IEP that needs the extra help and it is important for both of my girls to have social interaction. Not to mention that I am required to travel for work which means either myself or my husband will have to quit our job or pay even more for childcare which again would cause an undue burden.

I understand that some families would prefer to stay home, I agree that there should be an option for them to stay home but do not allow healthy children to not attend. Please look at the science of this virus and how it (does not) effect children.

Kind regards,

Meghann West

Thank you for taking the time to support our students and amazing teachers. Together, I know we can be a positive voice for education in Washoe County.
Dear Board Members,

In thinning of the challenges of reopening the schools at 50% capacity I am wondering if the board has given much thought to using empty buildings around town as temporary overflow for the Elementary Schools in particular. Due to the age of the elementary students they are not able to stay home alone if they are unable to attend school during working hours. This would be detrimental to thousands of families who can not afford to stay home with their kids.

If the schools were able to move the 4th and 5th graders to other buildings set up with desks and materials that would open up those classrooms for overflow of the lower grades. I understand this would create a complicated bus system but at least all the kids would be able to go to school all day giving the parents a reliable way to work.

I am not suggesting this for the middle school and high school level because those students are able to stay home without supervision in most cases.

Just a thought worth exploring so our kids can get the education they need and deserve while the parents fight to make it through this difficult and uncertain financial time.

--

Kind Regards,

Aleece Rose / Sustainability Specialist

Community Office Solutions
4690 Longley Ln #35,
Reno, NV 89502
To the Board of Trustees,

In considering the return to the 20-21 school year I hope a few things will be taken into consideration. I am for a return to school in-building as full time as can be worked out. First, to be considered would be the rate of covid-19 positive numbers from this last Spring on the East coast, where covid was really present during that time, in students and youth athletes. I think we would find numbers are very low and that would be with zero precautions being taken during that time. Second, I don’t believe waiting for a vaccine is the answer. Only 50% of the population gets the flu vaccine and that has been available for three quarters of a century, which leads me to believe that the result would be the same or less with a covid-19 vaccine. Last, the studies are showing that the antibodies for covid-19 do not last as long as initially thought, so covid-19 isn’t going away anytime soon. This is something we are going to have to figure out how to live with. I really feel our students NEED the social development and interaction with their peers that comes from attending school and youth sports. Distance learning, no matter how good or well planned out, can never be as good as in class and person instruction. With all of that said, I do think this new normal has to come with a change in a way of life, regulations and serious precautions. Constant sanitization of the schools, masks required by all students and staff during school hours, required exclusion from school with the onset of upper respiratory symptoms, and organized seating and masks required by all spectators at sports. I know these are big decisions.

I know you have all been working tirelessly since the beginning of quarantine to ensure what is best for our children, thank you to all of you in the school district for all you do and thank you for you time.

Sent from my iPhone
WCSD Board Members,

Thank you so much for sitting through what was a very long meeting yesterday and for what you do for our children! I watched the meeting online and am very discouraged and confused with what is going on. From the power point that was presented regarding opening of schools in the Fall of 2020, there were two options given, full distance learning and a blended model. I have read every single public comment that has been submitted and have spent lots of time reading social media comments about the reopening of schools. It seems that the VERY LARGE majority want schools to open as normal in the fall with extra handwashing and extra basic hygiene measures; however, this option was not anywhere in the presentation. Does WCSD already know what they are planning on doing, and if so, why are they asking for public comment or encouraging people to take the survey?

Thank you,
Katie Thompson
Hello to all.

Here’s My 2 cents:.....

My daughter will be a Junior at SSHS and she got NOTHING from the distance learning program, she is a straight A student who thrives on being challenged, doing projects, lots of homework, interaction with teachers, students, etc..

I understand it was thrown together on short notice as none of us have ever had to go through a pandemic, but I strongly Agree that we need to open the schools back up. Give them their normalcy back! Us adults will be ok but these kids need structure, routine, friendships, teachers teaching them in a classrooms setting!

Have Temp Checks at the doors, Anyone with a fever cannot come inside as my job now enforces. If parents don’t feel right about it then have an alternative for them with distance learning or they can choose to home school if they can. ALSO Change the absent policy cause of the temp checks and have online assignments available to them so they don’t miss out on school work that could affect their grade.

My other concern is High School Sports, My daughter is a Volleyball player and If I have to miss games because of a “no spectator rule”, then I am ok with it ( not really but...) at least she is playing the sport she loves. I rather be there to support her and her team. They need the fans there cheering them on, especially the student section!

Teachers should wear masks, student can if they feel they need to, but don’t make it a rule that will be broken on the first day of school.

PLEASE DO RIGHT BY OUR KIDS!! The Class of 2020 already got screwed....let’s move on, live , learn and get them back to school!

Thank you!

Jennifer Jones
I am writing in regards to the new agenda being proposed for the 2020-2021 school year. I have seen from community groups that Washoe County School District plans to have a strict protocol for the return of teachers and students.

Myself, along with a mass amount of other parents are extremely concerned for our children's education based on what is being recommended. Many of us do not approve of our children wearing oxygen restricting masks. There is no scientific evidence shown on the safety of short-term or long-term use of masks on children. There is indeed uncertainty and dissatisfaction for medical and religious rights/choices for our children.

There is a large percentage of students who have breathing issues, as well as, sensory issues that prohibit these children from the ability to wear a mask. My child will not be able to attend school if masks are mandatory due to health issues and sensitivities. I know many other parents are worrying about the same issue. My children should not have to miss out on public education because they medically and safely can not wear a mask (which is not proven to prevent the spread of disease or shown to be safe for children).

I will not consent to this medical protocol and my children will not be attending school if masks are required by students.

I would also like to add that hand sanitizer is a chemical that has the ability to reach the bloodstream within seconds. Studies show that hand sanitizer strips our microbiome of good bacteria. What do we need in order to have a strong immune system and properly fight illness? Good bacteria. Continuous use of hand sanitizer has been proven to create antibiotic resistant super bugs, strip the body of healthy good bacteria, and allow toxic chemicals to reach the bloodstream. The use of continuous hand sanitizer has actually been removed from many medical buildings, including Renown (our local medical facility), due to scientific evidence that supports the dangers of this use. Instead, science has shown that hand washing, without antibacterial, is the best way to prevent illness/disease and keep our immune system healthy with good bacteria.

Myself, along with many other parents, will not allow our children the use of harmful bacteria stripping chemicals. Not to mention, the students who have sensitive skin and allergies, like my children who can not put foreign chemicals on the body without a reaction.

I will not consent for the use of masks or hand sanitizer for my children. If this protocol is implemented, many children will miss out on the opportunity to have their American rights to attend public school.

This is just the beginning of many issues with this new school year agenda. I hope that the school district can listen to we as the parents and take our rights/thoughts/beliefs into account. What happens in school should be based on the best interest of teachers, parents, and students. These decisions should not be based off of media fear mongering, and misinformed political data. The science is all there to which supports mine, and many other parents views. If there is a stricter requirement the spread of diseases, then teachers should be the one wearing masks. Us parents will not consent and take full liability to our own children's health. If a child is sick or showing symptoms, they stay home until they are better. These "preventions" do not prevent anything, besides prevention of a child's right and comfortability to American public education.
A concerned parent,

Brittini Nelson
To whom it may concern,

I am a parent in the WCSD. I have children in high school, middle school and elementary school. Last year when the pandemic necessitated school closures I understood that the district had to quickly come up with a plan. However, moving forward I am hoping my students will be able to progress and learn despite the changes the pandemic has caused.

1. I would like to see the teachers teach. The district wide packet was ineffective in teaching or even reviewing information. I believe the teachers should teach via zoom or intermittent in person sessions. And that the teacher should hold the students accountable to do their work. My students all missed out on months of learning last year and I don’t want to see that this coming year. I believe the teachers can come up with curriculums that they can teach, the students can learn and be held accountable for.

2. Allow more autonomy for individual schools. The district is large and school needs vary dramatically within it. Please let the school have more decision power in how to meet the needs of the students in their respective learning centers.

I am willing to send my children to school. And/or do a school/online hybrid. I just need to know that my children are being taught and are progressing.

For the High School students, it would seem reasonable to me to send them to school every other day. At Galena my student had 1 1/2 hour classes and half of the class was spent working on HW. Moving forward I’d prefer the class length was shortened and more work was done at home. In fact I believe that with shorter classes the student could attend 7 classes in a day every other day and work at home on the off days.

I understand busing is an issue. I think there are many parents who could drive their children to school to limit the amount of students on the bus. This would allow those who need bus access with social distancing. Perhaps a survey could be sent out to assess need.

I understand this is a difficult time. However, this may be our future for a while and I don’t want my students to miss out on progress because of it. I know there are schools throughout the country and the world in which students are learning despite the restrictions of the pandemic. I think our children deserve to learn as well.

Thank you,

Carrie Dyer

From: Carrie Dyer
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 9:32 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020-21 School Year
From: Brenda Kiesel
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 10:09 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Are you thinking about the Safety of the kids!!

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CB1QdyOhK3p/?igshid=10b2u0wzsui

Sent from my iPhone
My teenagers are very much negatively affected emotionally and psychologically by distance learning. My older son in particular has been experiencing so much depression from the isolation. Social interactions are so important at this age. Busy work assigned through an online platform is a waste of time and is putting our kids detrimentally behind on their learning.

Laura Durrer
2 @ Galena & 1 @ Herz

Sent from a rotary phone
First of all, I am the biggest germ freak, but I still WANT and NEED my kid to return to the classroom. I have been in education for 25+ years and know that germs exist and know that covid is out there, but I feel the mental health and serious decline in educational learning is more detrimental. Summer Camps, Pre-schools, waterpark are open. Casinos have made it work. Let’s make a plan and make it work for our kids. Distance learning was a complete joke and disappointment. My child for one is an only child and has been anxiously awaiting his journey into high school. He is devastated that it might not be as he has envisioned. I am very concerned with leaving my child alone all day in order to do distance learning and the social isolation he will be faced with when we have to work. That is concerning. He is a very social kid and thrives off the classroom interaction, the teacher relationship and daily routine that the school day provides. I would feel that the district would be failing my child if he was forced to not be back in the physical classroom.

I am in FULL SUPPORT OF RETURNING TO THE CLASSROOM. Make it happen in some capacity however, 2 days a week and in conjunction with distance learning is not feasible for working families. If parents want to do online school, increase your ability to offer online school/homeschooling options for those families. I would much rather do a year round rotating track system so parents can have time to plan child care options for breaks and programs outside of the district can offer child care have a chance to plan programming etc. I would rather my child go 5 days a week for 6 weeks on and then have weeks off then some silly 2 days on and 3 for distance or half day. That is a logistical nightmare for working parents.

Please DO NOT take away extra curricular activities. These kids need something to focus on, have a goal to achieve and have team building experiences. Kids need a sense of normalcy now more than ever, don't take that away from them.

Children need routine. Children need normalcy and stability. Children need socialization in order to grow emotionally, educationally, and physically. This will dramatically be detrimental to our children’s development.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am happy to be contacted if needed.

Warmly,

Tara Batavia
From: Brandon Siri
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 1:28 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Schools Opening Public Comment - Comments for the School Board Next Regular Board Meeting

Hello,

Please add my comments below to the next regular board meeting where they will be discussing the reopening of schools for the Fall Semester. I believe they have one around July 7th.

Thank you,
Brandon Siri

Brandon Siri

Reno, NV 89509

Re: Open all the schools normally in August pt.2

6/25/2020

Dear Washoe County School Board Members,
You are no doubt facing many challenges regarding the opening of schools in Nevada this August. The risks of infections to our youth appear minimal and need to be balanced against the extremely harmful effects of school closures which are impacting our children’s physical, mental, and educational health. In my previous letter, I urged you to open the schools normally for these several reasons:

- Schools are childcare for working parents
- The Covid19 health risks to the children is extremely minimal (almost non-existent)
- Distance learning was a failure and families do not have the supplies or training to do it
- Children need pattern and routine
- Children need socialization
- Almost everything else is open

The intent of this follow-up letter is to explain more concepts that should be considered during your deliberations. My goal remains the same: Open all schools, normally, with no hybrid-learning this August with the additional changes being added sanitization stations/standards (which frankly should have been in place anyways). Anything less than a full opening will be needlessly harmful to the children.
I watched the entire June 23, 2020 WCSD Board Meeting where you clearly vocalized the extreme challenges of opening under the current phase requirements. I am here to tell you it is not an impossible situation. Easy answer: Open the schools normally. Invite parents who are comfortable to send their kids. The parents who aren’t comfortable can opt into a digital learning program and keep the kids home. Why does a one-size-fits-all solution have to be the solution? Almost all of your issues (from bus capacity, spacing, class size, etc.) will be solved with this model if the phase requirements are not lifted by August. Try being responsive to your customers. Finally on this topic, there needs to be separate reopening phases for businesses vs schools based on the demographics and associated risks. The schools should petition for separate reopening guidelines and their own phase schedule, which can be more aggressive than the rest of businesses.

Consider this: Suicides are on the rise because of the shutdowns [https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/08/health/coronavirus-deaths-of-despair/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/08/health/coronavirus-deaths-of-despair/index.html). Teenage suicides are likely on the rise as well, as they have been for decades, but I will wager that Covid has increased the number of attempts due to the extreme depression Covid Lockdowns caused. Please consider today’s National (all 50 states) CDC Covid deaths by age bracket numbers (I apologize as I do not have underlying condition data, or died FROM COVID/WITH COVID data):

- 1-4 years old: 5
- 5-14 years old: 13
- 15-24 year old: 125

As you can see, it is well under 200 deaths for the entire US, and I included college aged kids as well. According to the American Foundation on Suicide Prevention, [https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/](https://afsp.org/suicide-statistics/), there are 12 deaths per 100,000 for kids 24 and younger annually. Considering there are 60 million Americans in this age group (under 24 y/o), there will likely be between 6,000-7,500 suicides in 2020 (assuming no Covid depression increase). More kids (under 24) will die in one month from suicide than from Covid19 in all of 2020. Mental health is at risk and schools are often the place where intervention happens.


I hate to compare two non-related things, but the comparison must be made to demonstrate the urgency of putting the kids back in schools. Things that will kill more children this year than Covid19: Influenza, Car Accidents, Cancer, Drowning, Child Abuse, Overdoses, and the already mentioned Suicide to name a few.

And my final point for today’s letter (your homework) will be to read this short booklet prepared by Canada’s top pediatric medical center: [http://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf](http://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf) or the web link here [http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Newsroom/Past-News/2020/covid19-recommendations-school-reopening.html](http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Newsroom/Past-News/2020/covid19-recommendations-school-reopening.html).

To summarize their recommendations: Schools must open, full time, without major changes to routine. No masks should be worn by children as they can do more harm than good. Schools should have strict sick student policies. Children with underlying conditions should be treated separately. Risk mitigation for staff should be similar to the general public guidelines at the time.

The new directive from Governor Sisolak acknowledges that young children under 9 should not wear masks, and that they are exempt from the mandatory masks in public directive effective 6/26/20.
Thank you for your time and diligence to understand the situation from a parent’s perspective. I do not want to see my children, or anyways, miss out on critical education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Constituent and Nevada Native,

Brandon Siri
Dear School Board Members,

If the Washoe County School District is contemplating any kind of mandatory masking policy for students and/or staff, I would ask that you to consider the follow clarification of OSHA’S requirement for minimum percent of oxygen content in the breathing air of the school workplace:

1. "Clarification of OSHA’s requirement for breathing air to have at least 19.5 percent oxygen content.

In the preamble to the final Respiratory Protection Standard, OSHA discussed extensively its rationale for requiring that employees breathe air consisting of at least 19.5 percent oxygen. The following excerpt, taken from the preamble, explains the basis for this requirement:

Human beings must breathe oxygen . . . to survive, and begin to suffer adverse health effects when the oxygen level of their breathing air drops below [19.5 percent oxygen]. Below 19.5 percent oxygen . . . , air is considered oxygen-deficient. At concentrations of 16 to 19.5 percent, workers engaged in any form of exertion can rapidly become symptomatic as their tissues fail to obtain the oxygen necessary to function properly (Rom, W., Environmental and Occupational Medicine, 2nd ed.; Little, Brown; Boston, 1992). Increased breathing rates, accelerated heartbeat, and impaired thinking or coordination occur more quickly in an oxygen-deficient environment. Even a momentary loss of coordination may be devastating to a worker if it occurs while the worker is performing a potentially dangerous activity, such as climbing a ladder. Concentrations of 12 to 16 percent oxygen cause tachypnea (increased breathing rates), tachycardia (accelerated heartbeat), and impaired attention, thinking, and coordination (e.g., Ex. 25-4), even in people who are resting.

At oxygen levels of 10 to 14 percent, faulty judgment, intermittent respiration, and exhaustion can be expected even with minimal exertion (Exs. 25-4 and 150). Breathing air containing 6 to 10 percent oxygen results in nausea, vomiting, lethargic movements, and perhaps unconsciousness. Breathing air containing less than 6 percent oxygen produces convulsions, then apnea (cessation of breathing), followed by cardiac standstill. These symptoms occur immediately. Even if a worker survives the hypoxic insult, organs may show evidence of hypoxic damage, which may be irreversible (Exs. 25-4 and 150; also reported in Rom, W. [see reference in previous paragraph])"

I would maintain that by requiring masking, the district would likely be responsible for scenarios in which the % of the immediate atmospheric oxygen inside a mask might reach levels below the requirement. How would they test for this?

Full Clarification:  https://www.osha.gov/laws-regis/standardinterpretations/2007-04-02-0

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Deborah Lammam
From: Maryann Zucker
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 6:51 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Harvard Study

https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/06/harvard-expert-outlines-recommendations-for-school-reopenings/
To whom it may concern,

I am a parent of a child in elementary school in Washoe Valley, and I would like to voice my opinion about the upcoming school year.

Please start school in August.

There is so much unknown about the virus, and will probably stay that way for at least a year. But we have to continue with life. I understand that people have different levels of anxiety over Covid-19, and that we want to make as many people comfortable and safe as possible. But we also have to be able to live, work, pay bills, educate and learn, let our kids be kids, and keep our society going. I hope you will consider all aspects of peoples lives and what they are going through.

Some ideas that I have are:

1. From the sounds of it, there will possibly be different options for kids to go to school. **Please** have one of the options be to allow kids to go to school on a regular schedule.
   a. There are a lot of 1 parent families that have to actually go into work. Not all parents can work from home.
   b. There are a lot of 2 parent families, where both parents have to work. Not all parents can work from home.
      1. Let's get real for a second... have you ever worked from home with 1+ kids at home with you? For the end of last school year, we did A LOT of yoga in our house.
      c. Childcare is really expensive. So if you force kids of working parents to be at home, childcare is going to be a MUST. So are the schools going to be able to support before and after school care for the working parents in the cafeterias like before? For all day daycare for the days when the kids can't go into actual school? In these cafeterias, are there going to be enough power plugs to be available to kids computers? (Because they need to have access to the zoom classes.) Kids have to be able to be in school (no kid left behind)... you can't not let kids go to school, just because their parents have to work to pay bills and put food on the table.
      1. Is the school district going to help pay for this daycare? The usual before and after school care will have to raise their prices to accommodate the longer hours of watching kids. There are a lot of families scraping though as it is and won't be able to afford the higher rates. Lets hope that parents just don't leave their kids at home by themselves so that they can go to work so they don't become homeless.
      2. All day daycares... in a cafeteria... let's say 100-200 kids a day in a cafeteria... how is that better than a normal classroom? And if you say you want to limit how many kids can go to this all day daycare, please start back at the top of this email :).

2. With the school having the regular schedule, there might just be enough people that are able to keep their kids home, so that the classroom sizes are smaller anyway, so that will help with the whole social distancing in the classrooms, and parents will be able to concentrate on their work and know that their kids are getting the education they deserve.

3. When kids are dropped off at school
   a. All kids get their temperature taken as they get dropped off. Take their temperatures again after lunch as they reenter the classroom (this helps deal with the whole parent gives child Tylenol in the morning to curve fever).
   b. Kids wash their hands as they enter classroom **everytime**, and throughout the day when needed. This will become habit after awhile.

4. I vote on no masks in classrooms for anyone, unless someone has a deficiency of some sort. I won't bore you with what kids will do with their masks after about an hour on a good day.

5. When able, let kids do lunch outside. But **please** offer hot lunches to kids.

6. Let teachers teach their regular schedule class. If there are kids on zoom, then they can get the material via email, Teams, etc. and even listen in to the teachers lectures.
7. Figure out a way for the 2-3 time annual testing that is given to the kids to continue.

Teachers need to be with the kids. This is what they love, and why they became teachers. My child goes to Pleasant Valley Elementary, and our Principle NEEDS his kids, and our school pets are really really lonely.

Please don't let this virus do more damage to the future of our children. Children need to learn. Children need to have social skills. We as parents strive everyday to help give our kids the best we can, and we need your help right now to make this happen. We were all handed a new life, basically overnight, and are still trying to come to terms with "the new normal". But one thing will always be the same, education is power, and in these trying times, I would like the children to have the best education that we can give them.

Thank you for your time,
Wendy O'Steen-Wilson
Parent (and not a good teacher... you can ask my daughter)
Hi I am a student at Billinghurst Middle School and I have a recommendation for the 20-21 school year. I know it is not up for me to decide but on behalf of all students we are ready to actually go back. Many of us have lost friendships and can’t talk to our friends because they don’t have phones and we don’t have their parents numbers. I really do recommend that we do a mixed plan so we go to school some days and work from home on other days because we still have social interaction with our friends and we can still be safe and prevent the spread of Covid-19. Also not to mention a lot of parents can’t handle working from home and helping teach their kids. Especially the kids in the special ed classes they need to be in the classroom so they can better grasp the material. All being said those are some reasons why I think we should have mixed schedules for the 20-21 school year. Thankyou for your time and have a good day!
Sincerely,
Josalyne Messina
Dear Board Members,

Good afternoon, my name is Adrienne Conley and I am a 17 year veteran kindergarten teacher. I understand the difficulty of the decision you are making for the upcoming school year and I wanted to share with you my experience teaching kindergarten online last year. Over half my class never attended my Zoom classes because their parents worked all day and they were with either babysitters or at daycare. To combat this I added a 6:30 pm zoom class to help out those parents that worked so my students could still work on what we had been doing over the school year; 1 child attended daily, that was it. Out of 20 students I had 4-5 in the afternoon and 1 in the evening. I kept my evening classes the whole time because her parents made an effort to have her still "go to school". When I called parents and shared that I was doing evening classes (even after sharing on Class Dojo) I was told that:
1) We are doing our own thing, he is doing fine.
2) He has too many younger siblings and trying to get him online is a hassle because they are always bothering him
3) We are doing the packets, we're good
4) We don't have a laptop or computer, just the phone
and the one I got the most
5) She/he is in daycare all day, by the time we get home and have dinner it's time for her/him to go to bed. I don't have the time or the patience to do the work when she/he doesn't want to.

I'm not telling you this to toot my own horn or show how dedicated I am, I am sharing this to show you the mindset of most kinder parents; "It's just kindergarten and not REAL school." It takes 6-9 weeks to get 4 and 5 year olds "trained" for school, asking them to be online after only meeting their teacher twice and then staying focused on the computer is a huge expectation they are not ready for. I had a hard time keeping them focused for 45 minutes every day after having them for half the year, I can't even imagine trying to do it with kids I really don't know at the beginning of the year.

I know there isn't a magic wand that will solve the issues before you, however I just wanted to give you insight into my experience teaching littles whose parents work all day and do not have the luxury of being able to change their shifts or move their hours around.

Thank you for your time,
Adrienne Conley
Hello,

I just wanted to make sure you’d seen this guidance from June 25 from the American Academy of Pediatrics.


I found this bolded quote most interesting: “the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.”

Thank you so much for all the hard work you’re doing for our students!

Dawn Martens
Please consider the recommendation of AAP.

"the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school."


Mark Carruthers
To Whom it May Concern:

There are many factors that need to be considered with the proposed plans. The alternating schedule for families is NOT realistic.

I have expressed my concern with the alternating schedule as unrealistic because having to find additional care for my children, or how other parents will have to find additional care for their children, is unacceptable. I’m not sure where the state believes families have additional income to find care for their children when they are not in school. I’m not sure how the state expects families to support their children on their distance learning days when they need to work. I have emailed the Governor and explored the websites given to me by the Board of Trustees. I haven’t heard back from the Governor nor did I find adequate information to answer this question. Does anyone have an idea of how families can find and pay for additional care?

Yes, school is NOT a daycare and I am by no means a babysitter. I am an educator. With the current proposed plan I would still be educating, but where does that leave my own children on their home/distancing leaning days? They are 3 and 5. Are they to independently take on their own learning?

I would like the Board of Trustees, the Governor, the state and all committees involved in making the decision for our student population to read and consider this article below.


I’ve watched and read many articles similar to this. I think what pediatricians have to say about the well being of children is incredibly valuable.

While it is important to keep the health and well being of all persons in a school building in mind, that really isn’t the purpose nor should be a deciding factor in sending children back to school, full time. Every job as risks. This is an extreme risk, but our job as educators is to educate. That is what taxpayers are expecting. If taxpayers/families decide that sending their own child back is too risky then give them the options of online learning or homeschooling (which our district already has in place). If teachers are concerned with going back, then they have options available to them.

Again, I understand this is a difficult time and many things are being considered. But, in my opinion, the bottom line is educating our children and supporting their families as best we can.

Please read the above article and reach out to more families and teachers if needed.

Thank you for reading and understanding,

Christa Rossi
To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing as a concerned parent in the WCSD for the upcoming re-opening plans for the schools in the Fall. Based on the recent surveys that have been sent out from the WCSD, there still seems to be discussions about the possibility of continued distance learning. As a family who has both parents working full time, the possibility of distance learning is simply not an option for our family. It is unrealistic for the WCSD to move forward with planning for the school year with this approach. We do not have the time or resources to help our daughter move forward with her education in a distance learning model. The WCSD needs to seriously consider what it would mean for all families to continue a distance learning model. Most families, along with ours, simply do not have the resources to support our children to their fullest with this approach. We are expected to work full time and continue to provide financially for our families. We do not all have supportive employers who will let you take time off to essentially home school your child. The teachers simply cannot keep up with every single child remotely and their education will suffer for it.

It is vital that the WCSD considers how difficult distance learning was during the last school year. Our employers expected both of us to be 100 percent available during working hours and we were barely able to help our daughter continue to distance learning approach.

I am greatly concerned that my daughter’s education will severely suffer if she has to continue distance learning. The distance learning approach may work for older children, but is not feasible for younger children. They need interaction with peers and in-person instruction at a part time, minimum for the upcoming school year. Our children’s mental health also needs to be strongly considered with the distance learning. Not seeing peers and or their teachers plays a huge mental tole on them and they also suffer. The WCSD does not offer enough personal support if they continue distance learning and all our children will suffer.

I know the spring last year was an unprecedented time and I commend the WCSD on how they approached it the best they could during such a short time period. However, I strongly encourage you to deeply consider what it would mean for WCSD families to have to continue the distance learning approach full time in the fall. It is not a realistic model given the resources we have and what is expected from working parents.

Please also consider the attached article. The American Academy of Pediatrics guidance is strongly advocating for students to be physically present in school. Why, because it is "ESSENTIAL" to the development of children and adolescents. The WCSD must consider this when they make plans for our children and their future.

Thank you for your time,
Kim Carter
Kristina Washington, special education staff member at Desert Heights Preparatory Academy, walks past desks and chairs at the closed Glendale, Ariz., school in early June.

Ross D. Franklin/AP

The nation's pediatricians have come out with a strong statement in favor of bringing children back to the classroom this fall wherever and whenever they can do so safely. The American Academy of Pediatrics' guidance "strongly advocates that all policy
considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school."

The guidance says "schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being."

The AAP cites "mounting evidence" that transmission of the coronavirus by young children is uncommon, partly because they are less likely to contract it in the first place.

On the other hand, the AAP argues that based on the nation's experience this spring, remote learning is likely to result in severe learning loss and increased social isolation. Social isolation, in turn, can breed serious social, emotional and health issues: "child and adolescent physical or sexual abuse, substance use, depression, and suicidal ideation." Furthermore, these impacts will be visited more severely on Black and brown children, as well as low-income children and those with learning disabilities.

The guidance for returning to in-person schooling includes recommendations about physical distancing, cleaning and disinfection, hand-washing, and using outdoor spaces whenever possible.

The AAP argues that offering elementary school children the opportunity to go to school every day should be given due consideration over spacing guidelines if capacity is an issue: "Schools should weigh the benefits of strict adherence to a 6-feet spacing rule between students with the potential downside if remote learning is the only alternative."

And, it also argues that masks are probably not practical for children younger than middle school unless they can wear a mask without increased face touching.
The guidelines do note that adult school staff are more at risk compared to young children and need to be able to distance from other adults as much as possible — no in-person faculty meetings, no class visits by parents. And they emphasize the need to make accommodations for students who are medically fragile or have special health care needs or disabilities.

However, these guidelines don't necessarily address the health concerns of America's teachers or their willingness to return to in-person teaching. Federal data show nearly a third of teachers are over 50, putting them in a higher risk category when it comes to the disease.

Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, for example, recently announced its reopening plans, offering families a choice between two days a week of in-person classes or an all-remote schedule plus extra intervention on a third day for students who need it. The county's three educator unions resisted, arguing in a statement that remote learning should continue. "Our educators are overwhelmingly not comfortable returning to schools," said Tina Williams, president of Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. "They fear for their lives, the lives of their students and the lives of their families."

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Hello,

When reopening, please PLEASE consider other classes like band. Band is my sons life, he was planning on taking four music classes during the 2020/2021 school year and plans on going into college with a music scholarship and studying music. For some kids, the arts classes go FAR beyond just elective status, it's what keeps them going and drives them through life, if it's taken away or minimized or will have a detrimental affect on these kids.

If sports teams are being allowed to go back to the school and have practice, then the band should get the same allowances. The marching band works just as hard and are just as important as sports. They are counting on scholarships, just like the sports kids. Arts are incredibly important, they need to be allowed and not put on the back burner.

Brandi Stewart

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Good evening,

I hope you take this recommendation into account during your considerations for school re-opening. Thank you for your hard work during these times.

http://delivery.vidible.tv/mrss/video/5efbc14ac2e7f91202390f4c?bcid=56603651bbe5bf10d057f868&mxid=5bda1c918fcaa909eb78604d&w=1280&h=720&enc=mp4

Katie Jameson
To whom it may concern,

This email may come a little late, but I hope it falls into the correct hands. As a parent, I have seen my children socially and physically be affected by distance learning. The agenda and curriculum were very poorly executed and chosen. I really feel that the teachers were not allowed to teach because they had to follow your curriculums. I feel that you really must consider re-opening up the schools for those of us who would like to attend. I have seen my children suffer socially and physically from distance-learning. There’s been many recent studies that have indicated that there are far more impacts due to distance-learning then there are from the chances of becoming infected with COVID-19. I am especially concerned for those teachers who have children of their own.

I am asking that you consider to re-open schools to their full potential for those parents who are willing to allow their children to attend. I understand that there are those who parents who do not feel comfortable and are fearful to send their children to school. You could offer an online curriculum for those families, and ultimately allowing those parents who need to work and who choose to attend school, to do so. If liability is an issue, I will gladly sign a waiver indicating my choices. As I have indicated in my online Survey, I would feel more comfortable if temperature checks and sanitation, including handwashing before lunch is conducted by the teachers.

Thank you for your consideration. Mother of an elementary school student, middle school student, and high school student.

Sent from my iPhone

Sarah Dockins
Dear school board members,

I would like to express my concerns about the 20-21 school year. I go to galena high school, and one of them is marching band.

I understand the seriousness of Covid-19 and the precautions that are in place; however, marching band is extremely important to me and many students in the district. For many of us music is not only an elective, it is an activity that will lead to a career. I am planning on getting a degree in music in college, therefore band is a huge part of my education. Marching band cannot be done in isolation and much of what we do on the field can be done while maintaining six feet apart. Unlike football, which is being allowed to begin practices, we do not come in contact with each other, nor are we utilizing indoor facilities as part of a workout program. For marching band we should be allowed to gather outside and work on marching fundamentals and drills essential to creating a marching show. This can be done safely with precautions such as masks and distancing. It does not pose any more risk than will be encountered by attending school. It is my hope that the school board will allow marching band to begin as soon as possible.

When making decisions that limit educational opportunities, I would hope the board considers that our health is equal parts physical and mental. Please do not discount my need for interaction with my peers, or the impact your decisions have on my mental and emotional wellbeing, when considering to allow marching band to resume.

We are some of the district's most driven and diverse group of students. We are your future leaders and teachers. We hope you take the time to consider what we are asking.

I do not take my education lightly, and the same goes for band. Please take this email seriously and consider what could be done to allow practices. Again, band is important to many students in the district, and they should be allowed to resume practices.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and acknowledging the concerns which we have. Please get back to me soon and let me know what decision has been made.

Sincerely,

Sydney Trainor
Galena High School
Assistant drum major
Hello, WCSD team,

I am writing to give input for your upcoming meeting regarding the opening of the schools.

I recognize that education for our children is a primary need for us all, but so is having living relatives to care and support our families.

Many of the comments of my fellow citizens seem to voice the complaint that they have been inconvenienced by the distance learning program. I would like to say that I would rather be inconvenienced than have my family ravaged by COVID 19. Our children have done well with the distance learning and I would like to see it continue for one more semester. This would give our great medical community time to work with a possible vaccine, or at least free up space in the ICUs.

I do wish to say what a great and effective job WCSD did on short notice with the COVID 19 situation. I know that you are trying to develop a program to suit many needs, but you must know that if there is more than one child in those classrooms, the virus will spread and people will die.

Put our family's health and safety first. Would it not be wise to go forward with some self-control and dedication—delay full attendance opening for just one semester?

If both families and schools learn how to accomplish this endeavor, it might be the best lesson ever.

Thank you,
Jeanne Smith
Hi, I am a parent very concerned about the school reopening. My questions are:
-what if the decision is made to open and cases skyrocket before school starts? Will there be distance learning materials ready to go?
-will the school have enough funding to provide teachers with PPE? How will teachers have time to instruct when they’re also trying to keep kids from touching each other?
-what is the protocol if positive cases are traced back to a school? If a teacher or student tests positive does the school shut down for two weeks? What if it’s a family member of a student? Given that the disease spreads very easily even someone a child’s parent came into contact with could potentially infect a classroom or school.

Thank you for your consideration of these questions.

Sent from my iPhone
Hi all,

I appreciate the difficult position you are in while designing a education plan for the fall that balances safety concerns and educational needs. The continuation of distance learning is the worst possible scenario in my opinion. I fully support postponing the opening of schools until after Labor Day and then reducing classroom size to provide social distance space. This reduction can be by going to year-round or possibly doing half day classes. I also believe that offering an online education for families who prefer or are unable to return to school is critical. The encouragement of better personal hygiene at school with hand washing and requiring those children who are I'll to stay at home will go a far way towards the reduction of disease transmission. The emotional, financial, and educational toll that distance learning poses far outweighs the risk of transmission. Please strongly consider the reopening of school and providing a classroom for students to learn and flourish in.

Thank you,

Catharine Cook
Hello,

I'm a mother of three, all with special needs in their own way. Each one of my children was born with an eye condition called nystagmus, my oldest is autistic and going into 7th grade. My middle has dyslexia and a learning disability, she is entering the fourth grade and can read at a first grade level. My youngest has only nystagmus and is entering kindergarten. Each one of these obstacles combined with distance learning has given me a particular incite and I would like to voice this to the district.

I'm not a teacher. It's very plane and simple. I wish I was, I wish I had the capability to hear the questions my children ask and have the education and background to know the best way to answer it or guide them to find it themselves. But I don't, and the wonderful teachers who do know how to help my children are unable to adequately assist them. Trying to do distance education for three children in different grades while I'm also performing my job that has always been from home is completely unattainable. There was crying, begging, yelling and storming off with unanswered questions and a mother left in tears who fears her children who already struggle with education are falling even farther behind.

Now we are hearing rumors of a two day school week for the upcoming 2020/2021 school year with three days spent at home doing distance learning. Now I'm sure you have received an outpouring of concern from double income families with both parents working outside the home, but what about parents who work from home? All you have to do to find out how difficult this task can be is to ask a teacher who has school aged children and what she did while distance learning was going on. How did she manage to educate her children, do zooms for them along with her own classroom? She probably cried a lot and thought about if her job was worth it. While I'm not thrilled at the prospect of having to manage this while working from home, it is not my biggest concern. My biggest concern is that they are on IEPs and need special instruction. How on God's green earth is my daughter suppose to catch up in reading this way? What is the school district doing for these kids who truly need to be in the class room to learn?

Covid-19 is by no means on the school district, but what is on the school district is this coming school year. It is completely inexcusable to let more kids fall behind this coming school year because the district did not do its job in preparing for the upcoming year. It was well known by June that Covid would be affecting the upcoming year in some capacity, however the district doesn't even have a plan in place and we are almost in July. How is this being prepared? How are you planning on helping children with special needs who can not do distance learning? If the school district fails to address these concerns, what other choice will parents have but to withdrawal their children or decline to do the distance learning as my family choose to do after the first few weeks of the disastrous distance learning plan put forward? The district is given large amounts of money by the federal government for children with special needs, those funds depend on attendance of these children. I would sure hope the district would seek to protect that income.

Please think deeply about these special needs children and how staggered schedules would affect them, a child with autism will fail terribly if they were only in school two days week, a child who is behind can not catch up with two days a week and last a kindergartner can not learn enough for 1st grade with two days week. All children need to be in school learning, playing and developing with all the wonderful and amazing teachers. Even the America Academy of Pediatrics has stated children need to be back in school and the virus does not pose a threat to them or them spreading it. Please, do the right thing and send our kids back to school more than two days week, even they want to go back.
Sincerely,

Monika Dutchover

Sent from my iPhone
I am requesting that if the proposed plan of 2 days in school, 3 days at home is approved, that you put entire families on the same schedule. It would be extremely hard to coordinate child care and work if our 4 children in different schools are on different schedules.

Has the district considered splitting the week 2 and 3 days then alternating which group has the 3 day week every other week. This would allow more school days than the proposed in school 2 day week.

Has the district considered a plan letting teachers and families choose which path they need or want? Some teachers and families might want distance learning full time while others would prefer/need to be in school full time. This could reduce class sizes and potentially not need the district to split shifts.

Finally, I would really prefer for elementary kids to be in school full time and middle/high school students to be on the split schedules. My younger children have a much harder time working independently from home than my older students.

Thank you. I appreciate all of your effort on this and all of your communication related to this. It will be hard to keep everyone safe and make the learning equitable for all families. Thank you for trying.

Sent from my Huawei Mobile
I beg you to PLEASE consider the mental and social aspect of going back to school more than you have been. I ABSOLUTELY believe that by not allowing the students to return to in person instruction would be an absolute detriment to our kids. I have twins going into senior year and I have already seen the tremendous toll it has taken on them. They MUST return to in person instruction this fall semester.

Here is a great article I would like to share by pediatricians.  
Hello, I am a full time working mother of a Kindergartner, soon to be First grader for the 2020-2021 school year. My son comes from a home where both parents work. Not only do we both work full time jobs but we also work on opposite schedules. This means by the time I get home (around 5pm), my husband is leaving for work and does not return until 7am the next morning. I can tell you from experience that neither my son, nor a lot of my friends' kids whose parents all work full time, are getting what they need to sustain in school. I have no help when I come home from work. I have to cook, clean, bath my child, and prepare for the next day. Children of working parents are maybe getting an hour of school time in a day. These children are going to fall behind. My son deserves to get the best education possible and that is not possible with distance learning. Two days a week of in person schooling will not work for any child. All children are going to fall behind substantially. I am not a teacher. I can not prepare my child for Second grade.

I understand the challenges we all face with COVID, however our district needs to unit as a whole and stand up for our children. We need to be their voice. There have been publications from several U.S. Pediatricians calling for in person school and how the benefits of in person school outweighs COVID. With temperature checks before entering the school buildings, to sanitizing hands before children are allowed to enter their class and sit down, to regular hand washing, there is no reason why our children should be denied full time in person schooling. Every child in Washoe County will suffer tremendously from a decision that only allows for two days of in person learning.

As a mother of a child in Washoe County School District, to a friend of Children with special needs in Washoe County School District. I am begging the community to allow our children to return to school full time, in person. Our Children need this, and every child deserves it.

Sincerely,

Crystal Rickard
Hello All,

Thank you so much for your time and careful consideration in safely re-opening our schools. I know we're being led by a great team of Trustees and Dr. McNeill being truly the BEST Superintendent!
I just wanted to add to your considerations a thought on those of us who are immune compromised. My daughter, my Mom, and I are all immune compromised. I am sure the growing consensus from parents is to get our kids back in the classroom, and while I do agree that there is no substitute for in class learning, it is also terrifying for our family to consider going into a large group setting during a Pandemic with no current vaccine.
If you all could please consider an at home distance learning option for those of us who may have multiple family members who are immune compromised it would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you again for all you're doing,

Amanda Bell
To the board,

I’m a science teacher at Damonte Ranch High School with serious concerns regarding returning physically to school as well as the attitudes of many in the community. I understand that as teachers our supposed role in society has been reduced to publicly-funded childcare and the absence of this creates truly terrible situations for many families, but schools cannot safely open as long as there is community transmission, especially with what many in the community are pushing for.

Among concerns too long to list:

1. Students need to be required to wear masks. It is true that students seemingly face lower risk of catching COVID-19 and having any negative symptoms if they do compared to their adult teachers. It is also true that wearing masks is for the protection of others. To protect adults and each other, students must wear masks. Much like vaccinations, a very small minority of the population cannot wear them for medical reasons and it is therefore up to the rest of us to do our part by wearing them to protect each other. They do not lower the partial pressure of oxygen in inhaled air and therefore do not impact blood oxygenation (try it out with a pulse oximeter). If I can force students to wear aprons, goggles, and gloves when working with baking soda and vinegar for their own safety, I should be able to require them to wear a mask for the safety of everybody else.

2. Disaggregating the supposed immunity of students seems wise. I teach high schoolers and the vast majority of my students are 17 and 18 years old - functionally adults. It may very well be true that elementary school students face essentially zero risk and may not even spread the virus, but pretending that my older students should be treated the same is ludicrous and threatens their safety. Focusing on very low death rates can be misleading - there is a very large middle ground between only having a few sniffles and ending up dying - and there is troubling evidence of medium- to long-term impacts on lung function and many other organs like the kidneys.

3. What happens when teachers inevitably begin to get sick or are forced to quarantine for upwards of two weeks when someone in their household or classroom tests positive? Who will take over our classrooms? Most of our subs are retired teachers (read: older) who, understandably so, would never in a million years spend their day in a room exposed to 100+ people who aren’t required to wear masks for a laughable $90 and no benefits if they get sick.

4. Most of these plans to return physically rely on highly aspirational plans to keep our schools cleaner than they’ve ever been. Expecting effective deep cleanings multiple times per week out of our chronically understaffed and underpaid custodial crews is not wise. Unlike teachers, they are paid hourly, obviously cannot work from home if concerned for their own health, and won’t be offered early retirement options. The same goes for bus drivers and food service workers.

5. It’s not even clear to me that there will be any educational advantage for students to be physically present in school, since as far as I can tell, they won’t be able to touch any shared class resources, do any work on paper, or even have their teacher walk around the classroom providing feedback. It seems like the only thing we’ll be allowed to do is lecture or supervise work on laptops with our hands tied behind our backs. What is the point? Instead of forcing teachers to deliver the worst possible in-person lessons,
why not give them the technology and training to deliver the best possible digital lessons? On top of that, how much socialization will students even be allowed to do?

All of these issues can conceivably be solved if schools receive emergency funding well above what they should already be receiving. More funding for attracting and hiring more teachers, aides, and paraprofessionals we need to handle what looks to be a monstrous workload this upcoming year and to help reduce class sizes (commonly 40+ students). More funding for PPE so that everyone on campus is adequately protected. More funding for technology so that every child has the same opportunity to learn from home when needed. More funding to hire custodians and keep them safe.

Instead we are staring down the barrel of horrendous budget cuts with no federal bailout in sight. What’s more, as a community, state, and country, we have wasted the tremendous sacrifices made since March to get this outbreak under control and create the conditions where safely opening schools would be possible. It’s unfortunate that the failures of policymakers and the community at large will be laid at the feet of teachers and our support staff once again.

Wishing you all good health and safety,

Kevin Marks
Science Teacher
Damonte Ranch High School
Dear WCSD School Board and COVID Committee,

The date is approaching, and a decision needs to be made on the state of our schools and reopening. I feel that it is of the utmost importance that I convey my opinion again, and again.

It is my understanding that the committee will be providing their findings to the school board in July. You all will be deciding on and providing your final plan for approval to the NV Department of Education. While you say that you have not made any decisions yet, it is very clear the direction you want to take. The split schedule.

Please consider the below three very important points.

1.) Listen to medical professionals. I found this article from the American Academy of Pediatrics to be very insightful and compelling. In their medical opinion, schools should be conducted in person for the coming school year. Please take into consideration the psychological need for children to be present to learn. Teachers can wear masks. They can check temperatures. Sick kids should not be allowed to come to school. Wash hands frequently. Sanitize surfaces. Distance desks at least 3ft apart. Simple, rational solutions. Yes, I do understand that wearing a mask may be uncomfortable, but it is a requirement for all workplaces.


2.) During the digital learning “experiment” I did email the district to voice my concern for the process and the work provided. It was widely viewed by my group of friends and by my immediate family as subpar. It was conveyed to me that digital learning needed to be equitable across the district. That brings up a very good point – equitable, fair, reasonable for all families. So, I ask you this, how is it fair to force families to choose between working full time or being available full time as the teacher? If you move forward with the split schedule, how will working families cope? Is that fair to them? For your reference, the current going rate for a referenced, background checked nanny with experience is $19/hour. I know that because I pay that to Lifetime Love of Nannies. Can all families in the community afford to pay such a high fee for childcare while they are at work? My family can afford that added expense. We would need to cut back on extracurricular activities like swim and ski, maybe even stop contributing to the college fund. Again, my family can figure it out. But what about the others who can’t? That is not equitable in my opinion.

3.) We are not Clark County School District. I heard repeatedly “CCSD is doing this...” during your televised discussion. While I can understand the urge to follow the larger district as it would be easier, we are not Las Vegas.

Thank you again for considering my opinion. I am a full-time working mom of 2 kids. Your decision will directly impact my family, my children, and my career.

Maja Davis
Hunsberger Elementary Parent
Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing in regards to the re-opening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. I have a 10th grader at Galena HS and a 5th grader at Hunsberger ES. Both have been GT students and are historically motivated in school, thankfully. I am a stay/work at home mom and my husband works full time for our family. We are lucky to have access to laptops and internet service within our home. That being said, I do not want to repeat the 2019-2020 4th quarter. While we appreciate all of the efforts of our district, our schools/staff, and our particular teachers, distance learning was not a good fit for my children. My children thrive on social interaction, as well as interaction from their teachers. My high schooler learned how to minimally complete the work, which was done in 30 minutes or less per day. My people-pleasing 5th grader hit a point where she just did not want to do anything anymore and it became a battle to get her to login to Zoom and do the busy work. The entire 4th quarter was a loss for my children, despite our family's efforts to help them grasp what they were missing.

Going forward, I know that the district has the daunting task to decide what is best for the thousands of families within our district and not everyone will be happy with whatever decision is made. I have heard multiple rumors of possible scenarios of what could happen, none of which are ideal. I am advocating for the following:

- Allow the families who are comfortable sending their children to school do so. The families who do not feel comfortable can engage in a distance learning option. Perhaps this will slim down the numbers enough for proper social distancing within classrooms. Every family has their own ideas of what is best, so allow them some decisions in the matter.
- Start school on time in August and keep the balanced calendar schedule. Waiting to start school will likely not be helpful - as we've already seen with COVID-19, it is not predictable. Our peak was predicted to be in mid-April, but yet here we are with Washoe County breaking daily records.
- If distancing on school busses are needed, provide transportation to the areas that need it most - such as Title I schools. While we use the bus system and it is convenient for us to not have to deal with the parking lot chaos at school, I am capable of getting my children to/from school.
- Allow individual schools to have some power as to how they will implement protocols and what is best for their population of families. WCSD is a very large, very diverse district with multiple needs at each school. Principals and staff should have some decision making power.
- If staff are uncomfortable with returning to school, they should not be forced to return, just as students. Perhaps those teacher and staff could be the people implementing the distance learning portion for families who do not yet want to return to a school building.
- Do not make masks mandatory. Recommended, yes.
- Implement regular hand washing times, as well as additional hand-sanitizing stations.
- Allow HS sports to resume with proper distancing when allowable.

This virus is not going away anytime soon and I'm having a hard time understanding what the "end game" is. What is our goal with keeping students home? If they do not return to school buildings in August, what needs to happen for them to return to "regular" school? I am concerned over the lack of educational progress our children will make if they continue to do distance learning, not to mention the social and friendship aspect school provides for our children that they are very much missing. Being in an actual school building is imperative to their education growth, their mental health, and their social growth. I believe you are also fully aware of children who need the safety of school as well.
Thank you for your time,
Tracy Bruntz
Hola yo estoy de acuerdo q vuelvan reabrir la escuela mi niños están frusado en estar en casa cada rato me preguntan cuando van ver escuela mi niños quieren estar en escuela espero q si reabren la escuela nosotros estamos manteniendo con precauciones aquí en casa en fuera de la casa esto son mi comentarios gracias

Hello, I am for reopening of the schools my kids are frustrated of being home and keep asking me when there will be school they want to be in school. I hope that the schools do reopen we are maintaining our precautions here at home and outside our home. These are my comments thank you
Hi Dr. McNeill and board members,

HI just wanted to let you know that I am very concerned about the rumor that school will start again in the fall but on a split schedule of 2 or 3 days at school and 2 or 3 days at home doing distance learning. I know that this is not the final decision but I feel that I need to let you know that as a teacher and a parent of younger children (kinder and 3rd grade) I will not be able to continue to teach full time if this is the decision that the district makes. First, I don't want to double expose myself, and then potentially pass an illness on to two different groups of students. Second, I won't have anyone to stay with my kids at home while I am at school.

Part of the reasons that I chose to work in public education while my children are younger is because I can be home with them when they are not at school, I can focus on them, their education, and their well being. Another benefit is that I don't have to pay for child care (which I count as a benefit in my salary when I do my personal finances and worth).

As a teacher, I believe that it would be more beneficial for students to go consistently 5 days a week. I have heard of others using their high schools (who work through distance learning) to create more classrooms that music, library, computer, special ed. teachers, and other paid support staff use to reduce general class sizes and spread out more. More rigorous cleaning standards and supplies could also reduce risk with fulltime in-person education. Reduces school hours, or new school year schedule can also help minimize fear.

I know that I am not the only person in this situation, as it has been an ongoing conversation with other teachers with young children. We love our jobs but our families take priority and I am worried that many teachers would go to part-time to accommodate both our work/passion and our home life.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please know that I greatly appreciate your hard work during this challenging time. I know that there isn't a clear, easy, and make everyone a happy answer to the situation.

Best wishes,
Jenna

Mrs. Jenna Larkin M.Ed.
1st Grade Teacher
Lenz Elementary School
2500 Homeland Dr.
Reno, Nevada 89511
(775) 851-5620

"The more you read the more things you will know. The more you learn the more places you'll go."
To all concerned,

In the newsletter recently sent out, it stated that the board is taking all federal and state health input... I do hope you have looked into OSHA’s website concerning mask. Many (especially the current Governor and the media) have ignored OSHA and their stance on the use of Mask.

THIS group of people teach and instruct all hospitals, medical staff, and emergency responders of what’s appropriate, how, when, and why. I highly suggest you consult with them before making any decisions in regards to our community and especially our children. I have taken the liberty of posting a document from their website...
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2017-12-20

I’m sure all of you realize how NV ranks overall in education. While I am thankful that the ranking went up A little bit, this last spring was a huge downer. Please let the kids be free to learn their phonics skills without obstruction. Please start school on time and allow these kids to form friendships without obstacles or (heaven help) trying to talk and sounding like they have a lot of marbles in their mouths (same applies to teachers). Use some common sense please. Also, please don’t be a bully to students or families in regards to something that is largely voluntary and not viewed as even a misdemeanor by the Sparks PD.
Hello,

Now that the plan for next year has been released with the intention to have half the school off campus for part of the week during the 2020-2021 school year can I propose the following schedule? Separating high schools and middle schools by upper and lower class man is particularly difficult for elective teachers or teachers with mixed classes (due to credit recovery etc) and I know the board wants all staff at the schools to provide our online materials. The best plan in my opinion would be to adopt an A/B block with a 7th period at all middle and high schools and that rotates on an every other day basis. This would then allow the schools to say that week 1 students are only on campus for their A day classes and B day courses are online via teams. This would mean that 1/2/3/7 or 4/5/6/7 would be taught on M/W/F every other week with no students at school on Tuesdays and Thursdays allowing time to clean and disinfect. This would also still allow for those all important spirit weeks and school events as approved by the state and board.

In addition to the ability to clean between student groups and still have electives and school events it would also be possible to save money on technology as those students who have been identified as lacking in technology will have the opportunity to discuss with their off week teachers about assignments at school as soon as the next day or even the day before.

Thank you.
My husband and I are extremely concerned that schools are taking on paranoid view to this virus and pushing it onto to our children.
We cannot push a fear driven closure to schools that will have a potential lifelong scarring to our children.
The death rates are very similar to the flu( and may even be less since now they are finding many more people that have antibodies for it and also many more people are testing positive that are not sick or barley sick.)
Have you ever closed school down for the flu?? Not in my 48 years. Transmission is easy to stop with frequent hand washing and you will also have a lot less other illusion form this same practice.
We beg you to look at the children's mental and physical wellbeing and allow them to go back to school.
If there are a few parents who do not agree to go back to school they have the option of home schooling or charter on line schooling.
Also have you ever thought of having an infirmary?  This way sick kids that are sent to school because the parents cannot stay home with them are not intermingaling with healthy kids and staff.
Sincerely,
Jessica and Jake Capdeville

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Dear Superintendent McNeill and Board Trustees,

I thank you for your dedication during this turbulent time. My heart goes out to you as you make decisions that will impact people’s lives but will never satisfy all.

With respect, I want to point out the dichotomy of having a Zoom meeting to make the decision to send thousands of teachers and students back to in-person school. While I agree remote meetings are the safest solution, I feel you are sending the wrong message to the community and the people directly affected by your decisions.

Sincerely,
Caryn Neidhold
To Whom it May Concern at Washoe County Schools,

I am a parent in the school district. My daughter is 11 and will be in 6th grade in the Fall of 2020. I am writing to ask that you please base all of your decisions on science, public health, and on the best interests of the children, parents, and teachers. I do not feel comfortable sending my daughter back to school in August. I strongly believe given the state of the pandemic, the fact that it is not slowing down and the reality that kids can get sick, kids can pass on the illness, and this will cause trauma and devastation for many, that distance learning is the best method for the school year, perhaps until January 2021.

Children are prepared for distance learning and so are teachers and parents. This should be the way to go. Or at the very least allow it as an equal option for all students so that those of us who are in situations where we live with high risk groups, where we do not have health insurance, and where we need to do all that we can to stay healthy and safe, can allow our children to stay home to learn.

The idea of balance - some online, and sometimes face-to-face in small groups, might be okay but this is something to ease into. Not something to open up with. The idea of full on back to school in August is unwise and slightly terrifying as infections are on the rise and as not enough is truly known about the virus to say that anything is safe or that there are no long-term negative health consequences due to the virus. Combine this with the fact that many parents in the Reno/Sparks area are somehow adverse to the idea of wearing masks, taking precautions, and taking the pandemic seriously as a chance to make positive changes for public health.

I teach at TMCC and we have been notified that we will be online for the Fall semester. My child should also know she will be safe and able to stay healthy when school starts. She can zoom and learn and make 2020 the year we stayed safe and survived COVID19, not the year we were forced to go back to school too soon and put everyone in danger.
I am a parent, a volunteer, a teacher, and a community member and I am asking that Washoe County Schools take all data from science and public health into account, and to act in the best interest of the children, parents, teachers and community. Having school online through 2021 is the best option based upon the seriousness of this pandemic and all of the things we do not yet know about it, things that could cause detriment to our children in the long-term, and things that could harm and destroy lives in the short-term. This is a pandemic and we cannot push and push to go back to ‘normal’ as normal is over and our kids need to understand that we can all do what it takes to adapt and keep them safe.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Curtis

Sparks, NV 89431
Parent of a Child at High Desert Montessori School, Sparks, NV.
Hello all,

I am writing today as a concerned parent, during such an unprecedented time I’m surely not the only one. We understand as a community that this is uncharted, but many of us have been voicing concerns before covid-19. There have been long overlooked issues with allocating funding to high risk areas, classroom sizes, and teacher compensation.

Specifically in reference to the new school year, I am wondering how the district plans to be supportive to families that are considered “high risk.” There has been a coming together in our community recently, which is nice to see, but it’s time that our “high risk” students be given the same tools that students in affluent parts of town have.

These are a few of my concerns:

- Will there be funds allocated to ensure that EVERY student REGARDLESS of demographic has access to the same educational tools?
- Are there resources available for digital tools, like tablets, laptops, and wifi for families?
- What will a typical day look like for our teachers? Are we considering more pay for them?
- What about families who choose not to send their children back? Will they be provided necessary tools? Will homeschooling packets and curricula be accessible to all, not just the ones who can afford that adjustment?
- In what ways will the mental health of students/families and teachers be supported?

Amidst current challenges related to covid-19, we understand keeping our community safe is a priority. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A concerned parent

Hello all,

I have a recently submitted comment, that I wish to add onto just slightly.

Learning this morning of other states making plans for special education students, I need to know what direction we’re in.

With all students being given options to choose between in class learning or remote learning, what does this mean for students with IEPs in place? Will they have to redo IEPs? Can they be forced to go to school in person? Legally speaking, what kind of accountability falls on the district in these cases as far as the child’s education goes?

Again thank you for the time and consideration during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

A concerned parent
Dear School Board Members,

I am a WCSD high school teacher and a mother of an 11 year old. I have many concerns about WCSD returning in the fall to an in-person school environment. My concerns are mainly about the health of the school community. A study has just come out from Harvard indicating that air conditioning can circulate the virus in enclosed spaces (Lu et al., 2020; Powell, 2020). There is evidence that the most common form of the Covid-19 virus in the US is now a mutation which makes the virus MORE infectious putting the school community more at risk (Terry, 2020). I realize that the American Pediatrics Association has issued a statement saying that the preferred schooling method for children is in-person school. However, this recommendation does not take into consideration the lives of the teachers; who are much more at risk of getting sick and even dying, than children. Will (2020) describes that 18% of teachers in the US are age 55 or older. This population accounts for 92% of Covid-19 deaths (Will, 2020).

If you put us back at school in person I feel that you will putting teachers at risk for severe illness and even death. Please take this into consideration. A vaccine is on the horizon. We need to be patient and come up with safe and effective at-home learning solutions. This too will pass. In the meantime we need to do the best that we can not lose our beloved teachers or children, as children too are at risk for severe disease, though it’s a smaller risk. And we need to protect vulnerable family members and grandparents at home.

Thank you for your attention,

Amy Berkhousen

References


I know many parents have health and social objections to having students wear masks. Has the district considered using Face Shields instead? They would resolve both concerns plus they have been proven to be more protective than masks and cost less than $2. I believe a Face Shield option would be particularly beneficial for Elementary school students.

--

Meredith Whelan Music Studio
1. Will every person in the schools be required to wear a mask? What happens when dad says it’s not a law you can’t make us, and then his kid gets everyone sick? I would hope that kid stays home until dad gets back to believing the actual scientists.

2. When a kid or teacher coughs, do they go home? Where are the substitutes coming from? Kind of a rhetorical questions seeing as there haven’t been enough subs for the last six years of my career...

3. Are custodial staffs getting raises to have the time and energy to deep clean sanitize every single surface every single night between groups of kids?

4. Are teachers getting raises since we will now have like ten cohorts of kids we are tracking plus have longer days, more planning responsibilities, etc.?

5. Is anyone on the school board volunteering to come into the schools those first few weeks and get Covid with us?

6. If staff has at-risk family they can’t see during the school year, will they receive a stipend for choosing work over their family?

Sent from my iPhone
As a middle school teacher in WCSD, how is the district protecting me, as a valued teacher, making sure my health safety and salary are not compromised so my family is protected?
Hello!
I have concerns and questions about the proposed plan for reopening. I appreciate the gravity of the decisions you are making but believe there must be better ways to address the problem. And I certainly don’t come with just complaints, but also ideas.

Why are the younger kids whom are less likely to keep masks on, wash hands and practice social distancing the ones expected to go to school full time? The higher grades are far more capable of adhering to the requests and staying clean. Additionally, their course material is definitely more strenuous and demanding, requiring more in person help and guidance.

Do you have concerns that scholarships could be lost or even worse- drop out rates may increase because students feel overwhelmed or lost?

What are parents expected to do when they have to work but have children at home that need help with school and staying on track? Or are even too young to stay at home alone?

How will grading work? Last years “grade can only go up” approach won’t work, yet online instruction is incredibly inadequate.

I worry for my three children. I will have a child at Cold Springs Middle School, one that was just accepted to the PRE- AP at Clayton Middle School and one that will be a freshmen in Wooster’s IB program. How are the children to succeed in these advanced classes with out support and in class instruction? Many of these classes are far too advanced for me to help with, even assuming I had no work schedule of my own. I fear my kids may drop these programs out of overwhelming feelings before they get a chance to succeed. How are parents with kids in multiple schools supposed to get kids to and from on different delayed start schedules and/or “blocks?”

If we value education then we need to educate these kids the way they deserve. I appreciate the pandemic and it’s potential severity. While I would like to see measures taken for cleanliness and distancing, I don’t think keeping kids out of school and doubling teacher loads will help our children.

Instead of block/rotating schedules- Is it possible to allow parents to register for EITHER full time online or full time at school? Give the individual families the choice of what best supports their beliefs and agendas. Staff teachers accordingly- not doubling their load but filling their position as EITHER. Overwhelmed teachers will only make the children suffer because they can’t get timely help or learn to their full extent.

I thank you for your time.
B Smith
Sent from my iPhone
To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a working mom of 4, three of which are WCSD students, and myself as a WCSD 2nd grade teacher.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the countless hours and efforts to provide safe education for all during this unprecedented time.

I have a few concerns relating to my children and a few professional concerns relating to elementary teaching.

I have decided to place my PreK daughter in a private preschool due to potential unknown restrictions in the classroom and playground. My greatest concern is my 6th grade middle schooler would be expected to do the blended learning model, after having lost 13 weeks of 5th grade instruction. I know she will need some intervention and focused help for the upcoming school year. My eighth grader would also be at home alone navigating parts of this blended learning model. Feeling very uneasy about their supervision if they are not in a brick and mortar building learning during the exact hours I am as a working teacher. In addition to the supervision issue, bandwidth of technology needs is a concern in our home. During distance learning we encountered this a lot with zoom calls for 3 in a house having trouble getting a good connection. It cause a lot of frustration and stress in our home.

My professional concerns are regarding teacher evaluations, the SLO (student learning objective) evaluation and salary schedule that is currently inequitable with 2010 frozen step bubble of teachers still behind one step from other educators of the pay scale. How are we to be given fair evaluations if “best practices” are limited to classrooms that can not offer small group, differentiated instruction? The frozen step impacts a select few of educators, yet I bring this up because if there are more cuts and frozen steps presented to offset budget shortfall, this group of us would get double hit and cause our salaries to be even more inequitable and behind our other staff members. The greatest loophole in the frozen steps has been teachers can resign (even HR techs have recommended) and be rehired after a year off and then be placed on the appropriate step matching their years of service.

Rather than stating just my concerns, I wanted to share some ideas for solutions.

Elementary teachers schedules need to be considered in conjunction with middle schooler children.

Offer a modified teacher evaluation, SLO expectations and also student testing school year.

Offer half time positions for teachers to take for a one year only. Still allowing those of us pay for a job we can feasibly do and with less obligation to help with our school age children expected to do blended learning model.

Fix the salary schedule for the 2010 frozen step or freeze every other educator who did not give up that 2010 step. Leave those that are already behind alone.
I’m thankful for the work of the board, committees and I truly want to remain positive and hopeful during these months of navigating this unprecedented time. It’s so hard though when there are so many unknowns and inability to make plans.

Respectfully,
Paula Koger
2nd Grade WCSD for 17 years

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

First, let me say that I’m a huge supporter of WCSD. I was a public school teacher for four years, and now I’m now a teacher educator and researcher. I am writing with feedback on the proposed reopening plan.

WCSD has released the initial details of their school reopening plan and this is not a feasible plan. I wish it was doable, but there are many issues with its tenets and how they would be implemented.

For example, the district is requiring elementary school class numbers to be reduced, which is great... but we would need a lot more physical space in elementary schools for this plan to work that currently doesn’t exist. We would also need more teachers, which there isn’t money for, nor is there a large enough group of qualified individuals that we can recruit.

Most importantly, this plan isn’t safe. 5-year-olds, even 15-year-olds, will struggle with social distancing and wearing masks for hours everyday. There will be outbreaks. The decision shouldn’t be based on how someone “feels,” or what they prefer, but on science. We will inevitably see people needlessly taken by this deadly disease. We need to prioritize safety.

I understand that there is no perfect solution, but there are solutions that would keep families safer than this one I believe. I understand that any solution will inevitably leave some families behind and unhappy, but this is a very deadly disease. I don’t think schools should consider reopening this fall.

Thank you,

William Toledo, PhD
Get Outlook for iOS
Thank you for your hard work on this. I very much appreciate you are using all 5 days.

I slightly prefer 2 consecutive days for a Cohort.

I strongly prefer a Cohort attend the same 2 days each week. E.g., Cohort A always Monday and Wed and Cohort B always Tues and Thurs. With Fridays then rotating between Cohort A or B to keep even. If there were a day off that week, Friday go to that Cohort.

I very much appreciate posting the Calendar well in advance. Ideally for the semester, but month by month or rolling 4 weeks works well, too.

This will make scheduling one's work schedules, child care coverage, extracurricular activities, etc. much easier.

Warmest regards, Courtney Hamilton
To Whom it May Concern -

I am a speech & language pathologist currently assigned to middle schools and would like to voice concerns and/or suggestions regarding the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

I understand that this is a difficult, unenviable position that leadership has been placed in. Having read the comments available online at the time of this writing, many parents and teachers support returning to in-person classes. People want their lives back: educators want to educate, parents want to parent and not teach, etc.

I urge you, as a cancer patient, to not rush to the veneer of normalcy and look beyond. We all want to return to our societal roles. I see numerous comments regarding how COVID-19 doesn't affect kids in the same way as adults- but then where are these kids going home to? Are those parents / grandparents / caregivers immunocompromised? Have underlying health conditions?

And if the school shuts down due to an outbreak, what was gained? A few weeks of in-person learning? What, or who, was lost?

Can you absolutely guarantee the safety of teachers, students and their extended households? If you can't, why?

Does this square with WEA Article 14 (Safety):

14.1 The District agrees to make reasonable efforts to continue providing safety equipment which, in the opinion of the District, is necessary to protect employees from injury in accordance with the practice now prevailing in the District.

14.2 The District further agrees to continue to maintain safe and healthful working conditions in accordance with applicable Nevada Revised Statutes

... from that:

NRS  392.910 Assaulting pupil or school employee; interference with persons peaceably assembled within school; penalties.

1. It is unlawful for any person to assault any pupil or school employee:

   (a) Within the building or grounds of the school;

with assault defined as:

NRS  200.471 Assault: Definitions; penalties.
(2) Intentionally placing another person in reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm.
Is there a clear definition, during a global pandemic, of what "... reasonable apprehension of immediate bodily harm.", when asymptomatic carriers are present? Does a student removing a mask demonstrate intention? How about social distancing? How does this work during recess or lunch? Does "... immediate bodily harm." include "... reasonable apprehension..." of infection of a deadly virus? Does this definition matter only after the fact, when the possibility of real, physical and long-term harm is present?

As anxious as I am to return to work, I am equally anxious about all possible transmission vectors of COVID-19. If we truly are to return to the classroom, I beg that the infrastructure be in place for appropriate, ample stocks of PPE for educators and students as well as clear and concise, no-nonsense wording for appropriate and safe working conditions that square with WEA and Nevada State Law.

I don't envy your position. Though I'm sure some will say that I'm overreacting or need to 'suck it up', any preventable loss of life or harm to our community - by a government entity no less - should. I don't want any bodily harm to come to any teacher, student or parent that could possibly be prevented- especially as there is yet to be an effective treatment or vaccine.

I've loaded this message with enough rhetorical questions that I'm sure you all have considered. I'm not sure there is a 'right decision' without an extensive overhaul, and rethinking of, public education systems at large.

Thank you for your time and good luck-

- Simon Marx
To Whom It May Concern:

I am a parent in Washoe County school district and would like to make few suggestions for consideration by the Board of Trustees (the Board) regarding the 2020-2021 school year. Given the recent spike in cases of COVID-19 in the country and Nevada being one of the state and Washoe county being one of the counties where the infection positivity rate is steadily climbing my suggestion would be that the Board should consider and focus on a very effective Distance Learning Program. No matter how diligent and careful the school is it would be impossible to follow CDC guidelines regarding social distancing and mask requirements specially for kids. The only way to keep kids and families safe is to have zero contact so that the transmission of the virus is stopped until a vaccine is available.

In case the Board decides to implement a strong Distance Learning Program my suggestion would be to make sure that the students are learning new material like the way they would learn in a regular school year. Effective on-line programs are already being implemented by many of the nations universities and colleges.

I do understand that this suggestion if implemented would put more than usual burden on the parents but given the spike in the COVID-19 infection positivity rate I would not want to compromise the health and safety of our kids.

Thank you for your considerations.

Debashis Bagchi
To Whom It May Concern,

In light of the recent breaking news, that school will return relatively normally, come August (for elementary schools anyways) I decided I should put all these newfound feelings into writing. I am not normally one to put myself out there in this way, but as a new mom, advocating for my family is one of those “motherly instincts” that I have developed.

I understand we are in unprecedented times and I do not envy your position, but with that being said I was at a loss for words when I read the RGJ article regarding this coming 2020-2021 school year. I completed the survey that WCSD sent out earlier in June. I took my time and considered all options and how they would affect me and my family. And after reading the results tonight, I feel as if my voice, as a hard-working educator, was not heard. It is absolutely terrifying to think about going back to work, where students potentially may not have to wear masks and come home to my 10-month-old son, and my immunocompromised father each day. I will not put myself or my family in a position where my job could potentially cause them harm. Teachers, students, and other family members WILL succumb to this terrible virus if teachers and students are sent back without proper precautions.

As I stated above, I do not envy you and your position. With respect, I ask you to reconsider the standard opening of elementary schools in WCSD. Educators are highly professional and adaptable and I believe our students would get a highly rigorous education online and teachers would be able to meet the needs of all their students via an online platform. I understand there are a lot of factors involved in Distance Learning and if it is not feasible for WCSD, I request that you consider some stricter restrictions for schools opening for the safety of our teachers, students, and families.

Here are some articles that should be read over.


https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/?utm_campaign=trib-social-buttons&fbclid=IwAR1qeZPCI-w4vtPUn-5Sh5cYnNajSegkj5pTl8rPRI_YQeDPnJixyRiHQc

Wishing you and your families health,

Julianne Prettyman
2nd Grade Teacher
To whom it may concern,

I am a concerned parent in Washoe County school district and I would like to voice my opinion about the upcoming academic year. There is no doubt that the 2020-2021 year will be a challenge because of the unknown concerning Covid-19, however, I feel very strongly that Washoe County school district should offer normal school with a standard schedule to every student that would like to learn in person. My teenagers are very much negatively effected emotionally and psychologically by distance learning. My son in particular has been experiencing so much depression from the isolation. Social interactions are so important at this age. The mental health and serious decline in educational learning is more detrimental to students than physical health issue. Distance Learning packages were ineffective in teaching anything to my children during the past few months. I have the following comments:

1. Please allow the individual schools more authority and autonomy in making decisions that are right for their teachers and their students. What may be issues facing one student body in one school may not be issues facing another student body. Since my kid high school (AACT) is small, they can make it work for students to be in school following state guidelines.  
2. Please allow the teachers to teach. Whether that is in person, on zoom, or through email and school work. Many other districts in other states used this model to challenge their students and allow them to continue their learning and progress. I felt that Washoe County fell short in this area during the spring 2020 semester.  
3. Please provide accountability in school work of students. Not allowing for accountability for student work has set a low-bar for performance and desire to learn!

I understand that some families would prefer to stay home, I agree that there should be an option for them to stay home but do not allow healthy children to not attend in person school. I really feel our students need the social development and interaction with their peers that comes from attending school. Distance learning, no matter how good or well planned out, can never be as good as in class and person instruction.

Thank you for your time and diligence to understand the situation from a parent’s perspective. I do not want to see my children miss out on critical education that they need for their future.

Sincerely,
Mimi Sombatsiri
Good morning,

I wanted to write to you today about some concerns that I have regarding WCSD's proposed start to the 20-21 school year amid the COVID-19 pandemic. I do understand that plans can be made and changed in an instant depending on state and federal guidelines. However, with WCSD's proposed plan at this point in time, I want to make my concerns known. First, I am very disappointed that there was absolutely no prior communication to staff regarding the plan before it was publicized via media outlets. Communication to staff and community has been such a priority in the recent past; I am shocked that this plan was not communicated. Second, I feel that the safety of our students and teachers, as well as other school staff are not being properly considered. We are at an all-time high in our outbreak status in Washoe County; why would we return to brick and mortar if nothing has improved since we went into the shelter in place model in March? I feel like teachers and students are now the sacrificial lambs of this outbreak. Further, if students do return, the primary focus of the teacher will be to enforce social distancing guidelines in the classroom and will take away from actual learning time. This learning time could be so much better spent via Teams or Zoom. I know that no plan is perfect, but the health and safety of our community outweigh students and staff returning to a physical school setting until the COVID-19 crisis is under better control. Thank you for considering my thoughts and feelings.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Culbert, M.S., CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist
Westergard Elementary School
1785 Ambassador Dr.
Reno, NV 89523
Dear Trustee,

I have been a teacher in the district for 25 years and I have a son going into high school in the fall. I know you have a difficult decision ahead and I certainly do not envy you – it will be impossible to make everyone happy. Personally, I think it will be a mistake to go back to in-person instruction, even by adhering to CDC guidelines. I fear that we will be putting teachers and students at risk regardless of the restrictions we put in place. The proposed model has elementary schools going back to full-capacity, in-person instruction, while middle and high schools will use a hybrid model. This is what I do not understand – either it is safe for students to go back to full capacity or it is not. This cannot be a childcare issue because the district is educating our children not simply babysitting them. If it is safe to go back for ONE, it should be safe for ALL. I’m pretty sure that we are all in agreement that the best education is every day and in person. My high school student deserves the same high-quality education as his elementary counterparts.

If we stick with distance learning, we can make it meaningful by providing new instruction through Zoom or Teams – and attendance would have to be mandatory. Additionally, students would need to be graded on the work they turn in. With this model, we could use all of our resources to ensure that ALL students have the technology and internet needed to be successful. Teachers would be trained on how to provide this instruction effectively.

With a hybrid model, teachers would need to be trained not on instruction, but on managing the strict guidelines provided by the CDC – which will likely change several times depending on the governor’s directives. Also, when students are in school, it will not feel like the school they remember. No more working in small groups, eating lunch or running around on the playground with their friends, or even hugging their teachers. For students who like school, this type of model could cause them to no longer enjoy it. And for students who find school difficult, we are taking away the few things they actually liked about school – like socializing and working together.

I realize that as a parent, I will have a choice on whether to send my child to school, but my son misses school and will want to go back if it is offered. So, if a hybrid model is the decision, please choose one that has students going to school on consecutive days. This model has group A and group B going to school every other day – this will be extremely difficult to manage because we would not be able to establish a routine in our household if that routine changes every single day.

Nevada’s COVID numbers are rising. If this trend continues, it is unlikely that this proposed plan will even come to fruition – the plan even states that distance learning may be necessary if an outbreak occurs. Educators are experts at teaching in person. Parents have plans in place for childcare before and after a regular school day. Educators will need more direction to teach via Zoom or Teams, and parents will need to prepare for what to do with their children if distance learning occurs. Isn’t it best to plan for the worst and
hope for the best? Let teachers and parents plan for distance learning so they are not scrambling at the end of the summer.

Again, if school is safe for ONE, then it should be safe for ALL.

I appreciate how difficult these decisions must be, and I trust you have our students’ best interests at heart.

Sincerely,
Janine Luciani

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
I am questioning the logic behind opening schools in person. The school board is meeting on Zoom, for safety I assume. I can understand the idea that children are supposedly less susceptible to Covid; however, most of the staff are in the same age bracket as most of the school board. Also, those children go home to parents and grandparents in that age group. The groupings in school (even socially distanced) far exceeds the dozen school board members. Not only that the ventilation system is shared among the entire building and there are few windows to open for ventilation. My concern is that opening classrooms further enables the spread of Covid 19 in the community.
Sincerely,
Laurie Newman
Good afternoon,
A question not a comment- my question is in regards to a contingency plan for K-5. Reading today that the plan is to have them back in classrooms full time, what plans are being made if we are locked down again? Is a thorough distance learning plan also being pursued? It’s hard to imagine with the current trajectory of the virus that our students will actually be back as much as we would want them to be. So what is the back-up plan?

Thank you,

Shanna Anderson

Please excuse any Typos, as this email was sent from my iPhone.
Hello,

I have been a part of the Nevada System of Higher Education for close to 5 years now. Though I may not be in the Washoe County School Administration, I believe that in person attendance of students will be severely detrimental to the safety of our community. I urge the board to reconsider their plans on having 50% of students and staff on site. If you cannot listen to me, then please listen to the medical experts. The latest findings of OSHA shows that less than 50% of businesses are complying with mandatory face masks. If even adults and businesses cannot comply, what makes one think that a child will adhere to the mask wearing policy all day?

Please do not reopen on site instruction.

Regards,
Kamil Shankar
From: Amal Singer  
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 2:28 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School Reopening

What an interesting time we live in! I do appreciate the difficulty of having to make decisions that will affect thousands of household and the future of thousands of children. I truly do not envy you the position you are in! However, as you make those decisions, I hope you keep the conditions many of our children, families, and educators labor under in mind.

I cannot speak for everyone, but I can tell you that I have been teaching at WCSD for twenty years. I am over 60 and both my husband and I have asthma. During our last week of school I found out the two of my families had contracted COVID-19. In one of those families the only member who did not show any symptoms was my student. Had we been in session, the virus would have spread through my room like wildfire. And this was before the current spike in cases in the majority of our states, including Nevada.

I do have confidence that you will keep the health and well being of all those whom you are responsible for in mind. However, as you make decisions about going back to school, please keep in mind that it is not just those in classrooms who are affected by those decisions, but also everyone who might come in contact with them is too.

What concerns me is that some of our kids also fall in the vulnerable groups. We have kids who have fought cancer, kids with asthma, kids with diabetes, kids with immunocompromised systems. As off July, 3rd in Florida, three children between the ages of 11 and 17 have died of COVID-19 and a toddler in Texas has been reported among the infected. It is a small number so far, but not insignificant to those who loved them. Our schools house many who are at risk and I would like to believe that none of us is dispensable, although I often feel that is the case.

Not much is known about this virus, and new information is added every day. My hope is that in making decisions about the health of our children, families and employees, you keep in mind the recommendations of the CDC and the experts and not bow to political pressure. We have seen the results of opening up too soon and how much more devastation it can reek. All we have to do is turn our eyes east to see the impact of throwing caution to the wind has had on states like Florida, Texas and Arizona.

Thank you for all you do to keep our students, their families, and our colleagues safe!

Sincerely,
Amal Jaser-Thornburg

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Is the district going to update our HVAC system before allowing us back in buildings?

https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2020/05/19/air-conditioning-coronavirus
Please do not see my reluctance to get back into the classroom as me being unprofessional or lazy. I would love nothing more than to be back with my students, getting hugs and laughing at their antics. Nor is it an irrational fear, for I show up to work knowing that there might at some point, be a school shooter, but fully prepared to throw myself in front of the bullets for my kids. However, this is a different situation. The virus we are battling does not only present a small possibility of befalling someone in our schools, but rather an inevitable probability.

My reluctance is a result of my lack of trust in a decision making process that will protect teachers. We have not typically been protected when we had overreaching supervisors. We have not been protected from being beaten or stabbed with pencils in our rooms. We have not been protected from poverty when for 12 years we were not given a raise while inflation ran rampant. We were not protected when politicians mandated more testing and evaluations that proved nothing but added to our stress without improving student achievement. We were not protected from a multitude of diseases when children were sent to school with fevers or throwing up. Let’s face it, our health and welfare have never been high on the leadership’s list of things to consider.

So let me ask you, why do you think I should trust that my health, welfare, and maybe life will be a priority now? Especially when I know that the people making the decision to put all of us, students, families, and staff in harms way, are discussing the logistics from the safety of their Zoom meeting.

Sent from my iPad
To whom it may concern:

As of 7/3/2020 over 130,000 Americans have died from the Covid-19 virus, over 500 of those being Nevadans. As a 30 year Reno resident, I am absolutely appalled and horrified that the WCSD board of trustees is even considering opening public schools this coming school year. This is nothing but blatant disregard for the health and well-being of students and WCSD employees. Shame on you.
To the Board of Trustees,

I am a student in the Washoe County School District and I would like to address some of the issues that I personally experienced and see as a student.

First of all, I do not fully agree with the “hybrid” plan of going back to school. I think we should go back full time instead. Personally, I learn better with hands-on assignments and having a teacher right there in front of me. I have many friends who would say the same. Attending class through online school does not give the same message as in-person schooling does. During the last couple of months of the 2019-2020 school year when we were getting the distance learning packets, it was very hard to focus on completing the work. There was no incentive or anything to look forward to, especially since I had A’s in my classes already. And, when I needed assistance with questions, the assistance I did get didn’t help. I need that in-person guidance to understand what is being taught.

The only problems I see with going back to school full-time are the masks and having a lot of students in the same room. The masks, I understand, are required by the state in public areas, but, wearing a mask does in fact restrict my breathing (I have respiratory issues), and it increases my anxiety level. I would not support going back to school if masks are required. Social distancing measures should be in place as well as temperature checks before students enter school. Anyone with a temperature would be sent home with the work they need to complete, and they would be required to attend via distance learning.

If the hybrid plan is the only option available, then what about splitting up the days between grades? Monday could be freshman, Tuesday could be sophomores, Wednesday could be a free day for disinfecting the classrooms and deep-cleaning, and then Thursday would be for the juniors, and Fridays would be for the seniors. With this arrangement, or something similar, there would not be a lot of people in one building/inclosed area. The days the students are not at school, they would be doing online school and focusing on the work they need to get help with or finished from the day they went to school.

Another thought is along the same lines, but have freshman and sophomores attend Monday and Thursday, and juniors and seniors on Tuesdays and Fridays. Still allowing Wednesday to be a deep clean day.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my comments and concerns.

Sincerely,
Allison Cenac
Academy of Arts Careers and Technology Junior student
To whom it may concern,

Distance Learning was terrible, ineffective and painful. Please allow the children to return FULLTIME this fall. Our society is based around children going to school. They need this time. Time to learn, socialize, experience life away from parents in a safe environment. As parents we do don’t have the time in this day an age to teach our children everything they need. It’s takes a village, and a big part of the village is our school system. The majority of families are dual income, leaving no one home to teach, watch or be with these kids. You must be aware of this, you must listen to us parents and caregivers. They MUST go to school and stay in school this fall.

Please remember, daycares didn’t shut down and there has not been any issues with outbreaks. It CAN be done. So please if you do open, stay open. Don’t renege on your promise and give us distance learning a month or 6 months in. If you are even thinking that is a possibility, you need to warn us parents now. We need to have the time to find an alternative schooling (i.e. private school). Be transparent with your plans. For those parents that are fearful sending their children back, give them an alternative option but for the rest of us that WANT our children to attend school in the fall please open.

Thank you for your time,
Aaren Porteur
From: Martin, Joyce
Sent: Friday, July 3, 2020 5:38 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: July 7 Meeting

Dear Board of Trustees and Dr. McNeill,

I first want to thank all of you and the task force that worked on the plan for reopening. I understand that there are many ideas to consider and there will be positives and negatives to both. The decision is difficult, and I appreciate the time you take to make difficult decisions for employees and students.

I was glad to see that the recommendation for elementary schools was to return to school full time as this is what I think is best for students, my own children included. If this recommendation is passed by the board it does leave me with some questions regarding a safe and healthy return to school.

1. How will social distance in elementary school going to be determined? I know that this will be easier for some schools, but the school I am at will have an overflow of about 50 kids once all rooms are used and spaced 6 feet apart. Also, when I saw the diagram of my room there was no space for me to be as the room was just filled with student desks.

2. Who is going to be helping classroom teachers with the rest of the kids that don’t “fit” in the classroom? Does that said classroom teacher still have to do all the planning and grading for that group of students they don’t work with? I know that board members have discussed in the last meeting, but now it is becoming more real. I don’t think that all the responsibility should be left on the classroom teacher. If for example, teachers on special assignment are to go back to the schools and help they should be a teacher with their own class or group of kids. This includes planning, assessing, grading, and reaching out to student families. If we send teachers back to schools they should be just that a teacher, and not an aide or classroom helper.

3. How will sick leave be handled? If a teacher must quarantine for two weeks do sick days have to be used? If so are we getting extra sick days? One quarantine will eat up one third of the years sick leave for a teacher.

4. If funding is cut drastically does that change our current plan?

5. Is it professional to have teacher evaluations this year when we are in the middle of a pandemic and strict social distancing?

6. Can we get an exemption from state testing this year?

7. How will SLOs be measured when a lot of best practices will be impacted by social distancing?

8. What are we doing when students refuse to follow social distancing guidelines? This includes wearing their mask and not putting their hands on others in the classroom as this will greatly impact enforcing social distancing guidelines.

9. After hearing about the 40 administrations having to social distance in (I believe) California how are we going to ensure staff is safe while at school?

10. Is PPE being provided for us throughout the year when we need it as often as needed?

Again, thank you for your hard work and your efforts in making these difficult decisions to reopen our schools.

Respectfully,

Beth Martin
Brain storm: Plan A: What about all kids go to school everyday; 8 - 11 last name A - M and then 1- 4 N-Z. For high school see my comments below. We all get 2 hours for whatever (lunch, PLC, prep, PD, sanitary needs etc...) We need to work Friday until 11 for prep and then get the rest of the day off to make up for extra work M-Th and ESP is wouldn't have to come in on Friday because they would have served their time throughout the week already.... What do you think about this idea...

Primary recess can be split in half and have an assistant or an aide take out seven kids at a time while the other kids are working independently and then the other seven or eight can go after the others come back in.

If transportation is the only thing holding us back and then we need to add money to transportation, but our school only has one bus not including the two sip buses but on a daily basis it's only 1 hour and if some busses were late that would be okay at least students would get to see their teacher everyday. Also since the middle school and high school buses travel farther.. what if they split the transportation up into two sections instead of picking up by last name picking up by neighborhood so that way they aren't going from opposite ends all the time.

a lot of teachers are concerned about what parents are going to do. so I was thinking what about getting other entities involved to partner up more with our dilemma as a community. we have the Sierra kids team up 21st century program as well as the boys & girls club. They could help us offset the complications with parents. also we have to remember that we are in a worldwide pandemic not just a district pandemic. Typical rules that we would never bend are being bent right now. Allowing a teacher if they would like to have their own child in their classroom to add one or two extra bodies to help those teachers with daycare issues should be allowable. I know that on the private sector that has been done before. I know that all of this is thinking outside of the box but in order to appease both sides we're going to need to be creative to follow CDC mandates government mandates and the Nevada department of education guidelines. My son is in the signature program in high school he is an ROTC and he is in the honors program. he deserves to go to school everyday if elementary students get to go to school everyday. We as teachers are models and we have to be equitable for all across all grade levels across all special needs and regular education students pandemic or no pandemic.

Checklist:
Class reduction
Social distancing
In-person teaching
Transportation
Contract hours

Plan B: 100% distance learning

Why I am suggesting this... I do not believe the department of education for Nevada or the board is going to approve going back to school 100% of the time for elementary students. This is not follow CDC guidelines or
the governor's mandates for health and safety. the main important thing is that we have to remember that we need to be equitable for all ages genders and abilities.

In regards to parents who are just using us for babysitting:
I know this is a sensitive subject so I want to handle what I say very delicately, I know that many parents in the past have respected us but unfortunately they looked at us more as daycare providers instead of teachers. However, I do think that this idea of teachers being glorified babysitters did change quite a bit through distance learning. I think that parents realized that what we do is a lot more than just provide free daycare for them and their attitudes had changed toward us through this process. I think that we also need to look at ourselves and respect ourselves better that we are educators first, educating the next generation of citizens to contribute and make this country better. With being a teacher also comes great responsibility. We not only teach our children how to do math reading science and social studies but we also teach behavior skills hygienic skills and safety skills. We teach this through curriculum but we also teach it through modeling. We hold ourselves and even our own children to a very high standard of accountability. Right now the entire world has been in a pandemic. Things have to be altered for hygienic and safety reasons. Everything that we know as normal I think has changed. sacrifices have been made for the health and safety of all across all entities. The proposal I had mentioned above is better then what we had previously which was 100% distance learning. it is better than having my high schooler only go to school two or three times a week when he is an honors and signature classes. it is better than having my five-year-old go to school two or three times a week. As far as daycare is concerned, as a nation we have to come together and problem-solve. This is a time where families come together and employers come together and help problem solve for their employees as we are problem-solving how to get their children educated. We are helping our families by providing half time daycare with this proposal and educating their children every day. Our number one responsibility is to make sure that this generation continues to get educated as much as they can through this pandemic and I think as a whole we can do that. Ultimately we have to put our children's education first including our own. As educators we want to try to fix all problems by looking for the patterns, but it takes a village in this case. Parents have to learn to be accountable in this process just as their employers do. we can't save the entire community and as educators we tend to try to do that ask my own family.
Amanda Jones
Intermedia SIP Teacher
STEAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Get Outlook for Android
Has the district considered the use of Acrylic or plexiglass safety barriers installation at each desk. This would separate students with something that is easily sanitized/disinfected. Classrooms could begin with full classroom sizes. The safety barriers are see through. Each desk would have to be customized in accordance with the number of students who share a work area. You see these safety barriers now at most public service areas, i.e., post offices, banks, dental offices, etc. It might even alleviate the use of masks or the option to wear a mask along with the safety barrier.
Dear WCSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill,

I want to begin by acknowledging that I know you are in a tough spot. Any decision that you could make today is likely to be met with frustration and disappointment from at least some people. As I have been thinking through possibilities, I can’t think of a single one that serves to both make everyone happy and be completely equitable for staff, students, and/or families. I heard your concern for our community during your last board meeting, and I appreciate your recognition that the decisions made by WCSD will have deep impacts on families in a number of ways. Who knew a year ago that this is something we would be working through together?!?! Wow!

That said, I also want you to know this is not my first draft of this letter. I’ve gone back and forth on how to address my concerns with regard to my own children and reopening as a staff member. Like you, I know there are sooooo many factors. But, I’ll try to streamline my thoughts.

As a parent, I know that the chances of severe illness for my children are rare. But, I also know there are cases in which children have been confirmed to have contracted COVID (for example, in Arizona [https://www.abc15.com/news/region-southeast-valley/queen-creek/23-students-8-employees-test-positive-for-covid-19-at-canyon-state-academy-in-queen-creek], Florida [https://www.miamiherald.com/news/coronavirus/article243892967.html], Texas [https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/?utm_campaign=trib-social-buttons&fbclid=IwAR1qeZPCLw4vtPUn_5Sh5eYnNajSegkJ5pI8rPRI_YQeDPnJixyRiHOC], and Nevada [https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov]) and that there are probably cases that have gone unnoticed and thus unconfirmed in children. Additionally, the CDC acknowledges that children can pass COVID to others (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/protect-children.html).

And, we know what measures to take to prevent the spread of COVID by children or adults. Clean hands often, avoid people who are sick, use physical distance, children (and adults) 2 and older wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when in public settings where physical distance is not practical, disinfect high-touch surfaces daily, and launder items regularly (from the CDC [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/protect-children.html]). In a school setting, I am concerned that physical distance is not practical. We have four children ages 2, 6, 7, and 8. I can’t keep them apart from one another for a great deal of time (let alone 5+ hours as they may have to do in a classroom, assuming lunch and recess total an hour each day), and I certainly have a difficult time keeping them away from friends and family on the occasions we have been fortunate enough to plan out the safest possible social scenarios. Can teachers reinforce hand washing? Absolutely! I do hope that we will all be mindful of how much time it will take for all of the students in a classroom to successfully accomplish that task with a limit on access to sinks. I am very grateful for our custodial staff who work diligently to clean and disinfect each day, and in our house we will be sure to launder and clean and launder and clean again. The requirement of face coverings, however, seems to be up in the air for any of the classrooms my children would be returning to, and I’m confused by that considering that we know how difficult keeping young children apart from one another can be.

The language in the proposal with regard to face coverings is too vague. The evening that the proposal came out, I was excited because I interpreted the motion to mean that all students (of any age) would be required to wear masks while on campus. In talking with colleagues and friends, there were different opinions on what was meant by the proposal. Any such mandate needs to be more clearly defined so that a) there is no question as to what is required and b) there are clear options for those families who do not feel comfortable with whatever the mandate is. (Here’s an example of verbiage from Denver Public Schools that is quite clear on what they are requiring: “… masks will be required inside the school. … we also know that some families will still not be comfortable sending their children back for in-person instruction. To address this concern, we are offering a full-time online option for next school year for kindergarten through 12th grade.” https://www.dpsk12.org/our-dps-weekly-important-update-on-our-return-to-school/?fbclid=IwAR1KtP0olD9aaQloMxCQ6CUlhQbIUX8g6HBNHn531r7ydeTECuW8b08).

Obviously, I am a proponent of masks for anyone on campus. They are shown over and over to be helpful in preventing the spread of COVID, and while my children are young and in an age group not typically affected by severe complications from COVID, their grandparents are not. It would be devastating to lose family members and others in our community given that we know we have tools to help curb the number of incidences of severe illness and death.

[I also want to take a moment to point out I have now had two instances in which I have had a hard time getting my children into their pediatrician or urgent care due to COVID procedures. As in turned away at the door and/or told that we couldn’t come in for a possible ear infection and would have to book two appointments - and if you’re hearing implications with regard to my normal platform of insurance, you’d be right! In every medical encounter, my husband or I (because we can’t be together with a child at a medical appointment) AND our child has had to have a mask. No exceptions. Period. With regard to being in step with our community, that speaks volumes to me in terms of the community expectations for face coverings.]

As a staff member, I would be remiss if I didn’t point out a couple of complications that feel unaddressed in the plan. First, without having solid numbers of students who will be returning to brick and mortar for instruction, how can we ensure we even have enough teachers and classrooms for the number of students we’ll have given restrictions for physical distancing? Do we even really know how many teachers will be returning to buildings? (e.g. The staff survey came before we had any specifics around what coming back to school would look like. Personally, if we don’t feel like it’s the safest situation for our kids to return to the building, they’ll have to stay home. And, they’re too young to stay home alone. Grandparents, who we have been working diligently to protect, are not in a position to be full-time online school facilitators. That means I’m having to stay home with them. And my site is down a certified staff member. I can’t make any of these decisions until I know what situation my kids will return to.)

Second, I am concerned about our pool of highly qualified educators in general. First, we don’t know how many people will be back in the building to begin with. Then we need to really consider what will happen in the event teachers are out of the building. We are already planning to use support educators in classroom roles, so when we don’t have subs to cover, what do we do? We won’t have anyone on-site to pull. Combining
classrooms (a strategy that we’ve had to use in the past) would negate the work we’re doing to provide for physical distance (another reason for face coverings for everyone on campus). Sub issues were present pre-COVID. That issue won’t go away now. We need a plan that protects the individuals in the building. I guess I’m sad and disappointed that the sum of the work we do as educators is being reduced to a place for kids to be while parents work. I know - I really, truly know - how much of an impact no school would have on families. But I also know that daycares are able to limit the number of children in their rooms and design policies to keep their students and staff as safe as possible. We have held our 2-year old’s spot since March and continued to pay even though he has not been attending because finding child care is extra tough and even more limited right now. Summer camps have limited group sizes and kept cohorts together. But because we are public school, we may have to sacrifice access to high quality educators and safety for students and staff so that we can serve as primary caregivers during the day? Again, I know it’s a fact - just makes me sad.

Finally, an issue I think is unavoidable no matter what but I think we should keep in the back of our minds for the future. However we decide to go back as a district, there will be some families that have access to options. Some who can choose whether or not to send their children to school - see above with regard to childcare. And other families (and even educators) who will not have the same access to that choice. In essence, there will be segregation. It won’t look the same or sound the same as it did 100 years ago, but it will happen. Again, just something that I feel like is missing from the conversation and that I think should inform our decisions in the future.

I recognize the pickle you are in. You are going to make decisions that are hard and also necessary. Please know that whatever you decide, I appreciate you!!!! Thank you for continuing to do hard things for our students, staff, families, and community!

With the most respect,
Mary Culpepper
Mommy of 4 and
Dean, Lincoln Park Elementary
To Whom It May Concern,

I am a parent of a middle school student in the district and would like to voice my opinion about the upcoming school year. I understand the concerns of the families who have written to ask for schools to open as close to normal as possible. They are understandably concerned about having childcare so that they can keep a roof over their families' heads. They also have valid concerns about the social, emotional, and academic well being of their children. Everyone wants things to return to normal.

However, we are in the midst of a pandemic and while I relate to the concerns of families, I think a hybrid model of learning is safer for students and staff. Our cases of coronavirus in Nevada are increasing faster than anywhere in the country as of today (July 3rd). Since both the return to school full-time and the hybrid model are listed as options for middle school, I wanted to voice my support for the hybrid program. It will be very difficult for families to implement it, but the safety of children and their wonderful school staff is the most important factor. I know that a distance learning model will be available. However, I think having a little bit of school will help kids have that structure and social outlet that will keep them more academically successful and emotionally stronger. A hybrid model is also easier to switch to distance learning or full-time in person learning depending on the changes in active cases of coronavirus in our community. My child has an IEP and I still prefer the hybrid model.

Lastly, I wanted to state that the health and safety of school staff is important to me as a parent. I can't tell you how much Washoe County teachers and two administrators have touched the lives of my child and turned his trajectory around. Please make their safety a priority even if they are not as persuasive as the many parents who are concerned about childcare. They have given so much to our children and we would like you to make their safety a priority.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Lewis
Hello,
First, thank you for your hard work in seeking a viable solution for returning to school this fall. This is a scary time for all of us. I really appreciate everyone's persistent and thoughtful efforts at trying to keep people safe while also ensuring that our main purposes, to teach and to learn, remain at the forefront of our work.

I'm a teacher in the district, and just like every other teacher I know, I am eager to get back to the work that was abruptly taken away by the virus in March. After reading some of the public comments, I wanted to interject some important considerations that are not yet acknowledged there. The Board and WCSD personnel are likely already aware of this, but even so I wanted to emphasize the existing shortage of bus drivers and substitute teachers and the impact of this within the context of COVID-19. Even if most children have strong immune systems, they could still be carrying the disease while asymptomatic, and might then infect a bus driver or teacher or other staff member who would then display more severe symptoms and be unable to work. In that situation, who will fill in for the staff member who is out sick and quarantined for a week or two, at the minimum? I worry that operating schools and buses even at 50% capacity is still a risk to the safety of most staff, and I hope people understand that this has far-reaching implications beyond just the health of the affected staff members.

From what I have observed, many of our substitute teachers and substitute bus drivers are older and retired, and if they are coming in to cover a class or a bus route where COVID-19 is known to be circulating, they will very likely be unwilling to put themselves at proven risk for such little pay. It is hard enough trying to find substitute teachers and drivers in normal times, even though we desperately rely on them; in our current environment, it's difficult to predict it being anything but worse. In addition, there are many essential jobs at schools that do not have an option for substitutes, and what will happen to the daily flow of school if those staff become ill and no one is available to replace that job function, for potentially weeks at a time?

With numbers in Washoe currently on the rise, the health of all staff needs to be taken into consideration, and this has a far-reaching impact beyond a simple courtesy of protecting individual staff members. In fact, without this consideration being the baseline of what we can realistically offer our families, we might find ourselves in a situation where transportation on buses, actual instruction from certified teachers, and essential functions such as attendance checks and support from discipline and counseling offices, can't happen at all for significant numbers of our students during large or even most portions of the upcoming school year.

Again, I realize this situation is a terrible one that none of us wanted, and I acknowledge the difficulties in any decisions that lay ahead, including the hardships on families which are the very people we serve. As a teacher, I assure everyone that the best interests of students are on the minds of myself and every staff member I know.

Respectfully yours,
Christie Loar
From: Morgan Dusek  
Sent: Saturday, July 4, 2020 10:05 AM  
To: Public Comments; Batchelder, Jennifer; BoardMembers  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on 2020-2021 Year

WCSD Reopening Board,

I want to both thank you and commend you for your proposal for the 2020-2021 school year. Allowing students to be present in school as much as possible is the most important factor and I think the proposal does just that. Having Elementary school students present at school Monday through Friday is crucial to their education and social emotional skills. We can use every space in the schools to make sure that classes are 20 students or fewer. These spaces include music rooms, counselor offices, multi-purpose rooms, cafeterias, etc. As stated in the proposal, it is logical to use non certified teachers to monitor students working independently at given times throughout the school day. Our students are the future and we all know the negative impacts that are inevitable to happen when kids are not present in school. Child abuse, malnutrition, depression, and lack of education are to name a few. Elementary school students can not be left alone at home so if children are not in school Monday through Friday you would be asking the average family to have one parent be unemployed or only employed part time. This is not feasible for 99% of Washoe County Families. If our casinos can be open, then our schools can too.

Thank you,
Morgan Dusek
Board of Trustees

It is likely that my questions will be answered during the presentation, but I wanted to ask them just to make sure. On the slide captioned Full Distance Learning (COVID-19 Response Update & Recommendations, Slide 8), absent a shutdown or exposure to COVID, it seems to provide elementary students with just one option for full distance learning: Northstar Academy.

First, what is Northstar Academy? Is that just another way of saying North Star Online School? Registration for North Star is currently full. In addition, North Star is traditionally for strong readers who are independent and highly motivated.

If Northstar Academy is North Star Online School, will registration re-open? Will North Star be able to serve students with IEPs or who otherwise may not meet the stringent criteria for North Star?

What will a typical day/week of distance learning look like for elementary students? Will they be assigned to teachers based on their normal school zone? What will be expected of parents?

Finally, will all students be able to register for and complete the school year without having to go into a physical location?

Thank you and good luck.

Steven McCoy
Dear Trustees,
I trust you have the best interests of the school children and community at heart. These are certainly hard times to plan for.
As a parent of an 5th grade elementary school student, I request you have a 3rd option for elementary schoolers, in addition to full day school or home schooling.
A elective hybrid model of some in class/some virtual learning, similar to the middle school or high school proposals, would be beneficial to some parents who would like their children to limit their in-person interactions (for safety), but would also like them to go to school in some aspect for the social interaction.
Please consider adding this alternative option, in addition to what you currently have planned.
This will provide more choices for parents, so they can make the best decisions for their families.
Homeschooling isn’t the right choice for a lot of families, but until the COVID-19 situation is under control, sending our children to school 5 days a week isn’t necessarily the best choice either.
Best Regards,
Laura Varnon

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Board Members and Dr. McNeill,

First of all thank you so much for the multitude of hours you have spent considering the needs of our students in WCSD. I have read many letters and posts from numerous parents and staff members. I have deduced that most parents would like their children back in school. Understandably, children are at low risk to contract covid. I too miss my students immensely and feel academically, socially and emotionally students need to be back in school.

On the other hand, I have not heard or read much about how the needs of the teachers will be addressed. There are those of us who are at high risk due to our age or simply live with a high risk significant other. Teachers in middle and high school have the opportunity to teach distance learning. Elementary school teachers are expected to be physically back to school. What opportunity will elementary school teachers have to opt out of brick and mortar teaching? How do I know what my students will bring with them from their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles?

Many individuals have cited The American Academy of Pediatrics' guidance which "strongly advocates that all policy Doctors Call For Reopening Schools Despite Coronavirus Crisis : Coronavirus Live Upda... Page 1 of 22 https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/06/29/884638999/u-s-pediat... 6/30/2020 considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school." The guidance says "schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being.”

These guidelines do note that adult school staff are more at risk compared to young children and need to be able to distance from other adults as much as possible — no in-person faculty meetings, no class visits by parents. And they emphasize the need to make accommodations for students who are medically fragile or have special health care needs or disabilities.

However, these guidelines don't necessarily address the health concerns of America's teachers or their willingness to return to in-person teaching.

Federal data show nearly a third of teachers are over 50, putting them in a higher risk category when it comes to the disease. Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, for example, recently announced its reopening plans, offering families a choice between two days a week of in-person classes or an all-remote schedule plus extra intervention on a third day for students who need it.

The county's three educator unions resisted, arguing in a statement that remote learning should continue. "Our educators are overwhelmingly not comfortable returning to schools," said Tina Williams, president of Fairfax County Federation of Teachers. "They fear for their lives, the lives of their students and the lives of their families.

In closing, I just ask that you also address the needs of the vulnerable population of teachers who are greatly concerned about returning to school in August.

Thank you for your kind consideration during this immensely challenging time in history.

Sincerely,

Kathryn A. Miles, M.Ed., NBCT
Marvin Moss Elementary School
Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

As you weigh the competing factors in the choice regarding whether and how to reopen schools this August, I encourage you to weigh most heavily the needs of those students who are most disadvantaged. Particularly in this climate of heightened awareness of systemic racism, it is imperative that our school system's choices do not further preexisting achievement gaps. Systemic racism is not always driven by intent, but by the choices of organizations which lead to unequal outcomes. While the data from this spring's forced experiment in at-home learning has not yet been fully collected or analyzed, there are early signs that children coming from heavily resourced homes continue their upward learning trajectory, while others flounder.

A recent study by the nonprofit ParentsTogether found the following distressing results:

- “Parents from low-income homes are ten times more likely to say their kids are doing little or no remote learning (once a week or less) (38% vs. 3.7%)”
- “Kids from low-income homes are three times more likely to have consistent access to a device (32% vs 10%) and five times more likely to go to a school not offering distance learning materials or activities at all (11% vs 2%).”
- “Parents from low income homes are twice as likely to say remote learning is going poorly or very poorly (36% vs. 18%) and are more likely to say their kid’s work is mostly or entirely busy work (35% vs. 19%).”
- “Kids from homes with incomes of less than $25,000 a year are ten times more likely to be doing little to no remote learning than their peers from homes making more than $100,000 a year. 13% of those from low-income homes have either no device or no internet, compared to 1% of families with incomes greater than $50,000. And nearly 40% of parents whose kids should be receiving individualized support say they are not receiving any support at all.”

The New York Times has also weighed in on expected discrepancies in outcomes likely to result from distance learning: “New research suggests that by September, most students will have fallen behind where they would have been if they had stayed in classrooms, with some losing the equivalent of a full school year’s worth of academic gains. Racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps will most likely widen because of disparities in access to computers, home internet connections and direct instruction from teachers” (Goldstein, 6/5/20). They further note, “When all of the impacts are taken into account, the average student could fall seven months behind academically, while black and Hispanic students could experience even greater learning losses, equivalent to 10 months for black children and nine months for Latinos, according to an analysis from McKinsey & Company, the consulting group” (Goldstein, 6/5/20).

Additional efforts at surveying the effectiveness of distance learning highlighted ongoing distressing trends as reported in a recent roundup by Chalkbeat:

- “Teachers of low-income students and students of color were much more likely to report that their students were not regularly engaged in remote learning.”
- “In one survey, 51% of teachers in high-poverty schools reported that most of their students were participating daily in distance learning. For affluent schools, the number was 84%.”
- “About 20% of parents of children with disabilities said their child was not receiving required special education services in May. Among 501 school district superintendents from across the country who responded to a survey, 83% said that providing special education services was difficult to provide equitably during remote learning.”
What of the risks posed by bringing children back into the classroom? Data is starting to come in. Initially there were fears that schools might serve as “super spreader” hotspots. Results look very promising that this is not the case. We can look to the EU: “Twenty-two European Union member states have now re-opened child cares and schools in some capacity, and none have had COVID cases spike as a result. In fact, no nation in the entire world reports child cares or elementary schools as significant sources of transmission” (Haspel, 6/10/20). Additionally, from a study in Australia which focused on transmission within schools, they “looked at 18 infected teachers and students in 15 schools and found that despite them coming into contact with 863 people at the schools, only two had been infected” (Haspel, 6/10/20). As epidemiologist Daniel Halperin summarized, “[C]ontact tracing studies in China, Iceland, Britain and the Netherlands failed to locate a single case of child-to-adult infection out of thousands of transmission events analyzed” (Halperin, 5/29/20). It is good news to hear from Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the World Health Organization’s chief scientist: “Children are less capable of spreading it even if they get the infection, and certainly are at very low risk of getting ill from the disease,” adding that, “there have not been many cases described of children transmitting it to others, particularly within school settings” (Haspel, 6/10/20).

I am personally curious why data is not being more rigorously gathered from the child care centers in our own community which have remained open throughout the school closure period. My three-year-old daughter and six-year-old son have attended Caughlin Preschool in northwest Reno continuously since mid-March; they generously opened their doors to the elementary aged children of health care providers and first responders after schools closed. They have not had a single child or family with COVID-19. This appears similar to the experience at YMCA of the USA and New York City's Department of Education, who “have been caring for, collectively, tens of thousands of children since March, and both tell NPR they have no reports of coronavirus clusters or outbreaks” (Kamenetz, 6/24/20).

The latest family wellness email from the district sent on 7/2/20 stated that reopening plans will be “based on a foundation of no harm while ensuring that the basic needs of our students, families, and staff are being met, and ensuring equitable access and maintaining high academic expectations for all our students.” The difficulty with this situation is that there is no such thing as no harm. This is a situation in which leadership must weigh competing risks. I assert that the harm done to disadvantaged students by keeping them away from the classroom is real, present, and large. The risk of harm to students based on the likelihood of COVID-19 appears relatively small, much smaller than the risk we saw during the 2019-20 school year of children being hit by cars while trying to access school grounds -- more than a dozen hit with one fatality (McAndrew, 1/27/20). Harm did happen but we did not manage that harm by keeping children home from school. The greater risk of harm appears to be that of adults in the school environment passing COVID-19 to one another and certainly there should be measures put in place to try to mitigate that risk. Some with underlying health conditions may need to be reassigned to positions where they can work remotely.

As I was drafting this email, the American Academy of Pediatrics released their conclusions in their “COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry” document. I was gratified to see them highlight the importance of children’s physical presence in school being placed as top priority. I hope you will do the same.

Sincerely,
Katherine Claypoole McKenzie, Psy.D.
Parent to a first grader at Westergard Elementary

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References:


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Additional Reading:


Dear Board Members,

Thank you for all the hard work that you have done virtually to get our schools re-opened.

I have a question about the blended approach as a parent of more than one child. If a blended approach is pursued at the secondary level and kids go to school for certain days a week and have the rest of the days distance learning, will there be a way that all children from the same households will be able to attend school on the same days?

Thank you,
Kelly Roper

Sent from my iPhone
Good morning,
With the difficult decisions ahead, it would be comforting for many to buy a little bit more time by starting school in September with students full time.

This gives educators time to adjust and adhere to the “new normal” set of regulations. The transitions are going to take time and we will need time to adjust.

Thank you
Sent from my iPhone
I wanted to be up front about the lack of a plan for elementary schools.

Have you looked into the building designs and seen where the students will go with the non certified teachers?

All of the classrooms, except one, are full at my site.

We already have a substitute shortage, what if a teacher or student tests positive? Will testing be provided?

If the district provides only one mask, how will they be cleaned? What happens if a child forgets their mask? What if a mask becomes dirty or soiled during the school day?

I am sorry I do not have an answer for many of these issues, but would recommend a half day or alternating day schedule like middle and high school. Maybe consider partnering with local organizations to help with childcare or encourage parents to partner alternating childcare. Look at other districts to see their ideas for elementary schools, because leaving it this way does not seem like there is a plan.

While elementary aged students are not as affected by the virus, many staff and adults in these children's lives are.

Thank you,

Melissa Sandoval
Dear Board of Trustees,

I am reaching out to you as a parent and as an elementary teacher in WCSD. I understand you have heard arguments in favor of both opening schools in person and distance learning for the upcoming school year. I am writing to you to ask you to please consider options for distance learning. When we took part in distance learning at the end of last school year, teachers were really not able to teach. My perception was that we were to support the distance learning packets, even after hearing feedback from parents. We were not able to actually teach, but we wanted to. We understand how hard it is to be a parent homeschooling our kids, as many of us are parents ourselves. Let us help be the solution to a wonderful distance learning experience, if need be.

The numbers in Washoe County are continually rising and more and more data is coming out to support that this virus is airborne. [https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/239-experts-with-1-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne/ar-BB16I0RP?ocid=spartan-ntp-feeds](https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/health-news/239-experts-with-1-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne/ar-BB16I0RP?ocid=spartan-ntp-feeds)

The article states, "Ventilation systems in schools, nursing homes, residences and businesses may need to minimize recirculating air and add powerful new filters. Ultraviolet lights may be needed to kill viral particles floating in tiny droplets indoors".

Additionally, I am concerned that once we reopen schools, we will just need to close them back down and here is an example of just why: [https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/70-cases-covid-19-french-schools-days-opening-70740749](https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/70-cases-covid-19-french-schools-days-opening-70740749)

I know there are many educators who feel safe going back to school in person this fall, but there are some who are not. Some teachers have underlying health conditions and do not have a place on the front lines when they don't feel safe. We want to educate children. We want to be with them in person, but not at the risk of our own health. I understand both sides need to be considered, but what I am asking is that you do not put us all into the same bucket. Please give teachers who do not feel safe returning back in person options so that they may continue to educate kids and have trust in them that they will do a great job!

Gina Derryman
WCSD teacher
Dear Sirs and Madams,

I have been a faithful employee of this district for 17 years. I have held classrooms positions and coaching positions. I have lived through the School Improvement Grant, which about did me in. To be told your best efforts where not enough and that many of us would not be staying was horrific. The trauma it caused in my life lingers still. It was especially horrific because it didn’t make a difference. Last years restructuring of many Title I schools (one of which I worked at) brought back memories from the SIG years.

And yet I stay. I stay because educating is my calling. I stay because I want to support my fellow colleagues and watch children grow. I stay because it matters to me.

The school district’s recommendations for a return to school put me in an impossible position. I am a Mom first ... always.

I have a child in elementary and a child in the middle school GT magnet. I recognize there is no good answer for a return to school ... but I cannot see how the districts current recommendations allow for a safe and equitable return to school. My 12 year old son will learn on his own on the off days. He should not be expected to behave like an adult in the midst of this pandemic. He is brilliant but that does not translate into a student motivated to learning on his own. He thrives on an in-class setting, working with his peers to solve real-world, relatable problems.

My daughter attends elementary school and will be in 4th grade. How is it okay that she will spend half of her time being “watched” because class sizes are large? Will her principal be responsible for that time? What happens when there are issues within the school that need to be attended to by the principal ... who will “watch” my daughter then?

Lastly, I am a Literacy Specialist at a Title I school. According to the “plan” I will be one of those people responsible for “watching” children. I am absolutely okay with that ... but I will also need to help relieve teachers for their duty free time. I will be exposed to many more children than just the 20 in one classroom. I will be entering and supporting many classrooms. I will interact with many adults. And let’s be real ... I will have a hard time maintaining 6 feet of distance from 5 and 6 year olds. They love their teachers. They love the adults in their lives because we are a constant many do not find at home.

Teachers should not be expected to expose themselves to large numbers of students and teachers without district provided protective gear. If teachers must act as front line workers, they should be given the tools and resources like front line workers.

Paul LaMarca commented that “children will need to just learn a new set of behaviors” in order to attend school. Why is it okay to put this pandemic on the backs of our teachers and students? I fear the trauma caused by teachers trying to enforce these “new set of behaviors” will cause long lasting damage ... worse than has already been inflicted.

I feel strongly that EVERY student should get to attend school EVERYDAY. If parents choose to keep their students home then they can. I believe that all children deserve their classroom teacher in front of them EVERYDAY. They are best suited to ensure equitable learning.
I recognize there is no answer that will leave our students untouched by social and emotional damage. I do not agree that Distance Learning is the answer either. I do not envy you the difficult decisions you will have to make. I am torn myself between what is best for my children and the school I love to work at.

Thank you,
Danielle McIntosh

Sent from my iPhone
I know that many parents, students and faculty took your survey about reopening in August. It would be wonderful if you made the results available to us.

I also understand that you are considering a mixed online and physical school for our high school students. I believe they should be able to go back to school full-time without online. If you can allow the elementary schools to open up full-time, then the high schools should be the same. It seems that the only reason you open elementary schools full-time is due to parent babysitting issues. Our high schoolers deserve the same opportunity as the other grades in reopening. I don’t believe the district can give the same educational standards online as in the classroom. Please don’t cheat our high schoolers of a good education. They need to be college ready.

Thanks,

Annette Miller

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Is the District getting all the technology returned and accounted for to plan and prepare for the new school year? The IT department will definitely need more man power. Every student will need a WCSD computer and WiFi at home. The students and parents all need to be educated in the “flip” classroom model. Most importantly, they need to know that it is not an automatic pass and that distant learning will always be a part of their students educational future.
To Whom It May Concern:

I teach kindergarten in WCSD and I have several concerns about returning to school without sufficient precautions in place to ensure the safety of students, staff, and all their families.

I’ve noticed in the public comments that have already been submitted that several people are falsely claiming that young children do not transmit Covid-19. This is not the case. While young children may be less likely to exhibit severe symptoms, studies suggest that young children carry the same viral load as adults and are as likely to transmit the virus (Jones et al., 2020). Recent studies have also shown that the virus has mutated to become more infectious and that many more people may be asymptomatic carriers who can still transmit the virus than previously known.

I understand that everyone would like to return to normal but when Nevada is hitting record highs in numbers of new cases every day, why are we decreasing the restrictions that were put in place when the situation was far less dire? If evidence-based, cost-benefit analysis determines that in-person schooling is needed, please make sure that your plan addresses these issues:

1. REQUIRED FACE COVERINGS for all staff and students. Even if masks are required for all students and staff, I think we need to be realistic about the likelihood of five year olds being able to keep masks on for any length of time, let alone a whole school day. What will the consequences be for students/staff who do not keep their masks on?
2. SMALLER CLASS SIZES. It is difficult enough to maintain order in a room with 20 to 30 five year olds without having to make sure that they are adhering to social distancing requirements, face covering precautions and hygiene.
3. MANDATORY QUARANTINE for all students and staff exposed to a student who contracts Covid-19 or lives with a family member who tests positive.

Teachers regularly give an abundance of their own time and money to meet the needs of their students. They should not be asked to risk their lives or the health of their families as well.

Respectfully,
Jessica Gorin

Reference
Dear Board Members,

Many teachers have been asking about sick days and the Families First Coronavirus Act. We are quite concerned that when we return to classrooms and if we contract the virus it could potentially wipe out all of our contracted sick days. This would mean we would have no sick days left if we got other illnesses and/or had doctors appointment for ourselves or our family members beyond the 15 days provided by our contract.

Also, what will happen when we have a confirmed case in our school or classroom? How will the affect our students, staff and families? Will a student or staff memeber be required to be tested if they come to school sick, unknowingly or knowingly or call out of school due to an illness that resembles the symptoms of Covid?

Thank you for the consideration of my questions and concerns as you make the best possible decisions for our district.

Sharon Cabangon
Clayton Pre-AP Academy
GT Math Teacher
Good evening Superintendent McNeill and Board Members –

I am a parent to an incoming Kindergartener for the 20 – 21 school year, as well as a middle school teacher in the Washoe County School District. I wish more than anybody that things could return to “normal” or a sense of “normalcy” when it comes to school. I miss my students (who I would have again next year), I miss my colleagues, and I miss the classroom. I have been looking forward to my daughter starting Kindergarten and doing all of the fun things that they do in Kindergarten. Unfortunately, right now, in the middle of this pandemic, I do not believe this is possible and have some concerns regarding the proposed plans for the 20 – 21 school year.

1) COVID cases are currently rising in Washoe County. Schools were closed when COVID cases were in the hundreds and now we are getting a hundred new cases almost daily. This is an outbreak. How is this safe to go back face-to-face? Especially when we have no idea what the numbers will be in August. It also seems unfair and hypocritical that the board is meeting virtually, and not face-to-face, but expecting teachers and staff to report in August physically.

2) Many people have expressed that kids do not get sick or their rate of infection is less. However, in Washoe County currently 11% of COVID infections have been 0-19 year olds. Imagine that at the school level.

3) What happens at the school site if a student/staff member/family member gets sick? Does everyone at the school self-quarantine for the two weeks? Only the teachers and students that had direct contact with said student or staff member? How would that work? How would a student or parent report a possible infection? Would students or staff in quarantine be required to participate in distance learning?

4) Would teachers/staff members be required to use their sick days if they did have to quarantine in case of a possible infection or if a teacher/staff member tested positive for COVID-19 or would they be allowed to use the CARE Act? If staff has to use their own sick days, many would come into work when they are not supposed to for fear of losing sick days, thus possibly infecting more people.

5) I do have a concern of A/B days at the middle and high school level. On the days that students are not at physical school, I do not know where they would be. These students could be gathering with other students, friends, family members that do not live at their house spreading the virus even more. Then they would come to school and infect teachers, staff, and other students. Who will be required to provide the digital learning lessons during a students’ “digital day?” It would be a lot of work to do both physical and digital lessons for teachers.

6) Enforcing masks in the classroom seems like it would be a constant distraction. Students whose parents do not take mask wearing seriously will not wear them and teachers will continuously tell them (taking time from instruction) to put them back on. How will wearing masks be enforced?

7) Last, all of the safety equipment, extra teachers, rooms, and proper ventilation require extra funding that the school district just does not have.

With the way that numbers are going, we are going to have to punt again with distance learning when this whole time we should have been preparing to go to distance learning. Teachers again, will be put in a horrible position when it comes to that.

I know you all have a tremendous burden in the decisions for the school district employees and students. I appreciate your time in listening to not only my concerns but the concerns of all the teachers, staff, and parents. I trust you will make a decision that is safe and beneficial for everyone.
Thank you for your time,

**Amanda Alverson, M.S. Education**  
7th Grade Science

“Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.” - Carl Sagan

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I am a member of the Mamie Towles Elementary and Clayton Middle Schools PTOs, with kids on both schools. As we stand, Nevada still has the highest rate of contagion (R) of the country, and there is no vaccine for COVID; and social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing our hands frequently are still our only mechanisms to prevent and/or slow down contagion.

We are not ready to open schools in a month. Kids will not social distance in a school environment, and they will not uniformly wear a mask and wash often. Even if we somehow introduce enough space in the classrooms by either introducing temporary additional rooms, we can’t ensure social distancing in the transportation, during lunch, during recesses, and coming and going to school. The times in between matter, and there is no avoiding those or the responsibility that the school bears by reopening the classrooms in August.

I don’t feel comfortable sending the kids back in August and prefer to keep the distance learning model through the rest of calendar year 2020, with a reevaluation of what will happen during the second half of the school year as 2021 approaches.

If schools will physically reopen, then the parents must have the option to homeschool with district provided materials that align with the content seen in class to be able to balance safety and education.

I’m available to provide further clarifications to my statements if needed, and will try to view the YouTube livestream of Tuesday’s meeting.

Thank you.

Manuel T. Reiner – he/him

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks would spread to surrounding communities. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed.

People love that teachers are willing to self-sacrifice for their students. While it’s true that many teachers feel that they have a higher calling to fill unpaid labor fills gaps in underfunded public services that should have been filled by other professionals, such as academic counselors, therapists, after-school program coordinators, coaches, or custodians. During COVID-19, it’s time to say no, teachers have not signed up to die in service. **If we keep this unreasonable perspective, our colleagues, our colleagues’ family members, our students’ family members, and likely some of our students will die.**

Teachers must pledge not to return to campus until Washoe County reports no new cases of COVID-19 for at least 14 days; this is the bare minimum for safety and belief of science. Teachers need options, choices and respect. I propose the time is now for Washoe County, Nevada, to deal with this pandemic, requiring local, state, and federal governments to implement the public health and economic relief measures that should have been in place months ago.

For now, we need robust distance learning, universal Internet and computer access, and community services to help students meet students basic needs. As teachers, we can’t risk our health to go back. **We love our jobs, we love what we do,** , but when push
comes to shove, this is not worth dying over, we should not be forced to return to campus during a dangerous pandemic. As teachers, we need to exercise our power to withhold our labor until our conditions are met. A half-assed regime of physical distancing and constant sanitation that we are expected to enforce is not going to work. And when that time comes, we simply must refuse to return until the pandemic is over.

Thank you!

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Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks will spread to teachers and our community. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed.

People love that teachers are willing to self-sacrifice for their students. While it’s true that many teachers feel that they have a higher calling to fill unpaid labor fills gaps in underfunded public services that should have been filled by other professionals, such as academic counselors, therapists, after-school program coordinators, coaches, or custodians. During COVID-19, it’s time to say no, teachers have not signed up to die in service. If we keep this unreasonable perspective, our colleagues, our colleagues’ family members, our students’ family members, and likely some of our students will die.

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Thank you!

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone
Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks will spread to teachers and our community. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed. People love that teachers are willing to self-sacrifice for their students. While it’s true that many teachers feel that they have a higher calling to fill unpaid labor fills gaps in underfunded public services that should have been filled by other professionals, such as academic counselors, therapists, after-school program coordinators, coaches, or custodians. During COVID-19, it’s time to say no, teachers have not signed up to die in service. If we keep this unreasonable perspective, our colleagues, our colleagues’ family members, our students’ family members, and likely some of our students will die.

Teachers must pledge not to return to campus until Washoe County reports no new cases of COVID-19 for at least 14 days; this is the bare minimum for safety and belief of science. Teachers need options, choices and respect. I propose the time is now for Washoe County, Nevada, to deal with this pandemic, requiring local, state, and federal governments to implement the public health and economic relief measures that should have been in place months ago.

For now, we need robust distance learning, universal Internet and computer access, and community services to help students meet students basic needs. As teachers, we can’t risk our health to go back. We love our jobs, we love what we do, but when push comes to shove, this is not worth dying over, we should not be forced to return to campus during a dangerous pandemic. As teachers, we need to exercise our power to withhold our labor until our conditions are met. A half-assed regime of physical distancing and constant sanitation that we are expected to enforce is not going to work. And when that time comes, we simply must refuse to return until the pandemic is over.

Thank you!
For reflection....posted by a colleague from the Antioch School District in CA.

Below is a Facebook post from a doctor at Duke. She works on the Covid unit. She wrote this as a way to express her feelings about schools opening based on the experience she has had first hand with Covid and from the perspective of a parent with two young children. She makes several points that people often don’t mention, but none more striking to me than the point on morbidity vs mortality. Her name has been erased to protect her privacy.

Her post

7/2: SCHOOL. There has been much discussion and debate about what school will look like next year. Today, Wake county announced that they will have kids in a rotation of 1 week in person/ 2 weeks remote. I expect Chapel hill will shortly follow suit, Or have some similar hybrid plan. I keep getting asked this question repeatedly from friends — “well, you are a COVID Doctor. What do YOU think about sending your kids back to school”. My answer is my own, deeply personal, and not reflective of my employer. And I recognize and appreciate that many of my colleagues in the same position as me have different views. BUT. Since so many keep asking me, here is my answer, as both a parent and a frontline covid doctor. Do with it as you choose:

My family is electing to remote school next year. The reasons for this are multi-factorial:

-this disease scares the shit out of me. After 4 months caring for covid patients, we certainly know a lot more. But a lot of it isn’t reassuring. Covid is now known to cause lung, heart, kidney, brain, and clotting system complications. And that’s just what we know about the immediate effects. We have no idea — NONE — what the longer term effects might be. I am not willling to risk the health and vitality of my kids to find out what those long term side effects might be

-morbidity vs mortality. I’ve talked about this in prior posts. Yes, very few children actually die of covid. BUT many young people still get very very sick. Intubated. Put on ecmo. Pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome. Kawasaki-like illness with coronary artery aneurysms. These are serious issues with long term effects. Just because covid doesnt kill you; it doesn’t mean you will ever be quite the same either.

-the teachers and staff. My god, how can we ask this of them? After cautiously sheltering in place for months, we are now asking them to basically jump into the lions den and interact with hundreds of children with thousands of household contacts. The more exposure you have, the more risk you have. Trust me, we WILL see teachers and bus drivers and cafeteria workers and other staff — and their family members— who get sick and die.

-I want to continue having my parents involved in my kids life. If we strictly isolate, I feel safe doing so. But If the kids go back to school and interact with dozens of kids from dozens of homes, the risk to my parents increases exponentially.

-I do strongly believe that since we CAN keep our kids home without significant detrimental effects, we SHOULD. There are so, so many people in our community whose lives and careers and finances will be
devastated by having to do remote learning. We will not be. We can do so for a year without undue harm to my kids or our careers or our finances. I choose to keep my kids home so that families who absolutely cannot do so have just a little bit more safety at school.

I acknowledge that we are EXTREMELY privileged for me to only work part-time clinically and am able to do my non-clinical work remotely and help home school. And my parents live here and are willing and fully engaged to help us home school during the weeks I absolutely have to be in the hospital.

This seems like a god%$^ nightmare for any family with a single parent, two working parents who cannot work from home, families with out extended family support, and families with ESL, kids with IEPs, exceptional children, etc etc.

I have zero answers as to how to make it better. Zero. I don’t want kids falling behind disproportionally because their parents cannot afford to home school or hire tutors. I also don’t want to see kids sick from covid and dead teachers.

Any plan than is less than 100% not in-person seems doomed to only worsen and exacerbate the achievement gap between the haves/have nots.

But — Any plan that involves more in person time also puts kids and teachers more at risk. And these teachers quite frankly do not get paid enough to risk their and their families lives.

I have no answer. It is impossible.

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do  -Rumi
From: isela vizcarra
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 11:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please read

Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks will spread to teachers and our community. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed.

People love that teachers are willing to self-sacrifice for their students. While it’s true that many teachers feel that they have a higher calling to fill unpaid labor fills gaps in underfunded public services that should have been filled by other professionals, such as academic counselors, therapists, after-school program coordinators, coaches, or custodians. During COVID-19, it’s time to say no, teachers have not signed up to die in service. If we keep this unreasonable perspective, our colleagues, our colleagues’ family members, our students’ family members, and likely some of our students will die.

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Thank you!
Hello,

I am a teacher for WCSD. I am very concerned about the districts plan to re-open schools. We do not yet have scientific consensus on COVID-19 on how it is spread and on high risk groups. I understand that the district thinks we do, but there are young people who die from coronavirus every week with no pre-existing conditions and there are older people who catch the virus and exhibit no symptoms. Quite frankly we do not have enough knowledge about coronavirus to make any claims about the disease at this point. What we do know is that it is highly contagious and airborne. As a high school teacher, I cannot imagine having 20+ students in my room socially distanced, for seven hours a day, and making sure everyone is 6 feet apart, and wearing their masks all day. This does not sound like something that can happen in every single classroom across the district. I know that the district has said that once an outbreak occurs, they will close schools. This outbreak is inevitable, and therefore I am asking the district to implement fully digital learning for the fall semester. If we do this sooner rather than later, teachers can collaborate to design distance-learning curriculum and online learning methods that will be effective for their students. We can also make sure that our students have access to technology and the Internet, or to alternate means to access needed materials. If we wait until the last minute, digital learning will be ineffective and teachers will not have time to plan properly. The number of Covid cases in our state are rising dramatically every day. As a matter of fact, our state was the fastest growing in terms of COVID-19 cases last week. I understand wanting to return to normal. Believe me I want to get back into the classroom and be with my students, but we must listen to science. Science must take precedent over what people want or feel is safe. And science tells us that reopening is not safe. I ask that the district exercise caution and implement digital learning this fall. I am hopeful that we will see medical advancements over the course of the next six months, including effective treatments and hopefully a vaccine that would allow schools to reopen safely in January 2020. However, we are not at that place and that place cannot be forced, no matter how much the district wants it or how much teachers want it or how much families want it.

Best,

Clint Toledo-Milhollin
Hello and thank you for taking the time to read this. I am concerned about the restrictions that are being considered to return kids to school. I urge you to return kids back to school without restrictions. My son is immunocompromised and we have for years relied on good hand hygiene and keeping him home when not feeling well. I think with more simple tactics kids should return without masks, gloves and social distancing. Even if you only require teachers to wear masks my son who has a hearing impairment will not be able to understand instruction and I am concerned his learning and social development will suffer. A valid option of temperature checks, frequent hand washing and sanitizing can be helpful just as it is with other outbreaks.

In addition with two “essential worker” parents we cannot do any distance learning effectively to build upon our children’s’ education. Please think of our country and our kids’ futures and educate them, allow them to socialize.

In the medical community we are seeing significant impact on mental health both children and adults alike. This rate is much higher than the death rate from COVID 19. Vaccine development and implementation for the general population is not coming anytime soon (drug and vaccine studies take time for safety and efficacy reasons).

Parents cannot reopen the economy or help in the fight of COVID 19 if our kids cannot return to school.

Thank you again,
Amber Hayes MD

Sent from my iPhone
Dear WCSD

I’m writing today as a WCSD teacher with six years experience, ranging from elementary to high school. I’m also writing as a woman who is five months pregnant and fearful about what will happen in August. As anyone who spends much time in a school will tell you, disease spreads like wildfire. I wish it weren’t so, but even after several years teaching I get sick at least twice each winter. I am a healthy person with no underlying conditions except for my pregnancy. There isn’t much known yet about long term effects of Covid on pregnant women and their fetuses, but women who are infected while giving birth are advised to separate from their babies while they recover. This would be a terrible experience in the first few weeks after giving birth, and yet it’s also the best case scenario if I contract the disease. My husband has asthma. Generally each illness that we both get manifests in a much more intense way in him than in me. Last winter we got the flu and he ended up with pneumonia. I am scared to think what would happen to him if I brought home Covid-19. I share this circumstance, not because I believe mine is more significant than anyone else’s, but because I believe it’s typical. While children are possibly safer from Covid-19 than adults, they live in homes with many generations, many health conditions, and are able to transmit the disease to family, teachers, and staff who have the same situations. School wasn’t safe to open in March, April, or May. Our cases in Washoe county have gone up significantly since then. Large events have been canceled, even outdoor events like the rib cook off, balloon races, and air races. I do not believe that being in a building with hundreds of students each day is somehow safer than these outdoor events that are no longer deemed appropriate. Recent research is showing that the disease can be airborne. Our dated air conditioning systems and poor ventilation in schools will only amplify this process.

Effective, more rigorous online instruction is necessary for the beginning of the school year. Even if schools opened, they would probably be closed down shortly due to outbreaks or possible outbreaks. And what then? We need plans in place for online instruction that teachers create and implement, not just packets. I wish this time were spent working on developing those plans. They are of course not ideal, working with students face to face is. But these are extraordinary times. This disease has exposed the weaknesses we have as a society. We depend on full time, free school. But we can’t let that blind us to the fact that it is very dangerous to open the doors at this point. We need to look at the science of the disease and use other countries as a model before opening schools and exposing our students and teachers to the risk of contracting this potentially deadly disease. I want to return to my job and teach my students as soon as possible. But our district needs to protect the most vulnerable populations, not open hastily because it’s a popular opinion.

Sincerely,

Karah English
Sarah Winnemucca elementary school
Dear President Raymond and Trustees of the WCSD Board:

I want to start by saying that I appreciate the opportunity given for parents, students and faculty to give their input on plans for next school year. I recognize that this is a very challenging situation to navigate and whatever you decide will not make 100% of the WCSD community happy. That's unrealistic to expect. With that said, I wish to express my concerns about the proposed plan.

First and foremost, I think the proposed schedule for middle school and high school students fails to address their social and emotional needs. We need to come up with a better solution to be safe at school, while allowing these students a full time school option in person. Children ages 12-18 are a vulnerable population. This is the age group that is at the highest risk for suicide, drug experimentation and sexual activity. Reducing their school structure to every other day in person leaves a lot of unsupervised time at home for these kids to fill, time that could lead them to activities they are statistically at risk of doing. One of the first questions my son asked about the hybrid model was "will I be on the same schedule as my friends?" That's one question that needs to be answered publicly -- how does the district plan to split the kids into groups "A" and "B"? Will it be by school year? Alphabet? Class schedule (i.e. -- core classes one day and electives the other day?)

Second, I feel that high school students need focused academics to help prepare them for their future. A hybrid school structure doesn't best support them. During the Spring distance learning session, my two high school students struggled more than my elementary aged kids, especially with Math. My daughter was enrolled in a college readiness math class that continued to present new information because it was linked to the university. She told me that she felt like she was teaching herself how to do it, and she didn't know if she was getting it right. She became extremely frustrated with it. My son completed the Algebra assignments and his teacher gave him feedback, but it was frustrating to him to work on problems and if he had a question, he couldn't refer to his teacher right away like he would in class. Instead he had to send her an email, wait for her to reply and in the meantime, he either got distracted or had completed his work for the day and didn't want to get it back out again. These examples are coming from a home where I was present with my kids, guiding them through their lessons, and I have previous experience homeschooling my children. Imagine what this scenario would be like for a student whose parent(s) are working and they are home alone. Better yet, what happens to that student when they can't access Teams and they either have no parent at home or a parent who isn't technologically savvy who can help them?

Third, I think it is ridiculous to think that elementary age students would be able to wear a mask all day and not have it affect classroom management or their academic advancements. Even ages 9 and up, kids could become distracted by them, they could become a toy (the new fidget spinner!) or students could misuse them. One of my issues with the mask mandate in general (statewide) is that our state leaders haven't educated the public enough on how to properly wear and take care of masks. In my work experience, I have been trained on OSHA and Infection Control guidelines, and it pains me to see people out in public wearing or handling masks improperly. If we are all going to wear them "to save lives," then we need to be wearing them properly. Otherwise, they are nothing more than a fashion accessory. The same goes for the school environment. I recognize this issue may be out of your control, as you are required to follow the governor's orders. However, the administration's recommendation that they go above what the governor has mandated, requiring all
elementary students to wear a mask is unnecessary. The primary grade levels will struggle to keep them on throughout the day.

There are so many unknowns and it is hard to plan for that. I see that the district is trying their best to create a positive learning environment for students. I think there are a lot of questions to answer before proceeding with the proposed plan. I think you should get parent feedback again, now that the proposal has been presented. A quick survey to ask families if they will still send their students back given this proposal, or if they would choose to homeschool. I have seen so many discussions on Facebook stating that people will just homeschool their kids if this is the plan. They don't want the hybrid, and they don't want the district's distance learning materials. I think once the plan is approved, the district needs to invest a lot of energy in improving their online based school model. And I think it would be helpful to see how many people ACTUALLY intend to send their kids back given these parameters.

Best wishes to you all .... not an easy discussion or an easy decision.

Thank you,
Lisa Aland

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Lisa Aland
Our family (2 children in the WCSD system) would like it entered into the record that we want school to be conducted virtually and that until there is a vaccine, on premise/traditional education is not acceptable. We have made arrangements for this to be possible and there is no technical or financial barrier to making this so.

Thank you.
I understand the scope of the problems we face. I see parents concerned with childcare as they go back to work. I understand the frustration with the distance learning this past year. Especially with it's overall ineffectiveness brought about by our district's hyper focus on reopening schools instead of improving distance learning. I share the concern with the parents who have little to no internet access, as well as the parents whose children require extra support. As we focus on the needs of our students and their families however, we must also consider how the virus will affect them.

This virus has been incredibly underestimated all throughout the state as well as the country. We are seeing a steady increase in cases and hospitalizations in the country, the state, and this county. As of writing this we have a new record of 93 new cases in a single day, and have been steadily increasing for the past month. I find the amount of testing disturbingly low and not nearly enough to detect any outbreak in a school before irreparable damage will have already been done. I see no realistic or practical solutions for keeping elementary school children compliant with guidelines.

Our students' health should be our top priority. I understand the need for our students to be back in school. But, every student who can stay home, has to. On top of that, until you can guarantee a reasonable degree of safety for all students, staff, and families, you should not, and you cannot, reopen. Due to the rise in cases, and the seemingly complete lack of respect for the guidelines put in place across the county, it is evident that the state reopened too early and the problem will inevitably get worse. Reopening in August, with the trends we see right now, would be putting our students in danger of getting sick and spreading it easily, exposing more families to the virus.

--

Austin S. Atkin
Introduction

My name is Claudia Miner, I am a 30-year Reno resident and am the Executive Director and Cofounder of the non-profit Waterford UPSTART kindergarten readiness program.

The purpose of my submission is to ask that as you contemplate how to reopen the Washoe County School District this fall that you consider providing parents of preschoolers the option of using the Waterford UPSTART on-line kindergarten readiness program as part of a mixed-delivery system that includes public schools, Head Start programs, and community-based providers. This is a cost-effective approach that provides parents of early learners with a safe and effective option to ensure their four year olds will enter kindergarten the following year truly ready for school.

To follow is a brief overview of the Waterford UPSTART program and a summary of our activities to date throughout the country and in Nevada.

Background

Waterford UPSTART is an in-home kindergarten readiness program that was created by the Utah State Legislature in 2009.

- At the time, there were no state-funded preschool options for children in Utah. While legislators increasingly understood the importance of early childhood education, they were faced with Utah’s geographical barriers that made site-based early learning opportunities for all children difficult.

- Because of high costs associated with creating site-based preschool options across Utah’s many rural counties, state leaders recognized they needed an in-home option to increase access to early education programming for children across the state.

- Waterford.org won the state Request For Proposals for Waterford UPSTART and has implemented the program in Utah every year since the legislature created it over a decade ago.
• This coming school year, Waterford UPSTART will serve over 20,000 children statewide in Utah and the program is being implemented in Indiana, Ohio, South Carolina and Wisconsin through state funding.

About Waterford UPSTART

Waterford UPSTART helps children develop the foundational academic and cognitive skills they need for school success. Under the program:

• Preschool-age children use Waterford UPSTART in the home for 15-20 minutes a day, five days a week.
  
  o This usage model falls well within the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) recommendations of no more than one hour of screen time per day for 4-year-old children.

• Children receive a personalized curriculum in reading, math and science with an emphasis on reading.
  
  o The curriculum is aligned to Nevada Early Learning Standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework; CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Competencies; and endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education.

• An essential component of the program is parent engagement. Each family is assigned a coach that we call a Family Education Liaison that works with the same family throughout the program; Waterford UPSTART forms a partnership with parents and caregivers to engage them as first teachers in the education of their young children.
  
  o Support for parents is provided in whatever language a family may require, with Family Education Liaisons capable of providing support in English or Spanish directly. Should a family need support in another language, Waterford UPSTART uses interpreter services and has provided support in 28 languages besides English in pilots across the country.

• Social-emotional learning is modeled in the software learning sequence and developed by parents with the assistance of Family Education Liaisons through off-line activities.

• Computers and Internet service are provided as part of the program if the home does not have them. Children that complete the program get to keep their computer.

Independent Evaluation

Waterford UPSTART has been rigorously evaluated over the past ten years and has demonstrated strong evidence of effectiveness in meaningfully improving rates of kindergarten readiness for participating children.
• Third party evaluations (as required under the Utah statute) show Waterford UPSTART participants have significantly higher learning gains than children from control groups – as measured annually by the Brigance Inventory of Early Development and the Bader Reading and Language Inventory.

• The Utah State Board of Education conducted a longitudinal evaluation of Waterford UPSTART results. USBE found that Waterford UPSTART students continually outperformed state averages compared to their non-UPSTART peers on state standardized tests (DIBELS and SAGE) through the 4th grade, which was highest grade achieved by students at the time.
  
  o Significantly, Waterford UPSTART gains were markedly better across all subgroups than non-UPSTART peers, including special education, minority, low-income, and English learner populations.

• In 2013, Waterford.org received a U.S. Department of Education Investing in Innovation – or i3 – Validation grant that was used to provide Waterford UPSTART to Utah’s 18 most rural school districts. A Randomized Control Trial conducted under the grant validated the program and showed that Waterford UPSTART had substantial impact on improving student growth and closing achievement gaps for early learners.

• In 2018, Waterford UPSTART outcomes were evaluated as part of Utah’s High-Quality School Readiness Grant. A review of post-program social-emotional development skills by program group showed similar results for Waterford UPSTART participants when compared to both public and private site-based preschool programs.

  o In 2019, an external evaluation of the Indiana State-Funded UPSTART program found that Waterford UPSTART showed similar age-appropriate social skill growth to non-Waterford UPSTART children from pre to post tests.

2019-2020 Clark County, Nevada Pilot Project

In the fall of 2019, UPSTART began a pilot project in Clark County with 500 preschool age children for the 2019-202 school year. Over 40% of participating children were English Language Learners and 80% of participating children were from families under 200% of the federal poverty level.

To allow for a Randomized Control Trial of the pilot, half of the children used Waterford.org’s Early Reading Program and half of the children used the Early Math and Science program.

We are presently recruiting preschool age children for another Clark County pilot project and a Washoe County pilot project to begin in the fall of 2020.

A summary of final outcomes for the 2019-2020 pilot project is provided below.
About Waterford UPSTART: Waterford UPSTART is an in-home Kindergarten readiness program that was created by the Utah State Legislature in 2009. The program is implemented by Waterford.org and helps children develop the cognitive and social-emotional skills they need for school success. To date, Waterford UPSTART has been piloted in 19 states and is currently being implemented through state funding in five states (Utah, Indiana, Ohio, South Carolina, and Wisconsin).

Under the program:

- Preschool-age children use Waterford UPSTART software in the home for 15-20 minutes a day, five days a week. The usage model falls well within the American Academy of Pediatricians (AAP) recommendations of no more than one hour of screen time per day for 4-year-old children.
- Children receive a personalized curriculum in reading, math, and science with an emphasis on reading.
- Each family is assigned a coach to ensure strong parental engagement. Waterford UPSTART forms a partnership with parents and caregivers to ensure all children obtain the education necessary for success in school.
- Social-emotional learning is modeled in the curriculum and developed by parents through off-line activities.
- Computers and Internet service are provided if the home does not have them.

Clark County UPSTART Pilot Program: Waterford UPSTART is aligned to Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Standards; Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework; CASEL Social and Emotional Learning Competencies; and endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education.

- Approximately 500 preschool-age children from Clark County participated in the pilot during the 2019-2020 school year.
  - Over 40% of participating children were English Language Learners; and
  - Approximately 80% of participating children were from families under 200% of the federal poverty level.
- To allow for a forthcoming Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) of the pilot, half of the children used Waterford.org’s Early Reading Program and half of the children used the Early Math and Science Program.
- Families began in-person trainings and initial student assessments in September 2019; the pilot concluded with online final student assessments and virtual graduations (because of the COVID-19 pandemic) for families in June 2020.

Average Weekly Usage: Figure 1 shows participants’ average reading usage on a weekly basis, as shown by the blue line. The green line indicates the recommended usage criterion of 75 minutes per week.

- For each of the 33 weeks, average weekly usage exceeded the recommended usage requirement of 75 minutes per week, indicating significant parental engagement under the pilot.
- The average usage for reading program participants was 93.53 minutes per week during the pilot.
Figure 2 shows participants’ average math and science usage on a weekly basis, as shown by the blue line. The green line indicates the recommended usage criterion of 75 minutes per week.

- For each of the 33 weeks, average weekly usage exceeded the recommended usage requirement of 75 minutes per week, indicating significant parental engagement under the pilot.

- The average usage for math and science program participants was 104.53 minutes per week during the pilot.

Reading Program Outcomes: Waterford Assessment of Core Skills (WACS) is a computerized adaptive test of early literacy for students in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade with initial content validity established against state and national standards. Average final scores for children that completed WACS showed the following notable outcomes:

Note that Waterford.org was not able to proctor in-person final assessments because of COVID-19; accordingly, these results only include students who scored within one standard deviation of their predicted overall end of year WACS scores.

- Children’s outcomes averaged at the “Kindergarten Intermediate” level, where most children score mid-point during the Kindergarten year.

- 80.26% of children scored at “Kindergarten Beginning” or above, demonstrating strong school readiness outcomes.

- Children that participated in UPSTART and had no other preschool outperformed children who attended preschool and also participated in UPSTART.

- Children from low-income families (under 200% of the federal poverty level) demonstrated higher point gains than their more affluent peers.

- Hispanic children demonstrated similar point gains compared to Caucasian children over the course of the program.

Figure 3 shows average results for WACS pretest and posttest scores, grouped by subtests for the program.
The following table provides question difficulty ranges for the Waterford Assessment of Core Skills (WACS) by grade level. Each grade level is divided into thirds, for example, Kindergarten Beginning, Kindergarten Intermediate, and Kindergarten Advanced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Advanced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1334 - 1666</td>
<td>1667 - 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>2001 - 2333</td>
<td>2334 - 2666</td>
<td>2667 - 3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>3001 - 3333</td>
<td>3334 - 3666</td>
<td>3667 - 4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>4001 - 4333</td>
<td>4334 - 4666</td>
<td>4667 - 5000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table provides results on additional assessed skills. It shows average final WACS subtest scores and their grade equivalents for the program.

* Note that “Kindergarten Beginning” is highest possible achievement level for the “letter recognition” skill. Children’s outcomes averaged one point below the highest level for this measured skill.

**Math and Science Program Outcomes:** Math and science strand scores are scores for subskills (measurement and data; operations and algebraic thinking; numbers and operations; geometry; and science) as a percentage of 100. A score of 80 or higher within the Early Math and Science Program represents “mastery” of a subskill, which is the goal of the cognitively based Waterford UPSTART program.

Figure 4 depicts the average score, organized by strand, for all students who scored on a given strand for math and science. The red line indicates the expected average score of 80, which represents mastery.

- The average score for four of the five math and science strands was above 80.

Figure 5 depicts the average overall score per student for math and science. Each blue bar represents the score of an individual student. The orange line indicates the expected average overall score of 80, which represents mastery. This graph highlights the achievement level of students.

- The average overall math and science score for students was 82.84 at the end of the program.

- 66.66% of students had an overall score of 80 or higher.
**Parent Satisfaction:** Parents/guardians participating in the Clark County UPSTART pilot completed a comprehensive survey to provide feedback related to their, and their child’s, experience in the program.

**Survey Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Agree</th>
<th>Survey Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>96% YES</td>
<td>The training I received taught me what I needed to know to get my child started on the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98% YES</td>
<td>I like that my child is expected to use the program for a certain number of minutes every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96% YES</td>
<td>I like that the program expects our family to create a daily routine for using it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>The program prepared me to help my child in school next year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>The program helped prepare my child for Kindergarten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>My child is now better able to work independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89% YES</td>
<td>The amount of contact from the coach was adequate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97% YES</td>
<td>Did the coach give you what you needed to effectively support your child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% YES</td>
<td>The coach was friendly and polite when we spoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98% YES</td>
<td>The coach was knowledgeable about the program and software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94% YES</td>
<td>In general, did your child enjoy using the reading program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96% YES</td>
<td>In general, did your child enjoy using the math and science program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>Do you think the reading program was age appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% YES</td>
<td>Do you think the math and science program was age appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>Do you feel the weekly reading usage requirements were appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99% YES</td>
<td>Do you feel the weekly math and science usage requirements were appropriate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>Would you recommend Waterford UPSTART to a friend or colleague?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments**

- I would just like to say that I’m floored at how well the program worked. I was skeptical at first being that our son hadn’t had any formal schooling this far, but since completing the program he can now read short stories and smaller words which our daughter didn’t learn until Kindergarten mid-year!

- I love the UPSTART program because it not only taught my daughter to read, but incorporated social and emotional skills she will use her entire life. It gave me insight into child psychology and helped me as a mother to better understand her.

- This is my second child to complete the UPSTART program. My first daughter who completed UPSTART has been the top in all of her classes. This daughter who is in UPSTART right now has been answering some of my 1st graders school assignments. It’s been impressive to see how much she has learned. I’m so glad we have been able to use this program.

- I love the coach calling and talking about our daughter and her progress. They were so friendly and supportive. It was a good pick-me-up in addition to helping me know how to support my daughter without doing it for her.

- I appreciate the opportunity my child had to learn so much with this program. He had fun and it was very helpful for him, especially during the pandemic.

- I’m very impressed with the program. Even though my child didn’t love “every second” of it, she did an excellent job and the consistency of the program helped her to learn a lot!

- Thank you, Waterford UPSTART, has not only prepared her for Kindergarten, it has prepared her for a future of great learning habits and skills.

- The Waterford UPSTART program in Nevada gave my son a preschool experience when we would not have otherwise been able to afford to offer him any preschool whatsoever. The program has helped him learn many new words and expressions that have often taken us by surprise!

- We are amazed with how well our child has progressed throughout the program. As we followed a daily routine for “classroom” time, we noticed our child really enjoyed and thrived in the program.
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments during this challenging time for all students, teachers and administrators, and parents in our community. We would very much like the opportunity to work with the Washoe County School District to implement this program and are hopeful you will welcome Waterford UPSTART as an additional tool to provide learning instruction for our preschool age children throughout the 2020-2021 school year.
After reading all the attached comments from parents and teachers regarding school openings I am more than a little sad that so many parents feel that exposing their children to the unknown is an acceptable solution. What is the hurry? Are we not doing more harm than good with the anxiety that goes along with not knowing if/when they will start showing symptoms?

Someone mentioned an increase in suicides due to social isolation. Imagine how that child would feel if they returned to school and brought home the disease that killed their parent or grandparent? Or sibling? Would that same youth be able to stay strong and alive?

Have we not learned from the reopening of many states that the rate jumps exponentially? Just look at the curve in NV. Look how well we were doing keeping everyone home and safe. And now? After our 4th of July celebrations I imagine this will look even worse. I hope I am wrong but based on the sample of letters posted here, I doubt it.

Please keep our kids and families safe and figure out how to teach via Zoom or YouTube while the many businesses who understand this far better than any of us work for a vaccine and a cure.

Thank you.
PLEASE reopen school, full time, IN SCHOOL for our children.

While I understand the COVID19 concerns, when does it end? What is the endpoint objective that indicates it is now safe to go to school? There will always be risk. There are more cases (largely due to increased testing) but our ICU's/ventilators and general hospital beds are not overwhelmed, despite the increase in cases. Our ICU's/ventilators are less than 50% capacity.

Mandating ANY sort of distance learning will force either myself of my husband to AT BEST decrease our income to part time, at worst, one of us will lose our jobs. We can't be the only family who will continue to be at financial risk, hopefully not complete collapse. We are two income family for a reason. How do we pay our mortgage if one of us has to stay home?

Additionally, not all kids have access to online learning. Our son's teacher told us she was not allowed to teach anything new during the last 3 months of school because of this. Is the district suddenly going to have the resources to provide adequate resources so multi children families have enough computers to go around? Or kids who don't have computers or internet at all?

The economy is already suffering, doing any sort of distance learning may be the proverbial straw that breaks the camel's back.

Please, please send the kids back to school full time without any distance learning.

Regards,
Nicole Killian
(5th, 4th, and 1st graders)
Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks will spread to teachers and our community. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed.

As an Education Support Professional, I am concerned for my own health and the health of my family. I have an autoimmune disease, but will show up to work and perform my duties to my very best abilities if the schools open while there is such a high risk. I will not complain, but I do think hazard pay could also be an option for those of us at higher risk.

I see many ideas, comments and hypotheses regarding teachers, but there truly isn't much regarding support staff: Clinical Aides, Kitchen Staff, Custodial Staff, etc. This makes me (as I will not speak on behalf of my co-workers) feel as if I am essential, but expendable.

I have hopes of retiring from WCSD and would really feel unappreciated if my position was not of value to you all. Losing my position due to Covid 19 sanctions would be even harder to accept. I do hope you consider remaining the closure of the schools, with Distance Learning being the option, but I do hope you will choose to pay those of us who are ESPs but are also important to the success of the students.

Thank you for your time, talent and consideration ~

Nancy Gage
My public comment sent to WCSD Board Members is also hereby submitted for the July 7, 2020 Board Meeting public comment.

"Dear WCSD Board,

Reading the submitted public comments re: Fall Reopening, they are a significant majority (if not all) in favor of full reopening. Children are low risk. Masks restrict oxygen. Parents that are concerned can home school or arrange for other care. It's time to recognize this pandemic threat is for the student cohort much less about health and much more about education and the social growth of children and the mental health and economic earning obligations of parents.

I request you approve a full reopening in Fall with no distance learning unless specifically requested by parents that are concerned. Perhaps an opt-in distance learning by grade level so as to not overly burden our teachers having to prep in-class learning and distance. It is insane to create two school curricula and bifurcate the week into in-person and home. Enough.

I trust you will make the right decision Tuesday for our children. It's time to return to school."

--

CHRISTOPHER MANN - MCR

SVN | NEVADA & WEST COAST INDUSTRIAL MARKETS GROUP

www.svngdca.com
WCSD,

I would like to address the reopening plans that were provided to the public last week. Although there are many aspects of this plan that could work, this plan fails to address some of the major issues that will arise if schools open in August. It is demeaning and upsetting to read these plans which do not take into account the safety and health of staff and teachers. Regardless of the option for distance learning and in person schooling, you are putting staff and students at risk and it is only a matter of time before a teacher, administrator, or staff member dies of Covid. What are the plans when my fiancé, who is an essential worker, is put on quarantine for the third time because someone he works with tests positive? Will I be forced to quarantine? Will my students need to quarantine? What about the staff that I’ve come into contact with for the last 14 days? Who is providing the testing? And how am I expected to put the safety and health of my family and elderly parents at risk because the school board has determined it necessary for us to return to school?

As it stands now, I can hardly get basic supplies needed for my classroom and do not get paid nearly enough. How can the district ensure that we will have enough PPE and cleaning supplies? Who is paying for PPE and testing? The plan addresses the fact that night time cleaning procedures do not need to change, but I disagree. When I entered my classroom in June to pack and prepare items to return to students, my room still had not been cleaned from Spring Break (prior to the shut down and closure of schools). Nothing wiped down, no vacuuming, absolutely untouched. If my classroom can go almost three months without cleaning, how can I trust the nighttime cleaning process is meeting CDC guidelines?

This plan puts staff and students at serious risk. We are teachers, not babysitters. Switching back and forth to distance learning and closing a school at the drop of a hat is not a feasible option. This will put added stress on teachers and students. Especially those students who have or currently are experiencing trauma, who need consistency, and who have disabilities that inhibit their ability to process changes in routine like the rest of us. Part of the plan addresses that special education students and teachers will return full time. Which teachers? Which programs? Special education students (especially those with severe disabilities) do not understand social distancing, the importance of hand washing, and are unable to physically and mentally follow such guidelines. Why is the district willing to put certain groups of teachers at an even higher risk for Covid?

Lastly, I would like to address the fact that these plans were made public without giving staff any heads up or courtesy email. We will be the ones on the frontline, putting ourselves and families at risk. Teachers and staff should be notified of plans prior to the public. If the school board can’t meet in person, social distance, and wear masks. How can teachers, staff, and students be expected to do so? Please lead by example and show the teachers who work so very hard each day for our students and families that we matter, we are heard, and you are not willing to put our health and safety at risk.

Thank you,

Stacy Wright, M.Ed
Dear WCSD,

Schools should remain closed until there have been no new Covid 19 cases for 14 days. Schools are ideal environments for the virus to spread; children and adults indoors together for hours at a time, often in buildings with poor ventilation. It is merely a question when, not if, school-based outbreaks will spread to teachers and our community. Statistical platitudes about low fatality rates in children will mean little to the families of those few students who do die, and even less to the families of the thousands of teachers, administrators, staff, and community members from more vulnerable populations whose lives will be sacrificed.

People love that teachers are willing to self-sacrifice for their students. While it’s true that many teachers feel that they have a higher calling to fill unpaid labor fills gaps in underfunded public services that should have been filled by other professionals, such as academic counselors, therapists, after-school program coordinators, coaches, or custodians. During COVID-19, it’s time to say no, teachers have not signed up to die in service. If we keep this unreasonable perspective, our colleagues, our colleagues’ family members, our students’ family members, and likely some of our students will die.

Teachers must pledge not to return to campus until Washoe County reports no new cases of COVID-19 for at least 14 days; this is the bare minimum for safety and belief of science. Teachers need options, choices and respect. I propose the time is now for Washoe County, Nevada, to dealwith this pandemic, requiring local, state, and federal governments to implement the public health and economic relief measures that should have been in place months ago.

For now, we need robust distance learning, universal Internet and computer access, and community services to help students meet students basic needs. As teachers, we can’t risk our health to go back. We love our jobs, we love what we do, , but when push comes to shove, this is not worth dying over, we should not be forced to return to campus during a dangerous pandemic. As teachers, we need to exercise our power to withhold our labor until our conditions are met. A half-assed regime of physical distancing and constant sanitation that we are expected to enforce is not going to work . And when that time comes, we simply must refuse to return until the pandemic is over.

Thank you!
Dear Board Members,

After reading the possible proposal for release back to schools in the upcoming year, I had a few concerns. To start, please understand that I am not in any way proposing that we don’t go back. I think that for the mental and educational welfare of our students, it is essential that we return to school. However I was very bothered upon seeing the “plans” that it was clear that little effort was given to consider the welfare or needs of teachers. In addition, I have never written a letter to the board because I have never felt that decisions prior to this were inadequately made without consideration of teachers.

My two biggest concerns are the following:

First and foremost, the plan calls for rotational A and B days (assuming that every other Friday students would go to school, so some weeks students would go two days and some weeks would be three days). The students who weren’t at school on a given day would be completing distance learning.

Under this plan, I would be teaching everyday and doing distance learning every day. On teacher evaluations, I have been rated the highest possible teacher rating every year since I can remember, and I can guarantee that with this plan, I cannot adhere to quality teaching for every student using the contract hours supplied (or extending beyond them.) I am not worried about this plan because I am afraid of hard work. I truly know that the expectations are not reasonable to be in two places at one time.

Under this plan, you are asking me to do two jobs and that is not fair to teachers and will result in subpar education for our students. I am a teacher who is comfortable with technology and use it often in the classroom, and I feel uncomfortable with this model. Imagine teachers who are not as tech savvy!

I believe you should strongly consider what Vegas is considering and have Fridays be an off day for students, so that teachers can prepare, grade, and do the two distinctly different tasks that are being asked of us.

My second concern was for the dismissal of Fall Break. Just because contracts can be shifted doesn’t make it right when the calendar was already distributed for teachers, parents, and students. Like many others, I moved my Summer trip to Fall Break. That included non-refundable plane tickets that I transferred over because WCSD has NEVER changed the dates on the published school calendar since I have been employed over the past 15 years.

While teachers can use their option days during this time and I will likely do that, there will be no substitutes to accommodate the need in school buildings. This week will be chaos across Washoe County. There will be a disaster for what purpose? To extend learning for some students while others continue with their preplanned family trips. In addition, with low staffing in the past, we would combine classes to accommodate. That can no longer be done with current regulations, so it is likely that students will be sent outside to waste time, so they can maintain distance and be monitored by the available staff.

I know we are incharted territory, but I propose you take it slowly with consideration of how much teachers can reasonably do and their emotional needs as well.
Thank you for taking time to read this,
Jennifer Reynolds
Good day,
I wanted to voice my support for the temporary freeze of step increases as agreed upon in the MOU between WCSD and APTA.

While I, like all employees of the District, was looking forward to my yearly wage increase this July, I understand the reasoning behind the agreement. We are in an unprecedented time, and we must come together, even while making hard decisions, to ensure that we can move forward as a District. We must remember that we are all here to support our 64,000 students, and realize there may be some sacrifices along the way to ensure we can continue doing that.

Thank you for your time,

Charles Lednicky
Data Analyst – Professional Growth Systems
Washoe County School District
Hello Gina,

I am including Ms. JJ Batchelder who will be able to provide your questions to the our Trustees for the Board Meeting on Tuesday.

Thank you for emailing them.

Take care,
Kristen
Kristen M. McNeill, Ed. D
Superintendent
Washoe County School District
Reno, NV

Good Morning Dr. McNeill,
I'm not sure where I should submit questions for the next board meeting.

So here goes:

1) If a parent won't wear a mask or comply with other Covid-19 protocols, how is a teacher going to enforce mandatory masks or other Covid-19 protocols like hand sanitizer and social distancing in a classroom?

2) What is going to happen the first time a student refuses to wear one or use the other Covid-19 protocols like hand sanitizer and social distancing?

Thank you for considering these questions for the next board meeting.

Gina Riggi
Washoe County School District Teacher at Innovations HS
Hello Board of Trustee,
You have heard from me before on this very important issue and I want to reiterate. The detriment of mask wearing and social distancing on children cannot be overlooked. Children are not dying of Covid. Please allow our children to go back to school, life, social and normal. They are being damaged by an unsubstantiated practice. While cases may be going up due to much more testing, death rates are not. Children are rarely affected. However, they have already suffered so much loss due to our management of CV19. Please consider the longterm damage and effects mask-wearing and removing social interaction will do. If you are not taking into account the self-harm that has increased during this time, the mental-emotional-social harm and the issues and dangers to some children when kept at home, then you are not looking at the whole picture of the health of our children.
Please re-open normally, with extra sanitization. NO MASKS.
Thank you,
Katania Taylor
Hello Board of Trustees and Dr. McNeill,

I have just read through the hundreds of comments submitted for public comment for this meeting on July 7, 2020. It seems abundantly clear that the vast majority of parents want their kids returning to a NORMAL SCHOOL environment, on time and with NORMAL set-up, classes, flow of the day, and extracurricular activities intact. Also the VAST majority DO NOT WANT their children wearing masks.

It seems abundantly clear the the only option you have, IF you are listening to the parents and doing what the majority are requesting, is:

1) Offer a full return to NORMAL school to those who want it
and the OPTION of:
2) On-line school for those who are afraid, have family members at home for whom they have concerns and are not ready to send their kids back yet.

The blended option leaves too many kids without education, support, and child care on days they are not in school. The separation and 1/2 the numbers at school is far too costly. And clearly, many, many parents will be pulling their kids from school if forced to wear masks. So you will loose even more, desperately needed income.

The only option is the above 2-option plan:

A) Fully normal return to school, full-time with no restrictions on social distancing and NO mask wearing (with added cleaning, sanitization and education on self-care and hygiene; as well as more strict standards on kids staying at home when sick.) When sick, the robust on-line structure set up for those who chose option B would be in place for kids staying at home sick.

B). Full-time on-line school for those uncomfortable with returning to school.

You cannot make everyone happy, this is true. But this option addresses the public comments and address the highest majority of desires. A blended option, with masks makes virtually no one happy. The very fearful families will likely not want their kids part-time in school. The families who want full-time/no masks also will not be satisfied and will pull their kids! It is a no win with the Blended option. You will loose large sums of money if you don’t make the vast majority happy. The 2 complete options is the best path to maintain student funds and keep the majority happy.

Please do what is right for our kids. These kids have lost too much. The spring was a disaster. Kids have extremely low risk of being affected by CV19; however, their long-term mental health is also in your hands. You must consider this. We demand it. Let them go back to school with no restrictions while giving the fearful families the ability to FULLY shelter their children.
Dear WCSD Trustees,

I am a WCSD elementary school librarian writing to you about an unintended consequence of implementing the elementary school “in person” option as presented by the Reopening Committee and provide a potential solution. Implementation of the current recommendations could turn our school libraries into nothing more than “storage spaces” for the students that can not be in a classroom due to social distancing requirements.

I am asking that you consider a motion to exempt school libraries from being used as “overflow spaces” unless there are no other practical options available at the school. Our students having access to books of their choice for independent reading is too important to ignore, even during a pandemic. There are countless studies that link a student’s access to books to their overall academic success. I would be happy to provide some of these resources at your request.

Last year, my school library circulated over 28,000 books to our 500 students. How do we expect our students to gain access to the quality, quantity and variety of books they need to be successful if we close our libraries? At home? Some students have access to extensive home libraries, but most do not. Classroom libraries? Some teachers maintain small classroom libraries intended to supplement the school library’s collection, not to replace it. Digital Books? What about our students that do not have internet or device access and our schools that cannot afford expensive e-books or subscriptions? Without a school library, we create yet another inequity among our student population.

I appreciate the hard work the Reopening Committee has done and know that they have done their best in a situation where there are no easy answers. I completely agree that if we go back 100% in person, students need to be socially distanced. I am simply asking that our school libraries be used as a “last resort” to provide space for students.

While it is inevitable that the library experience will be different this year, there are multiple ways we can ensure our students have safe access to our books (classroom delivery, quarantining books using CDC guidance, student request programs, etc). However, this can only happen if we protect our school libraries and librarians.

Thank you for your time. If you agree with the idea of protecting our school libraries, I have written a sample motion (below) to introduce this item for discussion and consideration during agenda item 4.04 of the Board Meeting on Tuesday, July 7th.

Sincerely,
Bridget Burckhard
Jesse Hall Elementary School, Librarian
Sample Motion: That the Board of Trustees directs school administration to use all other practical spaces in the school building to house independently working students before considering use of the school library.
Hi,

As an elementary school teacher, I’d like to share some thoughts and questions about reopening schools in August.

To begin, I’d like to express my desire to return to school in August and welcome my students in with open arms and lots of hugs. However, given the reality of our current situation, that is not possible. So regardless of what I wish would happen, I’d like to focus on what should happen in order to safely open schools for students and staff.

Some questions I have:
1. What will happen with kids who have medical reasons for not wearing a mask? Will they default to distance learning since they can’t adhere to the rules?
2. What daily screenings will be in place and who administers the screenings?
3. If distancing in the classroom is impossible due to class size, what safety measures will be in place? Plexiglass cubicles?
4. What happens if there is a confirmed case in a class? In a school? What if a teacher or child has a positive case in their home? What if there a exposures?
5. If staff becomes sick or need to self isolate, will additional sick days be available?
6. How are we increasing airflow and ventilation in classrooms?
7. What are the implications of masked teaching on student learning? Specifically for young students learning phonics, students learning English, and students with speech and language services.
8. Can we eliminate or reduce bussing to free up funding and reduce transmission risk? Can we transition some of those positions into custodial positions to help sanitize schools?
9. How are we protecting medically fragile students? What about students with medically fragile or high risk family members?
10. How are we protecting staff? What about staff with high risk family members in the home?
11. What options are available to teachers who do not feel safe returning to the classroom? Is there a limit on how many teachers can chose that option? If so, how will teachers be selected?
12. How will student and teacher lunch periods take place? Surely we don’t want kids unmasked in classrooms.
13. How much money is spent on testing (SBAC and MAP)? Can we forgo those expensive tests for a year or two in order to free up much needed funds?
14. Do we have an adequate sub pool to cover classrooms when teachers are sick or quarantined?
15. How will we facilitate increased hand washing? Most classrooms only have one sink.

I believe that sending elementary school back 100% in person is a very irresponsible and risky option. It is extremely concerning that with positive cases rising in Washoe County, Nevada, and nation wide that we are looking at sending kids back into school buildings with hundreds of kids at a time. I believe we need to come up with a safer plan for educating our students this school year.

Carlye Humason

I am having a very hard time wrapping my head around what a full in person return in elementary with distancing requirements and less than 50% occupancy. I just dont understand what that looks like. Where are the rest of the kids?
Read this and see how I will die...

For those of you saying "If essential workers can work, teachers can work, and our kids need to be in school!" I get where you're coming from. I want you to imagine the first day of school.

Kids will get on the bus. They will be packed together, because my district (like many) has ruled that it is too expensive and time-consuming to do staggered bussing. They will be excited to see their friends, and they will talk, share items, and do all the things they missed doing on the bus, and this will be great for their emotional health. Eventually some of them will take off their masks, because one or two kids didn't come with one to begin with, and who's scared of this thing anyway?

And so, before 10am, you have had your first super-spreader event in the district. No, the kids may not all get sick, but a few of them will. A few of those will die, as we've seen in news reports. They probably won't be your child, so this does not matter to you. It is a sacrifice you were prepared to make.

Kids will enter school. If this is done in a staggered manner, we will lose significant instructional time. Kids will sit at their desks, and if they are in a Title I school like mine where most parents can not afford to stay home and support kids during Digital Learning, we will have at least 80% of the population in the classroom. A classroom with truly socially distanced desks can seat about 8 people. Realistically, we will have 25-30 children packed together. Some of them will play with their masks or, if their parents are anti-mask, they will refuse to have those masks on.

A teacher will now have to teach in a classroom where they are no longer allowed to have group activities, so vital for young learners, unless they are in a contactless digital format. Hopefully the school will have enough computers for those students without their own devices. Hopefully the teacher will be able to maneuver quickly enough to stop students from Snapchattting their friends, or logging on to any number of non-educational websites, so that they can do their lesson.

A teacher will also have to choose between instructing effectively and protecting themselves and the people they may care for at home. Proximity is key to classroom management. Social distancing is not compatible with it. Students who do not wear masks may see reduced teacher attention, because again, teachers are being asked to choose between their health and their effectiveness.

Lunchtime arrives. Students have to take their masks off to eat. In my district, we will be eating in classrooms, and my school's windows do not open. Staggered lunches do not help once the masks are off and students are eating and talking and, because they miss their friends, clustering together. A teacher will have to choose between eating, separating students, and their health.

Time to change classes. If students are the ones transitioning, instead of a teacher rotating between classrooms, we lose valuable instructional time to sanitizing. Do we have enough wipes and sprays to sanitize four or more times a day? Hopefully you donated some, because now a teacher may have to choose between their finances and *everyone's* health.

Novel study time. Do we have enough books for 100+ middle schoolers? Don't make me laugh. Every student will need to sanitize before and after touching a book. You won't pay for ebooks and you won't pay for physical books, but we hope you will donate hand sanitizer.

Chorus. Orchestra. Band. These teachers are talking about reducing class sizes to 80+. *Reducing* them. For their safety.
Time to go home. Students get on the bus again. A second super-spreader event occurs across the district.

Now, let's talk about how things go after Day 1:

A child tests positive for COVID-19. The parents fear retaliation from peers and do not report it to the school; they just keep their child at home and hope it blows over.

A child is sick with fever. A parent gives them Tylenol and sends them to school.

A child who interacted with the child whose parents did not report tests positive and parents report this. Students and teachers that interacted with the child have to quarantine for 14 days. That's 14 days of the Digital Learning we were trying to avoid in the first place. In middle school, if a teacher tests positive, that will mean 100+ kids are staying home with parents, and all of their teachers, too. This will happen again and again. All of the promised consistency, routine, structure, everything you wanted for your children, is gone, and you are not prepared to help them with DL.

A child in a community with high COVID-19 exposure becomes sick with MIS-C. More children contract MIS-C. This was a sacrifice you did not realize you were making, but it does not affect your child, so it does not concern you.

Now for the community spread.

The virus will find many opportunities to flourish in a school, no matter how carefully the teachers and staff strive to curb it. The resources simply are not being given to them. Children will spread the virus to parents, siblings, grandparents (especially in multigenerational homes), and inevitably, people who shop and work outside of their homes. The spike we see now, that began in June, will pale in comparison to what follows.

And some teachers, nurses, custodians, and principals will die. But that's a footnote to you; what about the learning outcomes? The academic gains?

Well? What will those be?

--Ellison Mitchell

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do - Rumi
Dear Board Members,

I would like to propose you consider the Clark County School plan for resuming a safe return to our classes for the 2020-2021 school year.

This plan - attached below - allows for students to have critical face-to-face instruction while maintaining CDC guidelines. With this plan, custodial staff would be able to effectively clean and sanitize classrooms in between cohorts on Wednesdays.

This schedule would hopefully limit school outbreaks while keeping students consistently in school two days a week.

This would also allow time for required teacher professional development.

Thank you for your consideration,

Steven Hatcher
Reno, Nevada
ALL GRADE LEVELS
THREE STUDENT COHORTS

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<td>Student Cohort A</td>
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- Face-to-Face Instruction
- Distance Education

Reference 5.02
Hello everyone,

Thank you for your service! There is always an opportunity for beauty to grow, even out of the toughest of elements. This is your time to shine through these historic times.

I predict this school year will have its own share of Covid challenges. My son will be a Junior and attends North Valleys High School. He is ranked 8th in his class and has been delightfully encouraged by his teachers and counselors, to put forth his best effort.

He had a 4.0 GPA at the start of the shutdown, so his final grades were such. However, the learning packets and instruction did not provide any new learning material or content. For struggling students, the review may have proved helpful.

My question is related to Independent Study programs.

Will the district be providing Independent Study options for Juniors that are, learning based classes, needed for graduation requirements?

Will there be varied options of learning, such as part time online, part time school instructional classes?

Due to my MS, there is an increased risk of me sending my child to school. So, I would like to know my options.

Thank you again, for being willing to re-structure programs, while still keeping a high standard of learning at the forefront. This is most important for every student's highest learning capability.

Respectfully,
Casandra Maitlen
Previous BVUSD School Board President
I was told that this was a good avenue to address questions and concerns about a return to school.

If a teacher tests positive for COVID, do they quarantine the teacher?

Do those count as sick days or leave?

Do they quarantine the students in that teacher’s class(es)?

If a student tests positive do they quarantine the whole school?

Get Outlook for iOS
Please do not assign lunch to the classrooms!

As an educator for many years, allergy sufferer and a parent of a child with severe food allergies I urge you not to assign lunch to the classrooms!

In my experience, even the most careful students have accidents and spills and food mess are common when having lunch in the classroom. Most of our elementary school classrooms are carpeted and hard to clean.

Secondly, this poses a huge risk to our allergy students due to cross-contamination and surfaces (such as carpet) that are not able to be properly cleaned. Lunches can be messier than simple snacks. Can you imagine scrubbing milk spills or peanut butter out of carpet, math manipulatives, paper books and computer keyboards? It would be difficult to impossible.

Thirdly, even the most allergy aware classrooms have students that accidentally or intentionally bring concerning foods to school. While the consumption of these foods may be discouraged in the classroom, teachers can easily direct students with these concerning foods to consume these items in the lunchroom which is a simple way for teachers to accommodate 504's and ADA. This is important when the concerning food is the only food option the child may have brought to school that day.

Lastly, food messes create bug and rodent problems. These problems may increase student and staff exposure to chemicals to rid classrooms of pests.

Again, please do not assign lunch to the classrooms!

Thank you,

_Summer S. Kaufman- M.A.T._
I am 100% OPPOSED to mandatory masks, social distancing, and alternative school schedules. Please do the right thing.

Heather Termini, concerned parent

Sent from my iPhone
Virtual Learning last school year was NOT effective. Don't let our students fall further behind. Open up the schools and the parents that aren't comfortable sending students can opt for a homeschooling program.

Thank you!

Lynnette Bellin
To whom it may concern

I am all for whatever plan will keep our children safer and disease free. I am not sure the half day proposal for middle school and high school is the appropriate response, It could become problematic in the winter with highschoolers driving to and from and increased costs for bussing. I also wonder how the middle school students will be transported for working parents? Will after school care for the 6th graders be implemented? I also believe that a full school day should be required my vote would go for the one week on three weeks off plan that was proposed.
I’m sure I’m not the only Parent who has asked this, but just to make sure, if we do not want our child to return to school with the increase in cases, can we continue digital learning for elementary grades? Will that affect their attendance and grades in a negative way?

Thank you for all you’re doing to protect our children.

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From: Shay Dusek
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 1:44 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reopening 20-21

Washoe County School District Reopening Board,

After reading the public comments since July 2, it is clear that most of the comments against sending children back to school are coming from teachers. My wife is a teacher and I respect teachers and admire them but this seems to be too coincidental to me. The district made a public announcement for their reopening plans and all of a sudden, we have teachers who say they are very concerned for their health and urging the district to reconsider. What about healthcare workers, grocery store employees, restaurant workers, casino workers, barbers, etc? All of these people have to put their mask on and continue on with work. I understand there is fear, but unfortunately teachers do not get a pass to stay home and continue to be employed and paid the same as other community members who must be present at work. This will force parents to forgo work to teach their own kids simply because our teachers have refused. Our students have to get back to school in order to ensure their future both academically and emotionally. Students being present in school is the most important factor that we need to consider. We need to consider the lack of supervision young children will undoubtedly have if students do not go back to school. Depression, malnutrition, child abuse, lack of education and social skills will be the new normal for these young kids. Education is considered essential and essential services must continue without restrictions. Put our students back in school full time and allow them the education they deserve.
July 6, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am strongly opposed to going back to school at full capacity because it would violate the do no harm approach that has been stated would be followed. I feel the need to advocate for myself, my family and my students. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to answer the survey about returning to school. At the time, cases ranged from 19-23 per day. I thought that it could be doable to start going back with proper safety guards in place: social distancing, have everyone wear masks, sanitize more frequently and have smaller class sizes. Now infections have risen considerably; in three days this past week, over 100 daily positive cases were reported. I no longer feel safe, or comfortable going back with numbers so high. It seems inevitable that we would end up going to distance learning anyway due to infections within the school and the lack of substitute teachers to cover absent teachers.

The reality of being able to keep the recommended 6 feet for social distancing is not possible when the school is functioning at full capacity. Even when I completed the survey, I imagined there would be half of the class present at a time. I have one of the smallest classrooms in the school. Keeping 23 people six feet apart in the room will be impossible. With the inability to do small group teaching, guided reading, partner reading, etc. the majority of benefits of teaching in the building are no longer present. With this physical limitation, it is actually easier to do guided reading groups through zoom or teams.

I felt relieved by the statement that everyone, including students, would be wearing masks. The reality though is that the one mask that the district would provide is not sufficient. Some masks will not fit properly, become dirty, or get lost. How can we expect students to properly wear a mask all day when adults do not even do this? For instance, I was at the grocery store the other day. One man had his mask hanging from his earlobe. Another person had his nose exposed. Another wore it under his chin. My own daughter at one point (fortunately we were not in the store) had her mask up over her eyes. Many adults at the grocery store also disregarded the huge signs and arrows directing which way to go. This is the behavior that has been modeled to our students. It is reckless going back to school at full capacity.

People state that education is essential, just like grocery store workers or delivery services. The difference is that in a classroom, the air is recirculating with the same people in the room with poor ventilation for nearly six hours a day, which is not the case for grocery workers. Furthermore, we have the ability to continue doing our job from home, unlike other essential employees.

Distance learning was done in crisis mode last spring. Now we have experience with distance learning. We are familiar with the technology and resources available. The adopted ELA and math programs both have digital learning tools. It is not a perfect solution, but it is the one that does the least harm.

Our community needs to accept that we are in a global pandemic. Distance learning must be considered because it is more important to keep children and the adults they interact with healthy. It is our responsibility to protect them. Children not only can have covid, but also may experience multisystem inflammatory syndrome, which is even harsher on their bodies. About half of the children tested in a study through the Mayo clinic with covid were asymptomatic. Children can spread the disease to adults and infants who it could be very risky for contracting.
This will be a short period of time in the longevity of our lives. Let us protect them from potential pain, suffering, life long health issues and grief from avoidable deaths by taking precautions and time before going back full time and full capacity in our classrooms.
Thank you for your time and thoughtfulness in consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Nichole Yco
Please consider sending the older kids full time and doing elementary part time. I understand the logic that older kids can work independently at home.

However, younger children have more time to catch up and are flexible. Older students have just a previous few years to prepare themselves for college. They need full time attention. Also, older kids can keep themselves clean. Younger students cannot keep their hands to themselves, much less keep their fingers out of their noses.

Cheri Gajeski  
MAT JU ‘99  
7 years elementary teaching experience  
Mom of 10th, 7th and 2nd graders
Dear Superintendent McNeil and School Board Members, (Sorry, my original message sent before I completed it - here it is again in its entirety.)

I appreciate the time and effort that is going into planning for a safe and productive reopening plan for students and staff. I have some questions that may be addressed, but wanted to get the to you just in case.

1) If the board does not feel safe and responsible meeting in person with precautions in place, in a space large enough for all of you to be 6 feet apart, how does it feel reasonable to expect teachers to feel safe in a room with 25 or more students in a smaller space?

2) I see on the agenda and read in the RGJ that it is expected if a school needs to shut down due to an outbreak or exposure that it would be expected to go immediately into distance learning. What will be the expectation if it is the teachers who are ill? Who will manage the distance learning?

3) Will the families who choose to opt out of in person learning be taken out of that school's numbers for allocations?

4) Will there be strict cleaning protocols at schools that are monitored and enforced?

5) What will be the "consequences" if a students or his/her family chooses not to follow safety protocols at school?

These are just a few questions that come to mind. I appreciate your time and once again, appreciate the time and effort being put into this process and plan. I realize there are many "what ifs" and that they all can't necessarily be answered at this point. While I am eager to be with my students in person, I don't want to risk the health and safety of my family to make that happen.

Thank you very much for your time.

Troy Reinhardt
6th Grade Educator
Roy Gomm Elementary
The virus numbers are still rising. I think at least until we get a grip on this, schools should be online. Lives are at stake! We can do this at least half the school year and then reevaluate.

Rose Santos

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
With the probability of school staff having to return (admin, teachers, ESP’s, etc) when will the admin building be returning to business as usual? If it is considered “safe” for us in the schools to be together, shouldn’t the Board be able to meet in person? Will EVERYONE be required to return to the job site full time, and if not, will those of us that do be entitled to hazard pay?

Thank you for your time

Get Outlook for iOS
Dear Board of Trustees,

My name is Melissa Bullard and I teach high school Spanish for WCSD. I want to thank you for your efforts to safely reopen our Washoe County schools. The challenges are unprecedented and there is no solution that will satisfy all parties involved; it is difficult to balance the risks from Covid-19 with the risks for our students' education since we are not able to proceed as normal. I have read over the presentation to the board and I have a few questions and suggestions. My perspective is that of a high school teacher (I teach Spanish) and a mother of elementary-school aged students.

First, I am mostly in favor of the proposed model for two reasons: 1), because I do not believe that Covid poses a great risk to most elementary-aged children and 2), if I am going to do my job this year, I need child care for my daughters. Everything I have read seems to suggest (though it is not yet proven) that children contract Covid at lower rates, have fewer serious symptoms when they do contract it, and even seem less likely to transmit it to adults.

Additionally, while some lament that schools are used as child care in our country, the fact is that there are no systems in place that offer full-day childcare for kids my daughters' age. (Even if there were, I don't see how those would be advantageous because my daughters would still be around large groups of kids; it would simply be a different group of kids.) I am fortunate enough that if I cannot send my daughters to school, my husband's job could support us financially for a year and I could homeschool. Many teachers do not have that luxury, and if all teachers who have elementary-aged children at home quit their jobs to homeschool (or simply because it's better than hiring a full-time nanny), the District will have a severe teacher shortage this year.

Second, please consider whether there is a way that we can reopen in line with the proposed plan but allow teachers (as well as families) to opt in to a Distance-Learning-only model. Many of my colleagues are in higher-risk age categories, have autoimmune conditions that put them at greater risk, or simply feel the risk is too high. Could we not allow these teachers to opt in to leading and running Distance Learning? If you support their learning and training and give them time to adapt
to a Distance Learning model, as well as any additional training they need to possibly expand their
own knowledge (as they might have to teach subjects or grades that are not their original area of
expertise), they would have a higher chance of being able to provide a high-quality education to
students who are learning from home. Teachers who are uncomfortable returning to the classroom
may retire early or move on to other jobs, and once again, we will have a severe teacher shortage.

Third, as you make plans, please be aware that we will need a way to recruit more substitute
teachers and make attendance policies and teacher sick leave policies more lenient. My husband's
job is such that if one of my kids gets sick, I will most likely have to be the one staying home with
them. If the quarantine period is fourteen days (and I have two daughters), that means that if my
daughters or I were to display symptoms of Covid-19 and I had to be out on sick leave, that could
potentially be up to 42 days that I would take off as sick days. In the meantime, I could probably
still help my students with their Distance Learning work, but I would be unable to teach at my
school.

Fourth, although the proposed High School Learning model looks like the best option for students
at this point, please be aware of what teachers can reasonably be expected to do. Page 51 of the
proposed High School Learning Model states that for Distance Learning, "Instruction will be
supported daily by qualified certified teachers." This is fine depending on what you mean by daily
support; if daily support is a quick post on Teams to check in with students, a meaningful
homework assignment to be collected and or graded later, and time spent briefly answering a few
student emails, that is doable. However, if I am teaching my regularly-scheduled classes during the
day (at half-capacity for student safety) and utilizing my normal prep period for planning
instruction, grading and giving feedback on student work, participating in IEP meetings, answering
emails, participating in PLC activities, etc., I will not be able to offer meaningful feedback or
interact fully with my students who are doing Distance Learning for that day. Last time I checked, I
have 163 students on my rosters for next year, meaning that for every day that I am teaching 80 or
so kids in-person, I will also need to somehow engage the 80 or so online. It will not be possible to
have meaningful interactions with all of them within contract hours, and grading, planning,
implementing, emails, etc. already take several hours beyond my contract hours every day.

Fifth, on page 15 of the proposed model, under the "Safety & Health" category, it says "Staff may
be asked to engage in duties not typically associated with their professional positions." What
exactly does this mean? Typically, I already do spend some time wiping down often-touched
surfaces with Clorox wipes or doing other minor cleaning that my room needs. But you are already
asking the high school teachers to do additional Distance Learning work for a hybrid model and, as
I mentioned before, my duties during a normal work week extend far beyond my contract hours
every day. Asking teachers to also take over the work of custodians is not reasonable.

Sixth, if students 10 and over are required to wear masks, what will disciplinary policies be for
students who arrive without a mask, refuse to wear a mask, repeatedly forget to put their mask on,
wear it incorrectly (after instruction on how to wear it), etc.? There are a few students who become
belligerent and disrupt the learning environment over minor issues, and teachers often bear the
brunt of having to manage those issues, either because District policies or their school admin do not
support the teacher's authority in the classroom. In this case, it is District and State authority that
will be challenged, but teachers will be the ones enforcing the rules. How do you plan to support teachers as they deal with these students? If you don't issue real consequences swiftly, it sends the message that either A), the District doesn't actually care about student/teacher safety or B), the risk is not so great and therefore wearing masks isn't actually necessary in the school setting.

I know that you have an extremely difficult task ahead of you and please know that I am fully committed to learning and adapting to new models of teaching within what I am physically capable of doing and what is best for my family, and I know that many teachers feel the same way. But we will need support and flexibility from District Admin, just as we teachers must be supportive and flexible toward our students.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Melissa Bullard
Dear Board of Trustees of WCSD:

Please consider the following concerns regarding the current plans and recommendations put forth in regards to reopening elementary schools in Washoe County:

- Elementary school children should be given an option for blended learning just as the middle/high school students. Cases will rise in this age group if you group them together via school every day.
- If the WCSD is providing an online/distance option for families that want to keep their children home, it should be available to all grade levels and secular. The current resource being recommended is Northstar Academy (4th-12th) grade, and it is a Christian School. It is not appropriate for the WCSD to be promoting a Christian school as the distance learning solution. It is also not available or experienced in younger grade levels.
- The elementary school plan, states that students may be required to complete work on their own while being supervised by a non-certified teacher/person. What does this mean exactly? How would it be implemented. If we are going to send our children to school to learn they should have the best and most capable people teaching them, teachers. Provide parents the option to pick them up and complete the work with a parent at home, or if the parent has to work, then allow them to sign that child up to stay with a non certified-teacher/person to complete their work. Please give parents the option here.
- If schools have to close and the District has to revert to distance learning, it should not be via Northstar Academy. This is a Christian School. Separation of church and state is important here. There website alone has no diversity. Plus, if distance learning happens, children should be able to stay connected virtually to their same teachers and classmates. If this is not going to be the case, parents need to know now, as this may weigh on their decision to return to school or not.
- At a minimum, have the school district provide or recommend good curricula for home schooling as an option to parents that are interested
- Please provide clear information to parents about recess and lunch. Will the elementary school students remain in their class for lunch with their same cohort? Will recess be structured to allow for and ensure social distancing?
- If daily screening of temperature and symptoms is going to be done via the honor system...many parents won't care. They will send their children to school anyhow. There at least needs to be an app or some system so they feel accountable for completing the screening honestly
- If children and teachers are to stay home if they have any symptoms, this will result in a lot more absent days than normal. What is the plan for that? Can students miss more days this year than usual? How will they learn the same amount? How about recording the teachers lessons from the classroom and posting them online?
- Principals and nurses must be willing to send kids home even for sniffles and coughs etc. if this will work. They will have to go home even if it is just a cold because there is no way of knowing if it could be COVID-19 unless a test is done since it presents differently in everyone.
- If the airborne particles stay in the air for up to 3 hours and younger kids won't be required to wear masks, this could be a problem. It should be required unless the parent requests an exemption.
Please include details in the plan so parents are informed prior to having to make a decision to return. This will allow them to make the best decisions for them and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
LB
Washoe County Medical Society Statement in Support of Washoe County Schools Reopening

Considerations for the Well-being of Our Children and Community Include Returning To School

As local physicians, and members of the Washoe County Medical Society, we feel it is our duty to stand with our community and advocate for the well-being of our children as our schools finalize reopening plans for the upcoming school year. We are in agreement with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that our community’s schools need to fully reopen to students this fall. Schools form a fundamental part of the social fabric in our community and can be a tremendous tool in promoting the well-being of our children.

On June 26 the AAP issued a “COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Reentry” statement which begins:

“The purpose of this guidance is to support education, public health, local leadership, and pediatricians collaborating with schools in creating policies for school re-entry that foster the overall health of children, adolescents, staff, and communities and are based on available evidence. Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits...” [https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/]

As the school year approaches, we urge thoughtful deliberation and careful analysis of the risks and benefits of all aspects of school reopening plans. Excessive focus on only the risks associated with COVID-19 can lead to unintended consequences that might neglect other critical public health matters. Fortunately, available data suggests that

1. School-aged children are less susceptible to COVID-19,
2. When infected tend to have less severe symptoms, and
3. Appear to be less likely to infect others even if they are infected.

As we plan for the upcoming school year, we stand with the AAP and other child-advocacy organizations and think a full-time return to school, with additional COVID-19 mitigation measures (as feasible and reasonable), is in the best interest of our children and community. Exceptions and recourse should be made for those at higher risk, but the overall benefits of a return to school outweigh the potential risks based on our understanding of existing evidence. The Clark County School District surveyed its families and found overwhelming support for this from students and families. Washoe County School District recently completed a similar survey with results to be released in the near future.
We recognize the evolving nature of this pandemic and recommend built-in flexibility and contingency plans in the event new information or events arise. We respect the organizations and local governing bodies making decisions with regards to specific measures needed when reopening (e.g. mandatory face coverings, social distancing in the school setting, etc.). The complexity of such issues hinges on the balancing of overall benefit versus harm and are nuanced by issues such as physical school construction, student population demographics, local COVID-19 demographics, etc. The statement from the AAP provides thoughtful analysis of many mitigation strategies.

With the state’s efforts to flatten the curve in the early stages of the pandemic, our schools were shut down which helped mitigate the impact of COVID-19 locally; but there have been unintended consequences that have directly impacted our children. There have been educational setbacks as school districts, families, and students adapted to remote learning.

The physical health of some students has been impacted as some have been without a source of reliable nutrition and are spending more time indoors and with screens. Child protective services referrals are notably down -- 7,076 referrals from March to May 2020 in comparison to 10,535 referrals from March to May 2019 according to the Division of Child & Family Services, DHHS State of Nevada -- as children are in social isolation and educators are unable to notice concerning signs of neglect or abuse. Mental health has suffered as social interactions have been disrupted and children are isolated which will require additional vigilance from our educators and counselors as we resume interacting with school children. Even the social health of our community has suffered as underprivileged children carry a disproportionate burden with remote learning and access to educational outlets. In the Clark County School District, it is estimated that 4,370 students, predominantly of Hispanic/Latino or Black/African American backgrounds, were not reached during the remote learning phase of the last academic school year and a large percentage of Washoe County School District students likely face similar obstacles.

Our time-honored maxim of “first, do no harm” applies powerfully to the current situation. With that guiding principle, we share these considerations with our local and state leaders as we prepare for the upcoming academic year. Our children and community would be best served by a full return to school this fall. Let us unite in our efforts to do the best we can and remember to balance the overall health and well-being of our children, our staff, our families, and our community. We pledge to remain engaged and available with our expertise to assist in the reopening of our schools.

ABOUT THE WASHOE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY (WCMS): The Washoe County Medical Society provides advocacy for physicians and patients and promotes the art and science of medicine and public health. Serving as a primary source of health-related information, we seek to educate our members and the citizens of northern Nevada. We strive to maintain the highest standard of ethics and medical care throughout our community.
I am writing to request for schools to go back as normal. I have 2 children that should be going back to school. If it is not as normal, they will be pulled from the public school system.

I also will not allow my children to go to school with masks on or treated like they are jail inmates. They need to be socializing and getting normal lunch and recesses outside with natural vitamin D. They will also NOT be getting a potential covid-19 vaccine that the government is attempting to rush and skip “normal” vaccine testing.

Teachers should encourage hand washing with soap and hot/warm water, rather than using hand sanitizer all day that kills good and bad bacterias. Children with illnesses or symptoms should stay home as always required.

My oldest child does not do well with distance learning and cannot continue with that type of school setting.

Marisa
Sent from my iPhone
Please fully reopen schools – do the right thing.

Thank you

Zak Woodhead
Risk Manager | Odds On Promotions
Hello JJ,

Will you please add the email below to the public record for tomorrow's board meeting.

Thank you,
Malena

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Malena S. Raymond  
President  
WCSD Board of Trustees  
malena.raymond@washoeschools.net  
www.washoeschools.net

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Hi,

I accidentally an email draft at 10:18am that wasn’t quite finished on accident. This is my updated draft for public comment. Please disregard and delete the previously previously sent at 10:18am and replace with this one.

I am writing to share my support for opening middle school and high schools 5 days a week. I have a son who will be entering middle school, as well as 3 elementary children at Roy Gomm. I have outlined what I believe to be the the risks to online school 3 days per week, as well as outlined some suggestions for possible implementation.

**Risks of Online School 3 days a week:**
1. Sub-standard curriculum (Washoe County has great teachers, but it does not have a tried and tested online program). Fallout: Kids fall behind
2. Lack of support for academic success at home. Fallout: poor student outcomes; aggravated distress tolerance, which is built through peer/teacher support and encouragement
3. Lack of parental supervision when kids are home alone. Fallout: leads to a decreased opportunity for prosocial behavior and escalation of antisocial behaviors (drugs, alcohol, teen pregnancy, misdemeanors/crime)
4. Lack of social connection needed for emotional and psychological development. Fallout: lowered social/emotional IQ and suicide risk. The suicide rate is .86% and COVID fatality rate is .9% (unless you have major risk factors) and even lower for kids.
6. Increased role strain for families. Fallout: Escalating abuse rate (women’s shelters, including those with children in Reno are overflowing & being placed in hotels)

Risks of going to School:
1. Potential for transmission/spread of COVID, although kids statistic are much different if we look at positive ratio to critical ill/death ratio.

Proposed Ideas:
1. Middle School kids do not change classes as often- TEACHERS do! They have rolling carts. Not ideal, but so much better than “zoom” or “packet” education.
2. Masks & temperature checks for staff.
3. Masks for students & temperature checks if that makes people feel more comfortable (I care about not having kids with fevers at school, but a lot to put on a teachers. Maybe parents sign a commitment form to checking their kids’ temperatures before school each day?
4. Sanitizer readily available and mandated each time kids use the restroom/leave the class, etc.
5. Plexiglass for teachers at a desk/podium as needed
6. Utilize gym/cafeteria for educational areas as indicated

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter; it is greatly appreciated!

Stephanie Falke
To whom it may concern,

I am voicing my concerns due to the recent proposed plan especially in regards to the fact that things will return mostly full time for elementary schools. I understand that this is a tough choice and that the difficult decision you need to make will not make everyone happy but I teach my students to advocate for themselves and I will not be a hypocrite. Washoe County School District continuously mentions they want to be equitable. Equity aims to promote fairness. Is it equitable that at risk teachers at the elementary level do not have any other option other than to apply to North Star online school and hope to get a position there?

To me, the proposed plan is not fair. What about those school teachers, like myself, who have an autoimmune disease? Catching a cold can take an immunosuppressed/compromised person out of work for a week...what happens if one of those teachers gets Covid-19? Elementary teachers, especially those who are at high risk, need to have an opportunity to teach online and limit classroom exposure. I understand you are really trying to listen to your parents and students, but please do not disregard the staff as many of us are terrified of returning to work in the classroom full time.

I also have some questions:

- How are students going to interact with one another and collaborate?
- How are schools going to avoid interactions during dismissal?
- Would teachers be expected to write lesson plans from a respirator?
- How can I help my students directly when it is unsafe for me to get close to them? If I get close to them to do what my heart tells me to do as a teacher I am putting my life at risk.
- Is it unfair of a teacher that has an autoimmune disease to ask their students to wear masks?

There are so many questions to be answered and considered. Please consider my words as well as the words of others while making this choice, I know it is difficult, but please do not neglect your elementary school staff members.

Wishing you and your families health,

Alexa Nakkula
5th Grade Teacher
Dear Board Members;

We do not envy the difficult position that you are in. We have been reading so many differing opinions on Facebook and in the news. We do not wish to be in your shoes as you make the decision about school for next year.

When the original survey went out, we were very much in favor of a split schedule scenario. But with the radical jump in positive cases since the beginning of Phase 2, we have changed our minds. Now we are more in favor of continuing digital learning. But with a small change.

We’d like to propose that teachers be expected to be in the building M-F. Meetings can still be held virtually for distance preferences. Students who need specific help can arrange an appointment to meet in the building with the teachers wearing appropriate safety features. And teachers should be responsible for assigning valid current content, grading, and supporting student learning of content.

We do not have a grasp on this virus. We do not know how to truly prevent it. And if students do not present the symptoms but are carriers, then it is something that can be carried home. We each have about 145 students scheduled to interact with us over 2 days. That is not including random students who pass our doors in the hallway. That is 145 opportunities for each of us to contract this virus in a two day period. Even if masks are consistently worn. Which, we don’t know about you but our tolerance for masks is approximately an hour before the need to breathe fresh air overtakes us.

Our greatest fear is that even though we know what the virus can do now, we don’t know it’s future consequences. We don’t know if the recovered individuals will be susceptible to a repeat case in the future or if the issues that it creates will be detrimental to future health.

At this time, many of us are the sole income of our families. And the fear of one of us falling ill and having zero income scares each of us beyond anything else. With the teacher shortage as is, it would be a shame to lose several professionals that have a true passion for teaching and improving the lives of our youth.

We are already dreading the undiscussed budget issues that could most likely result in a decrease in salary. Not to mention the undiscussed week between when teachers return and when students tentatively return. What sort of “training” will we be expected to attend and implement? That would be a great week to issue technology to students and for teachers to spend the time preparing for virtual lessons. Even perhaps teaching the teachers how to “flip” their classrooms.

We are sure that you want to appease everyone, but personally, until the number of cases stays strong at ZERO for fourteen consecutive days, we do not wish to return to any form of in person teaching with protective gear. We would much rather abandon our love of teaching for an alternate career where we will feel safer in daily interactions.

Thank you for working hard to keep all of our health and safety in mind at all times,
Rebecca Janes, teacher
Joy Davidson, teacher
Mollie Simi, teacher
Sara Vega, teacher
Victoria Koontz, future teacher

Sent from my iPhone
I have read that high risk students and families will have the option of distance learning and/or distance teaching. How will that be decided? If I choose to teach online, can I return to my position the following year?
Hello,

My name is Emily Wuest and I am both a parent and an employee in WCSD. I would like to express my concerns that will hopefully be taken into account for tomorrow's meeting:

1. As an occupational therapist I am expected to work with students at multiple school sites. OTs, PTs, SLPs, and other related service fields are often forgotten when making district wide decisions. It is not feasible to expect us to continue to travel and service 60+ students on each of our caseloads at multiple school sites risking exposure.

2. The population I work with all have some form of disability. Students may have sensory needs that cause them undue distress when attempting to wear a mask, they may not have the cognitive ability to understand why masks are required or social distancing is in effect, they will crave the affection they are used to receiving from teachers and other staff. How do I console a crying kindergartener from 6 feet away?

3. Why would we return to in-person school as cases continue to rise and are significantly higher than when we initially implemented distance learning in the first place? It is unfair of the district to decide on in-person schooling through virtual methods. If it is unsafe to meet to discuss schooling methods then it is unsafe for school.

4. What happens when a child or staff member is exposed? It WILL happen. Is the entire class in quarantine? Entire school/staff members? I love my job but it is unfair to ask me to risk my own health and the safety of my family at this time. I have a new baby and toddler at home as well as family members in the high risk population.

5. I know there are no easy solutions but the safety of our students and staff members is paramount. It is absolutely unsafe to put our children, teachers, staff members, and all of our family members at risk.

6. The survey was completed prior to a surge in cases. I, for one, would have answered very differently if I took it again now.

7. I provide many of my own supplies when working with students. I cannot ensure that I will have a set of materials for each student. I work with many students in groups. Will this even be feasible now? If not reduced caseloads need to be considered as a caseload of 60 students requiring 1:1 services is much different than when 60 students can be seen in groups of 2-3.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. I hope the district makes the difficult decision to ensure the safety of our students and staff members by continuing to implement distance learning methods.

Emily Wuest
To whom it may concern;

I wanted to contact you as a licensed teacher and a mother of an incoming kindergartener in Washoe County. I changed careers from a Marketing Director to a HS teacher two years ago to pursue a more fulfilling career. Little did I know then that the state of education is in a state of increasing decay. The conditions under which educators are required to work (in a normal time) are unsustainable and detrimental to the physical and mental wellbeing of the employees and students - all with a compensation rate that cannot support a single individual, let alone a family. This has led to a teacher shortage that has only further deteriorated the quality of life for your employees as more and more responsibility is pushed onto educators with very little support.

Fast forward to 2020. You are now taking a position of “do not harm”, yet have failed to provide a plan that keeps teachers and students safe. While there are pressures to open the schools, the amount of funding and new hiring it would take to follow CDC guidelines is cost prohibitive. I see no accounting for extra janitorial staff. I see the need for waivers from the state’s social distancing guidelines for transportation. Teachers will again be thrown into a situation where their entire selves will be required just to maintain order. There will be little to no time for actual instruction. This is child storage - NOT education. The damage that this will cause to the physical and mental well-being of your employees is inexcusable.

Teachers deserve more. Our students deserve more. The bravest thing you could do is acknowledge the fatal funding of the current system and protect your employees. There is no “safe” way to open. If you are brave enough to support 100% distance learning this one short year, there is the possibility in a change of public perception of education and schools may actually get more funding in subsequent years.

If you push teachers too hard, they will continue to leave the profession and you will be unable to open anyway. If you are able to open, the chances of shutting down after a month or two is highly likely.

By all means, provide essential services. Support the community however you can. But please do not pretend the perceived “loss” of a year of school is more harmful than the death of a teacher, a parent, or a friend.

Thank you for your time. I do not envy those making decisions in this impossible situation.

All the best,

Jenny Snaza

Sent from my iPhone (please excuse typos)
It has come to my attention that you will be allowing Summer Football practice, but NOT band, cheer, or ROTC. I see several problems with this:

1. It's not fair to the students that wish to participate in the excluded activities.
2. It sends an erroneous message that football is more important than other activities.
3. It discriminates against children that cannot play football.

It's great that you are opening up the school - but if that is going to include extra-curricular activities, you have to open it up to ALL ACTIVITIES...NOT JUST FOOTBALL! If your reasoning is that somehow, it's possible to social distance playing football...think again. Football is a contact sport. The excluded activities are not more of a risk for exposure to the virus.

If your reason is a lack of staffing for the excluded activities - I'm sorry...it's an all or nothing situation. You either get the staffing needed for all activities....or there should be NO activities. The exclusion of all activities EXCEPT football sends a very negative message.

Please reconsider your decision and work to bring all activities on line.

Sincerely,

Susie Rummens
I’m an elementary school teacher and a parent of two. Our kids are going to start 4th grade and 6th grade this year. With my husband having an underlying health condition, I’m actually terrified to send our kids to attend school the traditional way, even if I had to return to teaching full time.

I’ve read many public comments from parents pretty much stating that science shows that kids don’t get it. In fact, they can and do get it, according to the recent numbers shared by the Washoe County Health District. Just on July 3rd, there were 109 kids, under the age of 10, who tested positive for Covid and 243, between the ages of 10-19. So, kids can and do get it. I do understand the frustration from parents where both parents have to work. However, I do not understand when parents think it is ok for their children not to wear masks. I will not teach without wearing a mask and I do expect for the district to impose and mandate the mask wearing of students and staff. Masks are not pleasant to wear, I agree, nut they do prevent the spread of this virus. And, personally I do not want to find out how it is to live with coronavirus.

Of course I would love for all of us to be able to return to normal, however this pandemic will not allow us to do that for quite a while.

I am looking forward to teaching but I want to make sure my health is not at risk.

Thank you.
To whom it may concern,

As a certified staff member of Washoe County School District, I would like to make my concerns about the released reopening plans known.

I disapprove of how staff health and wellbeing has been completely disregarded in the formation of this plan. It is evident that WCSD views teachers as expendable babysitters. I have two Master’s degrees. I am not a babysitter. I am also not willing to sacrifice my health or my family’s health for my job. Teachers have historically been expected to be selfless and are made to feel guilty when they state their concerns over their own wellbeing. Unlike other frontline workers, we in education have the ability to work in a capacity that honors social distancing in manner that protects the health and wellbeing of all involved. Both my husband and I have an elevated risk of severe complications should we contract COVID-19 and as such we have been strictly following social distancing and mask wearing guidelines since March 14th. If I go back to the classroom under the proposed plans, will all of that have been in vain? I don’t feel comfortable taking that risk for an institution where my health and wellbeing has been nothing but an afterthought. I, however, am lucky that I am a secondary teacher. I can’t believe that WCSD is expecting our primary teachers to go back to what is basically normal. That is careless and disrespectful to the professionals who work in those buildings. What happens when a teacher (or a member of their family) is exposed to and/or contracts COVID-19? Will we be able to quarantine for the 14-days that are recommended? Who is going to cover our classes? It was already incredibly difficult to get substitute teachers in our buildings before the Pandemic. I can’t imagine many substitutes wanting to continue with this line of work now.

I am aware that distance learning was an ineffective stop-gap reaction to an emergent situation that no one predicted, but the proposed plans aren’t the answer. With the proposed plans, the minimum CDC protocols and guidelines cannot be met. Even at half capacity, my classroom will still have between 15-20 students. My room is not big enough to provide 6 feet of space between each student. Even if we were able to make this work, how do you suggest the teacher move about the room during instruction? Furthermore, many people in our community have made it clear that they do not believe that COVID-19 exists and they aren’t participating in social distancing, aren’t wearing masks, and aren’t requiring their children to do so either. In terms of PPE and related items, who will be providing these for students and staff? I have little faith that these items will be provided and that this will be yet another item that teachers are expected to either provide themselves or request as a donation from their students’ parents.

Finally, I disapprove of the manner by which this information was released to the public without any sort of prior notification to staff members. An email would not only have been appreciated but was expected. I can’t think of many individuals who would approve of their employer delivering important information in this manner.

Best,

Katie Grill M.Ed; MS
From: Gordon Hinkel
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:13 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Granddaughter

My 7 year old granddaughter is scheduled to start 2nd grade at Brown Elementary School. Please be advised I strongly believe her education and social skills will prepare her for achieving success by physically attending school 5 days a week. I don’t believe virtual learning provides a quality education and obviously provides no social interaction. Please return the elementary students back to the classroom 5 days a week.
Thank you for your efforts.

Gordon Hinkel.

Sent from my iPhone
Dear WCSD Board Members and Trustees,

First, I would like to start by saying thank you. I know that right now, you are faced with the impossible task of making very difficult decisions that will affect tens of thousands of lives. And no matter the outcome, the decisions you make will leave people unhappy. For this reason, as a Washoe County School District employee, I implore you to base your decisions on the health and safety of your students, staff, administration, teachers and their families.

When I look at the number of hospitalizations and active cases that we have as of today, July 6th versus April and May, when schools were closed, I am astonished that opening schools next month is even an option. Total current hospitalization numbers have continued to rise, and are at an all time high in both the state of Nevada, and Washoe County. In Washoe County during the entire month of May, total active cases averaged at around 550. We now have over twice as many active cases at 1190, with rates rising daily at an alarming rate.
After struggling to understand why reopening is even an option, I looked at the proposed plans and the answer became a bit clearer to me. Middle and High School students who are old enough to stay home alone will attend every other day to minimize exposure, while Elementary School students will attend every day because they're not old enough to stay home alone. This feels to me like the focus is on "childcare", rather than health and safety.

I understand that the plan is to divide the classes in half, and have the children supervised elsewhere in the school by support staff and administration. However, I don't understand how that is supposed to realistically happen. The aging, tiny elementary school in my neighborhood is already severely overcrowded. To my knowledge, all available rooms, including several mobiles are already in use. The last time I was there, a closet was utilized as an office for someone. Will half of the school even fit in the hallways and cafeteria? If so, who will supervise them? There aren't enough employees there to assign one to each teacher to supervise half of their class. Will enough extra staff be hired in time to start the school year? And if not, how will staff who are pulled from their regular positions to supervise children, complete their work?
At the Middle and High School level, I think of all the teachers who will be trying to teach an in person class, enforce social distancing, masks, hand washing, parent emails, etc. all while at the same time, trying to teach students who are doing distance learning. How will teachers ever be able to give a group of students their undivided attention? They won't be able to, it will be impossible. And again, there isn't enough support staff to help teachers so that they can tend to all of the extra workload. This will at minimum, double the work load of every teacher. It's unfair to expect this of them, in addition to unnecessarily being exposed to a deadly virus during a global pandemic.

There is already a huge substitute shortage in Washoe County, so how will teacher absences be handled? Teachers will have to error on the side of caution because of this virus, and this will create an increased number of absences. Will classes have to double up, bringing them right back to a full classroom?

Anyone who has children in a school, or has ever spent any amount of time in a school knows that germs spread like wildfire in schools. I am a huge supporter and firm believer in wearing a mask. However, they only work when they are properly and meticulously used by everyone. In my opinion, we just can't count on kids to do this. Masks will be constantly touched, removed, dropped and forgotten by children. There are thousands of people in Washoe County that refuse to wear masks because they feel they are a violation of their rights. What will the policy be when those parents refuse to have their children wear masks? Counting on masks to protect everyone will only work if they're utilized properly by 100% of people, 100% of the time.

The biggest question that I have is, what are the plans for when someone tests positive? Not if someone does, but when. Will we only quarantine specific classes when an infection happens? In my opinion, this isn't adequate. We will have no idea if the student or teacher was in the restroom, office, clinic, or teachers lounge, etc. We will have no idea who else they exposed, and where else the germs were carried off to. The school I work at has almost 1000 students, and roughly 70 staff members. While I understand that only half of the students would be in the building at once, teachers and staff would be exposed to almost 1000 children, and all of the germs from their households, in a matter of 2 days. In my opinion, it would only be a matter of time before an outbreak occurs, and we are forced to close down again unexpectedly.

For all of these reasons, and for the health and safety of students, staff, teachers, administrators, and their families, I urge you to stop focusing on how to mitigate this virus, because we can't right now. It's impossible. This virus is exploding, and numbers are rapidly rising. Instead, I urge you start the school year on full distance learning, and continue with it until numbers are steadily declining. I urge you to focus on good, solid distance learning plans, that teachers have a say in. Allow them time to plan for and prepare good distance learning lessons for their students. Please allow the focus to be on the health and safety of everyone, not just somewhere for kids to go while their parents work. Please allow us to all continue to put our safety in our own hands, and not to be needlessly exposed to this virus.

I know that there were many, many people who were unhappy with distance learning last year. I also know that this wasn't planned for or expected by anyone, and the district did the best they could given the circumstances. I feel that given adequate time, teachers can focus on preparing sufficient and enriching lessons, that students will learn from and thrive on, all while everyone stays healthy and safe.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,
Stacey Haltom
Hello,

I am an educator in Reno, and I would like to voice my concern about reopening schools this fall. I miss teaching. I miss my kids. I know that many of my students are suffering due to the shutdown. But I also do not see a safe way that schools can reopen this fall. Here are the main reasons why, from my experience, this will be problematic.

1. **Both students and staff are unlikely to follow social distancing and PPE guidelines to the extent required for safety.** The few times when I’ve been required to return to school grounds, I’ve found small groups of teachers gathered in their classrooms without masks in order to talk. This is irresponsible, but also predictable. Humans are very social, and they miss one another. If the adults at our school are not able to follow guidelines, there is no way that we can expect children to do so. Especially given the fact that safety and face masks have become such a political discussion. Furthermore, it is unclear how we can enforce such an expectation. Will students be sent home if they refuse to wear masks? How many warnings would they get first? What about when they (inevitably) hug their friends? Are we suspending them for that? What about those students who are acting out of protest, following the political atmosphere currently surrounding PPE? I can imagine this situation as a social powder keg for many of our students.

2. **An eventual outbreak and school shut down are likely.** Though children are less likely to get Covid, and to spread it, outbreaks are very common in public schools, and some amount of spreading can be expected. Even if only one student were to get covid, are all of the students and teachers that that student interacted with going to be quarantined? This would likely shut down the school itself, as substitutes will be in short supply and several teachers can be expected to retire early or take a leave of absence in order to avoid the dangers of working in such an environment. The school will very likely need to be shut down anyway. By choosing to shut down now, we are allowing teachers, students, parents, and schools the time to prepare a truly useful distance learning curriculum. Distance learning did not work out last time because we were not able to properly prepare for it. If we reopen, and then shut down part way through the year, we are in the same boat as last time. Except we’ve put many lives at risk to get there.

3. **The dangers of catching Covid in Nevada are higher now than they were in March.** I assume I don’t need to go into detail on this, as I’m sure you are being provided with constant feedback on the state of covid. I am a teacher, not an epidemiologist, so I will not pretend to provide expert insight, but the virus is currently growing faster in Nevada than any other state. [https://rt.live/](https://rt.live/)

4. **Teachers should not need to put their lives at risk, even if that means that education will be sub-par.** By far, the loudest argument I hear for reopening comes from parents, who desperately want their children to return to school. Children need structure, which many working parents can’t provide. And the distance learning curriculum in the spring was shown to be ineffective. “Don’t you care about the health, safety, and education of our children?” I have heard from many parents. Guilt has always been used as a weapon against teachers. We
are expected to go above and beyond our job descriptions, sacrificing work-life balance and our own health, for the sake of providing all we can for our students. I find myself, in the middle of my summer off, spending much of my time working on lessons for next year, trying to create something that is flexible enough to be used in and out of the classroom. I am constantly worried about my students, and many teachers will be pressured by this guilt to return to their classrooms, despite reservations. 40% of adults are considered at risk for covid. That means, statistically, 40% of the teachers you are asking to return to their classrooms would need to be hospitalized if they got covid. Yet, guilt will lead many of these teachers to return anyway. Guilt will lead some teachers to their death. In this case, any death is fully avoidable. Yes, students may lose some progress in their education, and some may suffer socially. We will do all we can to help them. But there has to be a solution that does not involve sacrificing the lives of teachers and students.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Ileah Kirchoff
Dear Trustees,

As we prepare to begin the 20-21 school year, I ask you to consider the following regarding reopening our schools. Safety is a primary concern for me as I have family around me who are medically fragile. I also see the necessity for kids to return to school for many reasons. As a teacher, my first concern is all the learning children are missing in their academic education. Second, their socialization in diverse groups is particularly important at this time in our history. Last, they need to see how we deal with crisis as a society and how best to democratically face a challenging situation.

While I feel for parents who need school as childcare, I believe our schools have a greater obligation to educate our students in as risk-free an environment as possible. Thank you.

Stacey Buschine
Hello, I am a parent of two girls entering Kindergarten and 2nd grade.

I do not think my kids would feel comfortable wearing face coverings to school. Smaller class sizes and more hours for cleaning would help. My girls are starting at a new school because we just moved and I want it to be a good experience for them. I am afraid face coverings would ruin that.

Thank you,

Jenelle Wheeler
I am a grandmother to a sweet granddaughter who attends Brown elementary. She will be in 2nd grade this upcoming year. I believe returning to regular school hours will be advantageous to my granddaughters social skills and general education. I don’t believe that distance learning will achieve the skills she will need to be successful.

Thank You for your attention to this matter.

Kim Ingersoll
Dear Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill,

Thank you for time and consideration. As a district employee working at an Elementary School site and mother of a middle school and high school student I am concerned with the proposed hybrid plans which could potentially put us all on different daily schedules. For example, Elementary School in brick and mortar 5 days a week, a Middle School child/student on an "A" schedule and (non driving) High School child/student on a potential "B" schedule. If the motion is passed and it is decided to have both Middle and High Schools on a hybrid schedule, I ask you to please give priority to district employees to have their children on the same A or B schedule. It is going to be difficult enough if we have some schools full time in house and some on a hybrid model for parents, but as a district employee I believe some consideration must be given and accommodations should be made.

I appreciate the opportunity to bring this concern to your attention.
Sincerely,

Nicole Buhrmann
From: Brenda Koval
Sent: Monday, July 6, 2020 4:37 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Upcoming school year

I would really like to see a choice for an online only option this year for my kids. I am a healthcare worker and I see how easily this virus spreads with the younger population. I fear starting school this fall will lead to an uncontrollable outbreak in our schools.
Dear Washoe County School District Board of Trustees,

I am not sure if the Reopening Plan is subject to public comment, but I am going to provide my two cents in hopes that you will consider it. I work at a non-profit that provides judicial education to judges and courts across the United States about how to handle domestic violence cases, and these judges and courts are grappling with the same issues as the WCSD in-terms of transitioning back to in-court operations, as is my organization in terms of how to provide judges and courts instruction that balances the in-person format that we use and know works with the need for and reality of virtual learning during this time and budget cuts for judicial education. I read the re-opening plans, and just want to reiterate my strong support of an option for families - either an in-person model or a distance learning model. I strongly believe that a hybrid model is setting up both our educators and students for failure because, in my experience, it will be very difficult to do both well, especially with the limited amount of time available to put plans in place.

I would like to see an in-person option and a distance learning option, where families decide on one model or the other. If the survey results were as mixed as I get the impression from reading, then in theory, probably half the families would choose the in-person model and half would choose the distance learning model. If this proves true, then the in-person option would be operating at 50% capacity as required. But, the district could also have a plan A and B in place if the number choosing in-person is higher. I think a lot of this depends on scheduling and the willingness of the WCSD to look at it and change it. A very difficult and daunting task, no doubt.

For the in-person option, I think that you could consider at the middle and high school levels teachers moving between classrooms rather than the students, which also in theory minimizes exposure if there is an outbreak; offering set schedules, so for example all English classes are taught first period from remedial to honors, second period math, etc., with the teachers moving to the students; maybe setting some and eliminating some electives, for example, we know this pandemic has taken on toll on kids (and adults) mental and physical well-being, so I would suggest making PE a full year required "core class" that could be the last class of each day (so kids don't have to use showers or worry about being stinky throughout the day), maybe also making health a require full year "core" elective that allows for kids to talk about the "new normal" in the age of this pandemic and covers the traditional sex education, hygiene in the covid-19 world, etc., but a place for the kids to discuss their fears, concerns, and vent with their peers, and maybe only offering 4-6 electives (language, art, band, choir); I would have hand sanitizers at each classroom that students and teachers must utilize upon entering; flow of traffic in the halls directed in a one way model utilizing the outdoors to keep the flow of trafficking moving one way; desks that have plastic around the sides and front like the nail salons are doing; practice social distancing and follow all other required directives, but also utilized unused space - maybe the gym when it is not the PE class track and outdoor space as the weather permits; working with and training the teachers that will be teaching the in-person track, and if they are certified in more than one subject, utilize that expertise, and shore up long-term substitutes for the teacher shortage; working with and training the cadre of distance learning teachers as it is vastly different than teaching in-person, and again shore up long-term substitutes and utilize as needed; and the distance learning model also provides an option for those teachers who do not feel they can return to the classroom at this time. This might also involve loosening up the substitute teacher requirements so that we can increase the substitute teacher pool, but might also help with providing jobs for those who are out of work, but have this skill set. Another option might be to live stream the in-classroom instruction (maybe tapping into the resources that film the athletic events) or use Zoom to do so. That way you get a simultaneous instruction, which might result in less feelings of isolation and lack of social interaction.

The hybrid model would seem to be just as expensive as offering a two-track model (having to secure equipment and supplies to ensure the social distancing requirements are met, personal protective equipment, and increased staffing, in addition to providing device and internet access for all middle and high school students), and really puts a lot of stress on families with two working parents, parents working from home, parents with more than one child, and parents who are teachers - especially those that teach elementary school but have a child(ren) in middle or high school. And, puts stress on teachers to develop and teach two different curricula - an in-person and a distance learning, rather than focusing their energy on the one they will be teaching. I know the budget is an issue, and the special session is coming up to discuss
budgetary cuts, but I would urge trying to secure funding for an increased staffing and substitute pool so that these two options can be given to families.

Again, thank you for your consideration and for all the work the WCSD representatives and committee members have done in putting together, what I hope is the first draft, of a reopening plan. I hope you will consider changing the plan to an option based reopening plan - an in-person track and a distance learning track, rather than the proposed hybrid model.

Sincerely,

Amy Pincolini-Ford
I don't see how it's possible to require all children to wear masks and socially distance at schools. Washoe County School district is already so so crowded that you are going to exclude many kids and those kids will fall through the cracks. Those kids rely on teachers for education and the school district for food for their lunch meals and after school programs. You're going to lose all of those children and give money to the private school districts or let deserving children fall through the cracks all because of a minor virus and you requiring masks. I'm appalled

Signed,
A local mother
A business owner
A voter

Guess my money will go to private schools then!
Hello-

I oppose the regular opening of schools requiring children to wear masks. If another form of social distancing can be adhered to, that would be much more affective and safe.

Thank you.

Concerned parent.

Sent from my iPhone
I urge the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees to vote for full time in person education for all students. The burden on mental health for students and parents that comes with distance learning cannot be underestimated.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, a group of medical professionals dedicated to keeping our children safe and healthy, support students returning to school this fall. That should be all you need to know.

Also, consider that it is safe enough for me to spend hours playing video poker or drinking at a bar, and thus by logical extension one could assume educating our children to prepare for their future should also be safe.

I don’t care if you check their temperature, make them wear masks, whatever. Open the schools.

Sincerely,

Brittany Nannini
Sorry resending with additional information.

Greetings -
I would like to voice my concern with the current plan to return kids to school with a partial in school / distance learning. I have 4 kids. I'm very concerned how we will manage this as I am employed under an essential business.

Also, my kids have been struggling emotionally as their life revolves around their school, their interaction with teachers and fellow students and friendships. This has rocked their world as it has all of us.

I have a middle schooler going to a new school and he's already struggling to keep up. I worry that this burden is too much. Kids should return to school full time. If there are no other options then at least consider that families are scheduled to be on the same block. If they are not on the same block then our whole family is being exposed to the very illness we are all being told we need to stay home for.

I also want to mention that the distance learning proved to be quite challenging for our home. We don't have enough devices to complete this. In addition I'm working a full time job from home and our kids required a lot of assistance with their learning. Also, to find out the work they were completed would not impact their grades that much was another blow. So much time being spent with very little reward. There's got to be a better way.

If you have any questions please contact me. Thank you for your time.
First off thank you for your time and willingness to seek out the public’s comments and thoughts regarding having children return to school. As a parent it is appreciated.

As we all know the use of the “packets” for distance learning was a failure. It was nothing but busy work that caused tension in households and at the end of the day it didn’t teach our kids....our children need to learn. They need to learn academics, they need to learn proper social skills and multitasking.

I understand that no matter what the decision is there will be people who complain or aren’t satisfied. For that I’m sorry. For me my biggest concern/question is what is the plan for distance learning (if the governor denies your proposal.... or if a school/classroom gets an outbreak.... or worse in the fall when flu season starts and everything gets closed down again)? If I am to keep my children enrolled in public school I need to know that they will still have access to their teachers online to learn on a daily basis (Like normal School hours... not a 20min zoom meeting). Busy packet work is NOT the answer. They need to keep moving forward not just maintaining.... our children are getting left behind in this country and world due to our counties poor decisions made last academic year. PLEASE address the plan for worst case scenarios and if they can’t go to school.

Thank you for your time.
A very concerned parent who believes children need to be in the classroom.

Ashlie Teixeira-Smith
Good evening,

I would like to voice my support for full time school for elementary age children.

Thank you,

Emily Beebe
Hunsberger parent

Sent from my iPhone
Please allow those parents who are comfortable sending their children to school to do so in a full-time, normal situation.

Please do not force this unlawful MASK mandate on our children.

There are plenty of alternatives for those families who are not comfortable.

Please do not force the rest of us who are not afraid of this virus to subject our children to this craziness. Please help keep things normal for the children of Washoe County who are not scared!

Our children need NORMAL and they need their friendships and social lives back!

Julie DiNapoli
Parent Galena High School
Dr. Kristen McNeill, I wanted to pose a few thoughts and questions to you as a taxpayer, parent, and spouse of a Washoe County School District employee. First and foremost thank you for your hard work and dedication to the education, health, and safety of our students and facility. I also want you to understand that NO ONE expects you to have the answers, we do however hope that you will place the health and safety of those we love above all other things in making decisions.

- If funding was not a concern wouldn't you agree that we should be starting from a distanced learning plan and working towards in school participation perhaps by December or January?
- How can we insure students, staff and families that we can provide a safe learning environment given the fact that our understanding of COVID-19 has been evolving over the past 5 months, and we have no idea what the next learning curve may reveal.
- Will facility and students be required to sign a hold harmless agreement so that the school district will not be responsible for children or facility contracting covid-19?
- How will we deal with possible exposure in a school, will the pupils/facility members' class room be asked to quarantine, will the entire facility be asked to quarantine? I believe it's not a matter of if but when someone will test positive and we need to understand what this looks like prior to moving forward with any reopening plans.

I appreciate your attention to these questions. I have literally 1000's of them racing thru my head as we prepare to reopen our classrooms.

Thanks again.

Ed Alexander
Hi

I have two kids going to WCSD - one going to high school and the little one going to 4th grade. I sincerely believe that all classes should be virtual in view of Covid-19 and Kawasaki-like disease symptoms in kids which are getting reported from across the globe.

It's better to be safe than sorry. All we need is one severe case among our community kids to make us rethink about in-person classes.

Thanks
Suresh Anumalasetty
Hello,

1- I’d like to express my extreme opposition to any sort of “hybrid” or block schedules for the upcoming school year. My high school aged child does not learn well online. She struggles with every aspect. My middle schoolers have a hard time staying on task with online learning without someone breathing down their necks. I’m a single mom who works full time. I can’t be home to police the internet and be sure everyone is staying on task and not taking a tik Tok break. My oldest will be a senior this year and takes mostly honors and AP courses. Unfortunately, she’s considering dropping these courses as it will be too much and too difficult even partly online. This will severely impact her college plans.

2- Why should WCSD receive funding for my students when I’m providing at least half of the instruction? Most parents I’ve spoken to agree that WCSD is putting their potential state funding as the motivation for choosing the hybrid/block schedule

3- PLEASE OPEN THE SCHOOLS FULL TIME. GIVE PARENTS THE OPTION OF FULL TIME SCHOOL OR ONLINE ONLY. LET FAMILIES CHOOSE FOR THEMSELVES WHICH OPTION WORKS FOR THEM.

LET US CHOOSE!!!

Thanks,

Tiffany Dini

Sent from my iPhone
I hope our messages and parent insight are considered as you make decisions to reopen.

Our children are suffering, many are home alone, becoming depressed, goals and milestones being tossed aside as if they should be ok with ALL this.

Please open the doors for our child!
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding 07.07 Meeting / Agenda Items 4.03, 4.04 - Re-Opening of Schools for 2020-2021

I thank everyone involved in this process for their work on constructing this plan, and I appreciate the difficulty you all must be facing in trying to make these decisions. That said, while I think this is a good plan to continue working on and considering for the start of calendar year 2021 if things improve, it is in no way appropriate for the start of the upcoming semester. We are still deeply affected by this virus with no solutions to the primary problem yet in sight. Until we have at least some form of consistent prevention or treatment for COVID-19, it is irresponsible and dangerous to gather large numbers of students and faculty together on a daily basis, and then disperse them back to their families at the end of the day.

Washoe County has had its highest single day number of new COVID-19 positive cases in the last week - a trend that has been growing over the past couple of weeks. This has been a major headline on most of our local news outlets and I know everyone is seeing the same statistics. This is not the time to put our heads in the sand and pretend nothing is happening, but from the survey results shared and public comments already available online it appears that many people want to do just that under the illusion of “getting back to normal”. Things might seem normal for a few weeks if we go forward with this plan, but as people begin to get sick and possibly die it will feel far from any idea of normal that we previously had.

While your survey data is informative in understanding how families will react to your fall plans and preparing for the potential blowback, it cannot be the driver behind those decisions. The decision to include these results in your plan make them seem like justification for something that is putting families across our district in danger. The only reasonable justification for putting students back into classrooms should be that it is completely safe to do so in the opinion of public health officials, not frustrated parents and students. If the board is still not finding it safe to meet in person, how can it be safe to send all these children back into a classroom for full day sessions?

This virus has been highly politicized, but it does not care about our politics. The fact is that hundreds of people are dying from it every day, and that number is likely to increase again as new cases are once again on the rise due to the easing of lockdowns and some people's outright refusal to wear masks. Deaths are down at the moment but they lag behind new infections, and we have not yet proven we have a handle on treatment. Looking at Nevada alone, the data clearly shows a steady increase of cases through Phase 1, and a sharp jump during Phase 2. While some members of the public like to attribute this to an increase in testing or backlogs, local health officials have made statements that it is a direct result of people “going back to their normal”:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/


Nevada currently has one of the highest reproduction rates of the virus in the country. Last week we had the highest, and while the curve appears to have leveled off the past few days that may have resulted from the slowing of testing and results over the holiday weekend. This is not a trend that looks good going into a school year where you want to put our children and teachers back together in confined spaces for long stretches of the day - especially as
Experts are moving towards an understanding that the virus is airborne and not merely spread through droplet transmission.

**National R/t Statistics:** [https://rt.live/](https://rt.live/)


Throughout this pandemic there has been a narrative that the virus does not affect children. If it were as simple as that then it would absolutely make sense to re-open schools, but this is not the reality of the situation. First, it completely disregards the fact that children themselves do not live in their own bubble. They will return home to their families every afternoon, along with whatever germs they pick up throughout the course of the day. Even if they become infected but not symptomatic, they will still be able to spread the virus to their teachers, classmates, and at-risk members of their family at home. Second, as time goes on, we are seeing that not only can they contract and spread the virus but it does indeed have detrimental and potentially long-term effects on children. I am not willing to take a chance on sacrificing my children’s entire future just to ensure they have a “normal” school year this year, and I am sure I am not alone. Our kids will get by with an off year, and they will be alive to see the next.

**COVID-19 can cause potentially long-term neurological problems in infected children:** [https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaneurology/fullarticle/2767979](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamaneurology/fullarticle/2767979)

**Over 300 children in Texas daycares have tested positive for COVID-19:** [https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/](https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/01/texas-day-care-coronavirus-cases-rising/)


What you are asking of teachers is also wholly unacceptable. They went into this profession to be educators, yet now you are asking them to put their lives at risk from this virus and become enforcers for rules that much of the public does not want to follow. Teachers, especially those who are older or immunocompromised, will be placed at risk as will their families.

There are several public comments already complaining about temperature checks and trying to argue that the masks themselves are dangerous. These parents are saying they will not allow their child to wear a mask. How much difficulty are you prepared to endure from these groups of people as time goes on? Many of the same parents that seem to be so adamant about “returning to normal” also appear to be the ones that will not allow their children to wear a mask based on the public comments I’ve read thus far. How can this possibly work?

If one of these students is in a classroom, they become a safety issue for all other students and educators there with them. In some cases seen in the news, people who were asked to wear masks have become violent towards those who have asked them to do so. How do you plan to create a safe environment for students and teachers who will follow the mask order to not only protect them from the virus, but from the potential of being coughed on or being attacked by those who are unreasonably uncompromising about not following the order?

How much of a teacher’s day is going to be wasted on reminding students to stay apart, to keep their mask on, to wash their hands? I can see this working at the university level, but K-12 students are going to cause immense difficulty for their teachers trying to enforce these rules. How will teachers be able to get their actual job done with the amount of time that will be required just to enforce these new rules?
If you are going to provide students with the option to attend school remotely, you should also take the teachers and their families into consideration and extend the same option to them. Surely there will be many families opting into the remote option, and you will need additional staff to cover that group. Please at least give teachers the opportunity to make that choice as well if you go forward with this plan.

While many parents may rely on teachers to be both educators and caretakers under normal circumstances, it is not the primary purpose of our schools to be a daycare. I am concerned by how your decision might be swayed by the number of comments I am seeing that seem to hinge on how a parent’s schedule will be affected by anything other than a full return to school. This is not the job of the school district to resolve. Any re-opening decision should be driven by meeting student’s safety and education needs first, not the childcare needs of parents. I understand how difficult this must be for some parents, but we cannot have public health be held hostage by employers who are unwilling to work with their employees to get through this universally shared problem. If we move to full distance education, that might at least force some employers to have to deal with the reality of the situation and provide options for their staff. I get no joy from taking this position and in fact feel terrible saying so because I know the hardships some families may face without childcare, but we cannot allow the already broken parts of our society to inflict further pain through public health issues that could be avoided.

I know you are concerned that going forward with this plan may result in an outbreak. Then what? It is already unacceptable that we might allow this to happen and trying to put together another last-minute distance education plan when it does will only make the situation worse.

I appreciate what was put together quickly for distance learning in March, but it was just barely enough to help us limp through the remainder of the school year, and with much difficulty in some cases. So much more could be done if we focused on well executed distance education today instead of scrambling to put it together a month or two into the school year when things go wrong. Please do not spend money on masks or other PPE, thermometers, HVAC upgrades, and other supplies for this plan. Put those funds towards tools for teachers and students to have a successful semester via distance education and then re-assess as time goes on. Start putting a remote plan in place today so that teachers will be ready to start the year off strong, and not scrambling to make something work at the last minute!

One final thought – we have many years to correct the course of elementary aged students who might fall behind as a result of a less than ideal situation they might face this year. If we are going to have any students make use of the school buildings it should be the older students who are closing out their K-12 education and need more direct intervention so they can move into the next phase of their lives. Over time we can work on any shortcomings that arise in our younger students.

Thank you for your time and continued hard work navigating this difficult situation,
Andrew Guzman
Hello,

I would like to share my comments regarding the districts proposed plan for reopening. I am opposed to any plan other than a full return to school for my children. Distance Learning was unorganized at best. It was very difficult to manage as a father who has full custody of 2 in elementary and 2 in middle school and who works a busy high level job. The content wasn’t relevant and did not follow any sort of progression. There was no consistency in the format used between teachers nor in grading expectations.

Parents should have the choice to either send their kids to school full time or do distance learning full time. Anything in between is detrimental to students learning and causes a severe hardship for many parents who work full time. I cannot spend the time to police at home online learning and an elementary or middle school student does not have the discipline to stay focused on online learning that is poorly organized and presented.

Social distancing guidelines which these supposed decisions are being based on are flawed. Students will naturally congregate in the bathroom, hallway, lunch room, recess. You can’t build a big enough school or hire enough people to ensure that students never get closer than 6 feet. Not to mention you can’t control what happens outside school in sports, etc. Kids get one chance at a childhood. Let them have the experience.

I hope this message carries some weight along with what I can only assume are numerous others like it. Parents make the ultimate decision for their children’s health not the school district or the state epidemiologist who takes guidance from elected officials who have their own agenda. If my tax dollars are going to the school district I want them used for what they are intended....Teachers teaching in school.

Michael Spitzer
Board,
During this time of COVID-19. Why is a high risk of transmission activity, like football, able to start practicing? However, a low risk transmission activity, like cheer, unable to practice and conditioning? They can easily practice condition without stunting and plenty of social distancing.

Stephen Waters

Sent from my iPhone
I want to thank the school reopening committee for coming up with some thoughtful plans to reopen our schools. I have been a classroom high school teacher in WCSD for over 20 years and I will be happy to return to teaching in the classroom with the hybrid plan if these three common sense conditions can be met.

1. Our community has a reduction of cases not over 5% of the test rate and a reduction in the community spread factor.
2. Teachers and students have access to Covid 19 testing with a 48 hour test return for teachers.
3. All schools provide PPE needed for staff and students and procedures are inspected regularly, like they are in grocery stores and shopping outlets.

I hope all these factors can be met before our scheduled time to return students to class on time. If they cannot be met, I hope we will return to distance learning until these basic requests are met.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Rutherford  
Science educator  
Damonte Ranch High School
To whom it may concern,

Please allow cheer practices to resume. I am a parent of an incoming high school freshman. If the board has allowed high school football to practice this summer then why haven’t you allowed cheer to practice?

Football is a male dominated sport and cheer is predominantly a female driven sport so, that would seem quite sexist. The cheer team can wear masks and maintain social distances. Please allow the cheer teams to practice!

Thank you,
Jessica Robnett

Sent from my iPhone
With all due respect I cannot go without putting my voice out before this meeting tomorrow. I truly feel that not putting all kids back to school full time is a grave danger not only for education but for their mental health. You proposed to possible only send the older kids middle to high school in shift at the hardest times in their lives where they need school and friends. It’s beyond a task for these kids to make a friend and now you either want to separate them on shifts and make life harder. It should be a back to school in full for all with special application for kids and family’s that are afraid as well as staff but giving us the choice this virus will not be going away and we need to learn to work with it knowing there will be cases and some people will be worse than others. I am quite certain the younger ones are way more risked than the older ones but due to work schedule for parents no kids should be left to navigate their own education in a part time schedule. All kids have the potential to do things while unattended to try to keep up with school. Suicidal issues are extreme at the kids from middle to high school and with these extreme isolation times these kids are already feeling alone without friends and now left home for hours could cause increases unstable behaviors in these kids. I hope this gets read and possible consider these real problems.

Thank you heather toole
Sent from my iPhone
To whom it may concern,

They say the plan is stagger schedules but keep Elementary school kids Monday thru Friday, my daughter was removed from Deidrichsen because of overcrowding and planning on attending Mendive for 6th grade to finish her Elementary education and move on to middle school. Does the staggered schedule impact 6th grade kids? I don't think that'll be fair to 10 yr olds that are technically Elementary school students to be part of that plan, parents like myself have full time jobs and don't want their young children home alone all day doing online school they are simply too young and the thought of that scares my kid. I'm sure that there will be quite a few middle school kids/parents that will be doing full time online school so that should reduce the amount of students in one place, Please take this to account when you make your decision. Thank you for your time.
hello,
i’m asking for you to please open the high school for m-f instruction. as a student, i struggled with the distance learning. it was difficult for me to focus and stay motivated. i struggled and it was only “review”. if i have to rely on online learning to actually learn, then i might as well not even go to school. my parents work all day so i have no one to turn to when i’m frustrated that i’m struggling or have no idea what i’m doing. please allow us to go to school full time. i never imagined in a million years that i’d make that statement.
thank you for reading,
Asia T.
Hello,

I am a special education teacher at a high school. My two main concerns are this: what is best for my students and what will work for my actual kids.
Many of my kids have thrived in an online environment and I think they would benefit from possibly only coming in for their social class. I want them to have options that meet their needs.
Second I am very concerned about childcare for my own kids. They are six and eleven. I need to make sure someone is watching them when I’m at work. My six year old has illness induced asthma. This year already we have done an ambulance and two hospitals stays because of the severeness of his asthma.

Thank you,

Britnie Marquez

Get Outlook for iOS
To whom it may concern,

As a teacher in an elementary school, I do have a concern with the plan that is being brought to the board of trustees. I am concerned that there is a rush being made to get back to school. Having 4 days to attend trainings and ready classrooms for the upcoming school year does not feel like adequate time before school starts on August 17th. I feel that it would be beneficial to have more time for teachers and school staff to understand what changes are taking place, prepare for the possibility of an individual school closure, and see how the social distancing classrooms will function with independent work done by students with non-certified staff. It seems that in the rush to get back to "normal" we are missing vital steps in keeping STAFF safe and healthy. As a teacher, I would rather be prepared in going back to educate students instead of struggling with the new measures and not teaching to the best of my abilities.

Sincerely,
Erin Krentz
To whom it may concern,

As a parent of two children in WCSD I ask that you reopen schools full time to those who want to have their children attend while offering a online option to those not comfortable/ able to attend. Children are less likely to get COVID, less likely to transmit COVID due to typically having little to no symptoms and if they do get it are not likely to get very ill from it. The lack of socialization and gap in education is much more damaging to this group of the population.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone
July 6, 2020

Dear Washoe County School Board of Trustees,

I believe that if Washoe County School District begins the school year with the in-person learning model, students, teachers, and all staff will be put in harm’s way. According to https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html the virus which causes Covid-19 spreads very easily and sustainably between people. The article goes on to state that “the more closely a person interacts with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.” The enclosed physical space of a school, combined with children and adults being together for extended periods of time, provides the perfect environment for the virus to spread and it is only a matter of time before an outbreak occurs.

Due to the massive increase of Covid-19 cases, I believe that it is in the best interest of Washoe County School District begins the year with the distance education model. You have the chance to do what’s right for our children and I strongly urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Filborne
Just a quick note to say my family fully supports your balanced, fair re-opening recommendations for WCSD schools. Getting K-5 into schools 5 days a week allows working parents to continue working with minimal interruption while the every other day in-person approach 6-12 is a workable compromise. My son is in middle school and I believe it’s the safest way to open. We understand the need to balance the health and well being of the kids, staff, families and greater community.

Thank you!
Chris & Kym Sorensen

Sent from my iPhone
To Whom it May Concern:

I am a first grade teacher, and I have some major concerns with the proposed plan to reopen elementary schools.

1. It is my understanding that even with masks, we must maintain 6 feet of distance between ourselves and students. Teachers will not be able to move around the room to interact with students, but instead must stay at the front of the room while students remain in their desks for longer periods than a young child is able to sit still. How are we to possibly teach first graders, who need help hundreds of times a day, in this type of restrictive scenario?

2. What are the repercussions for a student who refuses to wear a mask? Are they sent home because they are putting everyone in danger? Are they just constantly reminded? How will this be enforced?

3. How are we to even distribute materials to students when touching papers etc. would technically contaminate them? If students are expected to learn from simply listening to a teacher all day, it goes against every best practice teaching strategy we have been taught. A student this young can only listen to direct instruction for a short time before they need to interact with it in some way.

4. Students may not sing because it emits too many particles. Students may not check out books from the library because they might become contaminated. Students may not play on the playground. Students may not go on field trips. Students may not eat in the cafeteria. Students may not be closer than 6 feet from a friend. This is so restrictive it barely resembles the schools we left in March.

5. If a teacher chooses to remain a distance learning teacher, how will this work? Will they teach the students from their current school who choose not to return to the building? Will they lose their position at their current school while trying to stay safe?

6. If schools are to return at 50% capacity, how will we pay for the extra allocations?

Thank you for your time,
A very concerned teacher
To whomever reads this,
With masks only being required over age 9, that means 4 out of the 6 grades potentially will not be wearing masks. That could be 500 kids in a school with 700 kids. Young children are more impulsive and have a harder time keeping distance or making sure to sneeze and cough into a tissue. They also put their fingers in their nose and mouth all the time. A mask will remind them to not put their fingers on their face because it runs into a mask. If we are worried that they will play with their mask, frequent hand washing will help with germs getting on the mask. Then over time, they get used to the mask and touch it less. If they don't wear masks, their hands will still be on their face all day as they put their hand on their face to hold their head up, blow their nose, bite their finger nails, etc. Please reduce the age requirement to 5.

It will be impossible to change our classrooms to make sure everyone stays 6 feet apart without a lot more funding. Too many classrooms have moved to tables instead of desks, especially younger grades. We simply do not have enough desks in the buildings. The distance needs to be a recommendation, not the mask.

Please let there be some wiggle room with the masks. Make sure to approve the use of face shields and Plexiglas windows. Speech teachers especially need to be able to see the movements of the lips to help them do their job.
Why is it okay for teachers and elementary school students to return full time. But not appropriate for other levels?

Is it simply to have teachers be baby sitters while parents return to work? Why the increase risk to these grade school teachers? What is the reasoning for this increased risk?
Hello esteemed Trustees,

My name is Dallas Hulsey. I am a middle school science teacher at Marce Herz and serve on the Board of Directors for the WEA as their Middle School Director. I am writing to you today to advocate for safety over normalcy or convenience. Specifically, I am writing to share my opinions related to agenda items 4.03 and 4.04 to be addressed at the July 7th regular meeting of the Board of Trustees. I am explicitly asking you to consider voting for full-time distance learning at the start of next school year for the first 9-week period or the entire first semester.

The main reasons that I believe we should turn to fully distance learning:
1. It’s the safest option for everyone.
2. It saves tons of money on transportation and building usage costs.
3. The district realistically doesn’t have the money to follow the CDC guidelines for cleaning/safety or extra educators to manage students.
4. Educators are at a much higher risk than students to catch and have negative long-term impacts from the virus.
5. Educators won’t be able to teach very effectively in a hybrid model of learning anyway.
6. Educators will become extremely proficient with technology.
7. It allows educators with children to have a solid plan for childcare.
8. If the Board of Trustees and our various task forces don’t feel comfortable meeting in person to decide the fate of our careers and (potential) health, educators shouldn’t go back in person to school, either.

Many students won’t wear a mask. Many can’t keep it on despite their best intentions. Some will claim a medical exemption to get out of it. Many teachers don’t want their students to wear masks, and don’t want to wear them themselves. How well do you think they’ll enforce any mask policy?

As a middle school teacher how am I supposed to teach only 20 students in person each class? What happens to the rest of the students who won’t attend that day? I can’t manage an in-person class of 20 plus 10 or more on the other end of a Microsoft Teams video call. That sounds like chaos.

I need so much more paid time than what is given to prepare for almost any eventuality in the fall. I need time to plan; time for professional development; time for collaboration; and even more time for attendance and grading. I am not prepared. Even with the extra 10 days given to us I do not think I will be truly prepared.

Please consider discussing and potentially voting to have next academic year start as full-time distance learning. It is the safest option for our students, families, educators, and support staff. I understand that no option will keep everyone happy, but one option can keep people safe. Please choose safety; please choose full-time distance learning!
In solidarity and with best wishes,

Dallas Hulsey
To whom it concerns;

I would like to voice my opinion on the 2020-21 school year. My two children are in elementary school and I am not comfortable with them going back to school full time. I am on board for a hybrid 2 or 3 days at school and 2 or 3 days of digital learning. I do not feel that it will be a safe environment for my children or any children to be back at school full time.

Thank you,

-Heather Onas

Watching the live stream and wondering how elementary is expected to go back full time but middle and high school is not. Why was the decision made? Our elementary schools are at capacity so I do not see how it will work properly.

I am a parent who is for the hybrid model, but I am not yet on board with full distance learning or full in school learning. Can parents choose to do both in the elementary level?

-Heather Onas
Hello,

I would like to submit for public comment my concerns with the proposed reopening plan/outline as it stands.

First, thank you for taking the time to read this, and taking the time to form a committee to address reopening our schools. Secondly, I do not believe the current plan that is being proposed for reopening, particularly for elementary schools, is effective as it currently stands. As much as I wish to return to my classroom, I do not think that with numbers of cases of COVID-19 rising as they are, it is acceptable to open up our classrooms in any regard. We are endangering the lives of students, teachers, and families. A single recommended cloth mask is not going to protect anyone. Students and teachers will need several to keep clean during a given week, and teachers are already likely going to be buying brand new supplies for each student (to avoid sharing). Another plan or funding for PPE needs to be put in place and required.

I also think that the trauma and fear both students and teachers would be feeling may be too much for effective learning to take place. I am unsure how I am to care for traumatized children when I am experiencing trauma simultaneously. I cannot “put my oxygen mask on before I help someone else with theirs” if there is no oxygen mask. I can however poor my heart, soul, and training into serving my students during distance learning.

I understand that regardless of the outcome, people will be upset. However, if one choice is inconvenient and difficult but the other is potentially deadly... the decision is clear. I should not have to choose between my health and safety (and that of my family) and my job. An unpaid leave cannot sustain my family during this time, and if there are an abundance of teachers who want to distance-teach who will fill those jobs? Where will other teachers go? I am vulnerable, I simply cannot find another job, and teaching is my heart and soul. I love my kids. I don't want to die for them.

Thank you for your time.

Kathryn Hodges
Second Grade Teacher
Washoe County School District
Grace Warner Elementary
3075 Heights Dr, Reno, NV 89503
Hello,

I understand why the elementary model is full time (to remove the burden of childcare from parents even though teachers are far more than childcare employees) but I don’t understand how this is going to work.

- With students at the elementary level going full time, how are schools going to reduce classroom sizes to enforce social distancing?
- Also, for parents who recognize that their child needs social interaction but aren’t quite comfortable with the full time model, will they be allowed to send their kids less than 5 days a week without punishment (therefore using a non standard hybrid model?) - How is the attendance policy going to be modified next year?
- How will sick leave be managed for teachers next year when they are required to quarantine?
- Will teachers at school sites be required to prepare lessons for both digital and in person learning?

I sincerely hope these questions, along with the hundreds of others posted, are able to be answered as soon as possible.

Jacie Osborne
Hello,
As both a parent of two elementary age children and husband of an elementary school teacher I am 100% against school resuming in-person at this time. If the question is “how” then the answer should easily point to we shouldn’t. Pressure to reopen is heavily based upon the misconception that public school is childcare, it is not. It is for the education of our children. However the safety of the children and teachers is not fully being considered. If it is not safe for everyone to return to the office it is not safe to return to school. If it is not safe for pro and collegiate sports to return to normal operations it is not safe to return to school. If it is not safe to interact in public without social distancing and face masks it is not safe to return to school. Don’t be pressured to return school to normal in the same manner we returned from shelter-in-place and have seen a rapid increase in positive case counts of COVID.

How are you going to provide for social distancing when classrooms are already overcrowded? How are you going to ensure children and school district employees wear face masks the proper way (over mouth and nose) the entire day? How are you going to ensure proper sanitation? If you propose longer days or dual learning experiences how will teachers be compensated for the additional time? What happens if somebody within a school test positive? Have HVAC systems been upgraded to increase ventilation and filtration? Where will all the extra supplies and books come from so that sharing is not required? How are you going to accommodate students and teachers with vulnerable immune systems?

School should not resume in person as a trial for society. School shall only return to normal operations once a vaccine is widely available and administered. Every child and district employee should be required to get the vaccine before returning to school.

Thank you
Peter F

Sent from my iPhone
Board of Trustees:

I am writing this for consideration at the upcoming meeting on July 7th with a possible vote.

Why can’t we get our kids to school? The overwhelming reason as of today, is the Governor’s Directive 022 and Directive 024 that is restricting the school districts across the entire state. It is imperative that the school districts ban together with the support of the State Board of Education to tell, not ask, the Governor that his directive is unattainable for most school districts. The districts do not have the money, resources, equipment, or time to implement the directive. Instead they have wasted an enormous amount of time, money, and resources trying to figure out how to put a square peg in a round hole. Instead the districts could have been concentrating on sanitation, classroom configurations, outside classes, etc. The Governor has failed our kids.

It is time for WCSD to show some leadership, partner with Clark County and other school districts and represent the over 500,000 students in Nevada schools that KIDS and SCHOOL are ESSENTIAL. Districts will do their best to implement safety measures, cleaning protocols, etc. when and where ever possible, but the risks of 500,000 kids not going to brick and mortar schools far outweighs the risk of COVID-19 and the hundreds of “other issues” to kids who do not go back to school as we know it. Directive 022 is too restrictive for most of the school districts to implement, if not impossible without detriment to the kids and teachers. Managing to be the best you can is not easy and great results require tireless effort. The district has made progress in its education and cannot afford to fall backwards again. Sitting around waiting for the right time will not work and COVID-19 is probably not going away anytime soon.

Every one of you has gone to the store, purchased necessities, pumped gas, etc. The governor has not stopped you. WHY! It is essential. Attending school is ESSENTIAL! This vote has the potential to pave the way for a generational gap in what happens to the kids - educationally, mentally, socially, and physically. But, it’s okay to go and buy 2x4’s and nails at Home Depot take the kids to Walmart, and Wild Island – with and without masks.

I first thought I was one of the few who wanted to go back to a “normal school schedule”; however, after reading the comments from the past 2 to 3 board meetings, I realize that we are the majority. The Board must listen to its constituents and vote to return to normal school. We are the taxpayers who pay WCSD salaries and for assets to be used in our children’s education. Regardless of what WCSD staff and the Recovery Task Force suggests, they need to go back to the drawing board. Call the governor’s bluff and open schools at normal operation with the best safety practices that can be plausible and feasible and see what happens. I guarantee many parents will be by your side.

In our household both parents work consisting of 10-12+ hour days. My kids cannot and will not stay at home all day and be expected to participate in digital learning. The district does not have the capacity to teach digitally at a level described even as “BASIC.” Why use the word “basic”? Basic describes the process as just getting by or at a low level. That is an unacceptable level of education. There needs to be accountability on WCSD, teachers and students for digital learning. I do not trust the digital learning due to the extreme failure of digital “learning” during the past Spring. The district has NOT had enough time or guidance to implement a solid digital
education, let alone train any teachers. Brick and mortar is what WCSD does best. For those who cannot attend in person school- digital options such as NorthStar and others are readily available, some free and some for a fee. Parents are free to make that decision for their children.

I am concerned about the “block teaching” that is in the proposal for middle and high school. If you do block teaching, and the school ALSO has a “block schedule” then it would appear that students will see their teacher, in person, one day a week, and sometime twice a week. Absolutely not acceptable, especially for those classes that are not conducive to digital learning. Also for block teaching, either the teacher is repeating the lesson 2 days in a row, or some how the district was able to purchase and install a web camera in every classroom, so that the kids at home could view and listen to the lesson. This does not even address the block schedule issue that having multiple children in the same and/or different schools, on different block schedules poses. What about sports practices after school? How is a “digital day” child supposed to get to practice or a game at 2:30pm or 3pm if they are home, cannot drive, and parents are at work? I don’t feel that this hybrid scenario has really been thought out, and what might work at Incline HS may not work at Galena or Spanish Springs HS, etc. Each school is unique in its demographics, curriculum offered, enrollment, and general square footage.

Regarding transportation – the time wasted by the transportation department on trying to fit kids in an 8’ wide bus is a waste of resources. Any of us can fly commercially, sitting elbow to elbow with a stranger. Why is this allowed, but our kid’s transportation to and from school has to comply with the 6 ft distance rules when these kids are typically exposed to each other 180 days a year? Why is the governor and government hypocritical? Because they do not want airlines to go out of business. Why is a business being put in front of my child’s education? I argue that school busses have more room between students than an airplane and windows that can be opened, allowing much better fresh air circulation than an airplane, and typically the kids are not on the bus longer than 30 minutes.

Another issue to be recognized is the fact that the proposal allows for “medical, social, and academic vulnerable” to attend in person classes. Are not all our kids vulnerable at this point? – academically and socially due to the disruption in their education and well-being in March. This can be viewed as reverse discrimination and as stated “all students must have equitable access to an effective education.” All kids should be able to return to the classroom if their parents wish.

The district needs to allow each school, principal, and teachers to have the power to build a program and feasible safety precautions based on their individual school. You might be surprised at the results, but first you have to try. I am 100% against freezing teacher’s salaries because you don’t know what the budget will look like for 2020-21. Guess what – welcome to the real world – I don’t know what my budget will be either, but you can only control so many factors and sometime have to take a leap of faith. If you pay people peanuts you typically get monkeys. If you compensate teachers for the awesome and hard job they do, then you will reap the benefits of teachers who feel appreciated and valued. The pay freeze is calculated to save $354,000, which is approximately $100 per teacher, peanuts in the trade off of having teachers feel appreciated.
I really wish the best for all students, staff, and administration; however, I will make a grim prediction. If the district does not try to at least open schools to pre-COVID conditions the district will lose respect with most parents. If you try to open, then have to make changes based on circumstances, at least you can say that the parents were heard and that you listened. If you try to appease the Governor’s Directive, who is making a broad choice with a stroke of a pen for all 500,000 students, the hybrid and digital models will fail. Digital learning will not be in place or as robust as the actual classroom, teachers will rebel as they won’t receive the training that they need, kids will NOT wear masks (I can’t even stand to wear one for 30 minutes in Raley’s – let alone for 6 hours in a classroom), too many moving pieces for schools, teachers, and parents to have to keep track of. I am not sure who has a direct line to the Governor, but these kids need an immediate line, as school is ESSENTIAL.

Sincerely,

Matt Rager

Parent of 7th grader (Herz) and 9th grader (Galena HS)
Board of Trustees,

School is **ESSENTIAL** to our kids. I want you to know that these kids need to go back to school as normal as possible and as timely as possible. School is the identity of kids. It keeps them structured, gives them exercise, stimulates their minds. School, teachers, sports, music, clubs, and after school activities provide our kids with a routine and a safe space to learn about the world and themselves. School is social, emotional, and educational, it is not one dimensional. WCSD must persuade the Governor to amend Directive 022 so that school districts can get back to school in a timely fashion.

WCSD is too big to “pivot” at the drop of a hat. Being so large constrains its ability to be nimble and adapt quickly which was evident this last quarter with its attempt at digital learning. I feel that WCSD did a total disservice to our kids with the poorly executed digital learning. There was no learning, no progression forward, and no new material. Our kids were held stagnant and the older ones knew exactly what it was- “busy work.” Unfortunately, other schools and districts had better plans—where kids did continue to learn and progress and had to be engaged in the virtual classroom for 4-6 hours a day. WCSD virtual learning looked NOTHING like a classroom or a day at school. My kids averaged no more than 30 minutes a day and some teachers were never present the entire 10 weeks.

WCSD is not structured to have digital learning. The district does not have the time, money, resources, or training to implement a successful digital learning plan. Why is WCSD trying to purchase 10,000 devices? The digital infrastructure is not in place — web cameras are not readily installed in classrooms, and teachers are not all trained in digital learning. Additionally, NRS 388 has strict requirements for digital learning and specific approval processes, including parental approval which cannot be met by the deadlines pursuant to NRS 388.

For parents who do not wish to send their kids to “normal school”, there are many options for digital learning already available to them for **FREE** in Nevada with established programs that are already approved by the State Board of Education. These online schools use these platforms EVERY DAY and have been doing so for many years. In addition, some online schools allow kids from various states to participate in out-of-state schools which would also be an option for parents. Parents are the ones best suited to make decisions regarding their children’s education and family situation, not the State, not the Governor, and not the school district.

I agree that going back to school may look slightly different. But it should include the reinforcement of hand washing, hand sanitizer, general etiquette when coughing/sneezing, and common courtesy to stay home when you are sick. However, I believe the student attendance policy needs to be changed to allow for medical excuses with a doctor, dentist, or orthodontist note with the student still required to make up the work. Currently the policy of 17 days, makes parents and students feel like they must go to school so they do not get penalized for missing, especially if a family does get COVID-19- that is a 2 week quarantine which equates to 10 days of absences, the flu is typically only 5 days.

For working parents, the logistics of having kids at home learning digitally, even in a hybrid model is a nightmare. Who is going to watch the kids while the parents are at work? Who will take them to sports practice at 2:30pm if the parents are working? If school takes place at home, there will not be any before or after school facilities to care for these kids. When kids are left alone, they can get into all kinds of trouble – not doing their school work because no one is home to make sure they are doing it, potential fires from cooking, general safety with no adults, the potential for teen pregnancy occurrences, etc. Even for parents who can work from home, the efficiency of doing work is greatly reduced.
with the interruptions of having the kids at home. For the single parents, this issue is even more compounded, and for some kids, their parents are unable to help, even if they are at home due to their own education limitations.

Statistics around the world show that kids- for still unknown reasons are at an extremely low risk of either contracting COVID-19 and/or becoming seriously ill with COVID-19 and of course there are always exceptions. There are approximately 73 million kids ages 0-17 in the United States. As of June 5th, 62,537 had tested positive for COVID-19 and there have been 3 confirmed deaths as of April 2nd. There were 105 confirmed deaths of kids from influenza for the 2019-20 season as of February 2020. There are no confirmed deaths in children 0-17 from COVID-19 in Nevada, with 713 confirmed cases in kids 0-19, out of a Nevada population of 819,768 ages 0-19. Both the US and Nevada rate of kids testing positive is .08%. So at .08%, and 68,000 WCSD students, that equates to 54 students will test positive for COVID-19. The American Pediatrics Association just came out with a statement that kids should be back in school, with some minor but more feasible precautions. Enough testing and science still has not taken place. Our kids cannot wait for science to catch up to the virus. The risk versus reward benefit has totally shifted back to school is **ESSENTIAL**.

As of February 2020, 29 million Americans had influenza. We have never closed schools because of the flu, to my knowledge students are not asked to wash their hands more from November-March, we rarely even send notices out to families about a flu or an E.coli outbreak. What constitutes a virus outbreak in a school to trigger the sending out of information to parents? Perhaps those protocols need to be amended. We do not make kids wear masks and we try to get them to wash their hands but who knows how many really do. However, I think all the kids are used to washing their hands more and will continue to do so as a new habit.

For me, the risk versus the reward of my kids going to school far outweighs the .08% risk of contracting COVID-19 and the even lower risk of succumbing to the virus. More kids in Washoe County were hit by cars from August-January (I think 24 at last reported) – I am more concerned about that statistic or a bus accident than COVID-19.

Sorry for being so long-winded but having online meetings at 2pm does not work for most working parents and it also allows the comments that the community and parents present to be less persuasive as it is much harder to look someone in the eyes as they are communicating their position in person, rather than through an email.

In summary, school is **ESSENTIAL** for our kids and facilitates many facets of our lives and our community. There is inherent risk in everyday life, but we choose to live each day to its fullest. Please allow our kids to live each day and to live up to their individual potential by going back to school on August 10th as regular scheduled - buses, field trips, sports, clubs, activities, graduation, and learning to the fullest extent possible, in the classroom with teachers who love to teach!

Sincerely,

Janna Rager

Parent of incoming 7th (Herz) and 9th (Galena)
Hi! I just read through the options for reopening. It looks as if Elementary will stay as in person learning with social distancing guidelines in place. I am wondering how that will look in 5th grade as I had up to 37 students last year? What accommodations are there for students who “forgot” their mask? Also, consequences for students who take off their mask or maliciously touch or refuse to adhere to social distancing when with peers – I ask, because, kids are kids and some tend to want to do what they are not allowed or supposed to do. Also, how will a sick day affect a student’s attendance? At our school, attendance is an issue and some may take advantage of a liberal attendance policy. In addition, what will the plans be if the classroom teacher is sick (not necessarily COVID) or otherwise? Will substitutes be available or what might that look like? Thank you for your consideration – This is a daunting task and we appreciate all your time, efforts and consideration for the health and safety of staff, students, families and visitors.

Best wishes! :)

Heather Bowman 😊
Rita Cannan Elementary
5th Grade Teacher
NBCT
Hello Board of Trustees,

I’m writing to you this evening because I understand you will be making a decision on reopening the schools tomorrow. Based upon notes from your last meeting, it sounds like you are planning on sending elementary students to school full time and middle and high school students in on a hybrid schedule.

With Covid cases rising every day, I don’t understand why we would go back to school full time if the state is not fully open. Further, what will be the expectation of teachers if we are exposed to Covid? Will we be expected to use our sick time if we are forced to quarantine? As a parent of an incoming third grader I am also concerned about how I will be able to balance my own child’s education while teaching in a school, and teaching hybrid classes in a blended model. Will videos be provided for my students or will I need to completely figure out how to flip my classroom in the few days of professional development I am given? Will there be an equitable curriculum that is provided to all students in the event that I get Covid and cannot perform my duties as a teacher?

Is there going to be better pay offered to substitute teachers so that we have more of those available in the event that teachers get sick and are out for extended periods of time?

If teachers are given an option of solely teaching online because they are high risk, will their jobs be at risk because of allocations or funding?

When I do return to the classroom, will the board be providing me and my students with the masks which have the clear cut outs for the deaf and hard of hearing so I can accommodate my students? Will you provide the necessary Lysol wipes and hand sanitizer repeatedly when I run out? What supports are you going to provide to the teachers as far as mental health during this time? How will you support our social and emotional health?

In a previous meeting you mentioned that schedules may need to be staggered in order to accommodate busses and transportation. How will it be decided who goes to school at one time? Will families get to choose which times they want to attend school? Will teachers get to choose a schedule which works with their children’s school schedule? If school start times are staggered because of bussing issues, how will nutrition services work around schools with breakfast programs or schools where there are two lunches because of overcrowding?

It seems to me that there are still too many questions and logistics to work out before we are able to open the schools. I think many teachers agree. I realize parents want their kids to go back to the classroom; but giving the students a top notch education is important, and it seems if we don’t have a clear plan set out we are doing more harm than good.

Thank you for your time,
Veronica Copple
--
Veronica Copple
Dear Dr. McNeil and Board Members:

I don't have the answers. I know you do not have the answers either. Upon reading comments from some community members, I feel it necessary to say that 1) schools are absolutely NOT daycare providers for working parents. If we were, we'd all be making a lot more money than we are currently making, and 2) the staffs at schools working with our students in a variety of capacities are not expendable.

I am a teacher and a parent. I miss my students, my child will be entering his senior year and he misses his friends and teachers. I also am the person who does the shopping for my parents who are in their mid to late 70s, so I think about every person with whom I come into contact.

I am concerned that with *more* students in each class rather than fewer students there will be more chances to become infected with COVID-19. When we left our students on March 13, 2020, there were very few cases in Washoe County. The choice was made that we needed to flatten the curve. That has not happened. There are more cases being diagnosed daily, and yet we are going to be put in close quarters with our students, and our children will be in close proximity to their peers.

Board meetings are being held via zoom because of COVID-19, but schools, even tiny ones like mine, have many more people and kids in them than a board meeting. The special session, from what I understand, is not going to be open to anyone but the legislators, no public, no union members, no lobbyists, again, because of COVID-19, and again, fewer people are in those meetings than are in schools. So how are we able to safely open our schools? It must be safe for the staff as well as for the students.

I thank you for your time, your energy, your concern, and the work that you are doing to try to figure out the best course of action. I know that no matter what happens, people will be upset, I see you, and I understand. It happens in teaching too.

Thank you,
Kristen De Haan
Parent and Special Education Teacher
To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today to voice my concerns about the reopening of our schools. I really want my children in school leaning and growing as soon as possible, but I also want to feel safe sending them to school every day. Right now I don’t feel safe knowing we are sending our kids to school full time with normal classroom sizes. We are being told to practice social distancing, wear masks and stay home currently so it’s hard to wrap my head around the fact that we would be going back to school pretty much normally. I volunteer and know that some of the classrooms will not be big enough to spread the kids out safely. I am aware of the Board of Pediatrics recommendations and I do think children wearing masks is not ideal. I still do feel we are putting our teachers, staff, and children in an risky situation since we do not yet know what effects it will have long term. We need better safety measures if kids will be in school. I really do feel that the teachers are being left out of the decision making and they will carry a heavy load because of what is being asked of them. Especially their health most of all. Schools have never been in session during the pandemic so I think we need to keep that in mind. No one will be happy in the end but health and safety should always come first. These are sacrifices we all are having to make. My husband works full time and I work part time so I know working parents are extremely worried about what will happen. I totally get that and the need to have kids in a safe place daily. It’s an impossible task but we have to do better when it comes to distance learning, back-up plans, outbreak scenarios, communication, and options for families.

Thank you for your time and working so hard during this very difficult time.

Kind Regards,

Amy

Sent from my iPhone
Board of Trustees and Washoe County School District,

I am very concerned about my two children (kindergartner and 1st grader) returning to school for the 2020/2021 school year. My daughter as well as other members of my household have existing medical conditions that put us at a higher risk for complications if we were to catch COVID-19.

How is it a logical choice to open schools up now when cases in Washoe County and in the United States are worse than they were when schools were closed down in March? Those of us that are staying home for the health and safety of vulnerable family members will be opening up our households to the risk of having children in a public place, indoors, with at least 10 other children and adults with few people wearing masks. “The World Health Organization has long held that the coronavirus is spread primarily by large respiratory droplets that, once expelled by infected people in coughs and sneezes, fall quickly to the floor. But in an open letter to the W.H.O., 239 scientists in 32 countries have outlined the evidence showing that smaller particles can infect people, and are calling for the agency to revise its recommendations” (Mandavilli, Apoorva. “239 Experts With One Big Claim: The Coronavirus Is Airborne.” The New York Times, 4 July 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/health/239-experts-with-one-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne.html).

Since there are still so many unknowns with this virus, is it worth the risk? Are we just putting our children and families at risk because some have had enough of their children being at home?

It is difficult to understand how social distancing will logistically work with such young kids and with none of them wearing masks. How does the District plan on implementing and enforcing handwashing and other hygiene safety measures with elementary students, specifically 5 and 6 year olds? I’ve seen that the proposed plans have children staying with their respective teacher/adult in their own class but I will have two children at the school in different classes. Will that not be essentially the same as having those two specific classes together because if one of my children is exposed to the virus, the other will be too? This is the same for other families with multiple children. How will social distancing work with recess, lunch and PE? Will “special” classes like music, computers, art, library, etc. be cancelled? Will our children be expected to stay in their classroom for the entire day without recess including eating lunch in class?

Planning for improved distance learning will be a better use of resources. What happens when schools open but someone tests positive and the District has to fall back on a mediocre distance learning program similar to what was implemented in March?

What’s the plan if someone tests positive in the school? Will the school shut down or just the classroom? Are the kids going to be quarantined for a period of time? Will they all have to be tested? Will they have to start distance learning for that period of time? What is that going to do to the mental health of our children, to start school just to be put in quarantine and be back at home again? How will I explain to my young children that we can’t be in school again because someone has the virus? This almost guaranteed inconsistency can destroy a young child’s sense of security and create a whole host of mental health issues including anxiety and behavioral disorders. What happens when our places of employment see that schools are now open and they mandate we return to work at the office? How do we explain when someone tests positive in class that the class is quarantined and now we have to work from home again? What happens with before and after school programs
that run out of the school (specifically KidZone)? If we return to work with a normal 8a – 5p schedule, we need before and after school programs to be fully functioning.

I do not believe opening schools is beneficial to our children or our community. “Do no harm” means to not create risk for students or school staff and their families. I believe opening schools will do just that, put everyone in the community at risk from this virus when the kids bring the virus home from school (especially grandparents who are staying safe at home). Please consider modifying your plan and put resources into an improved distance learning curriculum instead of putting resources into trying to hammer out logistics for getting our children back into a school setting, which will greatly increase everyone’s exposure to COVID-19.

Thank you for considering my comments,
Patricia Bobo
If a teacher “volunteers” to teach online, will we lose our position at our current school and therefore have to clear out our classrooms? Also, what are the options for employees who don’t feel comfortable going back to the building or can’t because of health concerns for themselves or immediate family members?

God Speed to you all for having to make these choices for so many of the community members.

Karyn Parkins
4th grade at Winnemucca ES

Get [Outlook for iOS](mailto:Outlook for iOS)
To even consider ‘opening’ of school in any fashion other than that of ‘distance’ learning is absurd in my opinion. With Covid-19 numbers continuing to climb on a daily basis; with no signs of even a plateauing of cases; it is ridiculous to even have this discussion on opening. We have more cases now than when the decision was made in March to close our doors and yet despite the increase in numbers you continue to bow to the pressure of the few who want their children back in the class.

We can’t open a movie theatre that seats 100, but it’s okay to open a school (MS or HS) that with even ½ the student population in the building will number 500+ students PLUS all the faculty and staff...so perhaps 600 people? Wow. Lets spread some germs quickly. Or are we going to play the game of ‘Open and Close? Open on Monday, on Tuesday we get a (+)Covid test; close for 2 weeks. Open again, close again. Is it worth it? Talk about disruptive learning styles! Lets stick with ONE method...DISTANCE. We’re already in the pattern to learn via distance, our kids already know the routine. Let’s save the stress of everyone going home everyday wondering if they were successful in avoid the virus. Lets’ not take on the ‘battle of the mask’ in schools. There is enough stress in our community now without adding to it. Be leaders and vote to keep our lives a little simpler, and a whole lot safer.

Simply, it is not worth putting lives at risk, or wondering how many will suffer complications for the rest of their lives if they contract the virus. Seriously, how many funerals are you willing to take responsibility for because you thought it more important to read a story or learn how to complete a math problem?

There is nothing here that has been said that has not already been discussed and yet I see the ‘leaders’ considering an opening. I strongly oppose any such action until such time as it can be done safely for everyone in the community.

In solidarity,
Kathryn Howard
WCSD retired teacher

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Hello!
I am a concerned parent of 4 kids.

As like many people in the School District, I am concerned about the kids returning to school this year. My main concern is making sure that my 4 kids feel 100% safe going to school.

I honestly don’t think that school should start in person school until Spring of 2021. Think about how bad this Virus is going to get when it is combined with Flu Season! It is going to be awful!

I do not agree with elementary school kids going to school 5 days a week all day while high school and middle schoolers go to school 2 days out of the week and 3 days online. My kids are in elementary, middle and high school and that is so unfair. They need stability! They either ALL go to school with the guidelines below.

If school does start August 10, which I am personally not okay with, but if it does then here are my thoughts.
1. Every employer in Washoe County and other Counties are taking temperatures of their employees and if they have a fever they go home. Have the teacher take the kids temperature at school before it begins and if it is too high, the kids needs to go home. Simple! The parents need to take responsibility for their sick kids and stay home with them. Their kids come first. I know that parents may not be able to afford leaving work or taking the day off, but tough luck, that’s part of being a parent. If the kids are sick, they need to stay home!

2. Do NOT make those kids of any age wear masks! They are horrible! They are hard to breathe in. Teachers cannot take the time to tell kids to wear masks constantly. They will get no learning done! Do not make the teachers and staff wear them! I was taught how to sneeze into a tissue or my elbow and how to wash my hands back in the 80’s. It is not hard!

3. These kids have been quarantined for far too long and will not have an immune system if we keep them away from germs in the classroom. They need germs to stay healthy and to fight antibodies! Clean the classrooms everyday. The teachers/staff and custodians needs to make this a priority. Those classrooms were filthy before this Virus.

4. Do NOT make kids social distance! They have done enough of that for 3 long horrible months! That is an oxymoron! They need their friends close, they need to hug them and not be afraid to be near them! Teachers will get nothing done if they are telling kids to social distance! Again, no learning will done!

5. Kids need recess, PE, to be in the lunch room with their friends sitting close to them while not being afraid of them!

If these things cannot be met, then school should be online for everyone until Spring 2021. Like I said, flu season is going to make this virus so much worse!

Thank you for your time!
Hello, Board of Directors,

I must say that if you feel it is not safe enough for you all to meet face-to-face and are doing your meetings virtually, it is not safe for our students and our teachers to go back to face-to-face in August. Suggesting so is putting so many in our community in jeopardy of contracting COVID-19.

As of today, we are seeing nothing but rising increases in Nevada of people testing positive for COVID-19. Why do you think it is safe to bring our students back to school? Even though not many children are being affected, this Coronavirus is mutating. There is a syndrome affecting children and they are dying from it.

Until there has been 14 days of no new COVID cases, it is untenable to send our students and teachers back to the classroom. Especially for elementary students. Keeping social distance between kindergarten students is impossible. Other elementary grades next to impossible. How would you feel if a student brought this home to his/her family and someone died from their contact at school?

I am a substitute teacher and I will tell you that I will not be back if all students are not wearing masks and there is not social distancing. I have a compromised immune system and have NO health benefits being a substitute, so until there is a solution that I can live with, and I mean LIVE with, I will miss my students and my school, but my life has meaning to my family too and I won't be bringing COVID home with me to them.

Sincerely,
Debbi DeCalogero

After listening to the presentation, a question that I have is if a teacher is having a classroom full of students that they are teaching directly, how are they supposed to also be available for distance learning at the same time?
“We need to be able to figure out how to set up the classrooms, and then bring kids in a little bit at a time to teach them the protocols, to teach them the new routines, to get them acclimated so that when more kids are back together, it will go better.”

We need to go slow with our little ones. Please consider hybrid learning before going back to full in-person learning. I believe we should reopen schools in phases so Elementary students aren’t shocked by a very different and unnatural learning environment.

I also believe that the county should have a decrease in COVID-19 cases for at least 14 days before considering reopening in-person. We have to be safe.
Dear Board of Trustees,

My perspective is informed by me being a WCSD high school educator and by having a son who loves learning and socializing with his peers. Many people have already provided perspectives on concerns and desires for what these proposed measures will look like in the classroom (See Melissa Bullard’s letter for a thoughtful and thorough examination), but there are three patterns of thought I would specifically like to address.

1. I see many parents commenting on how little their students gained from the “Distance Learning” in the Spring, citing this as a reason that part-time or full-time distance learning would be disastrous in the fall. What WCSD did their best to cobble together and what teachers did their best to support was not “Distance Learning”. It was academic triage, what some have taken to calling “quaran-teaching”. It was not planned for; teachers, students, and parents were not trained for it; it was all review-based, there was no accountability for students, and no new material was permitted. In hindsight, of course, students, parents, and teachers alike became disengaged and disenchanted. But what good is hindsight if we don’t use it to develop our foresight? Nevada’s Covid-19 cases are up and are rising every day. If we try to pretend that getting “back to normal” is currently doable, we will be hit by a second wave, forced school closure, and stuck, once again, with unprepared teachers and students. Please consider developing a ROBUST distance learning program, accessible to all students and teachers. I was incredibly impressed with my son’s distance learning experience. He is a student at a public charter elementary school in Washoe County. His teacher had daily, live interaction with many of her students, did read-alouds, science experiments, art lessons, p.e. classes, break-out rooms for social time for the kiddos, and weekly one-on-ones with each student and their parents. She also linked to many resources on their Google classroom page using sites like Kahn Academy, for students to pursue their own interests. She offered synchronous lessons while providing asynchronous activities. Of course, my son would rather be in the classroom with his teacher and his friends, but because of his amazing teacher (and the incredible privilege my husband and I had of being able to work from home), he was able to learn, connect, and stay safe. We should be focusing on how to make sure that as many students as possible and every student and teacher who would like it have access to this experience— that all students and teachers have access to technology, to internet connection, and to a safe place to work (perhaps a use for the buildings if we go largely digital?), because according to current projections and trends all roads will lead to Distance Learning (or, if we’re not prepared, academic triage again) in some capacity as wave after wave of teachers and staff get sick and students get exposed.

2. Underfunding and overtasking. I am concerned about any proposal that requires teachers to be in-building part or full-time where our duties aren’t clearly outlined and where it’s not clear how we will get what we need. I have never had a school year where I had enough (or any) hand sanitizer, Kleenex, or cleaning supplies for my classroom provided by my school or the district. What I had in my classroom came from out-of-pocket and from parent donations. Please detail a plan for how the necessary cleaning supplies and PPE for students and staff will be acquired, distributed, and their use enforced. I have also never had a school year where I work anything close to my contract hours, truly often coming close to doubling my required time working. I
would like to be sure that teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn within the system provided without teachers scrambling to bridge the gap between what is needed, what is expected, and what is provided. For these reasons, please clarify and specify what is meant by “instruction will be supported daily by qualified certified teachers” when referring to the digital learning days in the hybrid model and, “staff may be asked to engage in duties not typically associated with their professional positions”.

3. Satisfying CDC/state guidelines without actually slowing the transmission of the virus. Alternating days in the hybrid model will not significantly reduce risk for staff and will also be a nightmare for parents and teacher parents who are trying to schedule work around their children’s schooling. CCSD’s proposal of two cohorts, one that meets M/T and one that meets R/F with Wednesday being a digital day for all, makes a lot more sense. Students, staff, and parents will be able to plan around in-building days and digital days and having a fully online digital day in the middle of the week will allow for teachers to check in with everyone and offer synchronous or asynchronous lessons while the buildings are fully sanitized. Additionally, this will create a space of time in between each in-person session that allows for any symptomatic transmissions to be detected before the group meets again.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Our students, staff, and families need school and safety and I know it is incredibly hard to try to choose when it seems like you are being pushed to prize one over the other.

Respectfully,

Kristen Williams, MA

Kristen Williams "Cada uno es artífice de su propia ventura"--El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote
Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. I will have a kindergartner this year and truly want him to have a wonderful experience to start his school career. I am not concerned about the virus effecting children, I am however concerned about the social distancing and lack of learning effecting children. Kids need other kids, they need to play and learn this is the time they are sponges. My husband and I both work FT jobs outside of the home and we need school to open with before and after school options. I think all children should be going back to school FT, there are too many parents that can’t stay home and make sure their kids are doing school work and will fall more and more behind.

thank you for your consideration,

Samantha Slavik

I did want to add one thing
I know each family has it’s own set of circumstances maybe give each family the option to remain home and distant learn with teaches that would also rather distant teach adn the families that would rather be in class can have that option also
I sincerely do not believe that students can safely be allowed to return to school in-person in the fall. COVID-19 cases are still on the rise, and if the numbers of cases are any indication, we as a nation, state and county have already proven that we cannot take even the most basic of protections for public health and make them workable. Expecting children, especially elementary age students who don’t understand the ramifications of this disease and how it spreads, to maintain social distance, to not share equipment, to wear masks at all times, is unreasonable. Opening schools for in-person learning without a vaccine for this virus is reckless and will only succeed in causing my illnesses and death among our community.

I will not be allowing my children to return to in-person schools in the fall. I urge you to keep distance learning in place, for everyone’s safety.
Washoe County Medical Society Supports Reopening Nevada Schools
Considerations for the Well-being of Our Children and Community Include Returning To School

Reno -- As local physicians, and members of the Washoe County Medical Society, we feel it is our duty to stand with our community and advocate for the well-being of our children as our schools finalize reopening plans for the upcoming school year. We are in agreement with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) that our community’s schools need to fully reopen to students this fall. Schools form a fundamental part of the social fabric in our community and can be a tremendous tool in promoting the well-being of our children.

On June 26 the AAP issued a “COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Reentry” statement which begins:

“The purpose of this guidance is to support education, public health, local leadership, and pediatricians collaborating with schools in creating policies for school re-entry that foster the overall health of children, adolescents, staff, and communities and are based on
available evidence. Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being and provide our children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity, among other benefits.”

As the school year approaches, we urge thoughtful deliberation and careful analysis of the risks and benefits of all aspects of school reopening plans. Excessive focus on only the risks associated with COVID-19 can lead to unintended consequences that might neglect other critical public health matters. Fortunately, available data suggests that

1. School-aged children are less susceptible to COVID-19,
2. When infected tend to have less severe symptoms, and
3. Appear to be less likely to infect others even if they are infected.

As we plan for the upcoming school year, we stand with the AAP and other child-advocacy organizations and think a full-time return to school, with additional COVID-19 mitigation measures (as feasible and reasonable), is in the best interest of our children and community. Exceptions and recourse should be made for those at higher risk, but the overall benefits of a return to school outweigh the potential risks based on our understanding of existing evidence. The Clark County School District surveyed its families and found overwhelming support for this from students and families. Washoe County School District recently completed a similar survey with results to be released in the near future.

We recognize the evolving nature of this pandemic and recommend built-in flexibility and contingency plans in the event new information or events arise. We respect the organizations and local governing bodies making decisions with regards to specific measures needed when reopening (e.g. mandatory face coverings, social distancing in the school setting, etc.). The complexity of such issues hinges on the balancing of overall benefit versus harm and are nuanced by issues such as physical school construction, student population demographics, local COVID-19 demographics, etc. The statement from the AAP provides thoughtful analysis of many mitigation strategies.
With the state’s efforts to flatten the curve in the early stages of the pandemic, our schools were shut down which helped mitigate the impact of COVID-19 locally; but there have been unintended consequences that have directly impacted our children. There have been educational setbacks as school districts, families, and students adapted to remote learning.

The physical health of some students has been impacted as some have been without a source of reliable nutrition and are spending more time indoors and with screens. Child protective services referrals are notably down -- 7,076 referrals from March to May 2020 in comparison to 10,535 referrals from March to May 2019 according to the Division of Child & Family Services, DHHS State of Nevada -- as children are in social isolation and educators are unable to notice concerning signs of neglect or abuse. Mental health has suffered as social interactions have been disrupted and children are isolated which will require additional vigilance from our educators and counselors as we resume interacting with school children. Even the social health of our community has suffered as underprivileged children carry a disproportionate burden with remote learning and access to educational outlets. In the Clark County School District, it is estimated that 4,370 students, predominantly of Hispanic/Latino or Black/African American backgrounds, were not reached during the remote learning phase of the last academic school year and a large percentage of Washoe County School District students likely face similar obstacles.

Our time-honored maxim of “first, do no harm” applies powerfully to the current situation. With that guiding principle, we share these considerations with our local and state leaders as we prepare for the upcoming academic year. Our children and community would be best served by a full return to school this fall. Let us unite in our efforts to do the best we can and remember to balance the overall health and well-being of our children, our staff, our families, and our community. We pledge to remain engaged and available with our expertise to assist in the reopening of our schools.

ABOUT THE WASHOE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY (WCMS): The Washoe County Medical Society provides advocacy for physicians and patients and promotes the art and science of medicine and public health. Serving as a primary source of health-related information, we seek to educate our members and the citizens of
northern Nevada. We strive to maintain the highest standard of ethics and medical care throughout our community.

Sent from my iPhone
Follow the science and provide options/choices to parents that make sense.

CDC data indicates that the school age group is highly unlikely to suffer any severe health issues relating to Covid-19.

Far worse negative impact of children NOT going back to regular school and other activities such as sports.

Give parents the option to send middle and high school children to school five days a week or participate in distance learning.

One or the other. Hybrid plan is ridiculous!

Our children’s education is being negatively impacted!
Hi,
I’m sure you’ve received many, many comments about this school year, but as a teacher, I just wanted to put just one solution on the table that will ease my mind about this year.
I’m very concerned about surviving this virus if I contract it (I’m in my 60’s with a couple of underlying health issues) and I would like to suggest that we just get through this first semester using Distance Learning. If it is decided that we need to go back into the classroom either blended or normal, what will happen when students, staff, or families start getting sick? You have to agree that it is fairly inevitable, given the state of cases in Nevada right now that it will happen and start spreading through some schools. Then what? We have no testing, tracing, quarantine plan so do you lock out certain students? Close classrooms? Schools? What if teachers start to get sick? Would there even be any substitutes who would be willing to come into that environment?
If we can just get through this first semester, maybe we’ll have the disease under control by winter. There’s even a slight possibility of a vaccine some time next year… I would feel so much better about going into the one environment that we are told to avoid (indoors, closed spaces with more than a few people) if we could get “the curve” down like it is in Europe and other countries around the world and have some hope for a vaccine or at least better treatment possibilities
Thank you, Rob Shader/Swope GT Magnet
In person instruction should be implemented at all levels of education including middle and high school. Staff and students can wear masks if they choose, but are not mandatory. Teachers would provide “distance learning” for those students whose parents feel they should not be in school yet, just as teachers have always done in the past for students absent on any given day. Distance learning is the least favorable option for students and parents for many reasons. Your committee should have information as to these negative effects.

Sent from my iPad
I am very concerned about how teachers and staff will be kept safe if schools are reopening. Will there be plexiglass shields? Has the air filtration/circulation been improved? Will there be plans in place to isolate students who refuse to wear masks? Students may have the choice to continue distance learning, but teachers are not given that option. In fact, it sounds like they will have to teach and manage both in class and distance students, essentially doubling their work load. There are certainly many teachers who are in risk categories for extreme COVID cases and I have observed much discussion on social media from teachers discussing alternate job possibilities since the article on Friday announcing the plan for in person teaching. We all want the world to get back to life as usual, but that is unrealistic at this point in the pandemic.

Sue Goodenow

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Board of Trustees,

I am a parent to an elementary student, a middle school student and a high school student. I have reviewed the proposed plans for reopening schools this coming school year and am concerned about some of the plans.

The short answer is to send students back to school, in some capacity. They need the schedule and structure. They need to socialize with their friends. They need to be taught by teachers. I am not confident, however, that any students should go back to school full-time.

I know many parents rely on the schools to provide a sort of childcare while they work. And I understand that not allowing the students, especially at the elementary level, to return full-time will be a burden on these families. But given the high rate of spread of the COVID-19 virus in Nevada, reportedly higher than anywhere else in the nation, the district has a duty to protect and safeguard the health and welfare of ALL of its students and employees.

My concerns mainly surround social distancing, mask-wearing, and sanitation. Many elementary schools are near capacity, if not already over-crowded. Their student populations leave few places for educating students besides the classroom. Using large, open spaces, like cafeterias and gyms, seems unreasonable unless you have an entire grade level, learning the same thing, in that space. The acoustics in those spaces are not great and sound travels widely. Teachers are going to have a difficult time keeping the attention of their students and the likelihood of distraction will be high. Why not implement a hybrid learning model for elementary schools as well? This would reduce the number of students in the building and allow for social distancing requirements to be met.

How will you enforce mask-wearing? I know that many people are against wearing masks. Will those students who refuse to wear a face-covering of some sort be prohibited from attending in-person instructional sessions? People with certain medical conditions and children under age 9 are exempted from wearing masks, and you are only recommending these students wear masks. Do you already know which students and staff have medical conditions that exempt them from wearing masks? Will individuals be made to provide proof of their exempted condition or do you have to take their word for it? Children under 9 make up about two-thirds of an elementary school. With that number of students only having a recommendation, not a requirement, to wear a mask, the level of exposure is greatly increased. And let’s face it, little kids are not known for covering their coughs and sneezes, so the already increased risk is even greater.

What is the plan for allowing students to wash their hands when coming into the classroom? I know the CDC suggests that use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is sufficient for killing the virus, but I do not know how healthy it is to use alcohol-based sanitizers several times a day for several days a week. The CDC also suggests hand-washing be the primary way to combat spread. How will the students be able to wash their hands before and after lunch? These seem to be the most vulnerable times as they have no choice but to put their hands near their faces and, most likely, in their mouths.

How and how often will spaces be cleaned and sanitized? Are you going to rely solely on the students to wipe down their areas before and/or after their instructional period (for middle and high school students)? I do not want my children using disinfecting wipes several times a day, and, let’s face it, kids aren’t the best cleaners, so how clean would those surfaces really be? Will there be larger custodial staffs deployed to the schools to sanitize during the day? Or will sanitizing only occur after school?

The distance “learning” program that was implemented during the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year was very disappointing, especially at the elementary level. I had to find ways to supplement my students’ district supplied curriculum because it was so lacking and their teachers were strictly prohibited from providing additional materials. How will you ensure distance “learning” materials are actually encouraging the students to LEARN?

There are a lot of issues that need to be decided and questions that need to be answered, beyond what is being presented in the proposed re-opening plans submitted to the public so far.
Sincerely,
Malia Puchta
Hello,

Thank you for the opportunity for public comments.

I teach high school English, and my main concern is the stress that teaching in-person and then also teaching online (for the students who are home on their designated days) will put on teachers.

I am hoping that in your discussions, you will consider the physical and emotional needs of teachers, as many teachers are already feeling anxious about additional expectations that will be placed on them in the fall.

Thank you,

Tricia Constantino
Studies show middle school and high school aged youth require more sleep and early school start times are counterproductive. Similarly, the same studies show elementary school children arise earlier and late start times, such as 9:30 am, wastes hours of prime learning time for younger children. These opposite start times also create difficulties on working parents who need to be at work at 8 am. While you are addressing our children’s educational opportunities during this challenging time, please take the opportunity to correct the start times. Thank you. Lynne Simons
Please don't single out our youngest students as the ones returning to the classroom. They are the most vulnerable for touching everything, not knowing any better. They are risking everyone they come in contact with, including families and staff. How about a year round type schedule for all grades to reduce class sizes? Or rotating a couple days per week contact? This proposed solution only seems to appease those wanting a daycare solution, which is not the responsibility of WCSD!! Keep ALL students safe as this pandemic continues to grow.
Obviously we’re in unprecedented times and there is no easy solution, but I’m fairly shocked that you all would consider opening schools, specifically elementary schools, in the name of day care. Would you be able to provide the citizens of washoe county with which public health advisors you have consulted on these plans?

Classrooms are already overcrowded. How will you ensure social distancing? Will teachers get assistance, both financially and in-classroom to deal with this added responsibility?

The pandemic is still very much with us. We’re still in the first wave. We all want schools to go back as normal, but we also all know that that is not the responsible decision right now until we can get this virus to a manageable level.

Why not start virtual and slowly work toward in classroom teaching as the situation improves? As of now it seems that the plan is to just pretend it’s normal and then shut down individual schools as the outbreaks begin. (Which they will) How is that sustainable? Or safe for the staff or families?

Are there contingency plans? What happens when students get sick? Teachers get sick? When they spread the virus back to their families? That sounds like it could be a public health disaster that’ll be easily traceable back to the schools and, in return, to the school board. Do you have planned staff backups to come in for two weeks when the teachers are isolating? Testing and screening procedures?

With the millions of dollars that the school district will need to spend on thousands and thousands of masks, cleaning supplies, new individual desks for all students, extra classrooms to ensure social distancing, etc etc on a regular basis, wouldn’t it make sense to just purchase tablets and laptops?

If you all think it’s safe to go back to school, why is this meeting being held over zoom and not in person? Are you willing to help teach a class when a teacher is inevitably out sick?
Some questions regarding the opening of schools as a teacher and parent:

What if someone in my classroom is sick? Are we quarantining just the person, the classroom or anyone who’s had contact with the person?

What about IEP’s and speech? These students need teacher to student contact.

What about our classified staff? They are greatly needed in our schools and heavily relied on.

Are we going to be provided with good insurance so we can afford going to the doctor’s when we do get sick from this (which we will) or am I SOL?

Are observations going to change?

How is this going to affect my sick days? Would we need to use FMLA? What about first year teachers?

How can I keep 28 students 6 ft apart or socially distanced in a classroom that’s probably the size of a 2 car garage?

What about MY family and my own children? Is their health being jeopardized worth it?

How will I be able to teach with a mask on? Especially soft spoken teachers?

What if a student forgets a mask, can’t afford a mask, or parents don’t want them to have a mask? What will the protocol be?

What if a student is sick and the parent refuses to pick student up? Do we quarantine the student? How do we prevent them from coming back to school? What measures do we take to ensure that everyone else in the school is safe?

Are we liable? Would we all have to sign waivers to relief the district from being sued?

What about classrooms that are teaming? Classrooms that are overcrowded?

If a teacher doesn’t feel safe coming to school, what are their options?
What if a teacher has school aged children that have to stay home without any help while they teach because of the A/B schedule? Do they have to sacrifice their children’s education for others?

How is this going to affect my pay? Am I going to be paid more for the extra work I will be doing/hazard pay? Are my "hours" and expectations of my work going to be minimized if there is a cut? How will this affect PERS?

Also, how are we expecting preschoolers and kindergartners to wear masks when they can’t even blow their nose properly? As an adult I have to adjust my mask at least three times each hour, and I do it as carefully as I can. Most 4 - 18 year olds (and even older!!) aren’t going to carefully take them on and off.

Can we get rid of state testing? This is money that is essentially being wasted. I can tell you where my students stand without spending thousands of dollars and stressing everyone out.

With the guidelines you decide, please let schools decide what is best for them. No two schools are the same, and one solution won't fix the problems that a title 1 school has compared to a higher SES school.

Please allow us to be safe when going back to school. Cutting funding is not going to allow for a safe school return and it will only turn GOOD teachers away from the profession if they feel like they are not going to be safe at work.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns.

Maria Rene Castedo
4th Grade Teacher
I support the schools reopening with normal, in person classes. Those that are concerned should be able to opt for home schooling, but those that aren't should have the opportunity to have traditional classrooms.

Thank you,

Jed Spangler
Washoe School board,
As a parent and a nurse on the COVID response team. I feel strongly against my child attending classes in person in the fall prior to a vaccine being available. Many fellow healthcare workers have the same concern. If school is to resume I want to know how a parent can opt out of having a child attend class in person. Our COVID numbers are rising and my hospital COVID unit is full! How do you think it is ok to open campus? Our state is starting to surge. Not to mention you do not have enough staff to properly supervise kids with compliance with face masks and hand hygiene some adults cannot even do it.
Thank you,
Jeanette Daniels

Sent from my iPhone
Kristen,

I have read the district proposed re-opening plan and no-where does the district acknowledge the need for increased sick leave/time for teachers to recover from COVID-19 if a teacher gets ill because of teaching during this time. There is generally a 14 day isolation period AFTER one recovers from it. This is important that the district acknowledge this increased risk and personal costs to teachers so the public understands the increased risks that teachers are taking by going back to the classroom in this crisis and the fact that COVID-19 can often leave lasting health issues that the teacher will have to deal with after they have had COVID-19. It is important that the district addresses this as the public needs to be aware that as teachers we are at a huge increased risk of getting ill even with PPE in place and the need for the district to address our increased health needs and costs.

Thanks, Rachel

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Rachel Robinson
Good morning. I wish you all the best of luck with your decisions today. I wanted to take a second to voice mine. I am a mom of a second and third grader. I refuse to send my kids back to school while wearing masks. It’s just not acceptable and they will get no learning done. They can’t even keep those on for a shopping trip. We need to find a better way. I am also a substitute teacher for our district. I will not go back to work wearing a mask as well. We need to protect our kids and our educators and this is not the way! People will be touching their faces, taking their masks off and on, etc. All these concerns make a mask pointless. I am all for whatever you decide but if it comes down to wearing a mask all day, my kids will be homeschooled and I will not return to work. And I am the only full time sub at our school so I know our amazing principal and teachers are counting on me. Thank you for your time!

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

First let me say that I know you all are making some tough decisions.

I am the lead person for a non-profit, Project 150 Reno. We help high school students with basics and had over 1,000 students come through our doors last year. We will not be reopening for shoppers to come inside our boutique at this time. We will stick to a modified curbside version.

I fear that if WCSD schools plan to reopen, there will need to be contingency plans for reacting to outbreaks at schools. Up to and including schools closures and a plan for exposed and infected teachers and staff to then be unavailable as they recover. This would also apply to bus drivers and lunchroom staff, both of those positions have been hard to staff as it was in recent years.

Worst case scenario would be that opening would result in a death or deaths of a student(s), educator(s) or staff.

I don’t feel that there is enough infrastructure to safely go back to school. The buildings and classrooms themselves don’t have enough space. The amount of cleaning, cleaning supplies, masks are not sufficient. The turnover of students in classrooms will not allow enough time for cleaning. The district has also been struggling for years on attracting and retaining janitorial staff.

At least consider removing some of those longer breaks in the 2020/2021 school year so the school can tentatively start four to six weeks later in the year. Watch the cases in numbers in America and specifically in Nevada since we are not doing a good job in our own state. If Nevada gets under control then reevaluate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Liz McFarland
Project 150 Reno
Hello Honorable Washoe County School District’s Board of Trustees,
I know you have a lot to balance and the voice of one parent of a 12th grader at McQueen might not be enough to sway your decisions either way, but I would highly recommend that you not convene in-person classes for students according the status-quo timeline. We are seeing record case counts in Nevada and all over the country precisely because we are re-opening too quickly. Where guidelines have been wise, mandatory masks, social distancing, etc; there are still many in our community that seek to flout these guidances in the name of some kind of misguided call for ‘freedom,’ (freedom to infect your/my/their grandparents).
Now a growing number of scientists, (239 experts from 32 diverse countries), have written an open letter to the World Health Organization to encourage it to provide guidance that advocates for caution of indoor spaces because of the evidence that the COVID19 virus spreads via tiny droplets emitted by human breath and speech. If this guidance is true, and there is ample evidence that it is, I can think of no more dangerous environment than a classroom of 35+ students with questionable ventilation and filtration systems.
Therefore this parent and this family firmly recommends an online school year. Let’s use this time to innovate and explore new ways to deliver education to our children, your students.
Please feel free to reach out to me via cell or email for any follow-ups you might have.

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Help Community!
Thanks,

-Andrew Cristancho
NNRMLS Director | Training & Engagement
From: Ports, Roger  
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 10:08 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: Re-open plan

Good morning,

As an 18 year teacher in WCSD I am desperate to return to normalcy. I can’t wait to loop up to 8th grade with my students, students that I desperately miss. I feel deeply for those parents that aren’t as uniquely blessed as my family to survive distance learning.

That being said, my mind keeps looping back to a quote from John Adam’s as he defended the soldiers that fired into the crowd during the Boston Massacre: “Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

The facts that should also be considered today include that Nevada leads the nation in transmission rates, that our numbers are far higher than when we closed down in the spring, and that social distancing is a moot point when students, staff, and teachers are breathing the same air for hours at a time. Ignoring these facts will lead to downstream effects far worse than any difficulties we are currently facing, including your present unenviable position.

I understand that distance learning is far from perfect, that it is a heavy burden for the majority of families. I understand human nature, I understand that children not watched like a hawk will find anything else to do but their work and their education will suffer. That being said, how are any of those concerns ameliorated when we find ourselves back into the same exact position as this spring? Why are we seemingly barreling headlong into a hybrid learning model that is only going to be shut down for reasons of public health as this crisis continues its current trajectory?

As educators it is in our nature to fix things. Over the course of my career I’ve found we always step up to every challenge, regardless of whether or not it even concerns education. I’ve worn the hats of teacher, counselor, therapist, surrogate parent, social worker, nurse and private benefactor. I don’t regret a single one but we have limits we are rapidly approaching. The hat of martyr is one I neither want nor deserve to wear. If we nobly throw ourselves and our students into Moloch’s flames there will be no turning back. Our community’s health will suffer, we will assuredly force Nevada back into a full shutdown, and we will see a reduction in effective staffing that we cannot afford for years to come.

Employers and government need to do their part in ensuring that parents have what they need in time, flexibility, and money to continue distance education in a more equitable way. It should not fall upon us to take this sacrifice like all the others we have taken over the years.

Thank you for your consideration,

Roger Ports
From: Lisa
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 10:10 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Covid back to school

(Please, if you read this at all in public, I just ask that you keep my name private.)

Hi, my name Lisa & I am an admin secretary at one of our elementary schools. I have many concerns about going back to school. Being in the main office, it is Grand Central Station. There are so many kids that come through that office every day & staff as well. There needs to be boundaries as I don’t want all of that traffic & germs coming through there. Also, parents of course want school to go back in session because they don’t want to homeschool their kids & have to deal with them at home. They are not taking into consideration the staff at school that is at risk. Parents will send their kids to school sick. No matter what, it always happens. And once a school has a student that comes down with it, I heard that school would go to distant learning. What about the feeder schools that siblings are at? They should go to distant learning too. The way our numbers keep going up as things open up is pretty scary. I have stayed in quarantine because I have my mom that lives with me who’s very high risk & I have a daughter with asthma. I can’t risk it for myself & for them. You seriously need to think of everyone’s health. So many people are dying from this. It’s serious & there are too many people out there that aren’t taking it seriously. Thank you for your time.

Sent from my iPhone
I have a kindergartener and a 4th grader for the upcoming 20-21 school year. While I fully want them to get back to some social interaction and in school time I do not agree with them going full time. I am not sure how productive a classroom can be at any elementary level where the kids cannot have recess, be close to another person, leave their classroom, etc. let alone a kindergarten class. Also, how will you mandate the kids wear masks? What will you do when a kid refuses?
Why wasn't a blended option offered for the elementary level? If the kids can do their in school academics in the am then self learning items like Prodigy could be done in the afternoons at home if the family chooses that option (or a split between days). Something like that would not give additional work to the teachers but would give the blended options to families.
Thank you for your time and considerations!
Jennifer Marquette
Your proposal is to be commended!
Educated children are the hope for the future of our state and nation.
It is imperative that elementary aged students are in the classroom on a daily basis. Many families are unable to afford
daycare- resulting in children left unsupervised at inappropriate ages.
Our students need the educational, social atmosphere provided by the schools

Sent from my iPhone

Listening for hours now. A Fall break is not “sacred “ as stated by a few board members. Our students have been out
of the classroom for far too long as it is. I’m in favor of taking the time for classroom instruction. The fear of another
shutdown is great whenever flu season is discussed! Also- the majority of families do not have the financial freedom to
take a week vacation. As a retired teacher of this district, I can say that Fall break didn’t exist and a two week Spring
break wasn’t a part of the school calendar. Our students need a solid education
Good morning WCSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeil,

*How will teachers qualify as “high-risk” in the event that we do have to return to brick and mortar teaching?*
*Will teachers be given additional sick leave in case they or an immediate family member contracts COVID-19?*
*When will families be contacted asking if they will be sending their children back to school or keeping them home so class sizes will be accurate?*
*When will teachers be contacted asking if they are returning or teaching virtually so staffing numbers are accurate?*
*Who will teach students on their digital days when their teacher(s) is teaching a face-to-face class at school?*
*If families choose to keep their children at home, will they be able to send their children back to school whenever they choose? This will affect class size/reteaching procedures.*
*How will the school district make sure that safety equipment/procedures are enforced at all schools in an equitable manner every single day?*

Thanking you in advance for the difficult decisions that you are having to make and all the work you’ve put in to develop the three re-opening plans.

Amy Bentel
Kindergarten Teacher
Diedrichsen ES

Get [Outlook for iOS](https://www.microsoft.com/store/pd/outlook-for-ios/HKJN57302)
My name is Melinda Warley and I have an incoming second grader (at Brown) and pre-K student. I strongly believe in the importance of sending the kids back to school full time. I understand there are some risks, but just living in this time of widespread COVID is risky. We all need to grocery shop, people are flocking to Wal-mart, Casinos, pools, shopping centers and other gathering areas then come home to their kids so I feel that keeping kids out of school isn't really keeping that safe anyway and is in turn only sacrificing their mental, educational and developmental health. The children need the in-person instruction and social/ emotional development that occurs in the schools and CANNOT be met with in home distance learning, ESPECIALLY in elementary school. Studies in Europe have shown no significant increase in numbers after sending kids back to school. The detriment to our next generation of citizens and leaders needs to be taken as seriously as the risks to the current vulnerable population. For so many kids school is their only safe place, a place to grow and develop their strengths and be exposed to new ideas, not to mention be safe from harm and have positive and encouraging influences. We are willing to comply to whatever means are necessary to allow our kids back into a learning environment, but have serious reservations about them wearing masks at all times. I don't know how they can learn to read and pronounce and speak correctly when instructors and they are wearing masks. Hopefully there will be allowances for times when masks can be off to facilitate learning the skills that are completely related to oral and facial motions. For the sake of our children's well rounded health-especially mental and social, as well as the development of our next generation and teaching them how to face challenges, we must send them back to school full time.

Melinda Warley
If you do a hybrid for middle and high schools please consider:

#1: Group A attends on Monday and Tuesday
    CLEAN and teachers work from home or in meetings on Wed
    Group B attends on Thursday and Friday
*This would make the safety of germs better controlled. This would keep the kids more focussed for the two days they attend rather than having days off inbetween every session.

#2: Consider doing a block schedule so that the students are in the same classroom for longer time and less time passing in the halls.

For ALL levels to re-open:

#1: How will you work with teachers who are immune-compromised and cannot return. Will you offer them positions for the online portion of your hybrid model or in the online portion of classes for those who do not come back at all?

#2: Will WCSD provide plexiglass to separate students from immune compromised teachers who do return?

#3: Will WCSD provide hand sanitizer to all classrooms and masks for those who don't come to school with them?

#4: I believe there will be many teachers who will choose not to return to teach in person at this point. Have you done a real questioniare in that regard? Will you up the pay for subs that will be needed to fill positions? Will you allow teachers to teach in areas outside their degree to fill positions? Will you re-hire retirees to fill positions?

Good luck. This is not easy and I appreciate all your efforts.
Attention School Board:
As a parent of a high schooler and a middle schooler, both in Incline Village schools, I strongly urge you to open schools on regular schedule and routine. I am against distance learning, alternating schedules, et al anything other than standard yearly operations. This includes classes, sports and extracurricular, field trips, etc. I firmly feel it is best to our children’s mental health and family physical and mental health for an “all systems go” start to the school year.

-Kristen Ferrall
Hi I am a Junior or will be at Sparks High School. This last year I feel like so much was stripped from me. I got Leukemia during Christmas so I wasn't allowed to go back until right about the time spring break happened. I got to see my friends again for a week before we were told we couldn't go back for the rest of the year. I get to go back this year and see that Suzy is no longer are student body president, I didn't even get to wish her fairwell. My best friend moved and I won't get to see him in class anymore or have him help me with my essays. I like going to school and seeing my teammates from our football team in my classes and at lunch. OMG I miss school lunch, that's crazy. I need school to help me deal with cancer. I need my support group of friends and teachers and counselor and nurse and principal. My life is not normal, school makes me feel normal and whole even if it is for just 6 hours a day. Please let us go back. I will wear a mask and if I am okay with cancer and no immune system going back then we should be able to go.

Jonah Howell
I am writing as a teacher and a parent. This has been a hard email to write and there are not any words that I can find that truly expresses by feelings. Bottom line is I am scared. I do not think we have the money or man power to successfully open and save lives. I cannot imagine the fear that will happen throughout the district when a child, a teacher, or any staff members is infected. Yes, I said when because schools are giant petri dishes in the great COVID-19 experiment. I can’t even get school supplies let alone PPE. We should be focusing on robust distance learning for middle and high school and planning a safe return for elementary students. I would implore you to run through a mock school day at various grade levels and have someone evaluating the potential exposures just in one day.

In all honesty, there will never be a solution that appeases everyone but I would hope that the safety of the school community, especially the frontline, is of your utmost concern.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Curtis

How will fire and all emergency drills be modified and handled?
July 7, 2020

Good afternoon President Raymond, Superintendent McNeill and WCSD Board of Trustees (BOT),

On behalf of the WEA and our 2500+ members, we wish to thank the WCSD Employee Insurance Committee for its recommendation to the Board of Trustees for a Group Health Insurance Rate Increase of 0% for the plan year 2021 (Agenda Item 4.02). We are all fully aware of the difficult times our community is experiencing because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the WCSD Board of Trustees approval of this recommendation, this will be some welcome news for our members, and very helpful due to the financial challenges are members are experiencing.

Thank you.

Thank you for your consideration,

Natha Anderson,
President, WEA

Tom Stauss,
Executive Director, WEA
How will the hybrid schedule effect teaching schedules? Will teachers teach the same number of hours and courses as normal?
To whom it may concern,

I want to thank you for reading this. I know that it is extremely challenging to create plans to re-open WCSD schools. On Friday I read the RGJ’s article detailing the plans to reopen fully, with few modifications in August. I was shocked. I understand that any decision made will be met with opposition, but I urge you to reconsider this decision. Currently in Reno we have more cases of Covid-19 than we have ever had, with large spikes in cases each day. Initially WCSD turned to digital learning when the cases were in the 20-40’s. We are now up in the 100’s each day. I think that the idea that we have all been social distancing for 4 months only to be sent back into a petri dish of germs is faulty. When reading the RGJ article there was nothing said about the safety and well-being of the WCSD staff. I speak for my family only, but myself and my children all have an autoimmune disease and the thought of sending them and myself into a school building with at least 500 other people is terrifying. I work at an elementary school and the idea that all children would be required to wear a mask is great in theory, but in practice is quite unrealistic. Under normal circumstances we have trouble getting students to wash hands correctly, cover their mouths when they sneeze/cough, keep their hands to themselves, and practice proper hygiene. The reality is that the majority of a teacher’s time would be spent putting hand sanitizer on and keeping kids masks on, not teaching. This is not even taking into account the parents that don’t want their children wearing a mask. Then this becomes a bullying problem for both the child wearing the mask and the child that isn’t. I want to urge you to think about this as a human problem rather than a data problem. The staff and students of WCSD are more than their SLO, SBAC, and MAP data. We are humans that are still trying to social distance and stay healthy. By going back to school in the buildings you would be putting the whole city of Reno at risk. I understand that distance learning poses many challenges, but the education of our students can’t happened if our staff and students are sick. I truly believe that our time would be better spent putting our whole heart and efforts into making distance learning the best possible situation it can be.

Thank you,

Sarah Coleman
Will staff who are immune compromised, and/or live with family members who are, have options such as working remotely or taking some sort of temporary leave?
Thank you for considering these questions.

1. In the case of school’s re-opening, how will teachers and students be protected when the school cannot ensure social distancing? A common example is when a teacher is sick and no sub covers their class, some principals split that teacher’s class between the other classes in that grade level. This might be the biggest reason teachers come to school sick even when they shouldn’t.

2. Does the school district believe that taking temperatures keeps people from spreading/contacting the virus? Several of my news feeds indicate that this is a myth and that people are spreading the virus without a fever.

3. How will teachers and students be protected when individual schools have unsafe practices? For example, school nurses sending sick kids (with and/or without a fever) back to class or principals not helping with students who refuse to wear masks or practice social distancing? When teachers do not comply with their administration, they are subject to retaliation through unfair treatment, poor evaluations, and more. Being pressured to comply with unsafe practices out of fear of retaliation is a scary prospect during this pandemic. Is there someone we can call if/when we are in this situation?

4. How will elementary teachers with 30+ students practice social distancing in their classrooms?

5. Why is there a push to re-open in-person school when the pandemic has gotten worse?

Thank you!

Julia

Sent from my iPhone
This is a question about related services. Zooming was exceptionally hard for related services as our students need extra help, sometimes hand over hand, close contact to demonstrate how to use hands, scissors, pencils, adaptive equipment etc. Unfortunately many parents struggled with this and were unavailable to do fine or gross motor tasks. Our areas of work are often a small closet, a windowless room etc. How are plans progressing to protect your older, vulnerable teachers, therapist and aides during this return to school. Will we have a work space that is at least open and that we can do some type of distancing?

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
From: Amanda Reynolds
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 11:25 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School return

WCSD,

As a preschool special education teacher I am very nervous and overwhelmed at the thought of returning to school in just a few short weeks. Working with children ages 3-5 with developmental delays is a challenge in itself, but trying to implement any safety precautions within the room, teaching, taking data and completing IEPs all within my contract hours is honestly impossible. I also fear for my health and the health of my family if we are to return in person. I don’t know the answer, but please know that I am making considerations for quitting my job if I feel as though my safety and mental health will suffer as a result of in-person implantation.

Thank you,
Amanda Dudley
To whom it may concern,

First, thank you for your efforts at making a wise decision over a quick one on re-opening schools.

While I wish I had a suggestion that would seem reasonable to meet all the safety needs and emotional needs of everyone involved, I don’t have one.

However, I do believe that meeting the safety needs of staff and students is critical to learning even if it looks different than what we are used to (altered schedules, decreased class sizes, blended with remote at home learning).

Most important however is that we provide the teachers the Personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to keep them healthy and allow them to TEACH our children.

Much has been lost in trying to get kids back to normal but that is unrealistic and dangerous. We need to provide the most stable option that can be able to weather the ebb and flow of this pandemic storm.

Teaching and learning doesn’t need to be all day to be effective. But it must be done in a way that provides real safety first as can be determined by Maslow’s Heirarchy of needs. This means adequate PPE for teachers and staff and adequate distancing for children and PPE of age appropriate.

My children will not learn well in an unsafe environment.

Thank you again for your efforts. I pray you all will come to the best decision for everyone involved that allows learning to commence which may or may not appease the most vocal of parents.

Dr. Carolyn Dolan DPT

Sent from my iPhone
As a grandparent I can only watch the new school year plans I’ve read about in the RGJ and seen on the News right alongside the surge of cases in our state, which like other states has seen a dangerous spike in cases after partially reopening.

I am absolutely appalled. I have a daughter just off chemotherapy due to lupus. There are many compromised people in our community who will be affected by your decision.

I know my grandson. He’s a sixteen year old incoming high school Junior in an overcrowded school who likes to take the bus with his friends. He’s at an age where he will make up his own mind. He’s like so many kids. He wouldn’t even wear a seatbelt if he had a choice. He wouldn’t wear a bike helmet. These are rules, not choices, so he does these things without question.

I urge you not to put our children and our community at risk during what Dr. Fauci has just called a dangerous and pivotal time in the transmission of this virus.

We need to wait and use restraint at this time.

We always tell our children, “Safety First.” Isn’t this the time when our actions should reflect our words?

Sincerely,

Melissa McPartlin
July 7, 2020

To the Board of Trustees

I am a parent in the WCSD. I have children in high school, middle school and elementary school, I want to thank all of you people who are working hard for giving us the best, thanks so much.

As a compromise parent I would like that you take in care some of my opinions 1. “TO LET THE LEARNING DISTANCE AS A CHOICE” if you diced to opening the schools I believe that it may work pretty good if you let us take the choice and keep our kids at home with Distance Learning. My Elementary School kid is 6 years old and his Immune System is not completely strong specially in winter season, last year starring November to March I had him every month at the pediatrician, this make me more concern because he would not be able to fight against this mortal vires Covid-19, and I'm sure my son is not the only one like this. 2. My other kids are healthy, but if we don’t have many cases of teenagers with this virus is because most of them have been at home (IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY). What could happen if they return to the school? Kids won't respect all the rules that they must fallow which is normal in teenagers.

Please let the Distance Learning as a choice, for all those parents like me who are completely responsible with our kids.

Thank you.

Yonilda Lemus DePerez

Nutrition Service Center WCSD
By this point my colleagues (this will be my 19th year as a WCSD teacher) have repeatedly and expertly outlined the shortcomings of the proposed plan including the impossibility of adequate social distancing and mask wearing, and the subpar education that would result from even attempting to implement such restrictions. I will repeat one point that has been made several times- you are holding your meeting today via Zoom because it is the prudent and safe thing to do for yourself and your families- please extend the same respect and courtesy to the teachers of this district. We have dedicated our lives to education. Do not place us in a situation which asks us to risk them as well.

Sincerely,

Kirk Wessel
July 7, 2020

Good afternoon President Raymond, Superintendent McNeill and WCSD Board of Trustees,

The WEA has many concerns regarding the reopening plan being presented to the WCSD Board of Trustees (BOT). Some of the concerns have been expressed throughout the reopening committee and sub-committee process, while many, many concerns and questions have come up since the recommended plan was submitted last Thursday. There has been a high level of stress and anxiety expressed by our members (who are both employees of WCSD and parents of WCSD students) regarding the plan.

One of the greatest concerns of the WEA and its members is safety. As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase in Washoe County, there is apprehension as to whether it is safe to go back to school within the proposed timeline. Notwithstanding all the safety procedures WCSD implements (PPE, self-temperature checks, face coverings, extra cleaning, etc.), all educators working at a school will be exposed to a work environment with medium risks, an environment wherein all educators could contract COVID-19, and an environment that may not be in accordance with the safety provisions of the WEA/WCSD Agreement. In the power point presentation for tonight’s BOT Meeting, it states “No single health and safety measure in isolation will effectively mitigate the spread of COVID-19.” This risk applies to all educators, not only to educators who have compromised health systems.

As an association, we understand there is a responsibility to balance the needs of our community, parents, and students by reopening schools, with the health and safety needs of our educators. One way WCSD can balance these needs is by providing options to our educators. We believe there will be educators who wish to return to work in a traditional setting, and educators who wish to work in a distance learning format. Based on this, the WEA is requesting the following options be provided to all educators:

• First, any educator wanting to take a non-paid leave of absence, due to concerns arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, be approved for a non-paid leave of absence for this school year; and
• Second, any educator wanting to work in a distance learning environment, due to concerns with contracting COVID-19, be given the option of working in a distance learning position.

We understand providing these options will be a challenge, but we also believe it is important educators be provided these options in order to ensure their safety. Our educators deserve this respect as professionals and as valued employees of WCSD.

The remaining concerns/requests which need to be addressed include:

• Special ESIP (Early Separation Incentive Program) offered to educators;
• Impact on personal sick leave due to remaining home for COVID-19 symptoms or for being quarantined (employees should not have days deducted for this sick leave use);
• Impact on contract hours due to modification of expectations/positions (we are concerned educators will be required to significantly work beyond the contract hours due to this restructuring of positions);
• Protection of prep time and duty free lunch;
• Adherence to reassignment section of the contract for educators reassigned in a school;
• Deep cleaning of the workspace being added to the certified educators’ responsibilities;
• Certified educators opting out of special cleaning requirements due to safety concerns;
• Notification/procedures of possible COVID-19 exposure (responsibility of the employee to report; responsibility of the employer to report to other employees must be clearly defined in writing);
• Formalized process of filing concerns around safety expectations not being followed at the school site;
• Face coverings/masks for students under 9 be required, with the exception for health reasons (educators and staff of students ages younger than 9 are more at risk for exposure due to this age group of students not being required to wear a mask);

• TIME – we need the paid TIME to plan, to grade, to contact parents, to do the work behind the scenes when students are not in the classroom; and

• Respect for the professional expectations of all educators, including our Special Ed teachers, SLPs, counselors, nurses, specialized teachers (such as music, GT, EL), when it comes to work away for the students.

Some of the questions we have include:

• What happens if a COVID-19 exposure occurs at a school? There should be written procedures.

• What is the case load or total number of students expected in each model for the classroom teacher, for the counselor, etc.? Our concern is the case load will increase when combining the distance learning and the “in person” learning, could this translate into 20 students in group one and 20 students in group two (which is a significant increase from the current class size/case load)?

• What is the balance between the distance learning/in person learning and the time to develop these lessons?

• What is the expectation at the secondary level for the “distance learning” day?

• When setting up the classroom at the ES, how will the social distancing requirements of 6 feet apart be complied with? Will consideration of “high traffic areas” in a classroom (such as restrooms) be considered?

• How will our EL, Music Teachers, GT teachers, and other specialized educators be utilized? We are concerned about specialized educators and itinerant educators who travel to multiple sites being overscheduled.

• Will there be consideration of the expectations placed on our Special Ed Educators (including SLPs) when considering caseloads and other professional responsibilities?

• What technology help (whether equipment or concerns around connectivity) will be offered to staff? We are also very concerned about student needs for technology.

• What support/training will be provided to specialized educators who are assigned to teach in other areas? In a related sense, will there be license issues for the educators?

• What is meant by “extra deep cleaning”, and what impact will it have on educators, particularly on their time? If students are eating in the classroom, what is the procedure for cleaning? Will this be the responsibility of the classroom educator?

• Will the WCSD BOT/WCSD Committee meetings be held in person when schools resume in August?

We recognize the final decision will be difficult.

Thank you for your consideration,

Natha Anderson,
President, WEA

Tom Stauss,
Executive Director, WEA
Studies have shown remote learning was overall a huge fail the end of the school year.

Surveys/public comments have shown OVERWHELMINGLY parents/children want schools to fully reopen with few restrictions and MANY parents are adamant about no face masks.

Give parents a choice

**NO FACE MASKS FOR CHILDREN**

Nevada Face Mask Mandate Section 7.1

“The mandatory provisions of this Directive shall not apply to: Children who are nine years of age, or younger.”


“CDC recognizes that wearing cloth face coverings may not be possible in every situation or for some people.” “Younger children (e.g., preschool or early elementary aged) may be unable to wear a cloth face covering properly, particularly for an extended period of time.”


**RESUME FULL TIME IN THE BUILDING**

The Y says that during the lockdowns it cared for up to 40,000 children between the ages of 1 and 14 at 1,100 separate sites. The Y says a few staff members and parents at sites around the country did test positive, but there are no records of having more than one case at a site. This, among a population of essential workers. Children at YMCA sites aren't required to wear them (face coverings).

In a separate survey of child care centers, Brown University economist Emily Oster found that, as of Tuesday afternoon (June 23rd), among 916 centers serving more than 20,000 children, just over 1% of staff and 0.16% of children were confirmed infected with the coronavirus.

Dr. Joshua Sharfstein at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health says “there is converging evidence that the coronavirus doesn't transmit among children like the flu — that it's a lower risk.” There are two related reasons for this, Sharfstein explains: One is that children seem to be less likely to get infected, and the second is that when they are infected they are much more likely to be mildly symptomatic or asymptomatic. If they’re not coughing or sneezing, it's harder for them to spread the virus to others. "These experiences illustrate that it's possible to bring kids together without a guarantee of an outbreak or a serious situation developing," ... "I think it's a failure that we haven't prioritized opening schools."
WCSD,
I am a parent who has a sophomore at SSHS. I’m very concerned for his learning as he has multiple learning disabilities and requires a very structured lesson and on a IEP along with the support of his teachers regularly. Second my concern is for transportation as I’m a single parent who works full time.
How are these two concerns going to be addressed? Distance learning isn’t completely working for my son.

Thank you for your time
Amanda

Sent from my iPhone
Dear WCSD Board,

It is clear communities around the country are discovering that teachers, like grocery store workers, and healthcare professionals, are essential workers for our society to function. Unfortunately, the essential nature of our jobs which should revolve around our expertise, experience, and education, in how to inspire and support student learning and skill building, is not being acknowledged as what makes us essential in the current global pandemic context as we debate how to safely open schools. Our "essentialness" is being framed as free childcare so others can go to work.

Yes, I hear the lip service given to the social emotional impact on students, the (valid) criticisms of WCSD attempts at Distance Learning at the end of last year, etc. But it is clear that the driving force behind the push to get students back in schools is about economics, not science, and certainly not safety. All of the numbers show the pandemic is getting worse and the full health impacts of Covid-19 are still only being understood. The state of the pandemic is worse now in our community and the country than it was last spring semester when the education system was shut down to protect the health of our communities. The requirements for the various "phases for reopening" laid out by the federal government and the state government have not been met. Politicians are caving to economic pressure over the safety of the people.

Make no mistake, as a 20 year veteran teacher, I love working with students in the classroom, engaging young minds, having fun as we solve problems and work collaboratively. But now is not the time to be in the classroom. Given the physical space limitations of school buildings, enclosed rooms with little outside ventilation, lack of handwashing facilities for the numbers of students, it is not feasible for schools to be open safely while the number of cases are on the rise in our community and around the country. It is also critically important for the board to remember that teachers are of not just essential workers for the educational system, they are often parents themselves who often have school aged children they are caring for as well.

I encourage the WCSD Board to take a stand for the safety of the kids and for the staff and for our community by focusing the district's attention on developing better distance learning for the students, keeping kids and staff home until the safe reopening of schools is possible.

Sincerely

Addison Wilhite, M.A.

WCSD Educator
Hello Board members of WCSD,

I was trying to figure out what to write this week as you prepared for your meeting today. I honestly can't think of a good plan for reopening that hasn't already been offered up by WCSD teachers so I hadn't written anything. Truthfully, until we know how much money will be spent on education this coming year we can only speculate a plan..... But this morning as I got up and prepared to make a poster for tomorrow's rally in Carson I knew exactly what I wanted to say.....

Here it is.... and I mean this with the most respect possible. As elected officials who do what is right for Nevada's education and oversee how our district uses funds for the benefit of students, I am not understanding why each one of you isn't advocating for more education funds from the State during tomorrow's special session or any other regular session. I don't understand why you continue to allow the State to portion you scraps and expect you to create a 4 course meal out of them. Adequately funding education in Nevada will fix so many issues that we face each school year. Our students and teachers deserve much more than what the State of Nevada provides. How come we can't STREAMLINE our efforts through connect ed messages, WEA blasts, or plugs on the WCSD website? Teachers at Empower Nevada Teachers have created a website, organized rallies, and met with influential community members to help bring awareness to the LACK of education funding in Nevada. We are trying to bring light to this very broken, underfunded system. We are small right now, but growing each day. Why can't we get help from our school board to spread the word to families, businesses, and fellow teachers? Is there a reason why you choose to not get involved? Conflict of interest? I am sorry, but I really don't understand why we can't spread the word through the WCSD venue or the School Board. There are over 9,000 in WCSD and many of them are also parents of children in our schools. We need to demand that our Governor FIND more money for education. I don't know what this might look like... (money from mining, a lottery, income tax.....) I don't know, but telling people the money just isn't there is no longer acceptable. They need to find it and we need to make it difficult for them until they do.

The teaching profession is losing... we lose good teachers yearly to budget cuts or burnout, we fail to attract college candidates who will choose a profession more financially stable, we can't retain subs because we cannot afford to pay them a decent wage, we aren't respected by the community as someone more than a babysitter while they are at work..... we are losing.....losing... losing....

We finally have a leader in Dr. McNeill who is genuine and committed to this District. I don't feel as if there are ulterior motives in her agenda and I have to believe that other teachers and families also feel this bond. A connect Ed message from one of you to the public asking them to show up for a rally so THEIR CHILD can have the best education possible will go a long way in this town. It is TIME for EVERYONE who is in this profession to take a firm stand that Education needs to be fully funded in Nevada .... teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, School Board Members, District Employees, parents, community members, and tax payers!

I appreciate your time in reading my email. I really would like your input as to how you can be the one to help get more education funding in Nevada. Please don't tell me to start with my legislators. We write letters each week that result in canned responses with politically correct answers to our questions. In my opinion we need someone who actually cares about what happens in classrooms. We need you!

Thank you,
Cheryl Hensley
Member Empower Nevada Teachers
22 year teacher in WCSD
Hi there I’m a parent of a student’s in Washoe County and I for one feel kids need socialization. It’s really starting to affect the children. The hybrid approach might work for some yes but the majority of parents need to be at work.....assuming they still have jobs. Is this meeting discussing the alternatives, teaching outside during the nicer months, possibly the cafeteria where one group of students/staff is allowed only. There has got to be more options.....testing for the bus drivers kids more readily available so that everyone can get back to more normalcy....or we build more herd immunity we can’t keep shutting down everytime there is a spike it’s severely impacting and already fractured learning system.

Thanks,
Casey Annunzio

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I am a parent that resides within the Washoe County school district and I am asking you to please consider an option for parents to choose **full time in-person classroom instruction for all grade levels K-12**. I also feel that those parents that do not feel comfortable sending their children back to school full time should be given the option to distance learn.

There are many effects that not going back to school full time in the classroom can have on children. One source stated that “Decades of experience and research have taught us that when children are out of school for prolonged periods of time, their exposure to physical, emotional and sexual violence increases. Their mental health can deteriorate. They are more vulnerable to child labor and less likely to break out of the cycle of poverty. For the most marginalized, missing out on school -- even if only for a couple of weeks -- can lead to negative outcomes that last a lifetime.” I hope you please take this things into consideration when making your decision.

Thank you for your time!
Please consider the elementary level return using the hybrid model. I worry about a full-time return and a possibility of transmission home. Thank you
What Criteria (exactly) are you using to determine the “risk” of sending kids back to school? Can you list and document The people and the actual studies which determine your reasoning?
Some facts indicate that a 0.001% chance of dying from COVID-19 is a much lower rate than the current rates of suicide due to depression and other issues in children.
Where do you get your facts?
Is it UnBiased?
Are you looking at the risk of Not sending kids back?
It might be nice to see leadership take charge, use grit, and not weasel out what is a political mess.
Ann Dutton

Sent from my iPhone
When will high school cheer be cleared to condition and practice? I know there are other sports that are cleared and are practicing. I don’t understand why our cheer camps keep getting postponed. Cheer is as safe or safer than the others sports already cleared

Thank you,

Jen McDonald

--

Jen McDonald
Global Real Estate Advisor | Manager
BS. 3279

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From: Stafford, Nancy
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:29 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Reopening

What options/opportunities will be made available for teachers/staff who are in the high risk category for contracting the Covid-19? ie; over 65, high blood pressure, lung disease, etc.

Nancy Stafford
2nd Grade Teacher
Double Diamond Teacher
Studies have shown remote learning was a failure for many families at the end of last school year, and our children are the ones suffering.

The deeming of childcare facilities as essential and the fact that they have been able to remain open with additional safety measures in place but without social distancing or face masks for children without outbreaks, shows that schools have the potential to open safely as well, without social distancing or face masks for children without outbreaks.

Surveys and public comments **overwhelmingly** indicate the majority of parents want school to resume full time with few restrictions and NO face masks.

Our workforce and economy will be even further negatively impacted if parents are faced with the predicament to have to forgo their career to be home with their children and administer remote learning if school doesn't resume full time.

In a risk vs benefit analysis and reopening our schools should be a top priority.
From: Quentin Blue Horse
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:43 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fall Session

Dear Board Members,

I have a child in the 5th grade. I hope the board does not give into the political pressure behind opening the schools back up. This is not a political issue. It is a matter of safety for our children.

I have lost a handful of family to COVID-19. Including friends who were young and kept themselves in great shape. It appears to be a roll of the dice when it comes to how a person’s body will react to this virus. I’m not willing to roll the dice with my child’s life. I hope the board shares that concern.

Keep our children safe. There is no need to rush into opening the schools. Do online classes for the fall and then see what the spring holds. By then I think everyone will have a better idea of what is in store for the future.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Quentin Blue Horse
Hello,

Here at Enhanced Electrical Services, both as business owners and parents, we strongly feel that our children need to get back to school as normal. This goes for all K-12. The combined impact that the continued "distance learning" is having on our children's emotional well-being and the parents' ability to work and earn a living is detrimental to our society. The statistics from around the world show that children face a minimal risk of contracting and/or spreading the virus. We believe that it should be a choice for each individual family to make and distance-learning accommodations can be made for those who choose to keep their kids home. This choice also applies to each individual teacher.

--

Respectfully,

Jim Baffrey
Enhanced Electrical Services Inc.
46 Hardy Dr.
Sparks, NV 89431

www.enhancedelectrical.net
I just wanted to voice my opinion which is supporting a hybrid learning model for the 2020/2021 school year. I truly feel that it is the safest model for our children during the current pandemic. And one that will cause the best environment for learning and teaching. I am hoping this is the model chosen.

Thank you so much,
Fay Aboussleman
Sent from my iPhone
Dear Board of Trustees,

I do not want to go back to school until we have a vaccine.

Love,
Marshall Culpepper
Student at Mount Rose, 8 years old

Enviado desde mi iPhone
My name is Holly Murphy, I have three children, they will be attending Spanish Springs High School and two at Pinecrest academy. Let me give you a run down of how distance learning affected my kids for the short time they were one it:

**My Son, 7 Years old just finished 1st grade**

His teacher was amazing, had him focused and enjoying his work. Homework was difficult to get him to finish at home, however his teacher did great motivating and encouraging him so he got better at home. Then March came around and he went to distance learning. No big deal right, a parent can teach him his ABC’s and easy concepts? No, not really. He would cry hysterically, I would get frustrated as I have worked well over 40 hours a week during this pandemic. So I had to bring my kids to work and try and help them. This put a big strain on my work and my hours at work. My Son did not complete one packet fully during distance learning, you can’t force them to put the pencil to the paper and write the answers. While on distance learning, he learned absolutely nothing.

**My Oldest Daughter, 14 years old Just finished 8th grade**

She already had a hard time in school in math only. She had a fresh start this last semester, had to go to tutoring with her teacher, stay in during breaks, and ask for extra help in class. She was finally on a good streak, and then March came. She was so confused with the online system that she fell behind in the classes that she naturally did good in. Her math teacher kept introducing new concepts and would zoom for only 5 minutes once a week. They had to then learn the rest from Khan Academy. My daughter’s learning style is hands on, in person with personal interaction. She can not, I repeat can not learn from videos or online activities. She started distance learning with an A in math and by the end had an F. I kept in contact with her teachers, however it did not do any good as her math teacher was not going to set aside a different way of learning for her, as the other students caught on just fine. (This was in California). This experience put my daughter in a totally dumbed down attitude and made her feel extremely stupid. She cried a lot and feels like now she is going to have a hard time in her freshman year due to her lack of concepts at the end of right grade. If you ask my
child now, she is so scared that schools are going to be on distance learning for any portion of the week and she is convinced that she will not get the grades or knowledge that she needs to have a bright future. These are words she said herself. She is working hard on her softball and is beyond her age in her skills, she knows she also needs the grades to go along with this and at this point she feels that all the hard work will be for nothing.

My Middle Daughter, 11 years old just finished 5th grade
Luckily, she is very academically inclined. She did great and caught on well. However her teacher also did not introduce new concepts without an extensive zoom meetings several times a week at 45 minutes at a time.

I can only encourage my kids so much, their state of mind comes from the experience they had in distance learning. I understand that we have to keep our kids safe, I also have done enough research to know that kids are safer in school then they are at home when their parents come home from a casino that is aloud to operate, or Walmart that does not sanitized their credit card machine after every patron. Please, help our kids have a bright future. Not only do my kids need the teachers Monday through Friday, they also need the interaction with kids their age. This is our first year in Nevada, I have a freshman daughter, who knows absolutely no one and now is the time she is supposed to built those relationships and memories. Please do not rob my kids of their future, please.

I run two businesses, as does my husband. Our time is extremely limited. We do not have the time nor resources to help our children with even one full days work. You have to know, that it is known that kids act better with their teachers than they do at home. (I know sometimes that is the other way around) but not with us. I read the plans you are discussing today and I am very disappointed in the fact that the HS level only has one option of a hybrid plan. They credits are more important that all other grade levels, they have to pass and they need to understand their concepts. If this can dramatically affect even one student, it should not be implemented, or at the very least, the parents should have a choice to participate in distance learning. As a parent, we know what is best for our children, lack of school, teacher and peer interaction is not that.

Please consider another option for High School other than a hybrid.

Thank you

Holly Murphy
Concerned Parent
Hello.
As a mother of 2 children, both in highschool this year, I felt I needed to reach out. My son has an immune deficiency and has been apprehensive to do anything outside the house. As a 13 year old he is more aware of his health than others. My daughter has asthma and other issues.
I do not feel as if a plan has been decided for my children along with the others that do have health issues. My daughter had teachers with health issues as well.
To put my children in a classroom setting even for 3 days could kill them. We can not even get in to see our pediatrician at the moment due to so many sick kids right NOW which is so rare for this time of year. Many children like mine could possibly die if you put them in these classrooms. We are told many different things about this virus. We can get it from touching a surface that was exposed, it is in the air, the masks work yet maybe they do not, etc.. As you all know these children do not leave their masks on and if you can not even get an adult to wear a mask how will that adults child? Using so many cleaning materials also comes with health risks. As a medical assistant I know this all too well. Highschools are entirely overcrowded and to say you can Safely social distance is just not true.
I understand you as a board are under immense pressure to reopen. Parents just want their children back. But those parents have not lost loved ones the way we have. Have you seen someone on a ventilator?
As a school board I beg you to reconsider opening at all. Yes people will be mad but you will be saving their children. How can you open when the numbers are up the highest they have ever been?
Again please reconsider.
C Roberts

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Are you willing to make the children, staff, and teachers the sacrificial lambs to Covid? We know that people WILL get sick by reopening. How many will die? What number of cases will close the schools again?
I am writing to express my desire for school to resume (full-time) with temperature checks and extra hand-washing stations.

I am hoping we can follow the White House guidelines of “return to school” listed here https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/07/politics/trump-education-schools-reopening/index.html and announced only an hour ago.

If kids are not in school, much more is at stake than our health. Our economy, as well as my own ability to return to work as a WCSD employee, are at stake.

Who will teach my children (at home) when I am also asked to work from home? Or- if I have 3 children in 3 different Schools, who is going to manage their schedules to make sure they are going to school on the same days, etc?

Lastly, Since I spend my days writing grants about the “geographically isolated” and “socially distanced” Incline Village, even before COVID, can incline schools be given autonomy to run as seen fit by “our” community and not the larger community of Reno?

Sincerely,
Nicolle Larson
LIVE WELL TAHOE
Meeting your nutritional needs
Dear Board Members,

Point #1. I find it a bit disconcerning that you are even ENTERTAINING the idea of opening schools, when you as a board are fearful of gathering in a room with the public, yet you are willing to determine that it is possibly safe for you to put schools in session.

Point #2. In the past we have seen schools close immediately if there is a ‘Norovirus’ outbreak which is mild (medically speaking) in comparison to Covid-19 virus. Yet again, it’s okay to have school with Covid-19, but not with Norovirus?

In my opinion, there is Option 1,2, or 3 (as per the state). There is no grey area. This is a simple black and white picture.
No Covid-19 outbreaks for 14 straight days (or a vaccine becomes available) : We open schools.
Covid-19 #’s climb or remain high, (no vaccine available): We stay closed.

Easy. End of discussion.

Regards,
Keds Howard

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Good evening,

My question is if we have children in Elem Middle and High School levels, will we be given the option to have them placed on similar schedules? Also, if distance learning is inevitable, what are your plans to help working parents some of which may be district employees balancing the two? I know many working parents are worried about the security of their jobs if their student's schedules are changed.

Thank You.

Please keep my information private.
Board Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I understand how difficult your position is and how challenging it must be to plan a reopening of WCSD schools this August. I write to you today to ask that you reconsider your current stance on a full reopening.

I want to bring your attention to the actions of the district in March 2020 when WCSD ceased all in-person operations with less than 20 new cases of COVID-19 in our area per day, and roughly 100 active cases total. Now in July 2020, daily positive tests exceed 100 new cases per day, with nearly 1200 active cases in our county alone. I am greatly concerned by the Board's drastic shift in response and the lack of clarity regarding why they now feel it is safe to return to full time operations with cases increasing in Washoe County every day.

I have a number of questions which I feel members of the board should be able to answer before making this decision:

1. Considering the information above, is it safe for students and staff to return to school full time?
2. If so, what safety measures are being put in place and who is responsible for implementing and maintaining them at each school site?
3. Will those who are responsible for this safety be given thorough training and hazard pay?
4. How will officials ensure that the political ideologies of staff and families do not interfere with the safety measures that are implemented?

As a teacher in WCSD for the last five years, I have witnessed first hand how measures put in place by district and state officials can be misconstrued or poorly implemented in the best of circumstances. Deep inequities in funding and support exist in our district and I implore you to take this into consideration when you make your decision. Please take further time to consider the ramifications this schedule will have on all staff and students' health, safety, and well-being this school year.

I thank you for your time and ask that you make conscionable decisions which protect the safety of the many stakeholders in WCSD.

Jack Scarbrough
Please, as a MS teacher in WCSD for the past 21 years, please do not setup rotations of students that vary by week. Kids need more structure now than ever and a rotation that moves days without ending evenly every week is not helpful. 
Darren Fleck  
Mendive MS
From: Mark Gregory  
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 1:30 PM  
To: Public Comments; BoardMembers  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opening plan for schools this Fall 2020-2021 Concerns

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing as a parent and as a staff member for Washoe County School District. I first would like to say that I understand the time, effort, and struggle trying to figure out how we will start back up in August 2020. I will start off on the parent side of this. I have some major concerns for my two children who attend a Washoe County School. As much as we want to start back up like any normal school year...this year is very different. My oldest who is an excellent student and is above academically did quite well with the distance learning we did for the last quarter of the 2019-2020 school year. It was because it was too easy for her and she is an excellent student who stays on task. She needs to be challenged. She has struggled with the social part more than anything. She is a very social butterfly and not being able to be around her peers and be at school was very difficult for her. As for her younger brother who struggles academically and is on an IEP I will say that the packets that were provided for his grade were not beneficial for a child with learning disabilities. You can't lump all students under the same umbrella and expect the same results. My husband and I made a decision regarding our son and met with his Sped team about completing those packets and what was more beneficial for him long term. We decided to focus on his goals and the areas he needed the support the most. He did quite well with handling the goals/areas needed for support along with his sped team meeting with him a couple times a week. Yes, it wasn't ideal, but we made the best of it. I do have long term concerns about both my children's education being hindered by how distance learning was handled with packets and the IEP not being followed because of decisions you all might be making. I would appreciate it if you thought about those families with children who have learning disabilities and the prolonged effects this might have on them. Not every child is blessed with parents who are proactive and supportive. Why is it okay to let them fall between the cracks? I am not okay with that one bit. I think honestly if we go back to the distance learning for the fall that our wonderful teachers and sped teachers be allowed to teach the way they know how to reach our children. Not by some packet put together to leave many gaps for so many children.

As for the health part of this I am very concerned about sending my children and myself to school with the current situation in our state and county. My daughter was diagnosed in March 2020 with asthma and my son's immune system is lower due to the medications he takes daily to function. I also have asthma and this is something I take very seriously. We have been self isolating since March 15th and will continue to do so until further notice. I do have many questions about how the schools will be safer then being at home. Will you have extra custodial staff cleaning everything all day long? Will you provide masks, hand sanitizers, and Clorox wipes, etc.? What about if a child is sent to school sick because parents can't miss work? How will this be handled? What about a staff member coming down with the virus? Will they have to use their sick time? What about paraprofessionals who don't have benefits and catch this virus or don't accrue sick time? How will that work out for them? What about staff being infected with the virus and then taking it home to their families? So many concerns and I want to know how this will be handled! So many questions without answers!

As for a staff member, how am I suppose to support my children if I am at school and they are at home? Both my children are middle school students and I work at an elementary school. How do I support my child with learning disabilities when I am at school doing my job? Is my 12 year old daughter suppose to take that role as a mom and teacher because you guys want elementary school staff to be at school? I don't think so. It's not her job and I shouldn't be put in that position ever. What is the benefits of having all elementary schools go back to school sites meanwhile middle/high schools go part time? You are still exposing everyone to the virus that we all know very well will go rampant through the schools. Then what will happen? Is this a risk you are all willing to take?

Thank you taking the time to read my email.

Sincerely,
Jessica Gregory
Hello Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeil,

I am a public elementary school teacher and parent of middle school and high school aged children. I was surprised to hear comments of proposed plans on the media as I spent many hours watching the June 23rd board meeting and didn’t hear of these such proposals during that meeting. I was a little caught off guard and hope todays meeting will be a true vote.

Specifically, I would like to know how the district plans to handle the quarantine timelines and details should teachers become sick with COVID while teaching. Will teachers be given additional sick time to adequately recover? PPE and adhering to CDC guidelines for social distancing is of the utmost importance to me should we return to in person instruction. I found it disturbing to hear on the news that elementary aged students would not be required to wear masks. I have seen instances in other countries were younger students are able to do this and believe we should as well. Additionally, we will not be able to distance all students at 6 feet apart in the given confines of a typical classroom in order to comply with CDC guidelines. Has the School Board and Task Force considered dividing students into smaller groups for instruction. I would rather see half my students for half the time and rotate groups to be able to properly distance. I am at a higher risk should I contract COVID due to moderate asthma. I take a daily treatment to keep it under control. I also live with a very high risk individual who is over 70, has diabetes and existing respiratory issues. Safety is a top concern for me. I know students need as much in-class time as we can safely provide but we must adhere to proper safety guidelines or I will not feel comfortable returning to in-class instruction. As we continue to spike in numbers of COVID cases we must take extreme precautions! Teacher, staff and student safely is frankly more important than potential loss of learning that could be made up after the crisis has ended. No one is immune to this disease or it’s’ potentially devastating effects. Also we are learning more about this disease every day and I don’t believe we know enough yet to let our guard down. We have no vaccine and no therapeutics. Please take these facts into consideration when making a final decision on how to reopen schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Faithful  WCSD Teacher and Parent

Get Outlook for iOS
Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read this response during this unprecedented time in our school district. I am a WCSD employee and have strong concerns regarding the district’s plan to re-open schools in the fall. Here are my questions for our Reopening of Schools, regarding the In-Person and Hybrid model:

- What will the safety measures and quarantine process entail for an employee who tests positive for COVID-19?
  - Will 14 days from our sick leave be added to each employee’s sick leave bank?
  - If the employee is hospitalized, will hazard pay or additional health coverage be put in place to offset these costs?
- WCSD has a chronic substitute teacher shortage *in the best of circumstances*. How will the district ensure substitute teachers are available to cover classes if an employee shows symptoms of COVID-19 or must care for a family member who is ill?
- What are the specific safety measures being put in place to ensure staff and students safety?
  - What kind of PPE will be provided for teachers?
  - Will teachers be expected to pay for their own PPE?
  - How will the district provide PPE students who do not have the means to purchase their own?
- Who will be held accountable if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at a school site?

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue. I urge the WCSD Board to make conscionable decisions that consider the health and safety of all stakeholders in WCSD.

Ms. Ashley Monnin
From: Mekelburg, Jessica Lynn
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 1:45 PM
To: BoardMembers; Public Comments
Subject: Reopening thoughts please consider DL until cases stop increasing

Hello,

I am a new teacher in the ARL program, one semester from completing my M.Ed. I am also a mother to an 18 month old, future WCSD student. I worked so hard throughout my pregnancy and my child’s first year to begin my teaching career, often putting in 10-12 hour days, missing many moments of my daughters first year. It is insane the amount of work a teacher has under normal circumstances. I have been so excited to begin this year with my students, but this pandemic is awful, and doesn’t care about students’ emotional needs or parents needing daycare. It’s a virus, it does not discriminate.

This virus spreads easily, even asymptomatic kids can spread it. They may not show symptoms but since kids generally have poor hygiene habits and interact with more people they are three times more likely to spread the disease. (https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/health/coronavirus-children-transmission-school.html)

“Assumptions that children are not involved in the epidemiology, because they do not have severe illness, are exactly the kind of assumption that you really, really need to question in the face of a pandemic,” Dr. Hanage said. “Because if it’s wrong, it has really pretty disastrous consequences.” - Bill Hanage, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Restarting school as normal is setting the community up for failure with disastrous consequences. It is wiser to plan for distance learning with a plan to ease back into person classes as cases hover near zero for 2 weeks. If it is necessary as it may be for some students to return to in person instruction, perhaps a limited schedule as cases hover near zero we can bring people back slowly, safely. It has been SCIENTIFICALLY proven that extended amounts of time in close quarters helps the spread. We should be limiting exposure as much as possible if we can not eliminate it. While I understand the desire to appeal to the vocal parents who need free childcare and social support, I urge you to focus on the science.

I understand the AAP also recommends in-person instruction for students, but they are not looking at the community effects nor the health or safety of the staff that is critical to these students. People WILL get sick and many will probably die because of this decision to reopen schools before the numbers are in a safe range to do so. Teachers, staff and their families should be considered when making these plans to return. Teachers give so much of themselves to this profession. They should not be asked to risk their or their families lives as well.

There is also the issue of the quality of education students will receive. Teachers and staff will be nervous and uncomfortable, there can be no group work, students will be seated in front of a computer for portions of the day. It is hard enough to get the younger kids onto computers, helping them log in requires touching the same computers, often multiple times, and then the issue of them touching their neighbors laptops or leaning over to see what level their neighbor is on. I won’t even go into getting kids to properly wear a mask or stay in their seat as these have been addressed by others. It would be better to put our resources toward finding a safer approach to QUALITY distance learning for the future. With the threat of more future pandemics on the horizon it is possible that DL may be our new reality, and it is better to learn to live with it sooner than later.

There have been so many wonderful comments from educators posing great questions. We need so many answers before we will feel safe returning. I know the district can not afford to lose educators, but that is exactly where they are headed making decisions putting them at risk.
There should be another survey considering the circumstances have changed so dramatically, with Nevada leading the country in new cases just a few weeks shy of our return to work. I urge you, do not ask of educators what you are not willing to do yourself. It may seem like the answer that appeases a vocal few but the long term effects of a premature return to normal. This pandemic IS NOT normal. Nevada is NOT ready for a return to normal. As mentioned by many others, cases are much higher than they were when we shut down in the Spring. The virus is mutating, and we don’t know enough about it to make decisions regarding our safety, nor is there enough funding to ensure a safe return.

Questions:

What are options for staff in high risk situations, if they themselves are high risk or live with someone who is? What alternatives are there for in person teaching? Do they clear out their room? Are they guaranteed their position back when it is safe for them to return?

If we are planning to go straight into In-Person learning, what happens when we have to shut down again? Families will be unprepared and more education will be lost. What happens when teachers inevitably test positive, is the whole class quarantined for 14 days? Do they go home to their families?

How will we cover for classes full of students when staff inevitably get sick? Will teachers get extra sick days? Hazard pay? Does a sub come into the high-risk situation? How will we find subs or staff to cover these positions if we can’t find subs under normal conditions and most of our subs are retired (read: high risk) teachers?

How are self screenings enforced? Where is the accountability?

Will each building have updated HVAC to ensure rooms are ready for safe return?

Thank you for your consideration,

Jessica Mekelburg
Sorry for getting this submitted so close to the meeting.

I read through all of the comments last night and found a few things very interesting:

Some people want to ignore CV-19, go back to "normal" life and take their chances. They state that masks don't work (except they do) and wonder about the effects of students breathing in them all day long. They believe getting back to a schedule, socializing with peers and teachers and having normal expectations are important. I think they are as well. They also said that children do not get CV-19 so schools should just re-open. Well....we all know that this is not true and they would think differently if their child got CV-19 or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MISC). They say children are getting depressed, and they probably are. Some also bring up the financial hardship of child-care and trying to keep kids on track with online/distance learning. If football is allowed to practice, all sports/clubs should be allowed to practice (cannot argue with that one).

On the flip-side

We have more active CV-19 cases than we did when we went into distance learning and the numbers are rising. We should bring kids back to school when there has been no new cases in 14 days (I like this one. Afterall, how will a kid feel if they bring CV-19 home and it kills a family member?), how are the health of staff members being looked after, are the school ventilation systems able to handle not spreading CV-19 to everyone? Social Distancing is not manageable. What happens if students refuse to wear masks? Are they sent home? What if there is a positive case in a child's home? What if parents do not report positive cases in their homes so that kids can go to school and parents go to work? Parents are not that honest when their kids are not healthy. What about the staff who live with high-risk spouses/partners or are high risk themselves? What about sick time due to quarantine and how the heck will we get subs?

There are so many questions that cannot be answered yet that is seems unproductive to go forward until they can be answered. The current plan seems like it is thrown together. I realize that not everyone will be happy with the outcome and I will have to quarantine from my husband if I go back to school (which makes me very sad but his life is worth it). How many lives have to be at risk?

Please answer the questions before deciding on a plan. If time runs out, err on the side of keeping students the safest from them getting sick or getting someone in their home sick. This virus is mutating. Who knows where we are headed. At least distance learn the first quarter but allow teachers to teach and find a way for everyone to participate.

Have to admit, if you cannot meet in person in a large conference room they why are we sending kids to school?

Parents send their kids to school sick all of the time as we are daycare as well as educators. There is no reason they will not continue to do so and create an exposure at school.

He is saying it will take 2-4 minutes to clean a bus between routes?????? I think that is not realistic. Maybe 10 minutes. Over and over again we heard "all hands on deck" when it comes to subs, transportation, custodians, or anyone when regular employees are out due to illness or exposure. Those managers tried to give the illusion that there are enough people. But there is not and I find it very sad that they dont say, "No. We are having difficulty filling open positions" which we all know is true. In this district, teaching positions are not filled and there are not enough subs on a good day. Transportation did not have enough drivers to get all of the students in the north valleys even with 3 high schoolers to a seat. Custodians were always short handed.
My understanding is that you may eliminate the fall break. My family already has plans bought and paid for. This would be unfair to not have a break.

Dolores Atkins
Board of Trustees and Washoe County School District,

I am very concerned about my two children (kindergartner and 1st grader) returning to school for the 2020/2021 school year. My daughter as well as other members of my household have existing medical conditions that put us at a higher risk for complications if we were to catch COVID-19.

How is it a logical choice to open schools up now when cases in Washoe County and in the United States are worse than they were when schools were closed down in March? Those of us that are staying home for the health and safety of vulnerable family members will be opening up our households to the risk of having children in a public place, indoors, with at least 10 other children and adults with few people wearing masks. “The World Health Organization has long held that the coronavirus is spread primarily by large respiratory droplets that, once expelled by infected people in coughs and sneezes, fall quickly to the floor. But in an open letter to the W.H.O., 239 scientists in 32 countries have outlined the evidence showing that smaller particles can infect people, and are calling for the agency to revise its recommendations” (Mandavilli, Apoorva. “239 Experts With One Big Claim: The Coronavirus Is Airborne.” The New York Times, 4 July 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/04/health/239-experts-with-one-big-claim-the-coronavirus-is-airborne.html). Since there are still so many unknowns with this virus, is it worth the risk? Are we just putting our children and families at risk because some have had enough of their children being at home?

It is difficult to understand how social distancing will logistically work with such young kids and with none of them wearing masks. How does the District plan on implementing and enforcing handwashing and other hygiene safety measures with elementary students, specifically 5 and 6 year olds? I’ve seen that the proposed plans have children staying with their respective teacher/adult in their own class but I will have two children at the school in different classes. Will that not be essentially the same as having those two specific classes together because if one of my children is exposed to the virus, the other will be too? This is the same for other families with multiple children. How will social distancing work with recess, lunch and PE? Will “special” classes like music, computers, art, library, etc. be cancelled? Will our children be expected to stay in their classroom for the entire day without recess including eating lunch in class?

Planning for improved distance learning will be a better use of resources. What happens when schools open but someone tests positive and the District has to fall back on a mediocre distance learning program similar to what was implemented in March?

What’s the plan if someone tests positive in the school? Will the school shut down or just the classroom? Are the kids going to be quarantined for a period of time? Will they all have to be tested? Will they have to start distance learning for that period of time? What is that going to do to the mental
health of our children, to start school just to be put in quarantine and be back at home again? How will I explain to my young children that we can’t be in school again because someone has the virus? This almost guaranteed inconsistency can destroy a young child’s sense of security and create a whole host of mental health issues including anxiety and behavioral disorders. What happens when our places of employment see that schools are now open and they mandate we return to work at the office? How do we explain when someone tests positive in class that the class is quarantined and now we have to work from home again? What happens with before and after school programs that run out of the school (specifically KidZone)? If we return to work with a normal 8a – 5p schedule, we need before and after school programs to be fully functioning.

I do not believe opening schools is beneficial to our children or our community. “Do no harm” means to not create risk for students or school staff and their families. I believe opening schools will do just that, put everyone in the community at risk from this virus when the kids bring the virus home from school (especially grandparents who are staying safe at home). Please consider modifying your plan and put resources into an improved distance learning curriculum instead of putting resources into trying to hammer out logistics for getting our children back into a school setting, which will greatly increase everyone’s exposure to COVID-19.

Thank you for considering my comments,
Orion Bobo
Dear Board Members,

First and foremost thank you for taking the time to do this difficult work. With all that is happening and all the unknowns and speculations I know the work is very challenging.

I am writing as both an educator and a parent. As a parent, I want my kids in school learning the best they can but that would be in an ideal world. We are not in an ideal world. I have said that my kids need to get back to school but now I’m not so sure. We have our social circle where we still see some friends as I’m sure many people do. When we go back to school all those circles of students and teachers and the people they all associate with will be mixing around together and this virus that is spreading is in no way going to slow down. I would rather the teachers be given a week or two to really work together, discuss, and plan for “real” distant/blended learning where they can prepare to teach students new content through their grade level’s essential standards. As an educator, I am concerned. We did not have enough substitutes to cover all teachers that were out last year. At my school, there were days when we were short up to 5 subs. I can't imagine all subs will be back for this school year and I am not sure that all teachers want to come back and expose themselves and their family members to possibly becoming infected. I have talked to others who have expressed a newfound interest in leaving teaching due to all that is happening. This can't happen. We are already short on teachers to fill all positions within our district.

The educators I know will do all they can to teach and go above and beyond to be back with their kids and to do it to the best of their ability. I feel that giving us the time to really work together and focus on blended and online learning can reap huge benefits that will get us through this pandemic and beyond. Our teaching will be profoundly stronger when we do go back in person.

I wish you the best on your decisions and pray that you take the time to give the teachers the needed time and support to do what they do best and build a strong platform where they can reach the students and teach them to the best of their abilities.

Regards,
Michelle Riley
To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for taking the time to read this response during this unprecedented time in our school district. I have deep concerns regarding the district’s plan to reopen schools in the fall and urge the Board to reconsider this plan for the following reasons:

1. There is little to no mention of teacher safety in the District’s proposed reopening plan. Safety gear, sick leave, hazard pay, and substitute teachers are all areas of concern which the district made little mention of in its presentation.

2. Who is responsible for the specific safety measures that will be implemented and how will the district maintain effective oversight of these policies in an equitable and efficient manner?

3. This pandemic has become a deeply political issue which continues to divide members of the public. How will the district address these issues and ensure that staff and student safety is not compromised by a person or persons' political views?

4. Cases of COVID-19 in Washoe County are continuing to rise and state leadership has recommended that Nevadans stay home unless absolutely necessary. If WCSD decided to close school sites in March with very few cases in our county, how can we justify this reopening now?

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important issue. I urge the WCSD Board to make conscionable decisions that take the health and safety of all stakeholders in WCSD into consideration before reopening this fall.

Mrs. Ariel Scarbrough
I’m going to make this simple...

If it is not safe for you all to meet in person to determine the 2020-2021 school year, How do you expect teachers and students to return to school?

Sent from my iPhone
PLEASE do NOT do distance learning! It’s doesn’t work and only hurts the students. My husband and I have worked through all of this and we have a 6 year old that had to be shuffled around and got very little schooling done between work schedules. This is “distance learning” is worse than any flu! These kids need socializing and structure. Open schools with no restrictions and let the people who are afraid do “distance learning”. My child’s education is way more important than someone’s hurt feelings.

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

I have a son who is starting 5th grade in the fall. Our family is not comfortable having our son resume school during the pandemic, especially when we have vulnerable family members in our home. Will the Washoe Schools give an option for distance learning for students who are not comfortable attending school in person?

Thank you,
Michelle Kirkland
I know this reaches you in a sea of other comments. I just wanted you all to know that we see the monumental efforts you are putting into the solutions to this crisis. We appreciate the difficult and challenging decisions you are making and will stand behind and support you as you are striving to do what is best for our students. You have our trust and admiration. Thank you.

Michaela Ports
Hi,
My name is Meriel and I am a mother of a young child and a social worker in the Reno community. I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns about the upcoming school year. I know you have some very difficult decisions ahead of you regarding the safety of our students and school staff. I would like to share that I am very worried about children and teachers returning to school in the fall. We know so little about this virus and I feel we are still in the early days of understanding the long term effects of COVID19. I am particularly worried about our teachers in the public schools and the impossible tasks ahead of them. I worry that on top of them managing their usual responsibilities they will be burdened with intense safety precautions along with trying to social distance in a classroom. Bringing 700 people into a school building is going to be very difficult when it comes to keeping everyone safe and healthy. I worry about outbreaks at a school and teachers becoming gravely ill. I ask that you consider distance learning as a primary plan for the upcoming school year. Until there is a vaccine I believe our options as a community are very limited.

Thank you for your time,
Meriel S.

Sent from my iPhone
Please have two options for kids to either go to school or to have us do home school distance learning. It's not fair to force us as parents to put our kids at risk especially with the increase in covid cases. Not to mention that all three schooling at home through the school district is either for 6th grade and up or that there's no openings and they're overbooked. It's just not fair to force us to pay for homeschooling or Force us to send our kids into a compromised environment regardless of how the kids wear masks there's always going to be children that are sick they come to school and don't follow the rules please give us two options
Dear WCSD,

Please consider the mental and emotional health of our children.

Depression rates have more than doubled since schools have been shut down. Children as young as my own 6 year old have been showing alarming signs of depression, and there have been more cases of suicide and attempts than ever.

Allow students to return to school. Daycares have remained open without causing a rise in cases. Children need each other. Please allow them to play recess, to take their masks off as often as possible. This is extremely important for children to develop socially and emotionally.

Teach teachers and parents to practice basic hygiene. Allow students to wash their hands multiple times a day with soap and water, along with hand sanitizer. Allow parents to keep students with fevers or coughs home by removing the restrictions on absences, and removing the need for doctor's notes to excuse them. Provide teachers with no-touch thermometers that they are trained in using, and they can check students before they enter the school building each day.

My son is going into 1st grade. In kindergarten my son was tested and found to have an IQ of 137-142. Being at home and distance learning has done nothing to help him excell and thrive. He, and many children like him, need the classroom setting. They need teachers who are trained to handle the many different needs, they need other students to learn from and to challenge them.

If full time school is not a possibility, please consider something like year round school. It would be as simple as splitting children into 2 groups, each going 2 different days a week and distance learning the other days. Or going every other week, or even every 2 months. This would be a wonderful way to limit classroom sizes, limit exposure, and still allow students to thrive as they should all be given the chance to do.

Please encourage and support parents who wish to home school students, or have their kids take part in distance learning. This would also be helpful in keeping classes small, keeping buses from overflowing as they have other years.

This year has been hard for the majority of us, and our children seemed to have suffered the most. Let us give them back their normal.
I live with my mother and she has health issues. I am very against my son going back into a classroom until this virus is under control. I feel very uncomfortable about it and don’t want my mom in harms way. I think there should be options for kids to do full social distancing.

Feel free to call me
Samantha Smith
Hello, please open schools as it's only exacerbating the problem with elementary children being taken care of by older grandparents &/or church members. We are trying to protect this population and closing schools does not do so with so many working parents with or without resources. In addition, the children without resources will fall behind educationally, emotionally & nutritionally. Thank you for your time.
Afternoon-

After reviewing the COVID-19 Response I have a concern, not only for the teachers/admin but for all students. In your "COVID-19 Response Update & Recommendations" there is no acknowledgement on how to handle students who refuse to wear masks. We have to be proactive not reactive. There will be students who refuse or don't want to wear masks, which is completely understandable. But what actions will be taken for students who refuse to wear a mask and how will the administrators, not teachers, move forward with keeping the school and the community as a whole safe?

Thank you.

Sonya Lucatero
Why aren’t you meeting in person? You want teachers to go back next month and have contact with other teachers and staff, students, and parents.
Thank you for the approval of a 0% insurance increase in the 20-21 school year by finding alternative savings ideas. I love the idea of the mobile urgent care!

Amanda Jones

Get Outlook for Android
According to how many students we have in the school system, how many families we have in the school, and how many teachers, these are very low survey responses. This shows you how many silent people that we have in our school district.

Amanda

Get Outlook for Android

It is very apparent that families and students do not really concern themselves with the safety of the classroom. It appears they just want to get everybody back into the classroom and live life like normal despite the fact that covid-19 is a current problem. Staff on the other hand are more verse in this area we know how many germs and how many sicknesses are passed on a daily basis without a pandemic I think that staff opinion should outweigh families and student opinion as we are the experts. I know this sounds harsh to say that teachers are the experts in the education environment but we are.

What this data also tells me is that our class sizes are not going to reduce that much at all which means that if they do not reduce then we're not following the 50% capacity role that the governor has mandated. This then goes directly against 100% return for elementary teachers and students.

I am very proud of Washoe County School district 4 reaching out to so many community members and trying to get their opinion. My concern is that so many teachers and families wants the school district to take care of them but are remaining silent and not providing valuable information. The same staff members and community members are also going to complain about the decisions that Washoe County School district makes when they did not participate in the outreach. This lets me know that we are not teaching our children and community about the importance of being a citizen and this democratic system of balance.
I think the survey NEEDS to be redone. The covid cases were not as high as they are TODAY when you sent the survey out between June 5th and June 26th.
I am not comfortable whatsoever sending my child back to school with the amount of positive covid tests we have every day this past week.
What's the plan when there's an outbreak?
What's the plan when our children get a common cold? How long will they have to be out for?
To the esteemed Board members who have been working hard to help us create a safe environment for students and staff upon reopening our school district. I have been a special education teacher with Washoe County for 16 years. I understand the want/need to go back to brick and mortar schools for the sake of our children, as well as to reinstall a sense of normalcy to our collective lives. I am, however, extremely concerned for the safety and health of my colleagues and I as we embark upon this unchartered territory of confined classrooms with Covid cases on the rise daily in Nevada. I would implore you to please heavily consider the risk us educators will be taking if we go back to brick and mortar learning. It is easy to say that yes, the best case scenario for our students is in the classroom. They most likely won’t get sick. But, with having an autoimmune deficiency, I might. My older colleagues and those with medical conditions are at an even higher risk. I would be more open to the idea of opening up full brick and mortar if I saw you, the Board of Trustees, open back up to in-face meetings, with the public welcome to join and unrestricted, into your meeting hall. So far, Congress is not opening up to public meetings, and neither have other officials. It is not fair to put us teachers on the front line without joining us. If it truly was safe for us to open up in brick and mortar, I feel that you would also feel safe opening up your meetings in brick and mortar, and would do so.

I appreciate the time and consideration you all have put into our reopening scenarios. I understand this is no small task, as I have been participating in several of the Task Force Committees to try and create a safe workspace and viable education options for our staff and children. Thank you for listening to my concerns, and taking them into consideration as you make this difficult decision. Good luck, and take care

Maureen Wander

To our Board members. Thank you, so much, for the time and questions you all are asking on the behalf of teacher and student safety. I have been watching today’s meeting, and it’s been long. And is going to be so much longer. Your questions are thoughtful, and show you have the best interest of us teachers in the forefront of your thoughts. I just needed to let you know how much I appreciate it, and your varying perspectives.

THANK YOU.

Hello again!
Is it safe to have our bus windows down during winter? It can be so cold in the mornings (below freezing)...

From: Wander, Maureen
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 2:41 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Concern with reopening
Will Distance Learning be an option for family's who are at higher risk? For example, family's with multi-generational house holds and children with underlying health issues.
Is a new survey going to be available now that Covid cases are sky-rocketing again throughout the nation? When the first survey was available the cases were leveling out and things were appearing to be getting better. I hope the new surge in cases and difficulties state-wide with Covid-19 cases will be taken into consideration before the board sends students and staff back into the buildings.

Thank you
If I were to take the survey again, today, with the rising numbers I would answer to go distance learning.
I am listening to the meeting as it is going on and reflecting on my response to this survey last month.

If this were taken today my answers would have been completely different. We seemed to have the COVID situation more under control in our community at the time this survey was taken and I was much more comfortable with the idea of returning to school with some safeguards in place. I am not comfortable with that now and I’m sure I’m not the only one.
Hello district board,

I have new concerns regarding opening of our schools given the recent spike in cases, and the large amount being young people. As a school nurse we need adequate time to prepare for any changes prior to having students in schools. It will not be safe for us if we do not have this prep time. I suggest opening schools later in the school year if decisions made make this prep needed.

Hillary Anthony, RN
Dear sits and madams;
I feel like when I filled out my survey, there was a bit of confusion on a few of the questions. On the one about sending my child back to school— I feel that my child should not be going back on campus but should continue to attend via online/distance learning. However, I mistook the question to mean am I going to pull my child out of the school district (and homeschool or private school/teacher).
I especially feel this way since there has been a recent spike in the number of cases and those contracting it are younger and younger. I don’t feel that the school district should be see as a babysitter. Lack of childcare, to me is not a good enough reason to send our children directly into harm’s way. Yes, this may be inconvenient for some families, it still does not justify the risk.
Please consider giving the parents a choice of if they want to do online learning or in class. My child has underlying medical conditions that make him more at risk of becoming fatality ill if he were to contract the virus.
Thank you.
Tina Hailer-Monsewicz
I have concerns regarding reopening for my immune compromised kiddos...can we have options for our kiddos to do full time zoom meetings?
I think the proposals presented are a good solution for the return to school plans. The only area I disagree is the portion that concerns fall break. I understand that it may become necessary to have extra educational time, but asking students, parents, and teachers to give up vacation time is not a good idea. Since many summer vacation plans had to be cancelled or rescheduled until later in the year, please do not ask those of us with plans during fall and spring break to change them, possibly at the last minute.

Andrea Ramirez
Cold Springs Middle School
I know that the survey was administered only a month ago, but with all of the new cases popping up, I think having our littles (my son will be in first grade) in school full time is putting them in danger. I don't see how the schools can keep our kids safe with enforcing face mask coverings and social distancing in small rooms for 24+ kids, plus teachers and aids. Especially for the younger kids, you need to have close proximity to speak with them in certain situations. I feel very uncomfortable sending my son to school in the proposed full time situation. Please consider having the younger children learn via distance, or a hybrid model. There is a decent chance a student/teacher will contract COVID and we will be forced to quarantine. Having a hybrid model already in place will make that transition easier.

Aubrey Flores
I have been in the WCSD for nearly 20 years. I have never feared for my safety more than I do now. I am sad that I am being asked to return to a classroom where multiple children may be carriers of a disease that is nowhere under control in this country. I strongly believe children should be in school and learning. I strongly believe that should happen when the government takes the steps to make sure we are all safe. This should not be left up to the individual districts to have to carry this burden. I have never felt more like a babysitter in my career. The message is loud and clear that that is how we are viewed. I do not feel safe. Feeling unsafe does not provide an optimal learning environment. It is appalling to me that we are moving forward to “see what happens”.

Kim Carl
Why is this meeting not in person with the board? You could have worn masks and been in a room together for the meeting. Aren’t you all asking teachers and students to do this when school returns? Walk in their schools. Whatever is decided, walk in their shoes from riding the bus to sitting in a classroom with a mask trying to learn all day, to lunch and then home. How is this going to affect the social and emotional health of students and teachers?
From: Jones, Amanda D
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:27 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: 4.04 re-opening of schools

- Note...were all Principals on the committee, white males? To ensure cultural diversity and cultural equality, I question the cultural diversity of these choices.

- Are board members going to rally with the WEA at the legislature in Carson City to ensure education funding? Why or why not?

- We can all agree that consistency is where most growth happens. If we fluctuate back and forth between full distance learning and hybrid or full distance and full in person model, this WILL cause about a 1 - 2 week learning disruption everyone change occurs... Won't the fluctuation cause more learning and behavior gaps?

- If the entire district or school gets shut down due to an outbreak does that mean that all students in that school would then have to switch to the online program format? if this is the case what would the brick-and-mortar teachers be teaching?

Spacing Is going to be an issue many of our schools are at max capacity if not over capacity as is...Some of our schools are outside schools (no halls, no quad areas) no extra space, how are you providing assistance to those Principals? If students in a special education self-contained classroom get first priority but there are too many students in that one self-contained classroom would we be able to use two different spaces to help with that social distancing and 50% capacity piece?

- what about high school students that are in signature programs that require hands on learning? will they have the opportunity to go to school more days since it is a special program?

- Are we going back to school in the elementary 100% of the time with 100% capacity in phase 2? or are we going to go back to the elementary setting in a hybrid model in phase 2?

- Awesome statement McNeil! Thank you for backing us up and saying that if the federal government wants us to open up without a hybrid model than they need to provide the funding for it!!!! Love this!!!!

- I'm confused so the earlier proposal for elementary schools to go back 100% full-time 5 days a week. is this still the plan going forward in phase 2 with 50% capacity rules or with those elementary schools have to do a hybrid model as well?

- also a lot of us teachers are talking and we are feeling that there are still a lot of unknowns and possibilities and variables that have not quite been figured out.

- Also I was hearing about the clinical aide helping in the schools. So a cold and a flu are very similar with covid-19 they look the same. This has been a known fact. Many symptoms of the cold and flu is also replicated in the covid-19. I heard that you guys were training the clinical personnel to be able to tell the difference by doing an extensive evaluation of the student, however this is evaluation would be based off of opinion not science. what kind of consequences would a clinical personnel have for letting a covid-19 student going back to class thinking that they just had the flu a cold? another issue that I have with this is that many of our elementary students get sick at one time. we don't have the amount of clinical personnel to handle large cases of six students. How will we combat this?
In reviewing the board meeting notes for today, I understand that there is a reference to A/B schedule when referring to which students would be on-campus on a particular day. While this is common for high school classes to be labeled as A and B, it is a different context to use that as a student grouping, and may create an unintentional bias. If the intent is to use those labels for students and which days they attend I suggest using a different grouping scheme that does not introduce this bias. A better labeling scheme could be "Silver/Blue" as an observation of our state colors.

Sincerely,
Robert Baumann
rbaumann@gmail.com
Questions for Elementary School Level:
- Will parents/families be allowed to choose full distance learning versus in-person school?
- If full distance learning is an option for the fall, will the zoned school be able to provide this or will we have to use another program (such as North Star)?
- If you allow full distance learning, will North Star open up more spots (currently they are full and already have a waiting list)?

Thank you,
Erin
I have heard, the district may recommend that the students alternate days of the week they are in the classroom. With the CDC’s recommendation for Day Care, Youth Sports, Youth Camps etc. being that the more you can keep the same group of children together the less risk there is. I am wondering would the board consider alternating weeks vs days? This may help with risk, provide better routine and for working parents, it may be easier to make needed arrangements.

Thank you,
Juliet Moore
One death under 20 yrs old in Washoe County related to COVID as of 7/7/2020.

How do you expect a student's immune system to stay strong in a sheltered environment? These are some of the most important years for children to strengthen their immune systems.

How was the principle of “Do Not Harm” used every year during influenza season? Meaning, influenza can and does harm children. I do not recall specific safety measures taken for influenza. What has science told you about COVID and children, if more of a threat then influenza, at what point is the line drawn and why?

World Health Organization (WHO) chief scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan agrees that children are "less capable" of spreading the virus, and are at "very low risk" of getting ill from the disease. "What we have seen in countries where schools have remained open is that there have not been big outbreaks in schools."

Why is there not more talk of science and how COVID’s risk places in comparison to other risks in our daily lives to put things into perspective for families, students and staff? The media can not be the narrative in which to make decisions from.

Mark Carruthers
Hello,

Thank you for hearing my comment.

I have upwards of 50 students in some of my beginning band classes.

If the board votes to approve in-person learning, will they be looking for recommendations for what social distancing in secondary education will look like, or appointing a cohort?

Please consider not making the model of electives cite based. As a music educator, it becomes difficult to be the only person in the school teaching a certain model. Worse even, when all of my music colleagues throughout the district, are doing something different.

Making a recommendation that all schools will do with electives will ensure that teachers like me have a support system. As well as making sure that all schools maintain an equitable elective experience.
Board of Trustees,

Is there a plan for if the state is able to resume schools as normal? If we are planning for the worst in terms of having to switch to distance learning in the event of a spike in deaths and hospitalizations, are we also planning for a switch to return to full-time school attendance as normal in the event a vaccine is released or if the virus starts to significantly subside? It seems it should go either way and we shouldn't be locked into one model either way.

Thank you.
Dawn Hepner
If they choose to do Northstar is there a Washoe County district curriculum and interaction with a teacher and what kind of supplies would they get in example work books or is it purely online?
From: Byington, Ann  
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:37 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: High priority populations

Hello-

I am a resource teacher for the school district. In the presentation, I saw special education students in self-contained settings being priority for in-person learning along with students in transition and English language learners. I just want to clarify that resource (non-contained special education) students should also be on that list. These students are highly impacted and vulnerable as well. I hope this was taken into consideration by the task force and will be by you all as well.

Thank you,  
Ann Byington
To Whom it May Concern:

Why is that select group of students given priority for full in person teaching?

Self-contained classrooms, I understand. That makes sense.

ELL students I can also understand, however the rest of the schools’ ethnic populations will benefit from in person learning as much as this one group.

However, the GT/SWAS population does not. From my understanding and communication with teachers of GT/SWAS students they have been thriving in the online learning models. So why give them priority?

Please consider offering in-person model to EVERY student.

Best,
Christa Rossi

What supports do you have in place for students of families where both have to go to work and their child stays home?
I cannot imagine a reason other than childcare why ES would return full time but not MS or HS. It is disheartening to me that WCSD could put economics before the best interest of my children. It also seems infinitely impossible that ES students are going to be able to follow the CDC guidelines, whereas with MS or HS there could at least be a chance.
Dawn Gearhart

Sent from my iPhone
Trustees,

As a parent that participated in the survey, none of my answers would change. Don't make assumptions.

Thank you,

Shelley Read
From: Michelle Sanchez-Bickley  
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:48 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Follow up on childcare etc., Public Comment

To whom it may concern,

I just wanted to let you know that here at Renown Health we have kept our childcare center open the whole time during this process. Our center holds children from infants to 5 years old and we have had no issues. Our children do not wear masks as they would of course only touch their face and it is scary for them. We do deep cleaning nightly and have not had any issues. I believe the boys and girls club has done the same and have been amazing and have had all ages. I think it is important we do not scare folks and we get back to normal wherever we can. Kids really need to be in school and should not be wearing masks. Even the governor orders says children under 9 is not necessary. I hope you look at this as distance learning was completely ineffective and I know several children where depression, etc., has gone way up.

Thank you for listening. Happy to help answer any questions if helpful to others.

Sincerely,
Michelle

Michelle Sanchez-Bickley, MS, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Chief Human Resource Officer  
50 W. Liberty St. Suite 1100 Reno, NV 89501

Here to FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT
As a teacher I have multiple concerns based on last school year.

1. Will we get time to plan for both in person and distance learning?

2. How do we balance both the at home kids needing help while we are teaching a group at school?

3. What happens if a teacher or student tests positive and we must quarantine. Will we have to use our sick days?

4. If we are required to wear face masks, what can we do if a student refuses to comply?

5. What do we do if a child comes to school sick?

6. The biggest concern is most of my students were on their phones last year for distance learning. How will we make sure these students have access to a computer with internet for distance learning?

Heide Kerr

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get Outlook for Android

I have a concern about enhanced cleaning.

Too often we are short a custodian. I am really worried that this cleaning that is being discussed cannot happen. Also, I just heard about the 5 minute "kill" time. How will we, the teacher, be able to do this between students (I teach middle school) passing and say use the restroom, or anything else... effectively.
Trustees,

I'd like to express my dismay that you are only reading the names of people that emailed comments. Those comments should all be read on the record as what would happen during a regular meeting. Doesn't matter if you have two comments or 200. They should be read into the record.

My child is a 9th grader at Reed HS and we both participated in the on-line survey. It is our desire to resume school full time. The zoom meetings were a complete waste of time. Doing a hybrid with the way classes are already arranged with different schedules each day, teachers will still be in the classrooms full time. Don't see the benefit of not having students in school full time.

Sincerely,
Shelley Read
Dear School Board Trustees,

I am a concerned citizen of the community and I would like to ask a question regarding going back to school. Once everything is all figured out, bussing, lunchtime, recess, masks or no masks, interventions IEPs and everything is set. What are the plans going to be when a teacher or student becomes infected? Are you going to close the school while it is being cleaned and the kids are thrust back home again? If we are not going to close the school to clean then why are we even taking these extra measures and spending money that could be used elsewhere?

Thank you for listening.

Renee Wagner
(mother of an Elementary School teacher)
From: Michalowski, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 3:56 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: 2020/2021 School year

All the discussion that I have seen is about the teaching our students. I have not seen any discussion about the transportation of our students and maintenance of health and safety of staff.

Sincerely,

Rob Michalowski
Hello,

I have been following the reopening meetings closely over the past month, and I appreciate that the trustees have been asking how teachers are supposed to teach in person and teach students at home at the same time. Unfortunately, I have not heard an answer from the district. They keep saying that "teachers are creative" or "it may look different." But what does this mean? It doesn't matter how creative I am as a teacher, I cannot teach two different classes at once. What will end up happening is that I will have to plan double the lessons and take even more time outside of contract hours to plan for "at-home" learning. Further, how can I guarantee that students are doing their work at home? Students were minimally engaged with distance learning last semester. I held multiple zooms a week and never got more than 5 students to show up at a time. I have to assume they will be similarly engaged this fall.

So what happens when my in-person lesson is dependent on students having completed a reading or project at home, but only 1/3 of my class has completed it? Now, I will have to further differentiate between the students who are doing their work (so I need to advance the lesson), the students who haven't (who now need to complete it during class time), and the students at home. This will lead to a situation in which my students are all at different paces, some are falling significantly behind (especially those without devices, without parental support at home, or who are working a job on their off days), and I have to plan and teach 3-6 different lessons at the same time each class.

Further, it was suggested that we could livestream our classes. This brings up two further issues: 1. Again, how are we going to get students to actually log in and watch the livestream (or even access it if they don't have a device).

2. We would need significant investment in our wifi systems at our sites. At my school we cannot have all of our teachers using a device at the same time because it slows down the internet to the point of non-functionality. That's just 60 teachers! Not even adding devices from students. This suggestion comes from someone that does not understand the resources we actually have in our buildings.

It seems that most of the board understands the hybrid model is not realistic for our teachers and our schools. I urge you to please continue to critically evaluate the shortcomings of this model and do not accept vague education jargon as an answer to these difficult questions. We need concrete answers from our leadership on this critical issue.

Respectfully,
~Selena La Rue Hatch
High School Teacher
I believe that elementary school kids should go to school full-time due to the fact that there are a lot of parents out there that do not understand how to do the work that children need to do and that would mean that kids would end up being behind in what they are needing to learn. I do not feel like that is fair to the children that they are become behind due to the fact of their parents not being a big help. Middle school and high school kids are able to do work without adult supervision A lot easier than elementary school kids they can suffice for themselves with understanding of what they need to do. I do not want to see any elementary school kids fell in life in the future due to this virus that was unforeseen. Also children that are in elementary school are not able to stay home alone while their parents are working a lot of parents depend on their kids being in school so that they can go to work and not worry about who’s going to watch their kids. Middle school and high school kids are able to stay home alone safely.

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,

Given the potential for additional teachers to meet the needs of any of the three models being presented, when will WCSD post school specific certified open positions? Time will be short for these educators to come up to speed and ready in just over a month when schools open.

Thank you,
Melinda Cooper
To whom it may concern,

I am a student at Reno High, and I am an incoming senior. It is my belief that school should resume normally in the fall and only go online if schools are ordered to close by Governor Sisolak. Studies about Covid-19 amongst children has shown that children are less susceptible to the virus and that they spread it less than adults. The distance learning that I experienced at the end of my junior year was unacceptable and was, frankly, discouraging for any future distance learning. I did all of my assigned homework and I only spent 1-2hrs per day on school. With Nevada ranked as one of the worst education systems in the country, it would be a failure on the district to provide subpar online education through distance learning, and children of all ages must return to school in order to learn the material. Also, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that children may have an increase in suicidal ideations during a school shutdown, and during the shutdown of schools in the spring, child abuse reports were significantly down. Not only does the school shutdown harm students academically, it may put some in harms way, and take a serious toll on their mental health. Temperature checks are quick and easy and help ensure that students with a temperature are not at school. Also, children who display any sort of illness should immediately be sent home, and all students and staff over the age of ten should wear face coverings. This is any easy way to prevent symptomatic spread and asymptomatic spread.

Thank you,

Sent from my iPhone
If the district does not have the bandwidth to deliver the online instruction from the sites, why are you planning on having all staff in the buildings? Why not allow staff to work from home and deliver the content that way?

--
Rachel Robinson
Reopening schools during an upswing in COVID-19 is a recipe for disaster. We’re not able to get all adults to comply with safety let alone children and many more people will become infected. The curve must be flattened before its anywhere near time to reopen schools. It puts us all in danger!

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Sirs and Madams,

I am wondering what happens at schools that do not have adequate seating to meet social distancing needs? I work at a school that has primarily tables in our classrooms. We do not currently have a pot of money with which to purchase plexiglass dividers. We do not have access to more desks, as the district does not have them available. How will the district address those issues?

Another question that has popped into my mind is this, will the district have the ability to recruit enough substitute teachers when classroom teachers are ill and must be home? Or if a teacher is exposed to students and then must quarantine for 14 days ... how will we ensure there are certified teachers to support our students?

Thank you,
Danielle McIntosh

Sent from my iPhone
I know one of the options for families is to have their children attend online through NorthStar.

In the application it does state that for Technology: Each student attending North Star must have access to their own computer and high speed internet. Due to the challenging online curriculum there is not time for computer sharing.

Will a computer be provided for the student to use or does this mean that if a student does not have a computer at home they will not be allowed to attend or enroll in NorthStar?

Thanks for the clarification.

Robin
To whom it may concern:

I am a parent of 6 children in 4 different schools. We are a 2 income family. Our family is strongly in support of a full time return to school for all students. We will not be able to continue on as a 2 income household if our children are not allowed to return to school and our home will suffer economic loss. Our families economic loss is minor in comparison to the damaging effect distance learning would have on our children’s education and mental and emotional health.

While I was blessed to be able to stay home with them through the entire distance learning process this spring, I also witnessed first hand all of the struggles of distance learning, including the emotional toll it took on my children to not be able to interact with their friends. While I did my best as a “teacher” I do not have a degree in education and I know that my results were sub-par at best. Our tax dollars are going to an education my children are not receiving. While I understand distance learning this spring was hastily thrown together, it was mostly busy work and led to a lot of tears of frustration from the kids. It was disappointing.

Additionally, I am not in support of mask wearing. There is minimal evidence that masks do anything to protect anyone, and many struggle to breathe in them. I myself struggle to keep mine on long enough to get through grocery shopping and am generally light-headed and dizzy by the the time I’m finished. I adamantly oppose forcing children to cover their mouths and nose while trying to learn. I believe masks will create more problems than what they could potentially prevent.

In summary - I support a full time return to school for all children in all grade levels without mask wearing.

Thank you for time.

Jessica Utter
Dear board:

I am a mom of two elementary school-aged children in a WCSD School.

I believe kids should go back to school. Face masks are going to be more of a burden than they are worth in my opinion. I can only imagine how much the masks would be played with, touched and misused. I am only speaking of elementary school-aged children. Teachers should be encouraged to wear n-95 if working closely with kids to protect themselves.

If a kid is coughing maybe they should wear a mask to help prevent spread of germs. Also, there should be required hand washing and sanitizer application before eating and after playing. Kids should wipe down and sanitize every afternoon.

Busses should be sanitized by requiring a hand sanitizer Application before entering and wiped down or sprayed everyday.

The schools should be required to take temperatures of every child before entering school and they should be immediately sent home if running a fever.

The district needs to have more lenient Attendance policies for kids that stay home if sick but at the same time, they should have some sort of distance learning or digital ability to participate if they have to stay home so they are not left behind.

My biggest dissatisfaction and complaint was that the kids didn’t learn anything in distanced learning. Zoom was a social hour for both classes and instead of being used to teach a lesson daily it was used to say hello to one another. We quickly stopped participating in these waste of time meetings.

The packets, if they must be used, should be created by each teacher for their individual class. This would be more tailored to the class, school, etc... The packets that were given out were also a huge waste of time. I purchased my own workbooks that I had them do daily because I wanted them to not forget the things they had learned.

I’ve seen studies showing that opening of schools have not increased positive cases in all of the countries where they opened schools already.

Thank you,
Keri Hellige
Sent from my iPhone-please excuse any mistakes.
To Whom it may concern,

I believe if we open schools that way it's planned it will make it harder on parents to schedule accordingly to get kids back and forth to school and potentially pose a risk for the kids at home that live with elderly people in their household. We have the kid's grandmother who lives with us and is in her late 70s. Please reconsider to doing distance learning so we can protect those in our household that are vulnerable. Also there will be plenty of kids eating in the lunch room together that will make it more than 50 gathering together. Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Sincerely,

David Arbuckle
A concerned parent

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Good Afternoon,

Our school nursing offices need to have more complete hours and staffing.

At Hug, we only had a part time nurse assisted by a receptionist, who was there for additional hours--and the office was not open before and after school or during lunch. If we are dealing with COVID symptoms in students and staff, we really need a full-time nurse at each campus and extended hours so that students and staff can have support when classes are not in session.

If a teacher or staff member has to quarantine due to contract tracing or COVID symptoms, will they receive any additional sick leave? Alternatively, if students have to miss a significant number of days due to symptoms or contact tracing, do we have built-in flexibility in attendance requirements so that they don't feel academic or eligibility pressure to attend when they should stay home?

Also, we need to consider the potential for additional subbing needs if there is an outbreak in a school that sends teachers home to quarantine. In my opinion, we do not pay our subs enough for these kinds of risks and responsibilities.

Thank you,

Jane Brown
I think the school district should strongly consider no open campus’ for lunch. Kids pile into cars to go off campus and then come back on campus which I think defeats the purpose of trying to keep things Covid sensitive.
Sandy Herman

Sent from my iPhone
As a district employee (educator), if I am required to be "excluded" or quarantined for a certain number of days due to an exposure at school, will this time away from work count against my accrued sick days

Thanks,
Kevin Schulewitch

Get Outlook for Android
Hello,

Can the teachers do temperature checks in the classroom in the morning or afternoon or both? I know they have a lot to do but it may be the only way to get them done.

Otherwise can the school nurse, health clinic personnel or an administrator go around and check Temperatures?

Thank you!!

Dayna Berry

Sent from my iPhone
I appreciate the time you are taking to listen to my questions and concerns. I know we are in a time that there is no right answer and with situations changing daily it makes it hard to make decisions.

I have been teaching for 20 years in this school district and have not ever been as worried and scared to return to in-person teaching as I am now. I have been social distancing, wearing a mask when out, and spending 95% of my summer at home with concerns of COVID-19 and the safety of myself and my family. Below are a list of my concerns and questions:

- With children often being asymptomatic, without true testing available for everyone, how is it safe to return to in-person teaching at this time?
- Our numbers now are higher than they were in spring when we went to distant learning. How can we consider an in-person school environment safe and not see a high spike in the spread of this virus?
- What happens with the “home testing” when students are still sent with a fever like has happened prior to Covid-19? Parents often send their kids even when sick because they need daycare in order to go to work. Thank you Trustee Caudill for asking this question as this a valid concern.
- I have heard in the board meeting, families will get choices of what they would like their child’s learning to look like. Will there be options for staff? So many staff members are at risk themselves or have family members that are considered at risk.
- How will there be enough substitutes to cover classrooms when a teacher needs to quarantine for 14 days since the majority of our substitutes are retired and considered in the at risk category?
- I know we have a budget issue and would suggest considering waiving testing this year as it would save the district a lot of money, as well as, free up time for continued teaching to make up for the loss of learning at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

In closing, I do support and strongly agree that children should be in school and learning. This is what is best for all students both for their social emotional and education sake however in these current times I strongly believe that the government needs to take steps to make sure we are safe by offering more testing so we can get the virus under control. Until this happens I do not see how we can safely return to in-school learning and staff and teachers are not being valued and being told we have to return as families need ‘babysitters’.

Please read the article below that I came across that covers many of my concerns and feelings during this time.

Thank you for your time,
Monica Washington
COVID:19 – Guilt and the Breaking Point of Teachers

MITCH LINGO · MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020 · READING TIME: 4 MINUTES

The rhetoric is ramping up as the beginning of the school year draws near, and we are seeing the tired method of society bending teachers to meet society’s needs through guilt. In my time as an educator and now working with educators, guilt works to get more from teachers. Guilt is used to cajole teachers into working extra hours to craft lesson plans, complete grading, or act as private tutors during breaks or after school. All of this is free of charge. Society undervalues teachers with entry level salaries that are painfully low compared to peers entering the workforce at similar education levels, only to couple it with pay raises that do not meet the consumer price index. Instead of providing the correct resources of classroom material, society relies on guilt to drive teachers to use their salaries to provide materials for their classrooms. Teachers do this because it is the RIGHT thing to do. Still, it appears this reliance on teachers to do “what society needs them to do” is finally hitting a breaking point.

In the last course of my undergraduate degree in the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa, the professor had five public education pillars. He would come to say that the first pillar was “child storage.” To some, this suggestion may be rather an uncouth pronouncement of our education system. But in March, this truth became apparent. The nation’s economy relies on public schools not only to create human capital but also to provide a place where children are cared for while parents work. To get schools back up and running for the fall, society had only one job to do. Slow the spread of COVID:19. Instead, we chose to go mask-less, eat out at our favorite restaurants or drinks at our favorite bars, send our children off to birthday parties and club sports, and go out to find our new favorite hazy IPA (for the record, IPAs are terrible).

Society put itself in a precarious position where we now have higher COVID diagnoses than we did at its worst in April. A situation that now falls within the 30-day window for teachers to report back to school for the Fall semester. Instead of watching people get ready to button-down and buckle-up, I am witnessing more of the same. Guilt towards teachers. Who cares if you are a teacher worried about your health? What about the children needing socialization for their mental health? Are you a pregnant teacher that just was placed on the high-risk category? Well, what about children that have trouble learning online? Are you really going to deprive them of classroom experience? No. Teachers are not to blame in this. Society is to blame, along with the total lack of central national leadership in this process.
Teachers are now at a breaking point in which many view returning to work as a potential detriment to their lives and the lives of their family members. I can see it in their posts. Though there is always a chance for a national teacher strike, we will watch five scenarios play out this fall if classroom teaching returns in August:

(1) Anyone at or near retirement will probably take early retirement if we try to start school in the fall. Given the number of comorbidities that plague Americans’ health, this shouldn’t come as a surprise,
(2) Those teachers with spouses that can afford to be a stay-at-home parent will stay at home,
(3) Pregnant and those intending to get pregnant teachers will take a year off and potentially never return,
(4) teacher’s education graduates and those in their first five years without the “golden handcuffs” will leave the teaching career path,
And, (5) there will be a minimum number of substitutes. Most substitutes are retirees looking for extra income or recent graduates that couldn’t find a teaching job. Retirees will not come back to sub. The recent graduates willing to teach will be snatched up in a heartbeat to replace scenarios 1 through 4.
Teachers will be pushed into substitute teaching within their buildings for other teachers during their free periods. The situation will hasten the exit from the classroom for those in scenario 4.
In any of the cases, we as a society will face a severe loss of human capital in our teaching force and have the potential to devastate the teaching workforce for years to come. Finally, teachers should not feel guilty for refusing to show up in order to protect their health and the health of their loved ones. It is not your fault, and you should not feel guilty about any choice you make in the upcoming months. Unless you are avoiding Dr. Fauci’s rules, you have nothing to do with the situation we are heading towards.

Mitchell D. Lingo, Ph.D.
No institutional affiliation as I am a recent on the market Ph.D. graduate in Educational Policy and Leadership Studies from the University of Iowa College of Education.
If I decided to enroll my 4th and 6th grader in Northstar Online school for this coming school year, will they be able to return into their regular elementary/middle school the following school year, 21-22? Will that be possible?

Also, my 6th grade is on an IEP. Would Northstar Online school be able to accommodate that?

Thank you.

Sent from Diana’s iPad.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From:</th>
<th>Ruth Hara</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sent:</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 7, 2020 5:23 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>To:</td>
<td>Public Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>[EXTERNAL] Proposed School Comment</td>
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I have not heard any comment as of yet on how the schools will accommodate lunch protocols in school cafeterias, accommodating social distancing or safety and health

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
From: Marilyn Knuth
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 5:26 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment July 7, 2020

Good afternoon, Board Members,

I am resending my email from the past meeting seeing as my opinion on this has not changed. However, the thing that has changed is the infection rate in Washoe County. We have had record numbers recorded in the last week, and based on the crowds I personally saw over 4th of July weekend, I cannot imagine these numbers going down in the near future. Again, please be mindful of what the scientists and public health experts are advising. I recognize that this disease is going to be with us for some time, but that does not mean that we have to jump back into an all-things-normal mentality and give up the fight.

Thank you,
Marilyn Knuth

Dear WCSD School Board,

When you asked for parents and community members to submit public comments on whether or not the schools should reopen in the fall or potentially resume distance learning, I have to be honest: my first response was, "Why are they asking us?" Parents, unless their career is in the field, are not public health experts. We do not know what would best serve our area's population. The opinions we are able to provide are just that: opinions.

I understand that distance learning was difficult for most kids and parents alike. It was difficult for me and my two children, too. My children were frustrated and missed their friends and teachers terribly. I understand that the lack of child care options is beyond challenging when parents are expected to work outside of the home, but they have younger children who need supervision. I can empathize with all of these frustrations.

However, we are in the midst of a pandemic. It is not going away yet. As Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases said in a June 18, 2020, interview with The Washington Post, "...unfortunately for us, we are still in the first wave...". We have no idea how this will progress. If COVID-19 follows trajectories of other viruses, it could possibly get much worse in the fall and winter months, per a study by Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota, referenced by reporters of The New York Times. We need to look at science to guide our decisions, not just our fatigue of having our lives turned upside down.

Furthermore, we need to consider the health and safety of all the school employees when making this decision as well. It is not all about the students. I do not know the exact statistics, but I'm willing to bet a fair number of teachers and support staff, including clinical aids, custodians, and lunchroom workers, are older, and some probably have additional health conditions that could make a COVID diagnosis even more dangerous. What about grandparents who often are responsible for after-school childcare? There are so many people who we need to consider, not just the students.

As mentioned earlier, we don't know how this is going to progress. We are in the midst of an unprecedented event in modern history. We are all sick of staying home and having our lives disrupted to such a great extent,
but whether or not to reopen the schools should not be our decision to make as parents. We need to let public health experts drive this bus, not popular opinion.

I realize that this will be an extremely difficult decision to make. There really isn't a decision that will satisfy everyone, but I strongly believe that it has to be science that drives the decision-making. I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts.

Thank you for your time,

Marilyn Knuth
Hi,
I am wondering how much time staff are allowed this year for Covid, is it the normal 14 day sick leave? I worry that as a teacher I would have to be out for possible exposure from a student but then would need time later for my children or myself being sick. I luckily have time saved but it may not be enough.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone
What is the status of Charter Schools? I cannot get ahold of 2 different schools we are interested in? How do we register? They have been closed for months.
How will getting on the back of the bus work for 3 year olds who are too small to get on by themselves? As well as the face masks, how will the children with special needs on their sped bus be safe from contraction if they can’t wear masks?

Michele Haugen
From: Sean and Megan Zurline
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 5:48 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Students with health IEP

What is the process for students who may be in a highly sensitive group?

If a student with an established IEP is not recommended to return to school in person per doctor’s orders can they receive at home, in person instruction along with digital learning?
What if the student is able to start the school year with in person learning, but has a change in their medical condition and needs to switch to hybrid or online learning?
Also, Northstar Online school has an application process. What is the time frame for that? If a decision on going back to school isn't made until July 21st will there be enough time for students to apply and be accepted to start the school year on time and not be behind?

M Zurline
As a teacher in WCSD, the safety and health slide of today’s meeting is a bit concerning. At my school site, we get emails, on the regular, from the head custodian that simply says “we are down [enter number here] custodians tonight, so it will be a trash and dash, please police your floors and tables”. I have gone weeks with my room never having any cleaning being done except for trash being emptied. Floors, table-tops, and the like are not touched. This issue has nothing to do with the custodial crew’s ability, but because there is no method of recourse when two or three custodians in a large high school call in sick. Have there been discussions on what can be done to mitigate these issues?
I'm seeing a lot of different information, but there is one specific school whose students, programs, etc. make many of these ideas irrelevant, and nothing is being said about this particular school- Marvin Picollo. My son is 17 and is a student at this school, he is epileptic, and nonverbal autistic (amongst other things). A fever is the highest risk for him to have a major seizure, which could kill him. The majority of these students are medically fragile, and ALL have IEPs. With my son being nonverbal, how does the district expect me to self-screen him every morning? He will NOT leave a mask on, and forcing him to do so will cause extreme behaviors. I am one of the parents who preferred to have their student stay on full distance learning, and with what has been said, I don't feel like I am going to be given that opportunity. I have had very little support from the school since March, but my son is thriving, and I am extremely careful so neither of my kids, nor I, have gotten sick, and I would like it to remain that way. From the information provided, it sounds like students with IEPs will be pretty much required to go back to school, but how will that be handled with an entire school that has IEPs? I worry not just about my son getting sick, but about him being asymptomatic and infecting others, as its difficult to get him to cover his mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Also, he has learned that coughing and sneezing gets a response, and as such not doing so has become a behavioral issue for him. Northstar DOES NOT provide services for students like my son, so what options are open to myself, and families like mine?

Thank you,

Shahna Stout
So my question, it sounds like they are saying that if they do an in person option and there isn’t enough room that only some children will be allowed to do in person and there will be priority given to certain students. So to me that sounds like some students will be turned away and forced to do distance learning. Am I hearing it wrong? My son will be a first grader and my husband and I both work 12-13 hour shifts. He struggled so much with distance learning as he’s young and we didn’t have enough time. How can you turn children away? My son has just as much right to be in school with a teacher and hands on help as other children. This is discrimination. If not all kids who want to be in school can no child should be.

Kristen wright

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone
To the WCSD Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeil,

"Per Governor Sisolak’s Emergency Directive 024, effective June 26, 2020, (Directive 024) individuals are required to wear face coverings when in public with limited exceptions. To comply with Directive 024...Children under two years of age; children between the ages of two and nine are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings."

(Wording is excerpted from a district email sent by the WCSD human resource office.)

Understandably the governor’s directive is the minimum required at this time in Phase 2. I am immensely concerned as a teacher of 7,8,9 year-olds because these students will not be required to wear a mask in the classroom. It is not fair and nor equitable that I then become more at risk (compared to my colleagues) because I am a teacher of this age group, whereas other teachers who teach students older than 9-years-old will have that extra layer of protection. ALL teachers and staff who work with children 9-years-old and younger, who do not wear masks, will have an increased potential to be exposed to the Covid-19 droplets and aerosols. I plead with the Board of Trustees to be mindful of this teacher safety/health concern and the importance of requiring masks for all students, with the limited exceptions. I will be on the front lines when school reopens and I want equitable protocols and requirements to protect my health and life and those of my colleagues that educate this younger age group. Requiring masks for this student age group, will have the added benefit of protecting other children and their classmates as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this major concern. Additionally, thank you for all of your work efforts and the difficult decision-making you are making for our community during these challenging times.

With gratitude and respect,

Mrs. Ruby A. Burnley, M.Ed., NBCT
3rd Grade Teacher
Diedrichsen Elementary School
With all of these bus times, supervised hand washing, lunches (has yet to be discussed) what is happening with instructional time? All of this takes away from the teaching and learning of students!! Can we talk about that??

Sent from my iPhone

Please start keeping this in mind as you talk through all of the agenda items! It is important and needs to be remembered. As well as if teacher now have to clean, supervise hand wash and teach possibly online for a hybrid learning model. You are asking A LOT of teachers with NO compensation!! Just think about it and the realities of what you are asking k-12 teachers to do!!
Thank you!
Board member Andrew Caudill unfortunately alarmed many at today’s meeting by relaying a “statement” he just read that “Hybrid models won’t be accepted” by the Federal Government Department of Education. This is nothing more than a politically motivated threat and should not have been shared without vetting. Just as our president cannot order states to reopen their economies, neither can Betsy DeVos order states school districts to not use hybrid models of education.

This is a state and local government, and school district issue. I am sure more current data is available with more time to dig, but the clearest figures I could find in a quick search, “The Nevada Plan”, Nevada State Legislature 2017 lists the state’s K-12 budget funding as Local (35.9%), State (35.9%) and Federal (9.3%). Although Nevada does receive some federal funding, it is very limited, as is the Department of Education’s ability to not fund states at these levels.

I appreciate Superintendent Dr. Kristen McNeill’s response, “We would need millions of dollars for the extra teachers.” She recognizes that such a demand would require considerable additional funding from the federal government, something they certainly will not provide. They will not cut funding either, that would guarantee lawsuits on behalf of states involved, take a long time to be resolved, be an extremely unpopular challenge of state’s rights and highly unlikely to succeed in court. This is a non-issue. Please refocus on what we can do for our students.

Thank you.
Hi,

I’m concerned that the plan for elementary schools reopening is a little too optimistic. First, it is hard to believe that WCSD has the resources to safely reopen the elementary schools (i.e., teaching space would need to be trebled to ensure proper distancing; if additional rooms or portables are available, then as many as three times the personnel will be needed to keep an adult supervisor in the room). Second, Nevada hasn’t yet crested the infection curve and we could well be back to Phase I in the coming months. Families are developing their plans for the fall right now - the current cheerful expectation that the elementary schools will return to a five-day model in August could backfire on dual income families if there is another closure or if their kids wind up bringing COVID home. Can we just be realistic about this?

Additionally, in the event of a shutdown, what is meant by “quality standards-based distance learning is available?” Are students expected to shift to an online academy as the contingency, or are teachers shifting their lessons to an online format? As a follow-up, are teachers getting the support they need to develop their online teaching skill set? Are there procedures and plans in place to certify every teacher to teach online?

Thank you for your work on this challenging situation in the interesting times.

Mike Perry
Good evening,
Should we use fall break for instruction, will we be ending the year a week earlier in June 2021 or would teachers be paid for the extra 5 days of work?
Also, the choice for families to be fluid between the hybrid and in person model is detrimental to all involved for many reasons. Please reconsider. It needs to be one or the other.
Thank you to the board members who are recognizing the amount of extra work teachers will be burdened with on a daily basis.
Thank you,
Wendy Zastawniak
1st grade teacher
Hi,
Pre-k has been omitted from the presentation. Will we be starting at the same time as kindergarten? Will there be pre-k programs this year?

Brandi
Pre-K Teacher
Anderson E.S.
What about Palmer? They are on the revitalization calendar.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
We need fall break in order to do our grading and we will need this break in order to catch up with all of this hybrid learning type of model as everything is going to be brand-new. We are going to be exhausted and we will need a break to collect ourselves. Do not take our fall break away from us.

Get [Outlook for Android](https://www.outlook.com)

PPE - Great work on funding this, thank you!!

If an elementary school has a capacity of 725 students, and they have an attendance of 749 students. let's say that 20% of them are doing a distance learning model and they are not attending. This leaves 80% of the students still 83% of capacity which is against the governor's directive. How will you handle the situation?

how will you handle the situation in an outside school setting where there are no hallways and there are no quads because outside of the classroom is literally outside the building?

As a teacher I want the little kids to wear masks. as a parent of a five-year-old going into first grade, he already usually wears a mask when we go in public so he's pretty used to it however having him wear masks for 7 hours a day is going to be difficult. so I definitely say that he shouldn't have to wear a mask when he goes to recess which is about three times a day and then he doesn't have to wear masks whenever he's eating so that's about 20 to 25 minutes a day. maybe we add an extra recess here or there to give the kids a mask break. I think we have to be creative and safe.
Fall break is arbitrary. It was invented a few years ago. If I have to give up Fall Break so that I can be on summer at June 4th, then excellent.

Yes, wear masks!!!

However, I love the idea of the clear face coverings/face shields!!!! Everyone should be able to wear one of those. What a great idea!
Please consider that the top priority should be recouping the learning that children have lost during the shutdown. With the beginning of school already shortened by a week kids will just be getting their learning back by Fall Break. Taking a week off doesn’t seem like a good idea.

Also please consider that children would then be going out into the community or traveling and interacting with other people that could increase the spread of Covid. We should be trying to get as much learning in as possible before a potential second wave and shutdown if it were to occur.

Sent from my iPhone
From: srtousley
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 7:11 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] You need to open the schools.

Just open the the schools. Online school does not work.

Shawn

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.
To whom it may concern,

I am writing as a working mom of 4, three of which are WCSD students, and myself as a WCSD 2nd grade teacher.

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the countless hours and efforts to provide safe education for all during this unprecedented time.

I have a few concerns relating to my children and a few professional concerns relating to elementary teaching.

I have decided to place my PreK daughter in a private preschool due to potential unknown restrictions in the classroom and playground. My greatest concern is my 6th grade middle schooler would be expected to do the blended learning model, after having lost 13 weeks of 5th grade instruction. I know she will need some intervention and focused help for the upcoming school year. My eighth grader would also be at home alone navigating parts of this blended learning model. Feeling very uneasy about their supervision if they are not in a brick and mortar building learning during the exact hours I am as a working teacher. In addition to the supervision issue, bandwidth of technology needs is a concern in our home. During distance learning we encountered this a lot with zoom calls for 3 in a house having trouble getting a good connection. It cause a lot of frustration and stress in our home.

My professional concerns are regarding teacher evaluations, the SLO (student learning objective) evaluation and salary schedule that is currently inequitable with 2010 frozen step bubble of teachers still behind one step from other educators of the pay scale. How are we to be given fair evaluations if “best practices” are limited to classrooms that can not offer small group, differentiated instruction? The frozen step impacts a select few of educators, yet I bring this up because if there are more cuts and frozen steps presented to offset budget shortfall, this group of us would get double hit and cause our salaries to be even more inequitable and behind our other staff members. The greatest loophole in the frozen steps has been teachers can resign (even HR techs have recommended) and be rehired after a year off and then be placed on the appropriate step matching their years of service.

Rather than stating just my concerns, I wanted to share some ideas for solutions.

Elementary teachers schedules need to be considered in conjunction with middle schooler children.

Offer a modified teacher evaluation, SLO expectations and also student testing school year.

Offer half time positions for teachers to take for a one year only. Still allowing those of us pay for a job we can feasibly do and with less obligation to help with our school age children expected to do blended learning model.

Fix the salary schedule for the 2010 frozen step or freeze every other educator who did not give up that 2010 step.
Leave those that are already behind alone.

I’m thankful for the work of the board, committees and I truly want to remain positive and hopeful during these months of navigating this unprecedented time. It’s so hard though when there are so many unknowns and inability to make plans.

Would teachers be compensated if asked to work through a break? We have a 185 contract... so would this make it a 190 day contract?
Respectfully,
Paula Koger
2nd Grade WCSD for 17 years

Sent from my iPhone
During the July 7, 2020 board meeting, there was a glaring inconsistency. At the same time that district representatives discussed wanting to maximize instructional time, they proposed taking away a full week of instructional time for professional development. I also heard trustees raise concerns about not losing time off for fall break. Much of the Board discussion of the calendar discussed strains on teachers. I did not hear enough discussion of the lost instruction from three months of very poor distance education in the spring and the need to catch the students up. The board’s focus on teachers having extra time for professional development and breaks is misplaced. Why would middle school and high school teachers, who already have a planning period, need a full day off of instructional time per week to plan when they are teaching the same lessons two days in a row: once to the A group, and then again to the B group?

I implore the board to focus on the mission of the school district, as stated on the website: "The Washoe County School District (WCSD) is focused on creating an education system where all students achieve academic success, develop personal and civic responsibility, and achieve career and college readiness for the 21st century."

I request that the board focus more on instructional time for the students.

Thank you,

Carrie Parker
Hello, I’m a parent of a student that attends Huffaker Elementary. I was advised that the North Star Online School now has a waiting list. Will you be expanding the online school to accommodate all who do not want to send their kids to school.

Thanks

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Keith J. Buggs, CBA, CAP, CICP
Senior Credit Manager
Financial Operations | Reno, NV

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You need to make a decision as to which spring break is solid and which is flexible so we can plan.
What constitutes a face covering? Would teachers and students be allowed to wear plastic face shields? Students need to see their teachers speaking, some students require it in order to stay engaged. This would allow students to also see one another and maintain some sense of social connection to one another. Thank you, Kelly Knudtson

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Dr. McNeil,

Thank you so much for your position on face coverings! You have addressed a major concern of mine and I appreciate your stance on this matter!

Thanks again!
Dr. McNeil did not answer the question in regards to the enforcement of face masks. Education for the community is ongoing. What does recommendation for ages 9 and younger wear a mask? This wording leaves it wide open

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jul 7, 2020, at 7:04 PM, Kimi <kimichubbs@aol.com> wrote:
> > Listening for hours now. A Fall break is not “sacred “ as stated by a few board members. Our students have been out of the classroom for far too long as it is. I’m in favor of taking the time for classroom instruction. The fear of another shutdown is great whenever flu season is discussed! Also- the majority of families do not have the financial freedom to take a week vacation. As a retired teacher of this district, I can say that Fall break didn’t exist and a two week Spring break wasn’t a part of the school calendar. Our students need a solid education
> > Sent from my iPhone
> > On Jul 7, 2020, at 10:51 AM, Public Comments <PublicComments@washeschools.net> wrote:
> >> > Dear Kimi,
> >> >> Thank you for your email regarding the re-opening of schools. I have copied the Board of Trustees so they are aware of your comments. The Board will be presented with additional information of the re-opening of schools at their July 7 meeting. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. and may be viewed on YouTube through the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChHIK-aa3yh6Z4EHo1Zntwg. Your email will be included as part of the meeting materials and public record for the July 7 meeting.
> >> > Sincerely,
> >> > JJ
> >> > JJ Batchelder
> >> > Board Services Coordinator
> >> > Washoe County School District
> >> > Phone: 775-789-4612
> >> > Email: jbatchelder@washeschools.net
> >> >>
> >> >------Original Message------
> >> > From: Kimi
> >> > Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 10:28 AM
> >> > To: Public Comments <PublicComments@WashoeSchools.net>
> >> > Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020-2021
> >> >> Your proposal is to be commended!
> >> > Educated children are the hope for the future of our state and nation.
It is imperative that elementary aged students are in the classroom on a daily basis. Many families are unable to afford daycare- resulting in children left unsupervised at inappropriate ages.

Our students need the educational, social atmosphere provided by the schools.

Sent from my iPhone
Face masks must be required for all students in Washoe County Schools. It is part of being a good citizen and part of being a community member. How will you protect the teachers with students under the age of 10? I am entitled to a safe workplace too, and I will not be safe unless my students are wearing masks. Please eliminate the exception for students under the age of 10. The CDC and AAP both recommend the use of face masks above the age of two. The exception from 2-9 is not based on science. You can certainly put in place measures greater than Governor Sisolak.

Sincerely,

Teresa Maples
Please don’t add cleaning desks as the teacher’s responsibility. I wouldn’t mind giving each student a drop of cleaner on their desk and a paper towel to do their own desk. The phrase “all hands on deck” means nothing when I’m the only one in the classroom. I only have two hands. Now, I’m cleaning desks throughout the day without a N95 or hazard paid? “Kill time,” just doesn’t sit well with me. Hire more cleaning staff.

Thanks,
Ana Sanchez
What if you have a 5th grade class with combination of 9 and 10 year olds, do you only make the 10 year olds wear a mask?

As a elementary teacher, why are we doing full face to face? I’ve been in contact with my staff members throughout this meeting. We are all not understanding why we should have a full building, while MS and HS are doing something different. Shouldn’t we all be doing the same thing?
Make masks using School logos and sell to students. Money can go towards more PPE.
Is TMCC high school on a different schedule?
Thank you,

Shannon Thompson, M.Ed., M.A.
5th Grade Teacher
Alyce Taylor Elementary School
Hello,
Are the staff at the schools/district going to be offering fit testing to ensure that the students or staff can sustain the impairment of their breathing as required by OSHA. If you are requiring that they wear these masks and or shields you are then required by OSHA to pay for fit testing for all students and staff to ensure that they are healthy enough to wear them without impairing their health.

Amanda Sprock
How will these recommendations affect the public charter schools? Specifically the in person, hybrid and distance learning proposals?

Thank you,
Megan Richter
What can be done to mitigate the issues I have with the use of a face mask fogging up my glasses? I cannot see without my glasses and I have yet to find a mask that does not leak my breath onto my glasses? I am willing to wear a face mask, but I need to find something that works for me without having to spend a lot of personal money for equipment that is needed for my job.

Thank you.
Dawn Van Sickle

Sent from my iPhone
What added safety guidelines, or supports will be given to us teachers with students ages 9 and under...We will be at a higher risk for exposure. Please keep us in mind. Thank you so much

Maureen
Hello,

I am a WCSD School secretary that works 200 days a year. I have 5 unpaid weeks in the summer, and return every year, 2 weeks before school starts. Since the calendar has changed, will I now return on August 3rd, or will I return on July 27th as originally planned?

Thank you for your time,

Stacey Haltom
Dear trustees,

I am wondering why custodians would be moved from MS and HS to elementary schools to clean when older students will have more student contacts in the classrooms (because of different schedules) and each other than elementary students who are essentially with the same small group of students each day?

I am also concerned that we continue to hear the phrase "all hands on deck," for every concern and lack of resources. Will we really have everyone willing to pitch in when we all are working to the best of our abilities all day long on our own tasks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michelle Rutherford
Science Teacher
Damonte Ranch High School
I’m against it 100% look what happen to the city of Reno when we followed California’s policy’s to fight virus nothing wrong with protecting our children and doing distant learning for the first few months to see where this virus goes ! Looks like it’s getting worse and more people are getting it cause we jumped the gun and august September looking to be the 2nd wave please consider taking baby steps and not jumping into it and being sheep like we have so far !

Sent from my iPhone
Can you please answer what will happen if students refuse to wear masks? The entirety of social distancing will not work if people do not wear masks. The Governor has mandated masks. Why are students allowed in if they do not comply with that order? If some refuse, and are allowed, how can we reasonably ask the others to comply? If no one is wearing a mask, how safe is it?
How can you ask people to send their children to someplace unsafe - a place where masks are not being worn.

Benjamin Zober
Dear Trustees,
I would like to comment about facemasks for younger students. No one has talked about developing phonics, phonemic awareness and phonological skills at these younger ages and how it necessitates the need of students to be able to see teacher’s lips as well as other student’s lips. Please do not put these students behind any further than they already are. Give us the autonomy to wear masks when possible and to not wear them when we can safely do so for younger kids. Please....phonemic awareness and phonics instruction is too important for the development of speech, language, reading and writing. I will wear a shield gladly, but a mask is detrimental to instruction in the developing, foundational grades!
Thank you,
Tricia Grinsell
Peavine ES
First Grade Teacher
Sent from my iPhone
Good evening Trustees,

I am attaching links to articles which focus on the effectiveness of shields over masks. After hearing the benefits from pediatricians on the Reopening Task Force, I purchased and will be wearing a Face Shield instead of a face mask. Since the language in the Motion states face coverings which a shield is, I believe I would still be following the directive of the District.

**Face shields a more effective deterrent to COVID?**

**Could face shields replace masks in preventing COVID-19?**

**Some Experts Say Face Shields Better Than Masks for Coronavirus Protection**

**Can Face Shields Help Prevent COVID-19? Here’s How They Compare to Face Masks**

Thank you for your time,
Denise Coverley-Paxton

I am concerned with a comment by the District during the Face Coverings Motion. It was stated that masks protect 100%. This was in regards to masks over shields. We know that masks don’t protect “me.” They protect “you” from me when social distancing isn’t possible, and not even close to 100%. Droplets still escape the mask. The mask keeps the droplets from projectiling through the air. This comment needs to be corrected. This is a huge misconception out in the public.

I also want to state that a pediatrician, a pediatric dentist and a WCHD who served on the Reopening Task Force did some research and found that shields were protective. There is mounting evidence that shows that shields actually protect you from others, where masks protect others from you (a free spray of droplets, but droplets still escape).

Since teachers are going to be the most vulnerable population when we return to brick and mortar, teachers should be allowed to wear face shields to protect them.

The motion reads face coverings. Face masks and face shields are both face coverings, therefore both should be allowed without question.

Please make a decision tonight on the school models, so schools can get to work on creating a school day based on the model that will work best for them. Families need time to make accommodations based on the models. Businesses need to come up with plans as well.

PLEASE I ask that you make a decision tonight. Time is soooo valuable to principals, teachers, parents, businesses, and the community as a whole.

After working with my principal, we are looking at Hybrid as a virtual attendance. Students would be attending virtually when it is not their day to attend the building. Devices will be checked out to students who don’t have devices.

After working through the models on the Task Force Model Committee, this is the best way to serve all students without going 100% back in business as usual.
Cannot exceed 50%
As a parent, I do not want my child to be sharing a bus seat. Who decides which child would break the social distancing rule?

Why are we trying to get recommendation on something that we've already been advised not to do. This sounds like we're going against safety because we don't have the means to be safe.

First off let me just start this out by I've been hearing safety safety safety in every subject that we have spoken about tonight.
I am now hearing a very different shift when we're talkin about elementary. It now starts to sound like convenience.

this pros and cons area is very biased it shows all positives and we're not talking about the real negatives of safety concerns and the fact that we're not following any of the government direct is a 50% yet transportation and other schools have to follow the 50% guideline. this definitely does not follow the universal model of equitable for all. why is it okay for my elementary student to get full-time education an in-person model but not my high schooler?

also I'm an outside school so it's not like you can split up the kids and put them outside to learn.

There are no other spaces except for the cafeteria at stead elementary school.
So are we sharing these rooms or are we having to sanitize before the next group comes in?

Also what about our classrooms that are in very small mobiles?

again very simply stated were not following the 50% guideline but expecting everybody else to.
Where does this other classroom for six grades exist, and if you're going to use rooms like the library and the music room as well as the computer room does that mean that there are no specials for the entire school year?

the fact that so many teachers are saying that it's not going to work in their schools at some point leadership has to take our concerns as real professional concerns. I would like to hear an example of how it would work in outside models instead of leaving that heavy burden on our admin.

I am a teacher, how am I going to get my 15 year old 10th grader to his sports events and practices on his birthday off days, he is a state qualifier in wrestling... scholarship focused.

Also can we opt for an everyday model likey first grader?
I commend you for proposing elementary school students to go back to school 5 days a week. What do you consider an "Outbreak" and will this be decided on a school by school basis, Grade by grade basis, or class by class basis? These children are our future and they deserve to be in school full time. Thank you
Good evening,

I’ve been an English teacher at Cold Springs Middle School for the last 5 years. I have been listening to the board of trustees meeting. I have a few questions regarding the topics discussed currently.

1. How will teachers receive the contractually required 30 minutes of uninterrupted lunch while also monitoring our students who are eating in the classrooms?

2. When will schools receive a list of which schools will require staggered bussing schedules?

3. What plan will exist for students who arrive to school early because of staggered bussing schedules? Most students wait outside the school as it is and usually they conglomerate into groups. Will we be asking staff to monitor these groups that arrive early so that we can make sure they maintain social distance?

4. With the hybrid model of teaching for next year, what will the curriculum look like for kids at home versus in the classroom physically? Will we be recording ourselves presenting the lessons so students at home can watch them as well? Or will we be creating separate assignments for students to complete while they are at home online?

5. Our school is one that rarely gets substitute teachers and we are often asked to prep cover other classrooms. How will this work? I’m assuming there could be a heavy amount of cross-contamination of classrooms if teachers are constantly being asked to cover other classes - especially once teachers start getting sick and needing to take time off.

Thank you for your time,

- Ms. Leja

Jennifer Leja
8th Grade English/Language Arts
Cold Springs Middle School
Hello,

Will Cold Springs Middle School 5th graders follow the elementary school model because of their age, or will they follow the middle school model because they are housed in a middle school?

Thank you,

Stacey Haltom
Batchelder, Jennifer

From: Jones, Sherron
Sent: Tuesday, July 7, 2020 9:07 PM
To: Public Comments;
Subject: Smaller capacity with no additional room

There are elementary schools that are highly populated. Risley is an example. Many title one schools that have limited physical capacity. How do you address those schools as far as social distancing? What Mr. Ernst is proposing won't work like working in a Hunsberger's building model.

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Dear Board Members,

Your dedication to this impossible decision is commendable. It is well known there is no way to please everyone. That said, as a 14-year, highly effective, veteran elementary teacher, I simply do not feel safe having students or staff return to the classroom. While this imposes a tremendous burden on parents, the safety of their children is of the utmost importance. Mental health should not be disregarded for children: I know kids who are already concerned about contracting Covid. While children do not have as significant complications, the spread to the community will be irrevocable. We do not have enough information on long-term effects to make statements in regard to morbidity/mortality. For me, with two young children, I will have to cease seeing my parents, and the worry that my children will contract coronavirus will weigh heavily on my mental and emotional health. I will no longer have childcare other than myself, and I do not want to send my children back to school.

The numbers don’t lie, and as much as I want to return to normalcy at school, we are far from a safe percentage of positive cases. Seeing that 10% of cases in Washoe County are in children aged 0-19, and if cases rise as they did last week (500 new cases), 50 Covid-positive students could be attending our schools. That won’t take long to spread, as contact tracers in Washoe County made the statement this week that tests are not coming back quickly enough to provide productive tracing. As the virus is now said to be spread by spending time indoors near one another, ventilation in WCSD buildings is subpar. As my children and I have type A blood, we are 50% more likely to need respiratory support. Due to this pandemic, my blood pressure has been elevated with the added stress. These place me in the category with underlying health conditions.

I am willing and have sacrificed much for the good of the children I teach, yet this sacrifice seems to be too grave. I did not pick an educational career to be sacrificed on the front lines of a pandemic. Where will we be if we do not have enough quality educators in the next few years? As I put in my survey, I feel that we should be spending time enhancing and expanding online/distance learning to make it as beneficial as possible. I feel that collaboratively we can make this work for those teachers and parents who prefer online learning.

I thank you for your time and open-mindedness.

Sincerely,

Jill J. Moon
How will you support staff at the elementary level with this model? We are concerned about our safety with a whole community back in one building?
Please, we can’t wait two more weeks to know what is going to happen in the fall!!!

Jennie Tibben

Sent from my iPhone
I worry a lot about making a decision tonight without knowing the budget.

Can we table this decision making, and maybe hold a special session??

Thank you!
The question was not fully answered on how sped will look. These children will not keep a mask on let alone social distance so what will be the protocol for that?

Will there be a raise in pay or hazard pay for teachers who are doing more as well as aides, especially putting their lives in jeopardy of getting Covid 19?

So why is having more staff for middle school more important than elementary when it comes to full day option?

Isn’t there a concern that with mostly the older kids staying home more often with the AB rotation option that there is an increase in depression, suicide risk, drug use, failing grades vs going back full time?
To the Board of Trustees & WCSD Administration:

I have a middle school child that attends Sky Ranch MS. and a Spanish Springs HS child and I looking at the proposed plans for hybrid learning option and I have a few comments:

1. I noticed statements that MS and HS aged children do not require as much supervision in regards to school. I agree that these aged students do require less supervision and have to be more responsible for there learning, BUT they also require the social and emotional connection that school provides. MS and HS students are more independent, but they are teenagers and I personally feel that MS and HS children require more supervision and that being connected in person is very important. With the hybrid learning model and parents working, MS & HS kids are going to have a lot of time to get into trouble. Mental health issues such as suicides, drug use and teen pregnancy is very real in our community, especially in this age group as we saw last year at Damonte & Bishop Manogue. I fear that this hybrid & distance model is going to cause a large increase in drug use, teen pregnancy and mental health issues.

2. Extracurricular & Sports & Band for MS & HS - I haven't seen any plans on these types of activities. These activities are key to keeping children connected and motivated at school. I have an athlete that participates in MS sports and a child who is a musician and athlete. What is the status of these activities for 2020-21 school year?

3. A/B Rotations - with two children going to go to different schools how can I request they end up on the same rotation.

4. The transportation recommendation of up to 50% of capacity in order to serve the current students was approved tonight and now goes to the State for final approval. This recommendation and approval doesn't follow social distancing but does require masks. Why can't this same thinking and exception be in place for the MS and HS aged students so they can return to school?

5. My child is in Marching Band @ SSHS and we learned tonight that these band rehearsals on July 13 & July 20 have been canceled for the next two weeks and that IC message would be coming out tomorrow, July 8. Marching Band is considered a PE waiver class and happens in the Fall sports season. I also understand that on July 6, 2020 all WCSD fields and facilities were opened up for use for Fall Sports. I understand that Football has had two days of weight training inside the facility. Why would this program be allowed to participate but band rehearsals are cancelled?

Thank you,

Nisha Hallert
I have an incoming 6th grader at Sky Ranch Middle School and have a huge concern regarding 10/11 year old students staying home alone for an entire day for multiple days a week while parents are working. My personal opinion is that they don't quite have the maturity level for this level of responsibility yet. For our family we are not at a point where we feel comfortable having our 6th grader be completely responsible for her school work and being home alone for 8-10 hours. I really think 6th grade students should be required to go to school in person at the Middle School level if you are giving that same service to 6th graders at the elementary school level. Not all parents have reached that level of comfort yet and asking us to change the way we view safety, security and responsibility for our 10/11 year olds is a lot to ask.

For many of us, staying home on non-school days to monitor this is not an option if we have full time jobs and no additional family or resources to assist us.

Thank you for your consideration.
If masks are so effective, and when maintaining a distance of 6 ft masks aren’t even required, then why would the class sizes need to be smaller if they are all wearing masks. The distance should be a non issue, meaning non certified staff wouldn’t be necessary. Cost wouldn’t go up.
Kelly Knudtson

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We’re teachers polled to see if they were uncomfortable with full classrooms, and if so, will those results be shared?

Hold on, the GT students get everyday instruction?
I don’t understand why the Gifted and Talented kids get to go full time? They are already smart.

Wish to remain anonymous
To whom it may concern,

After looking at your plan as presented in the July 7th meeting, it has left me with a lot of unanswered questions and a lot of trepidation as to the nature of the return plan for the 2020-2021 school year, especially the return for elementary school students.

While it is not arguable that in-person instruction is important for elementary students, it should not come at the expense of the good of the public health of those students, the staff and the administration of the facilities or their families. You can't possibly believe that elementary children will listen nor be able to comprehend social distancing and proper hygiene such as hand washing and you also can't possibly believe that the staff will be able to absolutely and unequivocally enforce those sorts of things successfully. We are currently in a spike as far as COVID-19 cases in Washoe County and yet, it seems like we want to keep that going.

Perhaps the board thinks that children don't get COVID-19 or don't suffer the same effects and while anecdotaly true, it does not exclude the possibility that an asymptomatic child may infect a staff member, teacher or fellow student that either is vulnerable or has a vulnerable family member. It also does not exclude the possibility that the nature of a virus means that it may mutate quickly; this was very, very important in history in the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic. The first wave of the flu, much like COVID-19, killed mainly the vulnerable population but the second wave mutated to cause cytokine storms which killed younger, healthy individuals. This plan does not adequately address these concerns; rather, it comes off as hasty and not in the best interest of the public health.

There are issues such as working parents and lack of supervision in the home that make distance learning difficult, but with that being said, these decisions need to be made taking into consideration all aspects. We all want the normal scheme of things back but going back to relative normal in the midst of a pandemic with no therapeutics or vaccines is foolish and may very well cause more damage in the long run.

Yet, looking further, middle and high schools are hybrid even though they would be more likely to actually understand and follow best practices for preventing the spread of COVID? That sounds a little backward; wouldn't it be better to go at the very least with a hybrid schedule for elementary school and in-person for middle and high school? Again, these plans do not pass the litmus test of the "Do No Harm" benchmark set in the beginning of the meeting; rather, they have the potential to do harm without proper implementation and common sense. What I've seen in this board meeting is a disregard of those two things in favor of getting things back to "normal".

Your aspiration to make education "normal" again is admirable, but your ignorance of the epidemiological and medical realities that lurk in the background of that are quite striking and dismaying.

Sincerely,
Ron C. Roques
Dear Sir or Ma’am,

How do we allow those kids without access to computers to be able to do distance learning again? Those packets were terrible. What are we also going to do about athletics, like football?

Thank you,

Dale Stockton
Founder and CEO
Battleborn Veterans
How will teachers be holding students accountable? Students choosing to not stay caught up, as well as students who are struggling to keep up, will affect the class. My question is to what degree. Will the classroom instruction carry on as though everyone is in the same place?

Block schedules allow for students to be in designated classes for an extended period of time, receiving more instruction and allowing for extra support when needed. The AB schedule does not provide the same structure, it provides 1/2 the education.

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In regards to the high school schedule and Jeana Curtis’s comment about transportation options being broader, I’d like to point out that most students may not be able to carpool due to state requirements. Teen drivers may not have friends in their car for 6 months after obtaining their license. Depending on when students are eligible to test for their license, this could be into the second semester of their sophomore or junior year. So it’s really only juniors and seniors that can carpool. And keep in mind the more teens you have in a car, the more likely the driver is to be distracted. If the district is encouraging carpooling as a solution to this modified schedule, I would caution you to consider the liability that poses.

Lisa Aland
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Lisa Aland
Hello,

For personal and health related reasons I will not send my 5 year old to school to be required to wear a mask all day.

More importantly though is that my daughter participated in Sparks CLC pre school and even through COVID shut down she had a great time still connecting with her teachers and peers through zoom.

Why isn't a hybrid option available for this age group? Undoubtedly this would make these schedules more confusing then normal and I would feel a lot more comfortable my young child trying 1-2 hours with breaks for masks half day kindergarten 2× to 3× a week then risking mental and physical effects of long day mask wearing 5 times a week. Keep in mind that while yes there is science for mask wearing for littles especially if they are carriers, however the cdc still recommends this age group not be in large gatherings or public where masks are required anyway.

I'm also a teacher. I believe that I can go to work and safely use my mask and take care of my own bodily needs. I am confident I could do this 5 days a week if needed and I will find child care likely with family if I were allowed to send my daughter part time or even had the option to continue distance learning. I am an adult, choosing to work for and with young adults. I cant imagine putting safe mask wearing on the priority list of teachers for their young and lively 5/6 year olds. Lets focus their learning and limit their class sizes as much as possible even going to all 1/2 day if necessary. This is at least for this year or school year. There are so many unknowns with this and scary still is there is a very real impact now being studied and found for young kids who have or have had COVID. My daughter has contact dermititis and being that we don't know her underlying cause of this why would I impact her access to oxygen or put her in a high risk category to get this infection that effects the skin.

Again please consider offering and/or allowing for hybrid and/or distance learning for kindergarten.

Thank you
Jourdan Rowbottom
Dear Trustees and Dr. McNeil,

With the A/B schedule, will students only have access to the counselors on their in school days. I worry about mental well being and access to the adults who may have been available every day in the past. What might this look like?

Thanks,
Concerned Parent

Sent from my iPhone
Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

I understand what a hard thing this must be, to decide what is right for our children. That you have pressure from families, and politicians, and your own personal beliefs weighing on you. It must be a tremendous stress. But I have two children, a 3rd grader and a 6th grader. We also are both full time working parents, we are both “essential” and so worked full time during the last part of the school year. It was a tremendous burden to work and teach. And the ones who were most hurt by it were my children. Much like you, we did the best we could, but we were unable to devote the time to their education they deserved because we HAD to work. And a daily zoom call for an hour for one child and twice a week calls for the other were not a good substitute.

With that being said I am confused. It appears to me that you are going against the majority of the family and student wants, which is to open school full time as normal. Why is that? There is no state law passed saying schools can’t open or that Governor Sisolaks’s mandates are law, they are at best recommendations. Which you prove by deciding they children under 9 need to wear masks. I understand the survey’s were just survey’s, but the overwhelming response to them would make it seem like families were invested and wanted to be heard. And we spoke loudly with the MAJORITY saying we wanted normal school days. Isn’t this country based on the idea that majority rules?

I am glad to hear that elementary schools will be full time. Distance learning was especially hard on them. And I can understand high school being capable of doing a blended as they are older. My concern is the middle school kids, those are big transition years especially for the incoming 6th graders. 6th graders are still closer to elementary school maturity wise while 8th graders are closer to High School maturity wise. I understand doing some grades in the school as full time and some as blended is not really feasible. But I feel treating all grades, especially 6th graders who are in a completely different learning environment could be highly damaging to their education. I would request caution on this idea...the 6th graders are vulnerable.


On bold near the top of the report it says “the AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.” The report And it recommends Elementary: “Desks should be placed 3 to 6 feet apart when feasible (if this reduces the amount of time children are present in school, harm may outweigh potential benefits).” Middle and High school: “Desks should be placed 3 to 6 feet apart when feasible.” Also potentially eliminate the use of lockers. When reading the recommendations, it seems to me the AAP feels that blended learning is detrimental to all ages elementary through high school.
Regarding face masks, expecting children to wear masks from the moment they get on the bus until the moment they get off, with breaks for eating and drinking is ridiculous. Children need to breathe! This to me indicates that the school is planning to cancel recesses. Kids need physical activity, how would you Superintendent McNeill do wearing a mask while working out? It is ridiculous to expect this of out children, especially kindergartners.

The American Academy of Pediatrics report referenced above recommends face coverings for middle and high schoolers, and for elementary when “harms (eg, increasing hand-mouth/nose contact) do not outweigh benefits (potential COVID-19 risk reduction).” They also had this to say about recesses “Enforcing physical distancing in an outside playground is difficult and may not be the most effective method of risk mitigation. Emphasis should be placed on cohorting students and limiting the size of groups participating in playground time. Outdoor transmission of virus is known to be much lower than indoor transmission.”

What is the 5-minute kill time cleaner? What are the ingredients? What are the recommended usage amounts and frequency? Even something good can be overused and cause toxicity. Is it on the EPA list of approved disinfectants?

And finally how long is this plan to be in effect? Until we hit a certain phase? Phase 3? Phase 4? The entire school year? Indefinitely? What if in the fall things drop dramatically, can we go back to normal school, or will we be locked in?

~Sarah Davalt
But I expect they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn't. And if they had, we shouldn't know, because they'd have been forgotten. We hear about those as just went on -- and not all to a good end, mind you; at least not to what folk inside a story and not outside it call a good end. J. R. R. Tolkien (1892 - 1973), "The Lord of the Rings"