To whom it may concern,

I have two children going into the school system this coming semester and I have a couple things to say. I went to school in Washoe county from 7th grade till I graduated and have had many issues with what has been done with taxpayer money. The system failed me and it seems that with the moves that are being talked about now, will also fail my children. It was voted on in Orange County yesterday, July 13th, that children would not be wearing masks nor will they be social distancing. That being said, last year there were almost 213,000 registered students in that county. I guess what I don’t understand is that they have what I would consider to be a corrupt communist dictator for a governor and yet they are still making what is the right choice. I have been working in an industrial setting which requires me to wear respirators and face coverings for the better part of ten years and I’m here to tell you that it’s not safe to make anyone, more especially children to wear face coverings for long periods of time. I have worked under MSHA and OSHA and am very aware of the regulations. I’m sure you have heard that so I’ll move forward. I know the move now is to try and be progressive and try not to hurt anyone’s feelings but I am hesitant to want my children to go to a school that won’t allow them to be children. Kids are supposed to get sick, get hurt, eat dirt, get in each other’s faces, wrestle, all of that, and now they have to “social distance”? It is the parents responsibility to distance themselves from people that are at risk, not the government. The schools should go back to normal. The kids with the parents that are ruining our society because they are scared of the flu, should attend school online. The same way the quarantine should have been handled. People that are comfortable go back to normal, people that are scared, stay inside and fight with people on the internet. The death rate is at 2%. You have the same chance to die from the virus as you do getting hit by lightning. It’s a school district. You should not play political games. The children should be able to be children without having the fear of something that isn’t going to hurt them or their parents shoved down their throat. We as tax payers pay for teachers to teach our kids. Not make YouTube videos. Nevada’s education system is already bad enough. I don’t work from home and neither should the teachers. Things are easier said than done and I understand making people happy is tough. I get that but to hinder the growth of children from both an education and an social standpoint would be a second generational failure.

Thank you for your time.
What is we are afraid to go back to teaching. We can’t possibly distance in a classroom. Teachers will be thrown to the wolves. We don’t want to die. Kids can wait until next year to learn. This is real.
To whom it may concern;
My question is, why was it good to close schools when the country's numbers were low and now that we are setting records everyday it is good to open? How are we going to get the socialization that most parents want?
Thank you,
Jennifer Stark

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Hello,

What will the distant learning curriculum for high school consist of and how will it be enforced? How will WCSD ensure high school students are ready for college or at minimum graduation?

Distance learning curriculum provided for high school lacked organization and consistency. I.e. Microsoft teams, zoom, reminder, infinite campus, paper packets with no resource references, low teacher interaction. Not all subjects offered at school were offered in the packets.

Thank you.
Our Grandson will be attending Hug High next month. His mother cannot afford a laptop computer AND they do not have access to good internet service. Will Hug High be able to provide him with a laptop? He attended Desert Skies M.S. BUT had to turn in his lap top from there. His sister was able to keep her laptop from Desert Skies.

Cheri Copple
I am an educator and parent. We have not received adequate training for Teams. I am concerned—from a parent perspective of two high school students—what high school math will look like online and/or in the hybrid model. How will teachers at Reed HS who have not been trained in Teams teach AP calculus and algebra 2 using Teams?

I don’t have enough information to fill out the parent survey and I work for WCSD.

Daisy

Sent from my iPhone
From: Dean
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 3:43 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Paying school employees

If you do not open the schools, I would like to see at least ½ of the teachers and administrators, nurses, counselors, and custodial help laid off, since they are not doing their jobs.
This will help solve the budget problems.
Since all property owners are paying for schools, but not getting service, I would like to see the property tax decrease accordingly.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
From: Kelly Roper  
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 4:42 PM  
To: Public Comments; BoardMembers  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] “Vulnerable groups”

Dear Board Members,

I wanted to start by telling you thank you for all of your hard work and everything you are giving up to have long virtual meetings to get our kids back to school safely.

Amongst my friends and family, all most of us parents can talk about these days is what we are going to do in regards to school this fall and whether or not we think our options are safe or good.

I personally have many misgivings about this fall, how the hybrid model will work, and if my children who were at or above grade level as of March 2020 will fall further behind this school year. However, I think the classroom environment is best for my girls as well as interactions with their peers and teachers, so we are going to give it a try. I am sad and disappointed that my children will probably only get two days of brick and mortar school, but I realize it is for the best for the safety of the teachers and other students to minimize the school population. I even understand that students on IEP’s or 504 plans are going to end up with more time in a physical school building so that students who have learning challenges would not fall irrevocably behind during this pandemic. That being said, when I received the email from the Family Wellness Newsletter today, I could not help myself from bring totally appalled and offended by the definition of what a vulnerable group was. I can hardly believe that students in the gifted and talented programs are being considered a vulnerable group and therefore are being given the option of attending school five days a week! These are students that are already in the top 2-3% of our school district population. They are not at risk of falling behind in their reading or writing or math. They are not at risk of falling behind in any subject. Why are they being labeled a vulnerable group? Why are they being allowed to go to school five days a week when almost every other child in the district will be suffering from less brick and mortar time with teachers and peers?

Every news story I watch about schools this fall is talking about teachers who might not feel safe coming back to school. At the virtual board meetings I have heard the re-opening committee talk about needing to shuffle allocations around to monitor distant learners but that the district will face problems because not only is there a lack of funds currently to hire any additional teachers to face this crisis, we are dealing with a state budget crisis as well. How can we possibly justify using our massively limited resources to continue to cater to a small population of very academically privileged kids when the majority of the district children are at risk of falling further behind?
Below you will find the bullet point that defined vulnerable groups copied and pasted directed from the Family Wellness Newsletter.

- Students considered to be in a vulnerable group have the option to attend in-person, five days a week. The vulnerable groups include students receiving special education services, newcomers in the English Learner program, refugee students, students in foster care and children in transition, and students in Gifted and Talented programs.

Respectfully,
Kelly Roper

Sent from my iPhone
To Superintendent McNeill and the Board of the Washoe County School District

As the citizens of the United States takes to the streets to protest not just the police murder of George Floyd but also the inequity that people of color experience every day in our country, we ask you to join us in recognizing the systemic nature of racial inequity and the role WCSD could play in building a safer and better world for students of color. As the state’s second-largest school district, and the country’s fifty-ninth largest, Washoe County has great power and responsibility in today’s fight for racial justice. The district has an obligation to its 64,000 students to provide an anti-racist education. The first step in meeting this obligation is to update the curriculum to address anti-racism and eliminate white supremacy from our teaching. We also urge the WCSD to ensure that its faculty looks like the students it serves.

People of color in the Washoe County School District deserve not only an education in history, or science, but an education in the truth of the institutional racism upon which our country was founded.

Such reform is necessary because of the systemic nature of racism against American people of color. Washoe County students of color will go on to become doctors in a medical system fraught with racial inequality; they will be lawyers in a legal system which routinely and systemically works against, instead of for, its Black citizens; they will be leaders in a political system designed by and for white people at the expense of Black voices and Black interest. Moreover, intelligence and achievement will not shield our students from the corruption intrinsic to these systems. We must also recognize that too many WCSD students will meet great adversity in every aspect of their lives, even with the exceptional academic tools provided them by the WCSD. Washoe County students of color will be patients to doctors who are statistically less likely to provide treatment to Black people; they will risk their lives when they speak to police officers on the street or in the courtroom; they will find it harder to vote and their votes will count less. It is imperative that we as students, teachers, and leaders understand that academic and scholastic success will not erase the impacts of systemic racism on our students. For this reason, WCSD has a responsibility to teach its students not just to become doctors, lawyers, and politicians, but to become racially aware thinkers.

Students must learn how to resist and dismantle the systems they step into when they leave the WCSD school system, and this requires more than a school system that is not racist: the WCSD must be expressly antiracist: 64,000 students who are not racist cannot close a wage gap or end police violence, but 64,000 anti-racists can. As one of the most consistent voices that students hear, it is crucial that the WCSD curriculum and teachers amplify the stories of people of color, the truth of their historical oppression, and the value of their lives and contributions to American society.

We understand that the WCSD is committed to diversity, and to the diverse student body it serves. Likewise, we know that district leadership values student voices. With those values in mind, we feel that our requests parallel the goals and priorities of our leadership.

We find it imperative that the district addresses the lack of representation in WCSD faculty. The district’s student body is comprised of 56% students of color[i], and that number is increasing. However, “the proportion
of non-white teachers remains stable at 11 percent.” The WCSD claims to be working on diversity initiatives, but its actions will speak louder than its words. The overwhelmingly white faculty of our district demonstrates an egregious and discriminatory apathy among our leadership; this racism pervades the WCSD student’s experience.

We suggest a broad reform of WCSD curriculum to value the role that people of color have played and continue to play in all fields of American study. We currently observe an issue of compartmentalization of racial studies in WCSD, which leads to the “othering” of nonwhite history. For example, as WCSD students we learn about slavery during history lessons. However, we were taught that slavery was a thing of the past, and WCSD students recall white-centric narratives which framed Lincoln as a savior without any exploration of the complex and continual harm caused to Black communities by generations of white people. Our “colorblind” curriculum denies students of all cultures and ethnicities a necessary education in the continued racial inequality that resulted from the events briefly described in their history textbooks. More specifically, our few Black history lessons lacked insight into the modern impacts of systemic racism: the fact that Black people still struggle to receive economic, legal, and social equity due to the legacy of slavery.

We realize this material is complex, but there are simple steps that can be taken in our curriculum to reflect the legacy of white supremacy in our history. For example, WCSD currently does not address Juneteenth, a holiday which commemorates the emancipation of slaves. In fact, most WCSD students learn that slavery ended two years before Juneteenth, which is factually incorrect and sheds light on the lack of depth afforded to Black issues in our schools today. Likewise, we were never asked as students to question the modern-day impacts of economic and social race disparities on housing, school zoning, or policing. The more we learn about these issues as individuals, the more we are compelled to emphasize the need for their wider incorporation in the classroom.

We fully support the focus of the school system on Black history and Black issues where it is seen, but Black history must also be incorporated into other learning. All American history is Black history, and the curricular sidelining of Black achievement and hardship cannot be offset by a compartmentalized Black history during Black History Month or in a special lesson on slavery. The reform we recommend requires our curriculum to honor both the role of racism and the achievements of people of color in other subjects than history, such as science and English.

Similarly, students must be educated about the privilege white Americans inherit from their history. Especially in a district where only about 2% of students are Black, it is imperative that our curriculum reflects inequalities that the day-to-day lives of many students may not illuminate. We were not taught in school that people of color are disproportionately killed by the police, paid less, and denied jobs and promotions. We are fortunate to have found communities outside of the school system that educated us on classism, racism, and the privilege white people experience from the street to the workforce. However, the fact that students are not receiving education on privilege from their public education system is a failure of a race education curriculum whose reform is long overdue.

Similarly, we must recognize that Black history is incomplete without intersectional studies of racism and LGBTQ+ issues, racism and classism, racism and sexism, and racism and disability. We know that Black lives are more likely to be taken if they are Black trans lives, and sexual assault is less likely to be reported if the victim is Black. We know that LGBTQ+ rights were historically championed by Black activists like Marsha P. Johnson. These are only several examples from an endless body of similar history. We must see these other studies of oppression reflected in our curriculum and in classroom discussion.

We understand that reform is a process, and that ideological shifts take time. We recommend the following action items to begin the amelioration of the issues described:

1. The WCSD should update the texts and media studied within all subjects, and all levels of education, to honor the truth of racism, as well as the achievement and sacrifice of people of color.
a. For older students, we recommend the immediate implementation of the following non-exhaustive list of materials; we credit the composition of the list to the students of Iona Preparatory School in New Rochelle, New York, though we have made several additions.

Science:

*Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*, Diedre Cooper Owens

*Body and Soul: The Black Panther Party and the Fight Against Medical Discrimination*, Alondra Nelson

*Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans*, Harriet Washington

Literature:

*Parable of the Talents*, Octavia Butler

*The Street*, Ann Petry

*Invisible Man*, Ralph Ellison

*The Fire Next Time*, James Baldwin

*George*, Alex Gino

*Gracefully Grayson*, Ami Polonsky

*The Education of Margot Sanchez*, Lilliam Rivera

*Some Assembly Required: The Not-So-Secret Life of a Transgender Teen*, Arin Andrews

*Juliet Takes a Breath*, Gabby Rivera

“Translation for Mamá,” Richard Blanco

“Every Day We Get More Illegal,” Juan Felipe Herrera

History:

*The New Jim Crow*, Michelle Alexander

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Malcolm X and Alex Haley

*Ain't I A Woman?: Black Women and Feminism*, Bell Hooks

*An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Debbie Reese

*If I Ever Get Out of Here: A Novel with Paintings*, Eric L. Gansworth

#NotYourPrincess: *Voices of Native American Women*, edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story, Elaine Brown

b. For younger students, we suggest the following non-exhaustive list of critically acclaimed anti-racist literature, as recommended by Jessica Grose of The New York Times (we have made our own additions):

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson

The Youngest Marcher, Cynthia Levinson

First Laugh – Welcome, Baby!, Rose Ann Tahe

We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga, Traci Sorell

Resist: 35 Profiles of Ordinary People Who Rose Up Against Tyranny and Injustice, Veronica Chambers

Not My Idea: A Book About Whiteness, Anastasia Higginbotham

All American Boys, Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You, Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi

My Papi Has a Motorcycle, Isabel Quintero

Carmela Full of Wishes, Matt de la Peña

Turning Pages, Sonia Sotomayor

2. The WCSD should amend history/social studies curriculum to cover specific events and topics important to race history, including but not limited to Juneteenth, the Tulsa Race Massacre, the 1969 Stonewall Riots, slave revolts such as Nat Turner’s Revolt and the 1842 Slave Revolt in the Cherokee Nation, the Porvenir massacre of 1918, anti-Latino lynch mobs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, depression-era deportation of Mexican-American people, anti-Latino school segregation, Mendez v. Westminster School District, the founding and continual work of the NAACP, Marcus Garvey and the founding of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), the murder of Emmett Till, the Birmingham church bombing, the Mississippi burning murders, the life and death of Malcolm X, the work of the Black Panther Party, Shirley Chisholm’s presidential campaign, affirmative action, the beating of Rodney King and the Los Angeles Riots of 1992, the Cincinnati riots/race riots (and any other race riots deemed relevant throughout history), the Orangeburg Massacre, The Gnadenhutten Massacre, the Mankato Executions, the Jackson State Killings, modern hate crimes, and modern anti-immigration rhetoric.

3. The WCSD should publish a comprehensive plan for how it will value diversity in its hiring process going forward. The WCSD should publish this plan as soon as possible to allow for public accountability. The plan must include action items to allow a body of teachers and administrators which represents the 56% of our district that is made up of students of color.

We believe that the district is responsible not only for educating students in English, History, Science, and Math, but for teaching them skills to be effective citizens of the United States. A democratic education is incomplete without acknowledgement of who it does and does not serve. To ignore race in education is to promote a political and social system which continues to ignore the lives of 56% of our students. In order to not
be a racist institution, the Washoe County School District must be actively anti-racist in its curriculum and its hiring process.

Regards,

Magdalena Albright

[i] According to wcsddata.net.
Questions:
1) How will new teachers or teachers with little sub days be able to remain on paid status if they contract COVID?
2) Is it true a waiver will need to be signed to return to work/school? If that is the case, doesn’t a waiver reflect how unsafe it is to return?
3) Will school hours be changed?
4) How was the confidential survey sent to certified staff acceptable? Options were limited and difficult to answer.
5) What if teachers and staff are not high risk but are terrified of returning? How can they still work and get paid while working at home?
-When will teachers know about distance learning options through the district or at their school sites if they do not and/or cannot return to the classroom for face-to-face instruction?

-Is there a deadline for teachers to apply for a leave of absence if there is a lack of remote learning options offered?

-If a teacher opts for distance learning or takes a leave of absence do they lose their current spot at their school site?
I’m a classroom teacher & many of us need answers before we commit to teaching. We need answers! These questions didn’t get answered at the forum or last meeting.

1) Is there a clear answer about the procedure about what happens if a teacher or student tests positive?

2) I’ve talked to several subs & they haven’t received any surveys asking about their intentions to come back this year. How will we know if we have enough subs (not that we’ve ever had enough in the past)?

3) What will the distance learning option look like at individual elementary schools & will there be enough distance learning positions??

4) Many if us teachers are moms. If we go to the hybrid model, what if teachers don’t have childcare? I cannot put my own children in daycare to teach other people’s children. At that point, do I take a leave of absence? How???

5) Why is Judy’s kids club opening? Doesn’t that go against everything we’re doing during the day at schools?

I’m trying to be respectful but it’s disappointing that staff doesn’t have answers, yet we’re supposed to return in 2 weeks. Most of us feel like we have so many unanswered questions! We feel that the focus has been on making the community happy with little regard to answering staff questions.

Thank you,

:-( Liz Lepe
To whom it may concern,

I know the district is trying to get devices for children to use from home. When I took the survey about tech this last spring, I was told my family does not have appropriate tech (because we have an iPad and chromebook). Is there any way the district would reconsider these as appropriate tech? I would think that considering iPads and chromebooks appropriate tech would free up PCs for kids that actually need devices. We were able to use zoom and teams fully on both (pending internet speed was up to par). MS Office only had a few items different than the desktop version but nothing a middle schooler would need unless they are taking a tech class or creating PowerPoint presentations. I’m wondering if the decision to use PCs only was misinformed by the assumption that Microsoft programs do not work on them. I thought edgenuity was web-based. I think the board should reconsider what devices are acceptable so that technology can reach more children.

Sent from my iPhone
This morning I met (virtually, of course) with a group of fellow staff members to begin the process of making plans as how to safely open our school doors for in school instruction in just a few weeks. It is abundantly clear that the obstacles we are faced with are monumental. In person learning not only presents a great health risk for spreading COVID within our schools and our community, but also is a logistical nightmare. The reality of what classrooms, instruction, lunches and recess, and specials, will look like is not what is best for kids. We collectively agreed that we, as teachers, can provide better quality instruction virtually than we will be able to in person during this ongoing pandemic. Additionally, it is safer for our community. Asking schools to open for in person instruction is irresponsible, especially since we can provide higher quality instruction virtually with the wonderful curriculum we have adopted in ELA and math.

If the school district won’t make the call to opt for distance learning, individual schools should be able to make that call based upon their unique student and teacher populations.

Again, I find it disappointing and irresponsible that a decision was made calling for in person school when it endangers our staff, students, and community and it is putting students and teachers into a position where the quality of instruction and learning is impacted negatively.

Carlye Humason
Brown Elementary School
Second grade, room B3
Hello!

I am writing as a parent with three questions in particular that have persisted through the last Board meeting and through the forum.

1. If a student (or adult on campus) does not wear a face covering, what is the consequence? (I heard this question asked at the forum, and I heard again that the Board and District support this policy. However, specific consequences were not outlined, and that is what my question is about.)

2a. What is the communication like between WCHD and WCSD? (Our son's preschool had a positive employee, and WCHD did NOT contact the preschool. I am having some trust issues that there will be communication with WCSD.) b. In the event of a positive case at a site, what are the next steps? (I heard that there will be communication with WCHD, which I have trust issues with, and that it will depend on factors. However, this seems like a time in which there are specific guidelines and procedures district-wide. I am unclear as to why a positive case at Mt. Rose would be handled differently from a positive case at Corbett, for example.)

3. One of the elementary options is site-based distance learning. If I choose that option, what can I expect for my children in terms of education? Other than the teacher being whoever my child would have had, how is this option different from North Star?

Many thanks and continued appreciation for your hard work for all of our kids!!!!

Smiles,
Mary Culpepper
Mommy Of Mount Rose Students ❤
Dear Washoe County Board of Trustees,  My daughter Grace Averill will be a junior at Damonte Ranch HS this coming year. We love the school and all the staff very much. She’s an only child, distance learning was not easy and she was lonely. Although she misses her friends and teachers very much, she and we do not feel like it’s safe to open our school at this time. Im thankful that Damonte will allow distance learning, we have options. What about the staff and teachers? Are they required to return back to school when they fear for their lives? I just don’t think that’s right. I really hope you listen to the staff and teachers as well and provide them with options like we have. One life lost is too many life lost. Thank you.

METHINEE AVERILL

Private Mortgage Banker
Relocation Specialist
NMLS ID 479799

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I am truly concerned about the health and well-being of my students. How are we going to monitor and enforce masks? How are we going to insure they follow the social distancing rules in halls and bathrooms at the already overcrowded schools? How is 20 kids to a room considered acceptable and how is that reduced capacity when it is almost the typical class size in first and second grade? How do we handle students who refuse to follow the norms, which I guarantee will be a problem? When restaurants are at half capacity, why are our classrooms and schools expected to open full capacity? Just a few questions that make me doubt that the schools will not be the new hotbeds of infection, which by the way happened in Israel. And finally, are we going to be competing with hospitals for PPE and will it really be provided for us on regular basis, or is it one time and then it is up to teachers to supply what is needed? I know teachers are creative, but they are also humans, which means even their creativity has limits.

Get Outlook for iOS
From: John Devaney  
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 2:05 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Questions about schools reopening

1. Will teachers have to sign a waiver to come back and work?  
2. What happens if a teacher gets sick? A student?  
3. What does full online learning look like if an outbreak happens at an elementary school?

John Devaney
Dear Board and Superintendent McNeill,

Here are my questions/comments on reopening.

1- Will we have to sign a "no harm" waiver before returning to work?
2- If I, my wife, and/or son (we all work at SSHS the largest school in the district) get sick and have to be hospitalized due to contracting COVID-19 at work, will 100% of our medical bills be paid for?
3- if you have to have vaccinations to attend public schools for viruses that are not currently active, why are we returning to school when we know we have an active virus with no vaccine?
4- what are you working on to make distance learning more beneficial to students if and when we get shut down due to coronavirus spread in schools?
5- what metrics are being used to determine whether or not we are "safe" to be in school buildings? I know the gov ultimately decides if we shut down but given that our numbers across the board are worse for deaths, transmission, and cases then when we shut down, just curious what the thinking is to open now???
6-why are we not shutting down sport, especially football???

I understand you have incredibly difficult decisions to make. I also know that the decisions you make, you will never have to deal with in a classroom or school building so it is very important to educators to get as much clarification as we can and to feel as safe as we can. So far, the response has done little to make anyone I have talked feel clear and/or safe. Nobody wants to be in front of children more than teachers but we also don't want to have any hand in spreading a virus that kills students, family/community members, and or teachers.

Thanks for your time.

Will Harper
EL Teacher Spanish Springs HS
Hello,

My name is Julie Dowell and I am 1:1 teachers aide at Diedrichsen Elementary School. I wanted to ask the board of trustees for the 7/21/2020 board meeting why ESPs haven’t been contacted for a survey about reopening, especially since we are all vital to the day to day functioning at a school? Also the K-5 reopening plan wouldn’t work if ESPs choose to not return to school. Would our pay increase because of the added danger? Thank you so much for your time.

Julie Dowell, Teacher Aide
Diedrichsen Elementary
Why isn’t there a “school based distance learning option” using Zoom or Microsoft teams, etc?
There’d be the safety of being home plus the benefit of live, classroom instruction.
Most businesses have figured out how to do this. Why can’t it be done as another option for our students?

Sincerely, a high risk parent who doesn’t want to die alone, gasping for breath- who also wants her 16 year-old child taking AP classes to do well this year, Cassi
Good afternoon President Raymond, Superintendent McNeil and Board of Trustees,

I have many questions regarding the reopening plan for school this year but I’m only including five.

ESP’s: ESP’s have yet to received a survey for their reopening plans (as of 7/20). The return of ESPs is necessary for the K-5 plan to work. What will happen if there are not enough ESPs who choose to return? They are an essential element for day to day functioning in schools.

Masks/Mask enforcement: Will students get a new paper mask EVERY DAY? How do we ensure those students who bring masks from home, wash them after school EVERY DAY?

Hold Harmless Clause: Will staff be asked to sign a waiver? If so, what will happen to our position if we choose not to sign?

Subs: HR has said there is an abundance of subs coming back this year. There has been a sub shortage for years and now subs are choosing to return, during a pandemic? If a set amount of subs are assigned to a specific school (i.e. 3 to a small ES) and 6 employees at that school are out the same day, what then? If we have to combine classes then there goes the 50% occupancy directive and the safety and wellness of students and staff.

High Risk Staff: Why will only “high risk” staff have the choice to teach distance learning and not teachers who feel uncomfortable and unsafe?

Thanking you in advance for answering these questions with clarity and guidance,

Amy Bentel
Diedrichsen ES
Questions for School Openings:

*What length of time will be routine for a COVID-19 quarantine? 2 weeks? 3 weeks?*

*Will COVID-19 tests be available when they are needed? Is our medical community prepared to process the number of COVID-19 tests that may be required due to the opening of WCSD? What length of time is expected between testing and receiving results? If testing falls behind I am concerned about the weeks of quarantine that teachers may be obligated to take.*

• If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 will sick leave be deducted from the teacher’s account or will the district provide "COVID-sick-leave?"

*Will all of the teacher’s students be required to quarantine if the teacher tests positive for COVID-19? Will their siblings be required to quarantine as well? Will anyone be tested?*

*If a student in the class tests positive for COVID-19 will the entire class/teacher/school be quarantined? Will the student/class/teacher/school be required to get tested for COVID-19? Who pays for the tests? Will tests be made available?...at the school?*

*What obligation do parents have to share with the school when their children test positive to COVID-19 in lieu of HIPPA? What obligation do parents have to share with the school when anyone in their household tests positive to COVID-19 in lieu of HIPPA?*

*Is there a time frame in which parents must make WCSD aware of a positive test within their household?*

*Will there be consequences for families who do NOT communicate positive COVID-19 tests in a timely manner and deliberately send students to school? Will WCSD immediately transfer families to online schooling? Certainly one family won't be allowed to risk our lives more than once?*

*Will there be consequences for students and/or families who do NOT follow safety protocols? Will there be immediate transfer to online learning in an effort to protect WCSD employees or will students/families get multiple chances to conform to WCSD expectations during this pandemic?*

• What if someone in the teacher's household tests positive to COVID-19? Does that teacher need to quarantine? Will the quarantine time off be paid from the teacher's account or will the district provide "COVID-sick-leave?"

*How will exposures be communicated in lieu of HIPPA?*

• Where is the district going to find substitute teachers who will work in classrooms full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?*

• Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the students/teachers in each school they subbed at now have to quarantine and get tested?
*Teachers are given 15 days of sick leave in one school year. Should teachers have to use a career's accumulated worth of sick leave to accommodate quarantining during a pandemic? Will the teacher's sick leave accounts be accessed and possibly drained during the pandemic?

• Why doesn't the elementary school system have a hybrid/blended model like middle and high school where fewer students are present in the building at one time? Are elementary teachers less valuable?

*Why has Kindergarten not gone back to half-day with half the class present at one time?

*Looking at successful school openings in foreign countries who have kept their numbers down, one sees many similarities with their hygiene protocols for school entrance:
  - disinfectant mats for shoes at entry doors
  - home mask (possibly germ-laden) being discarded and new school mask provided
  - clothing/backpack sprayed
  - hand sanitizing station
  - temperature check
  - closed all busing transportation

Have these ideas been entertained? If not are individual teachers allowed to set up their own protocols outside their own classroom doors?

* Are outside handwashing stations something that can be provided for the schools? The student to sink ratio in any given school is inadequate.

*Will testing money be diverted to other WCSD budgets in lieu of the financial impact COVID-19 has on cleaning and supplies?

*I believe that brick and mortar students also get to access online teaching when they are not attending school due to illness or are quarantining? Who teaches that online school to them? What will they be taught? Do classroom teachers have to provide their lesson plans to online teachers?

Thank you for allowing me to provide questions. It is validating as a professional to be allowed to be part of the process. Thank you for all the work that has been done around a very complex situation. There are no easy fixes.

Sincerely,
Patty Nelson
The board has their hands full planning for the next school year however the Incline Village Lawsuit Settlement is big, big, big. I write this before the formal approval by the County but the settlement calls for $56 million in reimbursement and I'm told about $22 million of that hit will be on WCSD starting July 2021.

The Board needs to start planning cuts, pay-cuts, furloughs and other difficult decisions now rather than leave the new board holding the bag for more drastic cuts. The anticipated tax cuts from CV-19 are major. Add in any legislative cuts and now the Incline settlement and we are facing a fiscal tsunami.

With the sales tax and WC1 revenue cuts we should stop all planned future building immediately. As in 2009 we expect a decline in enrollment vs the tiny 1/2% (.5%) increase previously. The three recently opened schools and adding Arrowcreek and Hug should be enough until that debt is accounted for. Likewise wait for the WC1/CP outside audit results which I assume will be post-election.

I also object to any pre-existing salaries of administrative personnel being funded by WC1 promised building funds. That includes, as I'm told, 50% of COO Etchart's salary being from WC1 funding sources, a total of about $3 million yearly in admin pay reportedly diverted contrary to WCSD promises made.

Jeffrey Church
www.WatchDogJeff.com
Hello,

I am an extremely concerned elementary school teacher in the school district. I was hoping to have questions answered about what elementary school classrooms will look like when we are supposed to go back full time in August. Will our class sizes be cut in half to allow for 6 feet of social distancing? Will there be other adults coming in and out of our classrooms throughout the day? How will a typical school day now look with new safety measures in place? Thank you for your time on these very serious issues as schools begin to reopen.

Sincerely,

Kirstie Holmes

Sent from my iPhone
Hello,
Over the past few days we have had ESP employees reaching out to us wondering why they have not gotten a survey regarding their return to work like certified staff have received. We feel that it is extremely important to include all employees in the return to work survey because without our ESPs elementary schools will have an even more difficult time returning to work successfully. Our ESPs are the lifeblood of our schools. We are an intricate system that needs all parts included to function properly!

Thank you,
ENT Leadership Team
Hi WCSD School Board.

I truly truly hope we go to digital learning K-5. At least through October until we can get things under control. They being said, as a classroom teacher, I am very concerned about using any industrial strength disinfectant and I do not want to risk my health due to repeated exposure to these products. Especially in a spray format. Please do not try to tell me "It's BETCO...it's safe." Or that, "all disinfectants are labeled as pesticides by the EPA. You will be required to disinfect your classroom with this product throughout the day."

I also know we are short staffed with custodians and I want to support our custodians, as well as disinfect my own room properly, BUT I'm wondering if I can apply for a waiver, as far as which chemicals I am required to use in my classroom. Peroxide based disinfectant, although probably more expensive from your standpoint for an entire district, is much less toxic and COVID approved. I would pay for it myself so I can avoid being exposed to the products you will be providing.

Problem: Industrial strength toxic disinfectants teachers will be required to use throughout the day in classrooms

Solution: Waiver in order to substitute the WCSD disinfectant for a peroxide based disinfectant, or alcohol.

Thank you.

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do -Rumi
I would like to better understand the WCSD’s and BOT’s decision to have elementary students at school 100% of the time.

I understand that they can not be left alone, however, I still don’t see how a school of 750 students, as many of our North Valleys and South Reno elementary schools are, can all be in the buildings and it can still be said they are at 50%.

Additionally, at what point will the individual school sites be providing their plans to teachers, staff and parents? If each site is to come up with how it will work for them, I feel those plans should be shared before staff and students enter buildings. It is my understanding that principals were to have plans to district admin the week before last. When will this information be made available?

Finally, at what point will the district (Health and School) be providing staff and parents with the protocol for when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? This is important information that needs to be provided BEFORE staff enter buildings officially in 2 weeks and students in four.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Gonzales
Good afternoon President Raymond, Superintendent McNeill and WCSD Board of Trustees,

We, the undersigned Collective Bargaining Unit Leaders, representing the majority of employees of the Washoe County School District, are opposed to the plan for the reopening of our schools for the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year. Many of the concerns brought up in this letter have been voiced in public comment/letters to the Board of Trustees the last several weeks, as well as in numerous private discussions with the WCSD Executive Committee and Central Office administrators. We recognize WCSD Leadership and staff have been working around the clock attempting to get answers/clarifications to numerous questions and concerns, however, the fact of the matter is, it is simply unsafe to open schools while we are in Phase 2 of a pandemic. As Governor Steve Sisolak stated in his press statement July 19, 2020, “…our State is in a dangerous situation.”

The overwhelming concern is safety. Employees do not feel safe nor do they feel confident in returning to the school sites. There are too many questions and unknowns when it comes to ensuring a safe work environment, including concerns of spacing, upkeep of the physical distancing, transmittal of the virus (or virus carriers), questions of what happens if a student decides NOT to follow the social distancing and mask wearing protocols, questions around the cleaning materials we will be expected to utilize, questions around the decision to depend solely on screening at home with no entry screening, and numerous other items which directly relate to the safety of the employees. Some of the largest items which need to be addressed are the following:

1. Washoe County has had an increase in newly diagnosed COVID-19 cases for more than 10 days, and numbers are NOT decreasing. From the Reno Gazette Journal July 18, 2020, the total number of daily confirmed cases “jump 103 to 4,054.” Furthermore, there have been a reported 102 COVID-19 related deaths in Washoe County. We want our students and staff to be safe. The number of positive cases diagnosed is not going down in Washoe County. These numbers clearly show a return to classroom instruction is putting the health and safety of employees, students, and our community at risk.

Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics clarified their position of reopening schools in a joint statement with the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and the School Superintendent Association (AASA) July 10, 2020: “Returning to school is important for the healthy development and well-being of children, but we must pursue re-opening in a way that is safe for all students, teachers and staff. Science should drive decision-making on safely reopening schools. Public health agencies must make recommendations based on evidence, not politics.”

2. A detailed plan is needed for what happens when a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 (which could include when a member of the household tests positive). WCSD Administrative staff have been working with WC Health Dept to develop these plans, yet the written plan has not been shared with the recognized bargaining organizations. There needs to be a recognized, consistent plan in place, so staff members and students feel safe at all school sites. As one employee stated, “I am willing to accept that risk as long as the school district follows through on its commitment of putting student and staff safety first. To me, that commitment needs to start with a plan that the district has developed with our health department. To go on talking about what
the school is going to do as far as providing PPE and facilitating social distancing without the ability to describe what happens the moment someone in the school community is positive for COVID-19 is putting the cart before the horse. "Safety first" means that WCSD and the Health Department have thought out this most basic scenario enough to feel confident that actions can be taken to prevent one infected person from turning into a school-wide outbreak and that they can communicate this information to students and staff in the form of a plan.”

Without a detailed plan, families could be contacted on a random Wednesday night and told “no school tomorrow, you need to figure out a different plan for your child.” Parents need time to be prepared for this. Having the first nine weeks be distance learning will allow for families and employees to plan ahead.

3. In addition to safety, there continues to be numerous questions as to what exactly the “in-person” learning will look like at the school and classroom schedule. Teachers, counselors, principals, administrators, Education Support Professionals – all educators are superstars and want to help students succeed and create positive learning environments for our students. The realities of time and continually changing expectations to complete in the less than four weeks before school starts is almost insurmountable. There is no consistent plan for the school sites, and so many principals are attempting to do what is best for the size of school they have as well as considering the needs of the students, the faculty and the staff.

4. There are also numerous unanswered questions regarding personnel related issues, such as non-paid leaves of absence, COVID impacts on personal sick leave, employee options for distance learning positions, etc.

We are requesting for the current plan of utilizing in-person teaching in the Elementary School and the hybrid model for Secondary be reconsidered for at least the first nine weeks of the 2020-2021 school year. There is no question we want to go back to the physical school setting, however, the safety of students and employees must be the priority and, at this time, we believe the only way to do so is through full distance learning. We recognize the difficulty in making this decision and the ripple effect it could have on our families and community. Going back to school buildings (whether through the hybrid model or all in-person) should not be considered until it is safer to return.

Thank you,

Natha Anderson,  Tom Stauss,
President, WEA  Executive Director, WEA

Don McHenry  Lana Bell
President, WSPA  President, WESP
Washoe County school district needs to implement a permanent hand washing policy in all schools before lunch. Children should have the time and be encouraged to have clean hands before eating. The CDC, Washoe County health department, AAP all say that hand washing is the best defense, especially before eating. Teaching children any skill is time consuming, but this is a skill that will benefit everyone. It does no good for me to teach my daughter to wash her hands at home if she isn't doing it consistently at school. When I spoke with her principal at the beginning of the school year last year I was told she can find the bathroom on her own before lunch, which means she had to sacrifice her already limited lunch time just to have to go to the bathroom and wash on her own time. Basic hygiene benefits everyone.

Thank you,
Kathleen Pfaff
Hello,

Last week certified staff was sent a confidential survey asking about their return to work. It has been brought to our attention that our administrators did not receive a survey asking about their preferences for returning to work. These are the administrators that you are asking to do the heavy lifting and come up with a plan for each of their sites to return to school. They are the ones that the weight is falling on as many of the answers from last week's forum were "that's a site based decision". These are the people that were asked to make all of these decisions, however no one asked them how they felt about returning to work. We feel that ALL employees in the district should have received the same survey that the certified staff received. Every person that is on a school campus is vital to the successful running of that building. It will be impossible to run a school successfully without our administrators.

Thank you,
ENT Leadership Team
Dear Board,
I am a parent and teacher in WCSD. I am writing this to you as a teacher. I feel it's necessary that you hear from the teachers who believe that WE ARE ESSENTIAL! Not ALL teachers are afraid and it's ridiculous to put us all in this group of frightened sheep.
Families who feel comfortable should return and kids will still learn even with the requirements. Teachers have the PPE and are essential and this is our job!!
I am more afraid for this country if we are not allowed to go back to school.
PLEASE LET SCHOOL REOPEN!!! There are TEACHERS who WANT to teach!!!

Karri

Please excuse errors...
Sent from my iPhone
Dear Governor Sisolak and Washoe County School Board Members,

Congratulations on finalizing your initial plans to reopen schools in August. You obviously understand the harmful effects to the students (K-12) if you do not open in-person learning. It is good to see the local school officials and the Federal Government advocate for the reopening. You have a good start, but there are still some critical issues that need to be addressed.

There is a John Hopkins Center for Health Security paper called, “*Disease Mitigation Measures in the Control of Pandemic Influenza*” that states, “Experience has shown that communities faced with epidemics or other adverse events respond best and with the least anxiety when the normal social functioning of the community is least disrupted”.

A lot of new data has been compiled over the last month that indicates that the hazards of Covid19 are minimal to our youth (and the majority of staff). Below I will recap my two previous letters about why schools need to be opened normally. Following the recap, I will present the new data in a raw compelling format with brief explanation. **My objective today is to take the panic out of pandemic.**

Much of your current plan remains an overreaction based on media hysteria. State governors and local health authorities are pressured by the media and we are now caught in a panic loop, even though hospitalizations, ICU occupancy, and deaths are down nationally day over day, week over week, month over month. More Testing > More Cases > More Panic > More Testing > More Cases > More Panic. Here in July, we have better treatments, younger aged patients who recover more easily, and accessible testing. My charts below will put Covid19 in better context, comparison, and perspective so you can visually see that it is not all gloom and doom. In Washoe County, here near the end of July, we are seeing declining numbers of hospitalizations and deaths. Although cases rose, they plateaued weeks ago.

It is also worth mentioning that your parent survey, which was well responded to, did not include options for “Do Nothing, Open Normally” under most the questions. We were forced to choose an option, even if we didn’t agree with any listed.

To add, any group or union that opposes the reopening schools does not have the children nor staff in mind. This very idea is unscrupulous. That would be actively against the science. There has been no excess child mortality anywhere in the world regardless of lockdowns or not, schools open or closed. Keeping the schools closed flies in opposition of doctors and health care experts. Anti-opener groups, at this point, are motivated by an agenda, likely in response to Governor Sisolak’s unnecessary cutting of K-12 funds and the legislature approving it. Know this – retaliating against politicians by keeping the kids out of school is cruel. Any teacher/member part of any group that opposes the opening of schools
should leave the group immediately. Teachers are wiser than a political game, and a union exploiting a health crisis for political gain is an insult to its members. A cautionary note – if the reason schools are kept close is political the parents won’t stand for it, and the long term consequences of the decisions will be felt long after Covid is a memory.

The concern is to keep the staff safe, as we clearly want them to be, so we should proceed like all other workers do. It is possible. In fact, a school is likely safer than other environments like retail or grocery markets where more strangers mix each day. Factor in that transmission from child > child and child > adult is extremely rare. In this article, they even state: "Children may even act as a brake on infection," https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2020-07-13/german-study-shows-low-coronavirus-infection-rate-in-schools

Here is a recap of my previous letters’ key points which address why schools need to be open normally, with regular schedules, all in-person, no masks, with minimal social distancing and some sanitizing practices:

- Children’s mental, physical and education health is at risk if distant or hybrid learning is used
- Schools allow parents to work and are an integral part of society
- School help prevent child abuse at home
- The Covid19 health complications to children are 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 every other business is open, including local universities now
- Teenage suicide is on the rise, and schools are a place of intervention. More teens will die from suicide in one month than Covid19’s entire course over two years
- Preschools have been open and no evidence exists that preschools are hot spots
- Studies show child to adult transmission is rare (see past letter for sources)
- Expert groups of doctors are calling for schools to be opened full time, in person. (This now includes the CDC, Canada’s health agency, and the American Academy of Pediatrics which represents over 67,000 pediatricians)
- The masks directive from Governor Sisolak acknowledges that young children should not wear masks in public

Seasonal Influenza Deaths ~5X > Than Covid-19 Deaths in Children <1 to 14 Years Old: CDC U.S. data through 6/27/20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viral Illness</th>
<th>Deaths (n) through 7/11/20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal influenza</td>
<td>150*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covid-19</td>
<td>31</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*seasonal influenza mortality age stratum reported as <1 to 17 years old, n=185 deaths, so <1 to age 14 influenza deaths (conservatively) assumed to be linear by age, = 0.82 x 185, n= 150

CDC Data Sources
Seasonal Influenza https://gis.cdc.gov/geo/IDMaps/Death.html
(Data accessed and compiled by Andrew Bostrom, MD, MS, 7/17/20)
CHART 3: This chart may be the most important one of the whole pandemic. Many states aren’t as open with their Covid data as Florida, but FL has enough cases to make this a relevant sample. The orange represents fatalities by age, the gray mountain is all known & confirmed cases, the green line is the average risk of dying (all causes) by age, and the orange lines represents the risk of dying from Covid by age. There is a lot to pull from this, but the two big ones to my points: 1) 21 and under have the least number of cases (even though they represent 25% of the population), meaning they either don’t get it (likely because they are exposed to so many similar viruses in schools already), or they are getting it and its so mild that they don’t even know they have it. (Remember – the World Health Organization says asymptomatic transmission is rare). 2) Risk of death for all causes, including Covid, does not begin to factor upwards until a person is in there 60s.

“We really don’t have evidence that children are driving the transmission cycle of this,” CDC Director Redfield said at a White House Task Force briefing to address school reopenings.
**CHART 4:** This chart is hospitalizations per 100,000 people from and with Covid. This clearly demonstrates that influenza (with a vaccine) is far more dangerous (5X) than Covid to youth.

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<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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<td>93.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<td>24.4</td>
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<td>18 - 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 - 64</td>
<td>155.0</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>95.5</td>
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<td>222.5</td>
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<td>141.2</td>
<td>146.4</td>
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<td>75 - 84</td>
<td>370.1</td>
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<td>215.0</td>
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<td>741.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>102.5</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>102.9</td>
<td>62.0</td>
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**CHART 5:** This chart shows age groups and the decline of deaths over the past few months.

**CHART 6:** By CDC Standards, the epidemic ended the week of 6/13/20. This time of year, 5% or higher is considered an epidemic. During flu season, it is 7%. It is no longer a top killer in the US at this time. The epidemic ended 7 weeks ago!
**CHART 7:** The number of estimated cases is far larger than the number we have detected. This is good news as it means the virus is far less lethal than we originally believed when we locked down in March. We need to behave based on what we know now; not how we did in March when we were unaware.

**CHART 8:** If you exclude the north east, the rest of the country barely crossed into epidemic threshold based on CDC standards.
**CHART 9:** Deaths continue to decline, and health complications amongst people under 64 are minimal and declining.

**CHART 10:** In Sweden, where they had no lockdown or closures, only the age groups of 70 and over experienced a death rate higher than the mean due to Covid.
Consider this: a 1% increase in suicides is over 30 new deaths of our youth which is greater than the deaths from Covid. Your current plan, while a step in the right direction, still adds much disruption to students: Masks, A-B days, Social Distancing, One Way Hallways, etc.. You have limited them. Not only will you never be able to enforce this (at any grades), it is not recommended by health care professionals, and this can lead to anxiety and depression, which in turn can lead to suicide. The students need normalcy, and the charts I’ve shown above clearly show that their risks are low, in fact, lower than the flu. We have never reacted this way to the flu. We have never tracked a virus this intensely in the history of mankind, and I bet it that if we did and the media created as much panic as they are now, half of the world would never leave their homes. Good thing we have immune systems, access to data ourselves, and rational thinking.

Finally consider that masks might not work anyways. I know this is controversial, but if you can smell through your mask, then an airborne microscopic virus can easily get through. Here is a study from 2015 from the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4420971/. In this there are two key results:

1) Penetration of cloth masks by particles was almost 97% and medical masks 44%.
2) This study is the first RCT of cloth masks, and the results caution against the use of cloth masks. This is an important finding to inform occupational health and safety. Moisture retention, reuse of cloth masks and poor filtration may result in increased risk of infection.

Yep. Masks can make you sick.

Thank you for your consideration.

Constituent and Nevada Native,

Brandon Siri
To Whom it May Concern,

I am a parent of a middle and high school student but I am also a teacher in WCSD. I am writing this to you as a teacher. I am also the Union rep for my school site. I was sent the letter that the WEA sent the Board of Trustees today and I just finished watching the News 4 report by Kim Burrows. The letter that Natha and Tom sent does not represent me and what I want. Not ALL teachers are against going back. There are a lot of us who love teaching and we want to go back to do the work we love to do - teaching in our classrooms surrounded by students eager to learn. Distance Learning was extremely difficult for me in the spring because I love being in my classroom surrounded by my students that I love and care about deeply. I had 33 students working on the packets that were provided by the district and many of my students and parents struggled with them even though the packets were review. It was extremely hard to manage behavioral issues with students that I had already build a connection with and knew my classroom expectations. I cannot imagine trying to teach new curriculum on Zoom 3-4 hours and manage behavioral issues when I have not built a connection with my new class. And what if parents are not home to help support me because their businesses are not shut down.

I am on the Reopening Committee at my site as well and I am extremely excited for the school year to begin. The Reopening Committee is working extremely hard to make sure all of our students are safe. It is going to be a lot of hard work but I believe the teachers who want to return are ready for this challenge. I know there is a possibility that I may or may not get sick but I am going to do everything in my power to keep me and my students safe.

So, please can we go back on August 17th and I truly hope you are getting letters from teachers who are excited and willing to go back and not just emails from the teachers that are concerned and do not want to return. Please know I respect their decision just like I hope they will respect mine.

Thank you so much for your time and all the hard work you are doing to make this school year as successful as possible. You are all appreciated.
Katrena Kalleres
4th grade teacher
Regards:

In reviewing the latest plan to delay school I wanted to ask the question of why? What data is driving a delay to the plan?

I will keep this simple. Pneumonia and the Influenza deaths are substantially higher than COVID for almost all age groups with the exception of one, ages 45-54, according to the CDC this week.

We haven’t shut down our economy and school system for the Flu or Pneumonia so why are we doing this for COVID? Yes, cases are on the rise but so is testing and the death rate continue to decrease every week so why are we going backwards as a State and Nationally?

I just want to hear the justification by the Principals and Teachers based on the CDC data not CNN, NBC or MSNBC but the data that is real and transparent.

In addition to my original question regarding the data and decision making. I would also like to know if the state, and county administrative school staff, teachers and support personnel are being paid at full salary, partial salary, or no salary during the proposed delay and what they were paid during the closure in the Spring.

The public has a right to know where their tax dollars are going and potentially shifting salaries to other more important means if they are not providing the required service.

Also, I think at this point we should not make COVID a political leveraging tool but rather look at the severity of COVID in relation to other virus’s and lethal mean, and ultimately make a decision that is right for the kids.

Thank you and I look forward to the salary percentages. Lastly, being two parents in the medical field we have had to take on acceptable risk during these times.

Thank you and take care.

Shannon Manning-Parent

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
From: Kimi
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 8:11 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teachers Union

I am aware that WCSD teachers union is petitioning for teachers and students NOT to return as decided by the school board. I can understand that some people fear being in public at this point in time. HOWEVER, There is a majority of families that want to return to school - this is in the best educational interest of our students.

If a teacher or support person chooses not to return, that is their right. As a taxpayer I am of the opinion that unless they are working contract hours in direct connection with students (a teacher can Zoom for the contracted Hours) then a paycheck is unwarranted.

As a secondary retired WCSD teacher I believe that I am fully aware of the duties required by contract. Let our students get back to the classroom!

Sent from my iPhone
Hello Superintendent McNeil and Board of Trustees,

It is unfortunate that the legislature could not get the 2/3 vote to add revenue and to support k-12 funding. We needed that money for this difficult time. This really hurts us as a district to support social distancing and small class sizes, which is why I know you were advocating for finding right along with us during this time.

We now need to look at the reality of our dire financial situation. As a union member we stand with the Nevada Education Association and National Education Association stating that a solid foundation in safety backed by planning must come first. Nevada is now a red zone state with WCSD being in a yellow zone county. White House recommendations state 25% capacity of some businesses and gatherings of no more than 25. Our own Governor has stated we are in dangerous times as WEA had re-stated in their letter that was sent to you today. Sisolak is asking each county to draft a plan of more stringent guidelines for our county. Are you working with our Mayor and City Council about these more stringent guidelines and discussing how this will need to affect our brick and mortar gatherings? Furthermore, has the NDOE and the Health Department approved our WCSD re-opening plan including procedures for WHEN not if a student, staff member or household member gets COVID 19? I know you are working hard on these details relentlessly and diligently and I thank you. With that being said, you need more time to solidify plans with the official budget cuts and with the powers that be Washoe Health Department, City Counsel, NDOE, WEA, WESP, community members, parents, HR, Stakeholders and Nevada Health Department. We need time to see how these new stringent guidelines are going to look in Washoe, as well as give Sisolak time to tell Nevada what he wants to do with us, are we going to stay in phase 2 or drop to phase 1? Again, why in a time where we as a State are in such a dangerous predicament according to our Governor. Should we be rushing towards such an unsafe work condition?

I can't wait to go back to work, We just want to do it safely. We stand on solidarity and we know you will stand with us if you are on the side of safety. Quality versus quantity is the mindset of the educator. NV Legislature made the wrong decision, we know you will make the right decision, stand with our Education Associations and our community. I will see you tomorrow.

Amanda Jones
From: Jones, Beth
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 8:29 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Parent response to WEA letter

Per Dr. McNeill’s recommendation, she has asked that I send my letter to public comments. Please find my email below Dr. McNeill’s response.

From: McNeill, Kristen <KMcNeill@washoeschools.net>
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 8:22 PM
To: Jones, Beth
Cc: Biersdorff, Debra <DBiersdorff@washoeschools.net>; Ellison, Emily <EEllison@WashoeSchools.net>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Parent response to WEA letter

Hello Ms. Jones,

Thank you for your email and I do remember speaking with you on the phone. I truly appreciate you acknowledging all that our district has done to communicate our plans and seeking parent, staff and community input to the best of our ability. I appreciate you articulating your concerns regarding distance learning and please know that in the event we did have to go to distance learning, as we must submit plans to the Nevada Department of Education, our teams are working very hard at communicating to our families regarding this option and to be sure students receive educational services.

I ask that you communicate your concerns, regarding the association letter to our Board via public comments as that is the associations’ right to do so as is yours. You can submit your public comments at publiccomments@washoeschools.net.

Thank you again for your email,
Kristen
Kristen M. McNeill, Ed. D
Superintendent
Washoe County School District
Reno, NV

From: Jones, Beth
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 8:00 PM
To: McNeill, Kristen <KMcNeill@washoeschools.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Parent response to WEA letter
Importance: High

Dr. McNeill,

I thank you for your tireless work in all things regarding getting children the best education possible.

I had the opportunity to read the WEA letter pleading for distance learning, and I want to comment on this letter, as it frankly makes me so angry. First, you, your team, the schools, time and lots of tax payer dollars have been spent preparing and families have spent weeks/months preparing on what and how our kids can learn this fall. You’ve had task
forces, sent surveys to parents (with overwhelming responses to send children back) and have offered options to those who opt for an alternative. The community has had Board Meetings, discussions, votes, forums and opportunities for input and feedback and have developed a plan. The Board of elected officials, developed a plan, schools and families have begun to work on how this will work and we’ve even agreed to allow our kids to start school late to assist in teacher preparations for safety. I fear, like in so many other states, when a union complains, changes are made, without consideration of the thousands of families who have already listened, commented and agreed to the plans and options in place.

They speak on behalf of parents saying how we would be frustrated if you called and said there was an outbreak and there would be no school tomorrow. We are more frustrated by not having our students in the classroom for weeks, not giving it a chance... sure would it be inconvenient, yes, but worth it to get them back with a certified teacher!

These are the same teachers who complained about Distance Learning in the Spring and are complaining that 4-weeks isn’t enough time to prepare schools; but it is enough time to plan distance learning?! They also don’t think it will be safe for 1 year, so we are going to take children out and now have them be 1.5 years behind, not to mention students with disabilities already struggling to catch up. What is a 9-week delay going to do? Getting students in the building and learning what and how changes can be made to best suit faculty and students is the best way to evolve. Not extending their “time-off” to argue again in 9-weeks.

My 6 year old and my 7 year old (SPED student) who both missed the last 50 days of last year, need to be in school. Parents are not teachers, home is not an educational environment, Occupational Therapy is not effective via Zoom... not to mention the truly unfortunate families of violence where school is the only way of protection, safety and a place to seek help.

You and I spoke via the phone when the schools first closed, because I wanted to provide a parents prospective and I was so appreciative you took the time to call me back. I also asked to be on the task force, as a parent (with a child who has an IEP) and a small business owner (we own 4 businesses in town), but never heard from anyone. When we spoke in March, I addressed my concerns for distance learning and Special Education with a school who does not have a Special Educator, well I can report it wasn’t ideal last semester. I have already reached out to my principal to learn more about SPED this Fall as this continues to be an area of concern – I assure you, distance learning with an IEP does not work!

As a parent, I have completed three surveys so far stating I want my kids to return. It’s my understanding watching the Board Meeting and listening to the forum as well as the Zoom with our principal – the majority of results state families are like mine and want our kids in the building. If you continue to ask families for opinions then choose to not listen, what is the point? I know many teachers who are anxious to return and are not part of WEA – please don’t let this letter (which is coming in the eleventh hour, by the way) make drastic changes unfairly for the rest of us.

The rest of our community goes to work, they don’t have the choice to return, unless they want to find another job. You have offered teachers alternatives if they aren’t comfortable going back. Unlike doctors, nurses, grocery store workers, baristas, real estate agents, construction workers, USPS employees, etc.

I am certain these teachers worried about their safety in a school environment where everyone’s goal is cleanliness and safety – are also the same teachers dining at restaurants where the safety and cleanliness measures aren’t being scrutinized to the same degree. They’re buying Starbucks, shopping at Target, and visiting the beach in Lake Tahoe – it seems hypocritical.

I don’t need to mention the business owners, the dual-working families, single parents, children who reside at two homes (where one parent cares about school and the other doesn’t have time for it) and the inability to make distance learning work for so many homes, because you already know this... hence why you have presented all families with choices to select what will work best for their student and that family.

Education is the upmost importance, even during a pandemic!
Thank you for listening and I’m happy to speak again via phone,
Beth

Beth Jones  •  Owner
The Summit Mall  •  13945 S. Virginia Street  |  Suite 618  •  Reno, NV 89511

www.myweddinglibrary.com

Visit My Wedding Library online & at our storefront:

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facebook.com/myweddinglibrary
#mwlreno
First, let me say I appreciate the long hours you have all put into to formulating a plan for our students. I am a teacher in WCSD and I have 3 children attending WCSD schools. I implore you to stick with the approved plan. Schools and teachers are essential!!! Our children have been at home not learning any new curriculum since March. The academic and social impacts for students and families has to be taken into consideration. The plan that is already approved provides parents with many options. Social distance guidelines and PPE recommendations will be put in place, and opportunities for teachers who are high risk are also available. We owe it to our children to get them back in school. I am a teacher and I need to be back in a classroom with my students. Please stick with the plan already approved!

Sent from my iPhone
I read in the RGJ that the teachers union are pushing back on Washoe County Schools going back in August. They want to push the start date out 9 weeks. Will you stand your ground on the decision to start August 17th with the Hybrid model for Middle and High Schools? Also, How will you Convince the unions that this is the best decision for our children and their educational success and mental well-being?

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone
Good evening Board of Trustees and Dr. McNeill,

I am sure you have seen the e-mail from the WEA. I don’t know how much you take their requests into consideration or if you will agree with their request to do distance learning for the first 9 weeks, but I’m asking that you don’t. The WEA doesn’t speak for me. I want to return to work. I’m aware of the risks.

I’m writing to you as teacher and a parent and am asking that you continue with your proposed plan.

Students, in my parent and teacher opinion, need to be in school. The younger years of a child’s education are invaluable.

You all have done wonderful work and offered great options for teachers if they aren’t feeling comfortable or confident going back.

I appreciate your support and hope that we can move towards re-opening as you initially approved.

Kindly,
Christa Rossi
(Mom and teacher)
Hello WCSD –

First of all, thank you for everything you are doing to educate our children during this pandemic. There are no easy answers right now, and that’s a reality that is hard for everyone to accept. I wanted to offer up some comments, for what it’s worth.

If we end up going with distance learning full-time in the fall, I respectfully ask that the distance learning plans be as simple to follow as possible. Not simple work mind you. Grade-appropriate work, in a plan that is organized and easy for me as a parent to jump in and guide my child in a shorter amount of time. The packet approach utilized during the spring was great– especially considering it was done with little notice! I have been blessed to be able to work from home during much of this time. But I am working constantly at my computer, on the phone, and making trips to my workplace as needed. I found the packets very challenging to follow, unless I spent a lot of time helping my daughter prepare for the day. Over the spring, I was unable to give my daughter and son the attention they need -- which fueled my frustration. I felt like a failure. I feel the packets were designed for a parent who perhaps does not have a traditional job outside the home, and are able to spend a several hours at a time with their children on distance learning each day.

We also received additional plans/packets/materials from each teacher every week and nearly every day, and for me and my 1st grader and 8th grader, it was very time-consuming to organize everything. The distance learning packets and teacher packets were not in sync, at least from my observation. Every day, it was, “Go to page XX on the district packet... read the article... go to this website... now go here... refer to page XX, complete the worksheet I emailed last week, jump to the district packet, look here, to to page XX on my packet, go here;I emailed that two days ago, read that, then do this, etc.” That was very hard for me to figure out in a relatively short amount of time. And what about parents who cannot stay home and help their kiddos at all? They must have been more frustrated than I was and am!

Please understand, I am prepared to improve myself and give my daughter and son more attention in the fall as needed. But I am working 10 hours a day minimum and I found over the spring that my 1st grader was suffering from a lack of instruction. I am not doing great juggling both jobs.

Again, I very much appreciate the packets and materials. The district responded AMAZINGLY to the situation over the spring. But from my point of view as a parent, I need easy to follow packets/plans for my 2nd grader in the fall. A daily pile of tangible worksheets that I can place in front of her and say, for example, "Okay, work on these
three reading/grammar/spelling sheets (explain each one as necessary). We’ll take a break then do 30 minutes of reading. Then we'll go for a walk. Then have lunch, then complete these two pages of math. Then you can watch Moana! Something solidly streamlined would be perfect for our family. If there is a way to receive the work in one packet week by week and in order, from one source, that would be helpful. I would like my daughter to work beside me, without me having to navigate her through everything. I would like her to write more, and use a laptop less. And please don't get me wrong. I would LOVE to be able to spend the time with her on distance learning. I will work on my time management more so I can help her. I just kindly request a solid and organized approach to the daily assignments.

Perhaps weekly packets could be designed by each teacher, and no multi-week district plans (but perhaps, district-issued "additional resources" that are optional and not required in the day-to-day assignments would be great), and parents would receive those by Friday afternoons for the following week. And it would be the teacher's responsibility to incorporate district and state standards, if time allows on their end.

I would love for my children to return to school next month, more than anything. But not until the time is right and until I know they and their teachers/staff will be safe. I do support a hybrid plan -- but I worry for our teachers trying so hard to make this work. Again, there are no easy answers right now. Thank you for trying so hard to help us.

Rebecca Cronon
Hello,

My name is William Toledo. I am a professor of education at the University of Nevada, Reno. I am writing in opposition to the current school reopening plan. Far too few guidelines are provided by the district, leaving principals and teachers with many questions about the safety and feasibility of the plan. On top of that, we have been breaking records in positive COVID-19 cases for weeks. Sunday just beat our all-time high record. It is not safe in the midst of record highs to re-open schools, which will inevitably bring more cases of COVID-19. The longer the board and the district wait to make the decision that distance-learning is the only feasible option for the first 9 weeks, the less time families and teachers have to prepare for this change. I am asking the board listen to the union, teachers, and other educational professionals. Please put safety first, and please shift the first 9 weeks of school to a completely distance learning model.

William Toledo, PhD

Get Outlook for iOS
From: Clinton Toledo  
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 10:16 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Schools cannot reopen

To whom it may concern,

My name is Clint Toledo-Milhollin, I’m a proud public school teacher at WCSD. I stand with my organized sisters and brothers with WEA, as well as our administrators and other educational professionals in urging WCSD to remain closed for at minimum the first nine weeks.

Your “site-based” plan breeds inequity in our defense against COVID-19, leaving school administrators in charge of plans that should have and could have been made by the district, and in turn only exacerbates the risk of increasing COVID-19 in our communities.

Meanwhile, Nevada ranks 9th in the world (not nation, world) for new COVID-19 cases. This pandemic is not slowing down here, rather it’s speeding up. Across the US there are reports of children and young adults testing positive for COVID-19, and there is little to no research available that tells us what the long lasting damage that can be done to children.

By opening schools, you are putting the lives, the hopes, the dreams, and the aspirations of every student at risk. Furthermore, you are putting families, teachers and their families, administrators and their families, and school support staff and professionals and their families at risk.

Keep schools closed,

Clint Toledo-Milhollin

Sent from my iPhone
To Whom it May Concern.

I read the teachers opposition to reopening and would like to respond on a few key points.

My husband and myself have worked through the entire pandemic as our jobs were deemed essential. The state has gradually reopened, therefore people are back to work. How can you honestly justify maintaining distance learning and keeping kids at home when parents are back to work? We face the same dangers and have had to take safety precautions to help keep our families safe. Why can’t teachers, faculty, and support staff do the same? How can you explain keeping the kids home “for the safety of the students” when statistically they are the least at risk? There have been 102 deaths in Washoe county, but they’ve primarily been those over the age of 70 with underlying health conditions.

I approve of the school boards reopening plan that would have my elementary school aged daughter going back full time and my other daughter in high school following the hybrid schedule. Any student or family that “doesn’t feel safe” can opt for online learning.

I think everyone can agree that more planning is needed before school starts on August 17, however, we have almost a month to finalize teachers concerns regarding illness and positive test results. Reducing class sizes and perhaps rearranging the bell schedule so that not all the kids are changing classes or are at recess at the same time. Bottom line, we have time to develop strategies and put plans in place that will help keep everyone safe.

I’m not willing to compromise my children’s education. I feel very strongly that they need to be back in a class room setting where they’re in a positive learning environment. Teachers have specialized training and have the experience to teach my kids far better than any packet can provide. Please take into consideration that the country was on lock down in the spring and more parents were available to assist their kids with their education since they were at home. That is not the case now. Parents will not be there to help guide their kids with their online learning as most of them are back to work. Distance learning isn’t conducive to working parents.

The kids have been out of school since March. The date keeps getting pushed back again and again. If you reconsider your reopening plan and decide to do distance learning for the first nine weeks of school, what guarantee will you have that the date won’t be pushed out again?

Best,
A very concerned parent.
From: Cathy Zarker <
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 11:30 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Reopening Schools

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cathy Zarker
Date: July 20, 2020 at 10:28:11 PM PDT
To: ICCOMMENTS@washoeschools.net
Subject: Reopening Schools

Dear Dr. McNeill & WCSD Board Members,

I am adamantly opposed to the reopening of WCSD schools, especially for elementary students. These are children who will be the least likely to wear their masks correctly, social distance, etc. With cases surging in our community I strongly believe that it will be only a matter of time before a teacher, staff member, or student will contract the virus. That being said, I’ve yet to hear anything about what I believe should be the most critical/mandatory part of the reopening school protocols: how will staff & students who contract Covid 19 be handled?

How many positive virus cases will be acceptable in a classroom or school before the class/school is shut down? Will parents, teachers, family’s etc., in a non-affected class be notified of positive cases? Will extra people be employed to assist school custodians in keeping schools sanitary or do you expect faculty & staff to take that on in addition to all their other responsibilities?

The difficulties involved in reopening schools during a pandemic are many. I’d like the WCSD to differentiate itself from schools nationwide by saying “Well reopen our schools when we can do so SAFELY!”

Sincerely,
Cathy Zarker
Retired WCSD Educator

Sent from my iPad
From: Pat Arnott
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:51 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Pat Arnott
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School Reopening

First I would like to thank you all for the hard work you have been doing in an effort to get our kids back to school. What I don't understand after reading the letter that the WEA sent to the school board is how any one of the teachers involved or supporting that letter can actually say they care about the education of the children in this county. I am sad to see that so many teachers have failed to do their own homework and instead just basically let themselves be bullied by mainstream media and people who are afraid to be sick. Yes the number of positive tests is rapidly rising, but the hospitalizations and deaths are plummeting. Also the number of children being affected by the virus is virtually nothing. While the number of kids being neglected or even abused because they are stuck at home with no where to get away is increasing. If you have underlying conditions or even if you are just scared then you stay home and teach online. Why have we not done a teacher by teacher poll and found all the teachers willing to do in person, everyday schooling and fill up as many elementary schools as we can with them and all the parents will and wanting a "normal" school year. The Official Journal of Pediatrics recently posted the article found at this link http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-004879. Please read it and please think about the lesson we are teaching our children about the decision on going back to school. If they are not allowed to go back to "normal" school we are teaching them that their opinion, along with the majority rule means nothing. That standing up and fighting for what you want, will do you no good because there are people who we have put in a place to voice our opinion are not doing it. Instead we will teach them that lying and shaming (BULLYING) people who have a different opinion is the right way to act.

Also while there are thousands of parents out of work, why can we not employ the ones who are willing to help out at the schools to help make sure the children are following all these new guidelines so the teachers can teach and not have to also police. The distance learning does not work. It is virtually impossible for parents that work and how much more isolation are we willing to keep kids in when they are not the problem. All these kids are allowed to go to places like Wild Waters and every big chain store with no mask or social distancing being enforced but we can not send them back to school. I simply do not understand.
Good Morning,
I am writing this email to state that not all teachers and union members are in agreement with the letter sent yesterday. While we all understand the present danger, some of us were ready and excited to return to school under the hybrid model. I believe the plan was well thought out and would provide a safe work environment for both teachers and students. I believe full distance learning is a danger to the academic and social futures of our students. 5 months away from routine is already too long for students. I support the hybrid model agreed upon by the district and do plan to return as a teacher under this plan.
Thank you for your time.

Peyton Lane
US History Teacher
Galena H.S.

Get Outlook for iOS
Hello,

I’ve asked multiple times but I have not heard an answer yet as to what happens to kids with IEP if full distance learning is implemented? I have multiple special needs children that distance relearning caused a lot of harm to. Thank you

Monika Dutchover

Sent from my iPhone
First and foremost, I appreciate all the hard work everyone has done during this unprecedented time. My question is what protocols and procedures do you have in place if I, my child, my students, or my colleagues become ill with Covid? Being more direct, will you shut down the school, the classroom, the bus etc for a certain time to insure all parties are safe? Thank you for your time and continued hard work.

Best regards,
Vicki Bowley
Please fully re-open the schools with standard safety and cleaning procedures. This is clearly the best option for education and our community, distance learning is/was a disaster.

Thank you
Zak

Zak Woodhead
Risk Manager | Odds On Promotions
www.oddsonpromotions.com
Dear Trustees and Superintendent,
It is with extreme disappointment that I listened to you make the decision to open up our schools and potentially destroy the lives of so many that you are decidedly putting at risk.
Shame on all of you for not being willing to be the leaders we thought you were and make the decision of life over... I don’t even know what. Leaders are called upon to make the tough calls, the unpopular calls and do what is good for the group as a whole. I’ve listened to arguments on all sides and understand the dilemma you must feel put upon, but what you are asking of our school community is unfair, unjust, and unhealthy.
I hope you can look in the mirror on the first morning after the announcement of the first death. And, while that may sound unreasonable cruel, you must know in your heart that that moment, sadly will come.

I respectfully request that you revisit your decision..and quickly, before we lose a life.
Kathryn E. Howard

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
I asked my sister-in-law how her kids went back to school in Aabenraa, Denmark in April. She’s been living in Denmark for the past 12 years with her husband and kids, who are 11 and 8.

Here’s how one school returned to school safely: Hiring substitutes to accommodate social distancing and shortening the school day. In the schools that were K-8 equivalent, they had the older grades do distance learning from home. Students in primary grades who wanted to stay home could do distance learning as well. They shortened the school day by an hour so teachers could contact those students. In the empty upper grade classrooms, they split the primary grade classes into 2 to accommodate social distancing. In my younger nephew’s class, 5 students opted for distance learning so his class of 17 was split into boys and girls. The teacher would deliver the lesson to the first group while a substitute teacher monitored the other group, and then they would switch. Their school installed chalkboards outside and taught outside as much as possible.

Here are a few comments from my nephews and sister-in-law: The students washed their hands so much that many students including my nephew developed eczema. She sent her own sensitive skin soap for him to use. All the manipulatives that couldn’t be easily cleaned (and that made learning fun) were removed. My nephew didn’t always feel comfortable asking for help from the sub. The first week that they went back, the youngest boy got a fever and both kids stayed home for a week (48 hours after the last symptom). The students always take their shoes off by the door so they could sit at the carpet.

As a first grade teacher in WCSD, I really want to return to school, but I have a few questions: How will we be able to eat lunch, have recess, and teach outside if August and September bring more smoky skies or 100 degree temps? How do we grade papers—wait a few days? How will we have guided reading at a kidney table, and how do I check on my students while they are working? Can I get some plexi-glass from Lowes for my tables to separate students (I have 6 tables in my class instead of individual desks.)? How do I teach number corner if students can’t sit in front of the wall together?

Can we meet our new class for a few days and then go into distance learning? Can I teach live from my classroom to students at home?

Thank you for considering this information,

Karen Devlin
As a teacher and member of our union, I was not asked or informed before that letter was sent out yesterday. It does not represent my thoughts or opinions on the matter of returning to school. I am looking forward to returning with the safeguards and precautions that the school district has put into place.

Thank you,
Amber Alfaro
Sent from my iPhone
Please listen to your staff and delay in person learning for the time being. Otherwise you’re putting people at risk unnecessarily.

Geoff
Dear Board of Trustee Members,

During this difficult time, I appreciate your time in considering the concerns of myself and my fellow teachers.

As we look to return to our school buildings that have been empty for far too long, I am troubled by the lack of clarity and forethought in the decisions being made. I am an educator coming in to my 17th year of educating. I am heading in to my 9th year of supporting teachers in honing their craft. A craft that thrives on connection, empathy, knowledge, routine, etc. A craft that I will, hopefully, continue to support through this upcoming year (with budget cuts this may be a thing of the past I am afraid).

When I consider how I will best support teachers and ensure that our students are growing and thriving in the best way possible, I am at a loss. When a new teacher asks me, "How can I help Student X become a better reader?" I cannot ask, "What types of struggles are you noticing when you listen to them read?" At 6 feet, with a mask, how does a teacher listen to their students read? When a veteran teacher asks me to observe a lesson they are teaching and give feedback, I will tell them I cannot because I will be supervising the "leftover" 4th and 5th graders that cannot be in a room with their teacher. When my principal would like me to support a struggling teacher, she will have to consider how that affects the tight schedule we will have to put in place and what tasks that time will take me away from (lunch duty, classroom teacher relief, supervising children who cannot be in the classroom because they do not have a mask, are refusing to wear a mask, or are just plain melting down from the emotional toll the day is taking on them).

I have had vivid nightmares about the TRAUMA a return to school will cause with the strict guidelines we are being tasked with implementing. For example, best practice for kinder students requires small bits of information given by the teacher with ample time to practice those skills with their peers. Typically we say kinder can take in 5 minutes of information and then will need 1 minute to process and commit that information to long term memory. This processing looks like students turning and talking to a near by peer, getting up and moving their bodies to promote muscle memory of the information, using manipulatives to cement learning ... all best practices that will be closed to our students when we return to our school buildings in 4 weeks. We know that kinder students need room to move and play so they can work on their gross motor functions. We know that they need time to work together in groups so they can learn to navigate sharing and working with peers in positive productive ways. ALL closed to our students. Instead, we will ask them to sit on the floor because our school only has 80 desks for 415 students. Why is every student not guaranteed a desk? If the district cannot get desks, why are they not buying us plexi-glass so we can utilize what we have? Why is each principal being asked to look at their school budgets and figure it out on their own? I'm sure the answer is lack of budgets and budget cuts ... so my question is, then WHY are we trying to get everyone back in to the buildings if we cannot provide them with the basics?

We are told students need to be in school to get an education, but will be unable to engage in the best practices that grow students. We will spend a lot of time reinforcing the CDC guidelines that go against everything we know as educators. We are told students need to be in school so they can socialize with their
peers. How do children socialize from 6 feet away with a mask? We are told that students are experiencing untold amounts of mental and emotional trauma. How much trauma will it cause for students who do not understand the purpose of the mask or the 6 feet of space? How will we reconcile the beliefs of parents with the CDC guidelines? How much trauma will it cause to a child who is sent home and asked to learn digitally because they didn't want to wear a mask because their parents said they did not have to?

Another concern I have been mulling over ...

I have two children in the school district, one elementary and one middle school. I work at a different elementary school. In the past, my elementary student attended the before school program so that I was able to be at work for my contract time. By this time in the summer, I would have paid for 6 months worth of that care guaranteeing a space for my child. At this point in time, the City of Sparks is unsure if they will be able to provide that care. My child is 8 years old. My contract time begins at 8:30. My child starts school at 9:15. I am uncertain of how I will fulfill my duties because I cannot leave my child to get to school be herself. I drive my middle schooler to school each day and he rides the bus home. Our home is 4.57 miles from his school. With no clear guidelines on how buses will function, I have no way to get him home. His day ends at 2:00 .... my day ends at 3:30. My son being required to stay home on his own every other day is also a concern. He is part of the GT magnet program. He is a very gifted kid but is not necessarily motivated on his own. I also have the same concerns for him with regard to socialization and education. His program requires A LOT of collaboration around real-world problems. How will he get that at home with no supervision?

How do I go to work everyday and fulfill my duties while my own children are left to fend for themselves?

A couple of additional questions I have:

Why isn't there a plan that includes COVID testing? Teachers and students alike have been coming to school sick the entire time I have been a teacher for a variety of reasons. Why will be any different now?

We keep hearing there will be plenty of subs to cover us if we are sick ... but everyday I am reading Tweets and Facebook posts that say our subs will not be returning to schools until they know it is actually safe to do so. Who will cover classes?

I have been part of the leadership plan crafting a return to my own school. How does the plan we are scraping together match the plan at my children's schools? How will they ensure my children are safe?

Just some thoughts that are constantly running around my brain. Again, thank you for your time.

Danielle McIntosh, M.Ed.
Literacy Specialist
Agnes Risley Elementary
Dear Superintendent McNeil and members of the board,
Thank you for you hard work in trying to figure out how to open schools safely and support both students and staff. My question is in regards to mobiles, which I’ve asked before but have not heard any real discussion of. How will increased clean air and circulation be delivered to mobiles where hundreds of our students have classes in, and have no windows for ventilation? Will windows that open be installed? Will air filters be purchased for these mobiles? Also, for mobiles, I heard it’s a capacity of 40, so it’s ok to put 20 kids in a mobile. But, what if there are 25 kids in a mobile and a school does not have extra space or personnel to help with the extra students? My next question is will there be options for teachers to transfer to North Star?
Thank you sincerely,
Jennifer Mentgen
I am an elementary school teacher and a parent of 3. My oldest will be starting 2nd grade, my middle is starting Kindergarten this coming school year. I am SO upset that the union is trying to retract what the district has set in place for the start of the 20-21 school year. These students need to be in school. How can these young students (all students actually) who don’t know their teacher(s), don’t know their classmates, and haven’t been in a classroom learning environment since mid-march be expected to just jump into more distance learning? It was one thing to do it when they knew their teachers and classmates and had been with everyone most of the year but now, they know no one. The first part of the school year is critical to building trust and a foundation between teacher and students. This cannot be done in distance learning when I had 5 of 15 students care enough to get onto distance learning ZOOM calls every week. In addition, who will be teaching my 2nd grader and my kindergartener when I am teaching my first graders? They are not independent workers yet. My poor kinder hasn’t even gotten the chance to learn to read. We need to get these students, ALL students, back to school. Parents are not educators and have to worry about putting food on the table and taking care of their families in so many other ways, educating them is not an additional stress they need or deserve. We all want safety for everyone and precautions are being set in place to ensure this. Why is it ok for store workers and restaurant workers, etc to go back to work and risk their health to serve society but teachers can’t? We are not above any other hard-working person. We have a job and a service to provide and this cannot be done from a distance. I am part of the union but 100% disagree with their letter to reject the plan and am extremely disappointed that they are speaking ‘for’ me, when this is not my opinion.

Sincerely,

A VERY concerned Mother and WCSD Educator
From: Sperske, Shannon  
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:58 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: Union Letter

As a teacher and member of the union, I was not asked or informed before the letter regarding teachers not wanting schools to reopen yesterday. I want you to know I do not share the unions stands on this matter and I am looking forward to returning to school in August.

Thank you,
Shannon Sperske
Nancy Gomes
3rd Grade Teacher
Students should be allowed to go to the dentist or doctor and have it be excused. And students should stay home while sick so to prevent the spread of all illnesses. A one size fits all policy is not helpful to families. Extend the school year to make up for this.

Thank you,
Kathleen Pfaff and family
Washoe County currently has less than 5 people in ICUs being treated for Covid-19

Currently 104 are hospitalized, 31 are receiving treatments for Covid-19 while 73 are hospitalized for other items, yet are asymptomatic and receiving no treatments.

The confirmed infection rate in Washoe County is 0.00223% of the population. The suspected rate (asymptomatic included) is only slightly higher at 0.017%.

These facts do not support the hysteria. These stats do not in fact support any mitigation techniques.

Please deal in fact, not fear, not fiction, not hyperbole. Your hyperbolic responses have caused panic, without factual data to support it, just to sound cool? or woke?

If a staff member has Diabetes they should likely take a leave of absence, their risk of dying if they contract Covid 19 is 15%
If a staff member has a family member living with them over the age of 70 with existing issues, they should take a leave of absence, the risk for over 70 dying if contracted is 8%
If a staff member is severely overweight and has existing health issues (not diabetes) they may want to take a leave of absence, their risk of dying if contracted is 5.3%

All of these people have legit issues relating to COVID-19, however they face nearly the same statistical risk getting in their car to go on a drive to the store.

None of the above data supports the panic being fed to these staff members by the unions, media, or social media.

As an elected official, it is your job to not stoke fear, you responsibilities are to the facts and data.

The RISK WILL NEVER BE ZERO......for anything!

Eric Dunn MD, RETIRED
To Whom It May Concern:

Teachers are essential workers. When the state of Nevada’s economy was shut down in March many people were expected to continue to go to their jobs amid great uncertainty regarding their safety. These essential workers kept our grocery stores open, they were fire fighters, police officers, health care workers, delivery drivers and many other types of workers. We depended on them for our basic survival. This was at a time when comparatively little scientific information was available on how to stay safe while at work. For example, initially masks were not recommended by the CDC.

Schools, however, have been closed since the shutdown. Parents of young children have had to balance their jobs with educating and parenting their children with no time whatsoever to prepare. We now know more about covid-19 and how to stay as safe as possible. We know that masks and social distancing prevent the spread of the disease. There is evidence that young children don’t spread the disease as efficiently as adults and older children. Many preschools and daycares and day camps for children have been open throughout the pandemic and continue to stay open right now. I am not aware of any outbreaks associated with these activities. There is reason to believe that elementary schools can operate in a similar manner without putting teachers in greater risk than other workers that care for children.

Schools have had more time than the above mentioned industries to prepare to operate during this pandemic. The workers mentioned above have not had this same opportunity. We need schools to be open. It may look different than a normal year and some people may contract covid-19, and there should be a plan for that. But the pandemic is going to be with us for the foreseeable future. Parents of young children learned within about a day or two that distance learning for young children basically amounts to homeschooling your kids with the option of doing a few lessons posted by the school district. Distance learning is not a real alternative to in person school for parents of young children.

Teachers have always been among our most essential workers. Just as they have relied on other essential workers in our community, we need them to open the schools as soon as possible.

Matthew Herz

Parent of a 7 year old and two 5 year olds
Hello Board of Trustees,

I wanted to express my concern with the letter the Teacher’s Union presented to the board on 7/20/20, in which they say they don’t want to back to teaching in the school. As a parent with two children in the district I can tell you that both children want to return to in-person learning even if only in a hybrid model. In addition, the online teaching in the Spring 2020 Session was not an adequate replacement for in-classroom study and already poses issues with missed curriculum opportunities. In addition, various studies have shown that serious mental and educational risks exist for children not in school. I’m concerned that my children are not getting the mental stimulation that comes with being in their classrooms with their teachers and fellow classmates. I feel strongly that even a few days a week in the classroom is critical to a road for them back to normalcy. In my opinion, the last quarter in the Spring of 2020 doing online curriculum was not very effective or comparative to normal in-classroom study. I feel it is critical for our district to let the children return to school, unless the parents pull them out of the district to either home-school or attend a charter school. If there are some teachers who suffer with compromised immune systems and don’t feel comfortable returning, perhaps allowing them to take a leave of absence would be the way to go. This is supposed to be for the well-being of our children. Both of my kids (and many kids of other parents we have spoken with on the topic) have expressed the desire to return to school. They enjoy the in-class learning environment and feel they can do the social distancing required while wearing their masks.

Thank you,
Kendrick Bratcher
To whom it may concern,

I have read the WEA's letter about not starting school for the first quarter in order to be prepared for the possibility of COVID-19 found in a classroom. I agree that August 17th is too soon to be starting school when there are still so many unanswered questions, mainly about what to do if a student or teacher is either sick with COVID-19 or waiting on test results. I am a teacher in WCSD and I feel very strongly about starting this school year with protocols in place to ensure a safe environment for staff and students. If the 9 weeks (first quarter) is too long perhaps there can be a compromise with a later date, like starting the day after Labor Day. This can still allow for planning and preparation, parents can make arrangements for an extra three weeks, and teachers can be involved with the schools on what the year will look like. It is very important for students to get back to the routine and continue their learning, but it needs to be done safely and correctly. With there still being no definitive answer to the important questions, I feel that school should not be starting on August 17th.

Sincerely,
Erin Krentz
Hello,

I’m in favor that we do start school session with distance learning so that we can pick one area to focus on and get all the issues/bugs resolved with distance learning before school starts. Once the dust has settled in the distance learning, we could then switch gears and focus on what needs to be done to safely migrate kids back to onsite learning or do hybrid model for at least elementary school. The more successful the distance learning program is, the more likely you will retain students in school district and their appropriate school zone which is critical for future funding/grant programs as most are moving to homeschooling and other resources.

I’d also like to propose that we host smaller virtual distance learning sessions so all children have time to participate in class and/or teachers provide one-on-one bi-weekly slots with students to ensure students are not left out.

I don’t know if anyone has data on % of students that have parents that cannot be home with child during day and also % of students that are disadvantaged with no internet access and/or devices? If we had that data, maybe we can get community involvement to help with donations? Just a thought.

Thanks for your time and consideration and I know it’s a tough time and not easy to please everyone,
Shelley
From: Andy Guzman
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:16 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for 07/21/20

We have still not been given a clear answer regarding how teachers will enforce the mask rules and keep themselves and their students safe. This was one of the first questions of the public forum last week and was essentially brushed aside with a non-answer about how important masks are.

How will teachers be able to enforce mask wearing, especially under circumstances where the student refuses to wear one or has been told by their parents not to wear one? What sort of support will teachers receive from administrators or school security if there is refusal to wear a mask? If that student is infected, they become a threat to everyone else in the same classroom. This is a serious issue and it is going to come up in schools across the district the second the first bell of the semester rings.

It is bad enough that we are supposed to put our heads in the sand and ignore that there is a pandemic going on just so we can "get back to normal", but now we're supposed to ignore the fact that there are some people who just won't follow the rules you're setting up to try and keep people safe. It is hard to ignore when the very first question of this comment document is someone saying they do not want their children wearing a mask. *What is your plan for dealing with this?*

I hope that all of you have been keeping the eye on the news and are reconsidering your decisions - but in case you haven't, here are a just a few stories that might paint a picture of what is to come if you decide to open schools in just a few short weeks:

**A study from South Korea has shown that middle and high school aged children are just as likely as adults to spread Coronavirus:**


https://www.axios.com/children-coronavirus-spread-schools-d925b7c3-0d74-4242-a4a1-d72d5d7696f5.html

**More than 30% of children under 18 tested in Florida have tested positive for the virus. That is over 17,000 children, including 213 pediatric hospitalizations and four children who have died:**


**Children are developing an inflammatory condition resulting from exposure to Coronavirus:**


**Not only can children spread Coronavirus, the viral load found from a nasal swab is just as high as in adults. The doctor quoted in this article supposes the reason we are seeing less ill young children while older children are getting sick is due to teens are gathering to socialize while young children are still being kept home:**


**A more infectious mutation of Coronavirus may be partially to blame for the rise of infections in Nevada:**
People are to argue that teachers are essential as if that somehow justifies putting their lives and student’s lives at risk in this scenario. Education is essential, but teachers are not first responders and can perform their duties in alternative ways that do not needlessly put their lives at risk. An education can still be provided with the right tools and planning through distance education, and we can re-assess finding the right point to re-open the buildings as time goes on.

You are not going to come up with a plan that pleases everyone, but you can still put a plan in place that keeps everyone safe from exposure to this virus. Please start focusing on distance learning to start the school year and put these re-opening plans aside for a time when it is truly safe to use them.

Thank you,
Andrew Guzman
Please don't let the WEA bully everyone into making decisions that would best benefit only them. The WEA's letter is only based on a handful of teachers, more than half actually want to return. The other non salaried staff of the district need to return so that they can get paid. Those teachers, just like those families who do not want to return can choose not to. It is unfair and selfish of the handful of teachers to force everyone else to abide by their wishes. Our families need to be back in school, they depend on it mentally, emotionally, financially and physically.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>From:</th>
<th>Jill Rogers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sent:</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:45 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>To:</td>
<td>Public Comments</td>
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<td>Subject:</td>
<td>[EXTERNAL] Regarding Union Letter</td>
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Dear Washoe County School Board & Superintendent McNeill,

I just finished reading the letter the union sent to you. I am so incredibly disappointed. I urge you to please think about the students’ wellbeing above the union’s. Teachers are essential employees of our society. (What if our doctors, nurses, UPS drivers, grocery store employees, and many others said they wanted to work from home?) Our children need to get back to in-school learning. I don’t need to cite the research, I’m sure you know, as you have been working very hard to make this happen.

If you side with the union over the students I ask, as a tax payer, that you please let at least half of them go without pay & benefits since a fraction of the staff will be needed to conduct on-line learning.

If our casinos stay open, but our schools remain closed, what kind of message does that send to our kids and our community? Where do our priorities lie?

Sincerely,

Jill Rogers
Washoe County School District Board Members,

I’m writing about my concerns about School District facilities for public use. On Monday, July 20th my friend and I attempted to use the McQueen tennis courts. The gate was opened and we played until an administrator kicked us off. We both play tennis for McQueen, but our coach hasn’t started practices yet. We just wanted to play, but we were informed that the facilities were closed. In past years the facilities have been open for use during the summer.

Sincerely,
Lauren Zimmerman

Sent from my iPhone
Hello Board of Trustees and Superintendent,

I have been a teacher in the district for 15 years, a coach for 23 years, a grounds keeper for 1 year. I understand that the best place for our students to learn is the classroom. The question though is at what cost should it be to get students back into the classroom? How do we protect the students, staff, families, and the community from the spread of disease from the schools if we don’t know who has it?

I have heard that you have some plan to communicate with the health department when a case happens. Then you will decide what steps to take. Is that being reactive or proactive? I would think if we consider the safety of all that we would be proactive.

Just this week I talk with someone that was around a coworker that tested positive in Washoe county for Covid, however it took them 10 days to get the results. If it takes that long to get a test result back now. How long do you believe it will take when school starts up? There should be some short of plan in place to answer these questions along with multiple others.

HR director got up and spoke at the virtual forum that the government has 80 hours to cover for sickness, however I believe the pay will only be two thirds of a staff member pay. That will be a huge impact on my families livelihood if I have to lose a third of my paycheck for those 80 hours. What happens if multiple students I come in contact get it over a long period of time? All of sudden it might be out 10, 15, 20 weeks because of being in contact with someone that is positive. Those are a lot of sick days to take, along with my students being without a teacher in the classroom.

I am 50 years old in good health, just ran a marathon on my own in Truckee so I don’t believe that I am in jeopardy. Although there isn’t enough information about this disease. What long term health impacts will it have on my 7 year old that attends public school in Washoe county? If we don’t have the answers to that question should we consider slowing down the reopening?

This is difficult time, decision for all of us. There is no easy answer for anyone or you. I would hope you consider that safety comes first. I believe you do then there needs to be a plan. What happens with a positive result? What happens when someone comes in contact with a positive individual? What is the cost to the staff member financially? Along with many others.

Ed Parise
Spanish Springs High School Teacher
Seriously, a nine-week delay to in-person education? What will that accomplish? Its not like coronavirus will be gone then. To the extent they have not already done so, the teachers unions should have made their concerns known while the plan was being officially discussed (the June 23 and July 7 meetings). They should not be permitted to throw a wrench in the gears after the plan has already been approved. Moreover, there should be no reason any undecided details of the plan cannot be decided over the next month before school is scheduled to begin. Why do we need another nine weeks of planning after that?

It was a huge relief for our family when the reopening plan was approved and we learned that our elementary school children would be receiving an in-person education this year. We believe -- as do many others -- that distance learning will simply not be effective for younger children. Now the teachers union is attempting to add indefinite uncertainty to the school plan. Its not even on the agenda for this meeting.

And as for subs being available – I’m not following the untested assumption that there will be a shortage. If there is truly a shortage, I will personally volunteer to sub once a week for free. And I imagine a lot of other community members would as well. The school has my contact info.

Sincerely,

Peter Lucier
Good Afternoon Dr. McNeill,

I am sorry to add one more email to your overloaded plate. Please know that I took time to think about contacting you when I know you are being stretched so very thin, however I have seen your compassion and concern for all so I am sending this email.

I am a High School Clinical Aide and I go back to my school next Monday to prepare for the reopening, which I must state I do not feel it is safe to do at this time. I have many unanswered questions to the exact plan, as does everyone else. Since I am the daily worker in the schools Health Office, I want to share some of the difficulties we face.

First we will be leaving it up to parents to do a health check on their student before sending them to school each day. While I believe some parents will be responsible, I know from experience that a percentage will not. During last year's (and every) flu season, many student came to my school sick and the parents were aware that the child was ill. I asked the student why they came to school with fever and cough or vomiting and were their parents aware they were sick; they replied that the parent did know and just wanted the student to try and make it through the day. This was quite frequent, especially during testing or finals. I also was told "we don't have a thermometer".

Another problem we face is parent won't answer their phone when they send their student to school sick or we are told "well I can't leave work to come get them", or "I can't be there for a few hours", or I have actually been told" Well it's your problem, I can't leave work and I have no one else to send so you have to keep them" I swear this is a common problem and one that worries me greatly. Our Admin does the best to intervene, but they don't have much more success. I have had ill/contagious kids in my Clinic for more than 3 hours many times.

I have a small clinic but larger than say Wooster, this is going to be a huge problem keeping possible Covid kids contained from the other ill students. I can do meds and diabetic care outside of the clinic, but who is going to be in the clinic to monitor the sick kids. I am sure you are aware that our school nurses have more than one school and aren't there physically everyday. Which concerns me with the possibility of exposure from another school. What are the PPE's for the Health Office, we don't even have N95 masks normally. What about paper gowns (for us to wear when dealing with possible Covid kids and face shields?)

My last question is not exactly a Clinic question, but a school concern. My high school has open campus at lunch, will this still be happening? We can not control social distancing and mask wearing during that 40 minutes when they leave to go with friends to "hang out"

Lastly I would like to mention that this is a concern for all of us, but the fact that I am 65 years old, I have Asthma and COPD puts me in a very High Risk category. I will have multiple kids that have Covid in my clinic,
there is no getting around that. Chances are very high if I get it, I will die. My doctor has said survival for me would be very slim.

I pray that you and the Board realize that we can not open schools safely at this time. I am sending this as Important so maybe my concerns can be shared with them before the board meeting.

Thank you for your time and all your very difficult work. We truly appreciate you.

Sincerely,
Gail Hart
Clinical Aide
McQueen High School
Suggest 1/2 day kindergarten to help make class size smaller
Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

I am a product of the Washoe County School District, having attended public schools from K through 12. I have two children in your schools and have served as your outside legal counsel in the past. I urge you not to let the unions overrule your decision to reopen based on carefully reasoned recommendations of your diligent Superintendent and her team.

In reviewing the CDC website today, deaths as of 7/11/2020 by age group, a total of 14 of 121,374 children from age 5-14 years died from COVID-19, or approximately one hundredth of a percent (0.011535%) (https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Death-Counts-by-Sex-Age-and-S/9bhg-hcku/data). During that same time period, more children died from pneumonia (72) and from the flu (47). A total of 157 of 121,374 young persons aged 15-24 died from COVID-19, or slightly above one-tenth of a percent (0.129352%, while 267 died from pneumonia and 51 died from the flu.

The risk of death to school children ages 5-18 is lower than pneumonia and comparable to the flu. Teachers understandably should be concerned, but they should consider their risks on an individual basis after consulting a doctor. You can make accommodations to high-risk teachers on an individual basis to protect them, or they can make the hard decision that their individual risk is too great to teach this semester.

I close by reminding you of your general powers under NRS 386.350. As a school board, you are given such “reasonable and necessary powers . . . as may be requisite to attain the ends for which the public schools . . . are established and to promote the welfare of school children.” To allow teachers as a group to force distance learning for everybody does not “promote the welfare of school children” and certainly is not in their best interests. Please vote NO to the union’s request for distance learning.

Sincerely,

Rick R. Hsu
It seems very unfair to this generation of children to keep them from receiving their education to its fullest because of a CHANCE they may get a virus. Children cannot be kept healthy emotionally if they are locked up at home. They need instructions from teachers, socializing with friends and classmates, and the encouragement of knowing they are not doing school alone!

Also, I as a parent, and business owner I am frustrated that the teachers are making this call. You have already reached out to us parents to get our input, and you have distance learning options available. If the parents of the children are comfortable with the children going to school, what right do teachers have to over-ride us!!!! If they don’t want to work, they should quit! If you don’t go to work, you don’t get paid. Are they honestly that worried about getting the virus or do they just want a continued paid vacation.

I WILL pull my children from the school district if distance learning is made mandatory again. If they have to have an education at home, we will get a curriculum that is more adequate than what you gave to them last year during distance learning.

I understand you have a very difficult decision to make, and I appreciate your time and energy put into it. I also appreciate this opportunity to share my opinion.

Thank you,

Sent from my iPhone
I would like to submit for public comment. The letter submitted yesterday from the WEA, absolutely does not represent the feelings of all of their members. As a dues paying member, I am extremely frustrated by the WEA making a statement alluding that all teachers agree with their comments. We were never asked our opinion by the WEA. I feel confident that we can return to the school building safely and would do so immediately.

Thank you!

Carrie Howard
I am writing in response to the letter recently published by the RGJ from the teachers’ union in regards to the Washoe County return to school plan. As a pediatric healthcare provider, I strongly disagree with the suggestion of delaying physical presence in school by 9 weeks, and proceeding with online learning during this time for the following reasons:

1. A delay of 9 weeks, with the already approved delay of start to August 17th, would put us to the start of influenza season. If we are going to send children physically back to school, I would argue the sooner the better—rather than to be in the midst of a flu season compounded by COVID-19.

2. The teachers union is correct that we have seen an increase in positive cases, but I would argue we have also seen a significant increase in regional testing. What we are not seeing is an increase in severity of illness with children, nor hospitalizations. We went into quarantine with the goal of “flattening the curve”, this meant protecting our healthcare system from being overwhelmed, not eradicating illness. At this time though the state of Nevada is in the “red zone”, Washoe County is not and as such this is the optimal time to attempt school reentry.

3. I worry about our youngest children if we opt to start the school year at a distance. As a parent of a rising Kindergartener, I cannot foresee a successful distance learning scenario where my child has not even met his teacher. So much of elementary education is about forming relationships, and this will be very challenging with a distance learning directive. My own child is fortunate enough to have had preschool experience, but for many children entering the WCSD this will be their first introduction to formal education. My assumption is that many of our students that have not had early childhood education also have access to less resources within the home to support distance learning—in effect we will send the children who are at the greatest need farther behind.

4. I worry about the older children. Though we have not seen significant increases in COVID in the pediatric population, we have seen significant increases in adolescent mental health issues. Our middle and high school students need the community connection with their peers and educators.

5. The teachers union references the AAP plan for return to school, and the necessity of safety for students, and teachers. I agree—and I encourage you to review the attached Harvard School of Public Health document that was referenced by the AAP in their guidelines and provides suggestions to create such an environment. In Nevada we are uniquely positioned to implement many of the suggested options for creating a safe environment given our climate and overall stable weather patterns.

Overall, there are children for whom in person learning is not recommended, and teachers who should not be in the classroom due to underlying conditions/illness, for those persons we owe them QUALITY distance learning. However, the remainder of students should not suffer unnecessarily and all efforts should be made to return SAFELY to school to start the year. I ask you to proceed with the approved school board plan for return to school, and to keep the best interests of our children at the forefront of this discussion.

-Elaine Cudnik
Dear Superintendent McNeil and Board of Trustees,

I teach 5th grade at Agnes Risley Elementary. I understand you all are working very hard to make sure everyone in our school community is safe and protected when we go back in August. I want the best and safest learning opportunity to be afforded to my students and the best and safest teaching environment for myself and staff. However, I believe you are rushing the reopening of school and it is unsafe to do so. First off, as you know we are only in Phase 2. We must wait until, Washoe Counties experiences no new cases for at least 14 days. Gov. Sisolak stated recently that Nevada is NOT ready to transition to Phase 3 because “We’re in the middle of a COVID-19 pandemic, we're right dead smack in the middle of it.” I believe we have seen the sharp and steady increase in cases because the state allowed the casinos and restaurants to open, and because many people decided their personal freedom to not wear a mask outweighed the safety of all. Currently, our local hospitals are at a 61% ICU occupancy rate and I fear our system will be overrun.

This is not the time to bring 450 young children and our staff of 50 into a chaotic environment of mixing and moving no matter how you think social distancing will occur. Because it will not. Kids will mix on the playground, outside on the lawn before school and after. The district mandates between 20-22 maximum students in our classroom. This number is based off of square footage with no furniture. Students must be 6 feet apart at all times. It is impossible to place that number in my room following social distancing. Each day our desks are moved around just by the kids bumping into them and moving as kids around the classroom. Our principal put a cap on our numbers at 18, trying to at least follow something close to district protocol. In order to seat that many kids my teaching partner has one sitting at her own personal desk. We have the same size room. This is something I am not willing to do. I refuse to put myself in jeopardy in order to cram as many kids as possible into a room, just as this district was doing before the pandemic. Our numbers are too high and hopefully now, finally now, the serious impact of having the highest student to teacher ratio will be recognized because a teacher might die because of our high numbers.

Here are some other thoughts, concerns, and questions I would like you to acknowledge and hopefully answer.

1.) Even with a cap of 20 students in class, there is no way to keep them at a table 6 feet apart.

2.) There will be unintended mixing of students at school, as well as before and after, that is a guarantee. They are kids.

3.) Am I going to be asked to sign a waiver, acknowledging that I am teaching at my own risk and the school district is not liable if I get COVID?

4.) Am I allowed to refuse to come to work if I feel unsafe?

5.) If a student’s parent gets COVID, they are required to report that to the district. I am certain not all of our parents will abide by this, and children will be sent to school regardless.

6.) If a student tests positive, I must quarantine for 14 days. How many other teachers in my school, that may have come in contact with that child have to quarantine? Will our sick days be used for quarantine?

7.) Teachers are going to get COVID if you reopen now. What is your plan if a teacher dies?
8.) I have heard that teachers here in Wahoo are creating wills, and rewriting their wills now. If I die can my family sue the school district because WCSD chose to fully reopen elementary schools, knowing the data shows that cases are on the rise in Washoe County?

9.) If I get COVID and pass it to my girlfriend, who I live with, will WCSD pay her medical bills? Teachers are not paid nearly enough in this district to deal with ANY COVID related hospitalization costs.

Thank you for regarding these comments and questions. Please strongly consider waiting for 9 weeks before bringing us all back. It is not ideal, but the ramifications may be dire if we open too soon.

Best regards,

Alexander Gauvain
Board of trustees,

Please consider the letter that the WEA has written you in your decision to reopen schools. I am an elementary school teacher and stand with the organizations that sent the recommendation that schools open with digital learning for the first nine weeks. I would love nothing more than to be in the classroom this fall, however the cuts the legislature just approved for education and the rise in cases of COVID in our community tells me that it is just not safe to do so yet. I am scared and overwhelmed with the thought of going back to school full time right now, and I know many of my colleagues feel the same. Please let us focus our efforts on providing the most effective digital learning we can right now instead of fearing for our lives and our students and families lives.

Your decision will show how you value educators in the district, I hope you can show up for us in the way we show up for our students.

Maggie Babb
"Most non-licensed support staff are considered Education Support Professionals. Teacher Aides and Assistants, Bus Drivers, Nutrition Services workers, Custodians, Secretaries, Groundskeepers, Clerks, Clinical Aides, and all of the other people who make teaching and learning possible are our Education Support Professionals."

This is how ESPs are described on the school district's website: https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/12888 and yet, these people who make teaching and learning possible were not sent a questionnaire asking whether and/or how they would come back to work. This doesn't make any sense to me.

Our ESP staff truly is the lifeblood of our schools. Without my wonderful assistant, I would not be as effective a teacher to my social resource students as I am now. She is able to step in, help out, help plan, help a student calm down, assist in our groups, and these are just a few of the many many ways she helps me and our students. Our custodians have been working so incredibly hard this summer and do so throughout the year, day in, day out. Can you imagine a school without a secretary? The secretaries do so many things that regular people don't know about or see to help make everything runs smoothly. Our bus drivers work early early hours until late and are with students in all different types of situations. Most of my students arrive to school on a bus with a driver who is well versed in the needs of our special education students. I feel better knowing that my students are getting on a bus with a driver and aide that care about the students' well-being. All of our ESPs are important and valuable people to our schools and our district and truly help make everything possible.

Many ESPs I know often feel overlooked. This was yet another instance of that occurring. It would appear that they were, indeed, overlooked.

I appreciate your time.

Kristen De Haan
I am fully supportive of my children going back to school full time. It is not realistic to ask parents who can't be home everyday to be the educator, especially when one of your children is on an academic IEP and in speech therapy. Our kids need stability and need to go back to school. The teachers either need to be on board or find teachers that are willing. I am tired of constantly hearing rumors that the WCSD won't be returning to school. We need assurance of what is going to happen. People need to stop stressing and realize if proper precautions are taken our kids will be fine.
Dear Trustees,

My name is Suzanne Lewis and my son is in the GT Magnet program at Clayton Middle School. I know that we are facing terrible budget cuts in the district. I wish that the state had found new sources of revenue to help. I realize that none of you want to cut anything that helps students. I am writing in support of continuing funding for the GT program without cutting services. My son was so bored in school before he started GT services in mid-second grade. He learned to read at age 3 and was reading short chapter books in kindergarten. He wanted to quit school in first grade.

There was such a difference in his attitude after he started GT services. He is no longer bored in school and has had to learn to work hard. Without GT programs, he would not learn those important skills in how to work hard at something that is hard for him.

Please continue funding for GT services.

On a second issue, I support starting the year in distance learning. Are numbers have gone up in Washoe County. I originally supported the hybrid model, but I no longer think it is safe for students and staff.

Thank You!
Sincerely,
Suzanne Lewis
We have kids in SWAS, middle school magnet, and the gate institute.

Are they required to attend school in person?
Is SWAS bus service stopped?
Are these programs being cut in general?

We've heard nothing from GATE and the programs are not mentioned in the mails from the school principals.

A more general remote-learning setup for elementary SWAS seems like it could be workable.

If GT is not happening, we are far too close to start date to have an alternative in place in time for fall.

Please give this strong consideration - these students will be severely impacted by cuts to these programs. They work hard and don't deserve to be such an afterthought in this process.

-Jeremy Murray
I am writing as a concerned parent with respect to delaying school. Our children already missed the last quarter of the school year and now with a nine week potential delay; that is another quarter of school missed. The bottom line questions is, what has WCSD and the various Unions been doing these past several months that the kids have been “distant learning” and or out of school (summer)? Why haven’t these measures been discussed and agreed upon already? Seems like a lot of sitting around has happened and no planning has taken place. Also, if masks work, why is there a concern? It’s my understanding that teachers and students would be wearing masks? Also, why not take temperatures upon arriving at school as an added precaution?

Distant learning for my family at the end of the past school year, was a complete joke! My kids completed their work in 30-45 minutes when a normal day is approx. 6-7 hours! What did they learn? NOTHING! It was dumb busy work that did nothing to help them grow. Kids need to be in school for more than garnering an education! With school comes social interaction with peers and friends along with physical education, etc. Mental health is a major concern as well.

At this point my frustration is with the lack of planning and leadership these past several months while our kids have been home. We all knew school would potentially start in August. How are we 3 or 4 weeks out and we are still sitting around debating how are we bringing our kids back? How is it that the private and charter school system have it figured out? It is beyond frustrating!

Bradford – Concerned Parent
Dear Washoe County School District,

As you begin discussions and plans to reopen, under the governor’s directives of having a plan 20 days prior to the start of the calendared year for our district, there is no other precedent time than now in guaranteeing the safety of the community, the faculty and staff of our beloved school system, and our children; the very future of humanity. A proposal from the WEA and the coalitions of teacher unions across the county have demanded that by returning to brick and mortar, we must prioritize safety over all other concerns.

The aforementioned letter to Superintendent Kristen McNeil and school board highlights many of the concerns employees and parents of the district have for a safe return. There have been no comments on record as to how, when an outbreak exists in schools, what the protocol will be. Additionally, specific sites are encouraged to figure out plans for adapting to the A/B model for middle and high schools, and a complete return for elementary institutions, social distancing protocols, bathroom logistics, mask mandates, directives and way finding thoroughfares, class sizes and enrollment and the like. However, it fails to highlight data on the impact reopening might have on our community. Daily, reports from the Reno Gazette Journal provide the community with updates on infection rates, mortality, ICU capacity, ventilators in use and the like. After the infection rate is stated, the Journal acts as a reminder of CDC recommendations for reopening safety, with a cap at 5% infectious rates in order to curve the spread of the virus and to avoid burdening our hospitals and care facilities. As of yesterday, July 20th, the infectious rate was over 20% across the state and above 18% on average over a period of 10 days in the county and the highest in the nation. I would refuse to believe that our board members, administration and district staff members are science deniers or would turn away from these morbid facts.

I appreciate the surveys provided to the community and to staff, and that careful consideration has been made from public comment in the reopening process decisions. As an employee of the district and a father, I did not have the privilege of taking the survey sent out to parents, as my daughter is not yet old enough to enter the public school system. However, I could only imagine what many of the responses were in the polling process for parents. I imagine the language from these polls to inquire whether parents wished the return of their students to classrooms, in whatever capacity. I also know that ConnectEd calls have gone out to notify the public of having middle and high schoolers opt out of returning to sites by way of Edgenuity and North Star’s online school system. With Governor Sisolak’s negligence in reopening phases, and as unemployment benefits will soon run their course, parents of our community have either already returned to work, or, are getting ready to do so in order to avoid eviction and provide for their families by any means necessary. If you are one of those parents, how might you answer those survey questions. For our most vulnerable in the community, those forced to work as first responders and at grocery stores, gas stations, and other small businesses, how as a parent would you be able to make the decision to put your family at risk, but by tactless force and no other options. Many of the most vulnerable are without internet at home, nor a device to even consider the option of online learning. And with some initiatives and funds by the State and County, 4,000 laptops are available for students with a proposal to provide 7,000 more in the upcoming weeks. When looking at our student population in the district, we serve over 67,000 students, with a 56% diverse population, and according to Washoe County’s 2016 data, 13% of our population lives under the poverty threshold. There is no current data available from what I can find, as to the socioeconomic status of our students. Based on previous data, that equates to more than 10,720 students in need of and access to technology or wifi connection. We must also consider getting those laptops ready before the start of the school year, especially as we look across the nation as to shortages of supplies, backlogs in the shipping industry, and some of the largest school districts in the country going all online. Again, we are underserving our most vulnerable.
Safety is touted across the nation as a top priority for all public services. In public schools, there is no greater importance. There seems to be no argument over the importance of safety in schools, as data from National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments suggests, school safety is linked to improved student and school outcomes and rise in academic performance benchmarks. In Washoe county, schools pride themselves on their Communities in Schools program, link the Boys and Girls club to many facilities, have an array of professionals on campus, from intervention preventionists, counselors, school police, school and site psychologists and the like, all mechanisms for creating a safe environment for productive learning. In this county, teachers are evaluated based on their ability to build strong learning environments with the underlying push for relationship building and connections. Why is this important in our transparent system? Because these connections and meaningful relationships encourage and instill safety. Many of our schools are adopting Socio-Emotional Learning and growth mindset classes to provide confidence and enrich our students through measures of safety in mind, body and spirit. I have heard many points of contention at home and with current quarantine measures in place, notably addressing issues of domestic abuse and that safe spaces, such as schools, provide students with supports in their mental health. Social circles and face to face discussions are meaningful for a 21st century learner. But, to address our most vulnerable, and with modest measurements of data projections, consider that we have 67,000 students. According to the Reno Gazette Journal, in working closely with reports from Washoe County Health and Human Services as of July 4th, 109 people under age 10 had tested positive, an additional 243 were positive for Covid-19 between the ages of 10-19. The CDC has proposed that nearly 8% of children/students who contact COVID end up in ICU and roughly .75% die. Even with the very low reports being at a mortality rate of .02% respectively, this would still result in nearly 14 deaths among children in our own community, with as much as 502 deaths based on the previously mentioned percentages. New data suggests that students, though often asymptomatic, spread the novel coronavirus as much as anyone. How does this affect our community, and especially for those who are most at risk? Let’s imagine, though difficult to process for sure, that students go home and infect family members, members who are autoimmune compromised. Again, the CDC suggests that 1 in 2 Americans have a pre-existing condition that leaves them vulnerable to COVID. If those students were to pass on the virus to their family members, and those members end up in ICU, other responsibilities would be in place for those students such as helping to support siblings financially as well as providing care, making payments for medical care, and in the worst case, leave many of our students orphans to the state. What kind of trauma and impact would that have on our students, knowing they are guilt into being responsible for the death of a family member or members?

The letter to the county also addresses one more key point. Preparation for a closing last minute in the event of an outbreak would leave many parents scrambling for alternative education solutions. Without proper plans in place for the first semester hurts the community. Planning ahead, especially for instruction, as a holistic approach to teaching in general, requires careful planning with data driven benchmarks. Students learn from a backwards or DOK learning style because they need to know outcomes first, then build towards that goal.

Sincerely,

Ryan Small

Hug High School Teacher
Dear Board Members,
I realize you have difficult decisions to make today and will support whatever you decide. I hope you have hard evidence to support it. I am a teacher that supports going back if it is safe enough. I feel the plan that was presented at the last meeting gives everyone an option on both sides. I feel it should remain the same unless of course a majority of the teachers don't want to go back. I know it is suggested to not go back by our union for the 1st 9 weeks. I then don't see us going back then either.
I feel teachers that are resistant to go back are worried because there hasn't been definite procedures presented if someone is sick and may possibly have covid. I hope that is answered today.
Thank you for your time!
Jamie

Get Outlook for Android
From: Jeri Fulgham  
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:02 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Distance learning

1. Why did the teachers union wait so long to send this letter to the board?

2. If we do distance learning to start out the school year, what will the expectations be of the teachers to be available for the parents who are working?

3. Will the teachers be expected to work from the school so that the administration can actually see these teachers "working"?

4. Will the teachers have office hours that allow for parents to sign up for one on one zoom and work sessions for the students?

5. Will teachers be seeing a pay cut to offset the budget needed for online learning such as Dreambox? If they do not have evening office hours, how will you pay for the teaching that children with working parents will receive in the evening?

The audacity if the teachers to think they get to be the one part of our economy that says "no thanks, I would rather not work" is absurd. Daycares, rec programs, all forms of childcare, grocery stores, all essential businesses, etc etc have all been working at least since May 7(some longer). Where are the studies that show that being around children causes a spike in deaths among adults?

I have recovered from covid 19 and neither my pediatrician nor the health district deemed it necessary to test my 3 children for it because they were not showing symptoms. How can we possibly know how deadly this is for teachers when no one is doing anything to test the children and formulate any type of conclusion as to how deadly they are to adults?

I have been so proud of the board and the task force. I have been impressed with the research, the diligence and the optimism. I feel so blind-sided and so betrayed by these teachers.

I expect nothing less than the utmost transparency and availability throughout eLearning. I expect every single one of them to be held accountable if a student is falling behind. They want this job so badly, then they better be prepared to work harder than they ever have before. After all, that is what has been expected of parents since March 17.

In deep frustration,
Jeri Fulgham
Maybe another way of Hybrid learning would be to have the 5 mail subjects done once a week with each subject having their own day. Then repeat the following weeks. This way the children have class time, are being social and have friends/support system other than home.

Children, young adults, need interaction or there will be issues with development and who really knows what is happening to them at home if no parents are around or the parents not the “parent” type.

Bottom-line for me is that we need to get our children back to school and educated with social interactions.

Thank you!

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
WCSD Board of Trustees: Please consider having teachers record lectures/lessons for middle school and high school classes, particularly for GT Magnet, AP, and honors classes so advanced students who have an excellent skillset for distance learning have the opportunity to study from home. I operate a 501c3 nonprofit and would be happy to help quickly mobilize our over 300 volunteers (or as many as are needed) to help teachers upload lessons, assignments, and monitor messages. We can also assist with the district’s volunteer application process to expedite this. Please contact me (Amy Dewitt-Smith) at the Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada. Thank you!

Amy Dewitt-Smith, MPA, CNP
Executive Director

Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada (N4)
A 999 Pyramid Way, Sparks, NV 89431

W neighbornv.org
Hi,
I am writing to address the request of children waiting nine weeks doing distance learning only and hold off on in person school. I am a management employee at UPS and we have all union drivers. Every single day at 8:30 in the morning 300+ drivers show up in masks and PPE equipment to our location, pick up their trucks, deliver all day and return back every day since the beginning of March to service the country’s needs. If these union drivers felt they were unsafe to work I’m not sure how the country could move on. I do not support the teachers of feeling unsafe and waiting nine additional weeks for in person school With a cleaner environment and kids spaced out with plenty of hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.

Thank you,
Natalie Ghysels
Dear Board of Trustees,
My name is Heather Gallagher Smith and I am the parent of three Clayton Middle Schoolers two of whom are in the GATE magnet program. I am also a former WCSD high school teacher. I know that the budgets will be tight this year but I am pleading on the behalf of the GT program. The teaching that I have seen at Clayton in the magnet program is the best teaching I have seen in Washoe County, and I am a product of Washoe County who had phenomenal teachers. I wish all WCSD students could have access to this program. Gifted teaching isn't just teaching for gifted students it is best practice teaching for all students.

I also believe the structure they are using would be beneficial if WCSD is forced to do distance or online learning during the pandemic. Our GATE program publishes their syllabus ahead of time allowing students to practice time management and other essential work skills. My GT student shifted almost seamlessly to distance learning last spring where my non-GT student transitioned with quite a bit more difficulty. Intelligence was not the primary factor, school and life skills were.

I cannot imagine how difficult the position you are currently in is. Please understand that I address you with the highest level of respect and compassion during this trying time.

Sincerely,
Heather Gallagher Smith

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All the best,

Heather Smith
6th Generation Studios
Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to state I am not in support of any cuts suggested for the GATE program.

Thank you,
Wanda Lopshire
Due to budgetary constraints, I am aware many educational programs were reduced. I am concerned with the Magnet/Gate programs. The students utilizing the Gate programs need to be challenged and engaged to prevent behavioral or boredom issues. Most of these students have distinctive academic learning styles and requirements, in addition to social and emotional needs. The GT program has allowed these students the educational needs and appropriate instruction to best serve them. Without this program, these pupils will be at risk!
Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone
How is it that you want teachers and students to go back to school in person and put all of their lives at risk and you are not willing to meet in person for the board meeting? It is incredibly insulting and it says that your lives are more important than the students and staff!

How can you say that "education was clearly a priority of the governor" when he wouldn't cut standardized testing and find new ways for revenue and made cuts to education? The is the opposite of being a priority! Teachers are taking pay cuts AGAIN and are incredibly underpaid and nothing is being done about that.

I am truly sad how much you are all supporting the governor and saying you appreciate what cuts he made. You are all completely unaware what is needed in classrooms for students and staff. You are so far removed from what is really going on and how many incredible teachers are leaving because of the lack of support from the district. This is very disappointing.
Hello. My name is Laura Furumoto. I have a daughter who is 20 at McQueen who is in the CLS program and has enjoyed special ed in Washoe County Schools since she was three years old. My sons have enjoyed the pull out GT program with Ms. Huntington at Westergard and are now going to full day programs in 5th grade and middle school in a few weeks (hopefully). We are excited about the new school year, despite all of the current challenges, and encourage the district to continue to fun the GT programs. Things have changed enough for the kids. This has been something they have looked forward to throughout everything. Thank you.

Laura Furumoto
Good afternoon,

I would like to voice my concerns regarding reopening schools this 20-21 school year.

I am a science teacher at Cold Springs Middle School and love my school, my coworkers, and my students. However; I believe reopening the schools for in-person instruction at this time is a mistake with potentially dire consequences.

The current plan for re-opening is incomplete and insufficient to ensure the safety of our teachers, staff, students, and their families. We need to stop and have specific and effective procedures in place for the likely scenarios that will occur BEFORE we reopen. The ideas in place currently leave to much margin for error between schools. The concerns I have were appropriately addressed by the WEA in their most recent letter to the board.

The request to delay re-opening of in-person instruction is the best way to keep all parties safe. By allowing time to develop safety protocols unique to COVID-19 and providing administrators, teachers, staff, students, and families time to familiarize themselves with these protocols is paramount. Planning and implementation cannot be effective in the current timeframe.

If school is to re-open in August, distance learning should be the priority and it needs to be decided with enough time to implement effective instruction until the safety of all parties can be ensured.

My personal story is one of many in the district and I will share with you some of the core details to help you understand my position and the position of many teachers I have spoken with.

I currently have two children, a son who is high risk with both compromised immune system and asthma and a daughter who would do anything to help her brother but is also at risk. Additionally, my wife and I are expecting within the next 2 weeks after 10 years of fertility treatments and an extremely stressful high-risk pregnancy during a world-wide pandemic. I can assure you that the safety of my family is my priority and by re-opening prematurely the district places me into a position where I would have to distance myself from my family, from my newborn son in order to ensure their safety while still having the opportunity to provide for their needs.

Please consider your position on re-opening the school to a minimum of prioritizing distance learning and waiting for in-person instruction until we have a specific and well-rehearsed set of procedures that makes all parties in unique situations such as myself at ease with returning.

Thank you for your time.

Joshua Kolbet
Science Teacher
Cold Springs Middle School
Hi all,

These are incredibly trying times and many organizations are in the same situation trying to decide which programs/departments to cut. It is no easy task. I ask that you please consider keeping the funding for the GT program. This program is one of the reasons we have kept our children in WCSD. The teachers and curriculum are amazing and our children have had so many opportunities because of the GT program.

It seems that GT is always on the cutting block fiscally but I ask you to please reconsider. The children in the GT program thrive on the challenges presented in the program and do not do well in a normal classroom.

Regards,

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Catharine Cook
From:
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:39 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] GT Program Cuts

My brother and I are two Gifted & Talented students, and they have both benefited heavily from the accelerated learning the program provides. Cutting the GT program will stop not only us from achieving our highest goals, but it will also stop hundreds of other children from getting the same opportunity. We strongly suggest for the board members to consider everyone in these cuts, not just the majority. Cutting the GT budget by 60% is a ridiculous and unnecessary amount for something that has already been severely cut in the past and does not need to be cut more. Please consider not only our requests for your support but all requests, and thank you for serving us thus far.

Much appreciated,
Braden and David O'Grady
Good Afternoon,
Will secretaries and clerical aides receive a copy of these new attendance changes before school starts?

Thank you,
Jessica Gregory

Get Outlook for Android
Good Afternoon,

I am writing today to insist you follow the lead of other districts around the country and provide education online only until the Covid-19 crisis has passed.

I have two children, one about to enter kindergarten, and I cannot support sending not only children, but our talented educators back to an environment in which their lives are at risk. When you’re five, you don’t understand the basics of how viruses work, or even have the impulse control to be socially distant from others. Putting the onus on teachers to even try to manage this is an ask too grand.

I’ve been to the funerals of children, all of them tragic losses, but in many ways they were unavoidable due to their circumstance. These impending deaths and the spread to families are fully avoidable. There is a distinct contradiction in your current intention to open considering that you yourselves are attending meetings remotely to avoid potential transmission. Much as you are not congregating to make crucial decisions regarding my children’s’ wellbeing, children should not congregate in schools. The idea that children are not becoming gravely ill and cannot transmit this virus is a dangerous myth, as evidenced by the 85 infants currently diagnosed in Texas, and the documented severe inflammatory symptoms effecting kids who have been diagnosed.

Please act quickly, and allow parents to make alternative arrangements through childcare providers and neighborhood support bubbles before it’s too late. You are sending already undervalued teachers into a dangerous environment, and we entrust public schools with the safety of our precious children when you have them. You cannot guarantee they will be safe from Covid-19. You cannot guarantee they will not pass it on to high risk parents, leaving them orphaned.

The writing is on the wall. If your guidelines have been revised to address the deaths of students, teachers, and other staff, sending them to school is clearly the wrong decision. If you intend to have parents sign waivers holding you harmless for death in the event of contracting Covid-19 at school, sending them is clearly the wrong decision.

You as the board will not be on the front lines. You will not be tasked with maintaining social distancing, cleaning protocols, and the appropriate use of personal protective equipment five days a week, seven hours a day. You will ultimately be held responsible for decisions you make, and each sick child, each death, will be your fault. It is reckless, amoral, and unethical to require the attendance of innocent students and staff. The scientific evidence is there. The experts do not believe schools should open. What logical response could you have to refute their advice?

Sincerely,

Demetria Garnsey
Lemmon Valley