I’m just curious, given that the board has decided to students to return to in-person learning in this school year: exactly how many students, teachers, or family members need to contract COVID-19 and possibly die before the board reconsiders its decision?

What an irresponsible decision you’ve all made. History will not look kindly upon you.
Quick question about the press release...1st graders – 6th graders are they 3 feet or 6 feet? Did someone forget to mention those grades?

Kim Price
Thank you for making the correct decision.

Zak Woodhead
Risk Manager | Odds On Promotions
Hi there

I feel the school should have half the students go one day the other half of the students go the other day to allow for social distancing.

If we can go to Walmart and other open establishments I feel kids can go School. School are essential!

Blessings,

Shahin Lampe
Don't say your decision is based on the needs of our children. The decisions each board member made last night was purely political. You voted against the advice of Kevin Dick. This tells me that your concern is not for the safety and well being of our children, but purely political. Shame on each and every board member, except for Katy Simon Holland. When there is a surge in children being hospitalized and children's lives lost due to Covid-19, remember this was YOUR bad decision. All the apologies in the world, will not make it right nor bring back the lives that are lost. Shameful.
From: John Anderson  
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:38 AM  
To: Public Comments <PublicComments@WashoeSchools.net>  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on 7/28/2020 Board Meeting

Hello,

I watched the entirety of the board meeting this afternoon and evening. I do not envy the work that you all have to do right now, so thank you for your time.

I have to say that I am upset with the decision that was made. I have watched the last several board meetings and at all of the meetings it has been commented that the board and WCSD will follow Washoe County Health District guidance. This evening, the top official of the WCHD gave the board a recommendation that schools should not open at this time due to the current rate of transmission. The board, and Dr. McNeill all expressed that they felt differently and went completely against what was recommended. In addition, the WCHD is mentioned here on the Covid-19 Response / Reopening page at least 7 times (see attached pictures.)
How am I, or anyone for that matter, to believe that you are working with the WCHD when you blatantly went against their recommendations? I am not convinced that the school district is prepared to send 64,000+ students and staff back into buildings this fall, and it is going to be a mess when the first case shows up at a school.

Can the community be assured that you all will actually be working with the Health District, or will you continue to make the decisions that you all want?

Sincerely,

John
**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**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?**

If a student tests positive and was at school while infectious, only those students and personnel who were exposed would be asked to quarantine. Testing is offered at several locations and location dependent, insurance dependent, may range in cost. Testing offered through WCHD is performed at no charge. Testing will not be conducted at the school. Persons seeking COVID-19 testing due to symptoms or exposure should not be on school campus. More testing information through WCHD can be found at covid19washoe.com/testing/.

Si un estudiante da positivo y estuvo en la escuela mientras era infeccioso, solo se les pedirá a los estudiantes y al personal expuestos que se pongan en cuarentena. La prueba de COVID-19 se ofrece en varios lugares y depende del lugar y el seguro médico que usted tenga sera el costo. Las pruebas que se ofrecen a través de WCHD se realizan sin cargo alguno. Las pruebas no se realizarán en la escuela. Las personas que buscan realizarse la prueba COVID-19 debido a síntomas o exposición no deben estar en las escuelas. Puede encontrar más información sobre las pruebas a través de WCHD en covid19washoe.com/testing/.
WHAT ARE THE HEALTH STANDARDS AND
PROTOCOLS FOR WHEN A CLASSROOM IS CLOSED, A
SCHOOL IS CLOSED, OR WCSD IS CLOSED DUE TO
COVID-19 ISSUES?

The WCHD will do all that can be done to keep schools open
when elevated disease transmission conditions do not warrant
closure, and when other approaches can be taken to control
potential spread of disease within schools. Exclusions will be
conducted on a case-by-case basis in accordance with CDC
criteria following the definition of an exposure as someone who
was within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer to a person who is
confirmed to have COVID-19, while they were infectious. All
exposed persons will be asked to quarantine for 14 days from
the date of last exposure to a confirmed case. Schools may
need to close due to large numbers of staff and support
personnel needing to be quarantined, due to exposures in or
outside of the school setting.

El Departamento de Salud del condado de Washoe (WCHD
siglas en inglés) hará todo lo posible para mantener las
escuelas abiertas cuando las condiciones de transmisión de
enfermedades elevadas no justifiquen el cierre, y cuando se
pueden adoptar otros enfoques para controlar la posible
propagación de enfermedades dentro de las escuelas. Las
exclusiones se llevarán a cabo basado en caso por caso, de
acuerdo con los criterios del centro para el control y prevención
de enfermedades (CDC siglas en inglés) siguiendo la definición
de expuesto como aquel que estuvo dentro de los 6 pies por
15 minutos o más a una persona que se confirmó que tiene
COVID-19, mientras estaban infecciosos. Todas las personas
expuestas se les pedirá que permanezcan en cuarentena por
14 días a partir de la última fecha que estuvieron expuestas a
un caso confirmado. Es posible que las escuelas tendrán que
cerrar debido a la gran cantidad de personal y personal de
apoyo que necesiten estar en cuarentena, debido a que fueron
expuestos ya sea dentro o fuera del entorno escolar.
WHAT IS WCSD DOING TO KEEP STUDENTS AND STAFF SAFE AND HEALTHY IN OUR BUILDINGS?

Students, and staff alike, will be facing new expectations as we return to school for the 2020-2021 school year. Significant effort will be made in the first few weeks of school to teach, and reteach, new routines expected of students such as maintaining social distancing. Visual aids will be used at door ways, in hallways, at bathrooms, and elsewhere to remind students of social distancing expectations.

The health and safety of our students and staff is of utmost importance and a multi-layered approach will be taken. Surfaces in our schools will be cleaned frequently throughout each day and each night. WCHO approved disinfectant will be provided in all classrooms for teachers to use as needed. Custodians will prioritize cleaning high touch surfaces over carpets and grounds keeping. HVAC systems will be adjusted to bring in additional fresh air from outside throughout the day and the systems will "flush" the buildings before/after school daily.

In addition, there will be frequent handwashing breaks throughout the day and hand sanitizer will be available in each classroom. The use of face coverings will be required and physical distancing will be observed in keeping people healthy.

Los estudiantes y el personal por igual enfrentaran nuevas expectativas cuando regresemos a la escuela para el ciclo escolar 2020-2021. En las primeras semanas de escuela haremos un gran esfuerzo para enseñar, y re enseñar nuevas rutinas para los estudiantes como mantener la distancia social. Se utilizar imágenes de ayuda en los pasillos, entradas, los baños y donde sea para recordar a los estudiantes sobre las expectativas de distanciamiento social.

La salud y seguridad de nuestros estudiantes y personal es de mayor importancia y se ha tomado un plan de múltiples niveles. Las superficies en nuestras escuelas serán limpiadas frecuentemente durante cada día y cada noche. Desinfectante aprobado por el Distrito de Salud será disponible en todos los salones para que los maestros lo utilicen como sea necesario. Los consejeros darán prioridad a las superficies que son más expuestas antes de las alfombras o mantener las zonas verdes. Los sistemas de HVAC se ajustarán para traer aire fresco del exterior durante el día y los sistemas "enjuagarán" los edificios antes/después de la escuela diariamente.

Además, habrá descansos frecuentes para el lavado de manos durante todo el día y alcohol en gel estará disponible en cada salón. El uso de cubre bocas o mascarillas será requerido y se promoverá la distancia física para mantener a todos saludables.
**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**WHAT SHOULD A STAFF MEMBER DO IF THEY FEEL ILL?**

Employees who are feeling ill or have any symptoms of illness (i.e., fever, acute cough, or shortness of breath) are advised to remain at home to limit the potential spread of illness. Please notify your school/supervisor immediately and in accordance with your site’s procedures. Employees are also encouraged to seek medical care through their healthcare provider or the Washoe County Health District COVID-19 hotline at 775-328-2427.

Los empleados que se sientan enfermos o tengan cualquier síntoma de enfermedad ( fiebre, tos severa, o falta de aliento) se les recomienda que se mantengan en casa para limitar la propagación de enfermedad. Por favor notifíquelo a su escuela/supervisor inmediatamente y según los procedimientos de su sitio. Se anima a los empleados a buscar cuidado médico de un proveedor de salud o el Distrito de Salud del Condado de Washoe línea de atención de COVID-19 al 775-328-2427.
**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

**IF A STAFF MEMBER IS EXPOSED TO COVID-19 WHAT SHOULD THEY DO?**

If you are well but have contact (been close for more than 15 minutes) with someone who is suspected of or tested positive for COVID-19, contact the Washoe County Health District COVID-19 hotline at 775-328-2427 to determine whether it is necessary for you to self-quarantine and/or be tested for the virus. Please notify your school/supervisor accordingly before returning to work.

Si se siente bien, pero ha estado en contacto (cerca por más de 15 minutos) con alguien que sospecha que tiene un prueba positiva de Covid-19, comuníquese con el Distrito de Salud del Condado de Washoe al (insir # here) para determinar si es necesario que se mantengan en auto cuarentena y/o debe ser evaluado por el virus. Por favor comuníquese con su escuela/supervisor antes de regresar a trabajar.
I would like to invite the Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill to please be present on the first day of school. Please spend the day visiting a number of sites, from open to close, in your districts so you can see first hand what it is like in classrooms. I think this would go a long way with the public at this time. Please do this in person while wearing masks all day as well.
Thank you to the School Board, Superintendent, and School District. I watched the deliberations and could see how tremendously difficult it was to make the decisions regarding the plans for the coming year. Thank you for looking out for our children.

Holly Parker
Laxalt & Nomura, Ltd.

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From: Logan Leeder
Sent: Wednesday, July 29, 2020 10:49 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reopening Schools

Hey Board of Education,

After yesterday's decision to reopen public schools in Washoe County it is clear that you have no concern for human life or the safety of your staff, but I hope that I can appeal to any decency or morals you have left. DO NOT REOPEN OUR SCHOOLS. DO NOT SEND OUR PARENTS, SIBLINGS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BACK TO SCHOOL. Elementary and middle schools are already a petri dish even before COVID-19 and now they're only going to be worse. I am scared for my mom, a librarian at an elementary school, and my nieces and nephews, and my sisters and brothers who are now all at risk of getting infected because of in person schooling this fall. Think about your own families and your own children, going to school and coming back carrying a death sentence. Be logical here and use your own brain instead of letting this choice be decided for you by the governor or your peers. Lives are at stake! Please be on the right side of history and let our teachers and students enjoy a semester of safe learning instead of trying to send them back because you're too lazy to think of a better solution.

Hoping you'll take this into consideration, Concerned Individual
THANK YOU for your courageous vote last night to reconfirm your commitment to our children and to open schools. I sent an email yesterday afternoon stating how critical in-person instruction is to my 16 year old daughter with an intellectual disability.

Life is full of risks, and avoidance of all risk is impossible. Rather, it is the responsible management of risk that we all must contend with. Thank you again for doing the right thing for our children.

Respectfully,

Michelle Wilson
I find it disgusting and inhumane that you have chosen to reopen schools. Whatever reason you have is not good enough. You are showing that there are things you value over human lives, most likely being reflected to this board. Not just these children are going to die, but their teachers, bus drivers, family members, and other nevadans they may come in contact with. Politics do not trump science. It’s not safe, and you should be ashamed.

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Board Members,

After hearing about your decision to reopen schools I'd like to voice my personal concern. Beginning on a personal level, as one of the recreational supervisors in our community, my mom is an at risk individual who would be in direct contact with hundreds of kids every day as they utilize her after school programs. Given the decision to reopen schools, the chances of her exposure to COVID-19 would be magnified and quite frankly, that terrifies me. But even taking a step back, beyond my own mom, there are a mass majority of parents and caretakers who would also be at greater risk of exposure given your decision. With respect, I ask you why you would even find it reasonable to reopen schools now after you closed them in March when case numbers were fewer? Your board of all people should know best that schools are already a hotspot for the exchange of germs and sickness, slowing the spread of a virus like this is critical to the health of our community at this time and reopening schools is not the way to do this. Beyond just students and school staff, I hope you consider the health care workers who have been tirelessly working trying to stay on top of this virus for the safety of you and your families. At the least, respect what they've been facing to protect you and don't contribute to the further spreading of COVID-19.

These are scary times and I hope you find yourselves thinking about the lives at hand when reflecting upon what you have decided. Without exaggeration, lives are in your hands right now. Find a real solution and treat them like they matter.

Thank you for your consideration,
Paige Nelson
Dear School Board,

As a concerned citizen with both a teacher who is a mother and a little brother in middle school, I feel it is my duty to show my disgust towards the simply deplorable and irresponsible decisions you have made recently. To return to school just for the sake of “being normal” is simply idiotic. It kind of demonstrates the reason why our state does so poorly in education. When the attitude of those in charge is to disregard science and logic for no real reason - why should students ever have to care about science or logic? You’ve shown them that those with power don’t need to, so why would they?

While none of this may effect you personally, I must tell you all that there are plenty of lives you are ruining with this. Some people simply cannot return to normal life right now because of they’re medical, and you are forcing them to be exposed.

I hope you all enjoyed degrading and publicly humiliating your own public health expert, when he was the only one with any right to say anything (as he is the only one educated enough).

With all of that being said, there is blood on your hands. And I hope you realize that if my mother or Brother happens to contract this virus due to your negligence, I have attorneys on speed dial.

I would say thank you, but that is too polite.
Antony Giammona Wilber
I disagree with schools opening. I think it is a careless move that will cause a super spreader. I don't feel like the teachers or the students will be safe. Putting kids cramped into indoors is a reception for disaster.

I'm scared for my family and every family out there. My sister has Parkinson and could be in danger. I feel this is wrong at this time.

Thank you,
Sincerely, Teresa Dermody
To Whom it May Concern:

Reopening our public schools is an agreement to risk the lives of children, staff, and their families. The rate of covid transmission in Washoe County is among the highest in the world. I urge you to reconsider, and do everything in your power to prevent further needless deaths of children, adults, and the immune compromised.

Children have little understanding over bodily autonomy and even less understanding of the fatal virus among us. By sending them back to school, not only are you encouraging transmission among children, but you are acknowledging that you, Washoe County Administrators, understand that when you reopen schools, you will have their lives on your hands.

This is not a plea for a change in opinion, this is a cry to keep children and teachers alive.

Abigail Foster
Hello,

I am writing because the recent decision by the Washoe County School District Board of trustees to reopen our schools in the upcoming weeks is an unethical, immoral, and dangerous decision. The COVID-19 situation in Washoe County is the worst it has ever been, and this decision would only increase case numbers and death counts.

I am a product of the Washoe County School District, and I cannot believe that the same entity that fostered my learning for 12 years is now showing itself as truly callous towards the lives of the children it is responsible for.

A single dead child is unacceptable. A single dead teacher is unacceptable. A single dead education support professional is unacceptable. For anybody associated with WCSD to live with the permanent health conditions COVID-19 causes is unacceptable.

How dare the Washoe County School District ignore the cries of District Health Officer Kevin Dick? I was appalled to see how the educated opinion of a public health professional was not paid any mind.

I demand remote instruction for the fall semester for the health and safety of my community. I do not want to see people lose parents and children due to an irresponsible decision by the Board of Trustees.

To whoever the individual is whose job it is to read these, I beg of you to do everything in your power to communicate that the broader community is not okay with a return to schools at this time. This is a matter of life and death.

Cordially,

John Giammona Wilber
He/Him/His

Chapman University, BFA/BA, Class of 2019
University of Nevada, MPA, Class of 2020
I am truly trying to understand which/what protocols will be implemented. Perhaps I'm having a difficult time finding this information? Please direct me. As of 7/7/20, I have read on your website that “taking temperatures of each student as they enter the building is too difficult”?! Are you kidding me? My understanding is that ‘self screening is currently left up to families at home’? Are you serious?! I agree that there are socio-economic disparages tiedt this pandemic. I agree that school should be a safe place. If you can’t provide thermal cameras, how can I trust you to educate my children?

Sent from my iPad
Hi there,

My name is Rachel and I’m sending this email in regards to the decision made yesterday to reopen schools. My mom is a 4th grade teacher at Rollan Melton Elementary and I am scared for her life. I already have a constant fear of school shootings and now you’re putting her, every other teacher, child, and the parents of those children, in danger. I think this is such an irresponsible, stupid decision. My mom has over 30 kids in her class this year. There is absolutely no way to social distance those children; impossible to have all of them keep their masks on and abide by strict rules. They’re children. My brother will be in the 5th grade at the same school and your decision is ridiculous. I understand this has been extremely difficult on you guys but your decision was the WRONG one. I have already lost my father and I cannot, CANNOT lose anyone else. I encourage you to rethink this decision as you are putting your students, staff, and this community at risk. As much as my mom is dying to get back into her class, because kids weren’t learning anything online, this country handled this Pandemic horribly and it is not the time for it. Too many people are dying from this. Her ability to teach with the restrictions you’ve given to teachers, regarding helping students who are struggling, will be worse than making them learn from home. You need to rethink this before you start taking the lives of people in your community.

Sincerely,

A worried daughter who has common sense
Sent from Mail for Windows 10
If you are convinced it is safe to reopen schools and put faculty, kids, and the community at risk; why aren’t you holding the meeting in person instead of virtually??
Hello,

It is unacceptable to open schools this fall, for this endangers employees and forces teachers to risk their lives. Teachers are able to be flexible and meet the needs of students remotely. Please consider the lives of our teachers and also students with family members at risk, and keep schools closed.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Stevenson
From: Diego Bunuel
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 10:33 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opening schools

Please dont open schools yet. It isnt worth the death and damage to families it will cause

Sent from my iPhone

It's 180 degree different result than what we were told during WCSD board meeting on July 28th. Just another thing to consider for everyone's safety since the board members have power to control this situation than our young children.

Thank you so much.
Greetings,

I'm curious what the plan is for keeping students, teachers, and safe. Face masks, social distancing, and the hybrid model are givens, but what else is being done? For example there be someone at the doorway of each school to monitor body temperatures? Thank you very much.

Regards,

Forrest Hopson

--

R. Forrest Hopson, M.Sc.
Consulting Geologist

Reno, Nevada 89503

Geology Photographs: http://www.flickr.com/photos/44740122@N08/

The great tragedy of Science—the slaying of a beautiful hypothesis by an ugly fact.
Thomas H. Huxley (1825–1895)

Geologizing in a volcanic country is most delightful; besides the interest attached to itself, it leads you into the most beautiful and retired spots.
Charles Darwin (1809–1882)
Earlier it was said by the board that if someone selects online only school that they can go back to regular in class schooling "at any time". Now, I heard that a ONLINE selection can only be changed at semester breaks? Please clarify this in FAQ section with an OFFICIAL answer, and also make it easier to find re-opening FAQ page from WCSD main web page. Most interested in ELEMENTARY aged children answers.

Thank You,

Tim
From: James E. Benthin  
Sent: Saturday, August 1, 2020 9:09 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] attention board of trustees

Dear WCSD Board of Trustees,

It is my belief and mutual understanding that ‘we’ all wish for our students to return to in class instruction. Make no mistake this is a daunting task that lies before us; not only is this endeavor of great magnitude and scope it cannot not should it be treated lightly-- indeed, we should take the utmost care in how we seek and pursue teaching our students now and in the future.

To premise my observation, experience and insight I shall shed light of my experiences in volunteering, working with youth, special education, hospice and personal struggles over the last twenty years. In all of these professions and various capacities and experiences I carried out many duties; the highest of these pursuits was to keep those I worked, volunteered with or cared for safe. Whether it was being in charge of safety of students at summer camp, making sure a patient in my care in hospice would not fall during the night, or in special ed when trying to deescalate a student seeking to harm myself or fellow coworker-- I persevered to “do no harm”. Eight years ago I was exposed to black toxic mold while living in the Village studio apartments off of Valley Road. The exposure and sickness nearly killed me (I will spare you the details-it was not pleasant); it is only by God’s grace I am still alive today. My immune system, by mind and my body will never quite be the same; this is the reality of life for me now. I know intimately what it means to struggle, to suffer and to fail at many aspects of life. I was only in my mid twenties that I was diagnosed with ADD/ADHD and kind of math dyslexia in which I transpose numbers often and letters occasionally. Despite my struggles such things have given me a unique perspective on life and overcoming adversity; my experiences are of something of value and it has blessed me how I interact with my students. Despite all the things going on I do wish to go back to school; to support our next generation; equipping them with the tools and skills in the hope they succeed where I have often failed. Teaching in special ed is highly rewarding and I considered it the greatest honor and privilege to do so. I realize that going back to school presents a significant risk to me given my situation; though I do not seek omission for myself I beg you to think about students and staff members who at a greater risk given their disposition and pre existing conditions.

I like many other teachers and support staff are faced with many challenges that COVID-19 presents; I no doubt that many of us will rise to the occasion. It gives me pause when the reality of having contact with my parents and family members sinks in; that given my position with WCSD I put my family at risk if I return to work. In all honesty I can acknowledge and understand to a certain degree the risk to myself; however, to wrap my mind around the possibility of exposing and potentially being the cause of a family member, parent’s, coworker or student’s death is too grievous for me to comprehend-- too great for me to come to terms with. Returning to in class instruction feels like a doctor who has forsaken his hippocratic oath; seeking to provide a safe environment so our students can flourish and strive is an impossibility given the uncontrollable variables COVID-19 presents. There is no definite or absolute in nullifying all the risks in regards to in class instruction.

Laboring to sort and sift through nearly all the comments posted to your committee; I also have sat through most of your meetings to better understand the severity of how COVID-19 is and will ultimately affect the educational process. To better grasp the communities perspective on these matters I also unfortunately searched through various comments and posts on social media; however I was overwhelmed with the amount of negativity and disrespect levied towards teachers and support staff. It was a sobering realization to see how much of society looks down on education; on teachers, on support staff-- the sentiment that became abundantly clear was razor sharp- that teachers needed to go back and babysit the students so parents go to work… Perhaps an oversimplification but drugging through the sea of negativity was profoundly depressing. I like history, studying it has become one of my pastimes and hobbies-- I have
observed that some of the greatest atrocities throughout history have been committed when one segment or group of people were treated less than human. All staff regardless if they are custodians all the way up to even administration should be treated with equality, dignity and respect. It grieves and saddens me that so many people think and feel so little of we educators. I know many inspirational and amazing teachers; their contribution and influence is vast- it spans decades of faithful service and significant sacrifice.

An email I received yesterday stated that governor Sisolak was in process of putting forth legislation to prevent liability--that in essence employees would not be able to sue if they contract COVID-19 get sick and or die. Furthermore, that would make it exceptionally difficult for parents and students to do likewise. I admit going over safety protocols and standards, infections diseases, OSHA regulations gives me pause because of the weight and severity of such things. I suggest and advise that everyone who wishes to return to school in any capacity look into those details-- not just the COVID-19 CDC guidelines but ones WCSD needs to adhere to. The mere legal ramifications that COVID-19 presents are simply a logistical nightmare. Not to make something very serious in nature humorous however I quickly realized the absurdity of opening schools up are in regards to in class instructional. Regardless of the desire or attempt to reduce exposures such pursuits create more rules and regulations that ultimately will take time, distract, dilute and devalue any academic pursuit-- thus in the end the previous endeavor becomes a science experiment with millions of unforeseen and uncontrollable variables. The idea that we can control COVID-19 without a vaccine is laughable; the sentiment that we can prevent exposure is ludacris, the idea we can limit those who contract COVID-19 is offensive-it’s like in Star Trek when the starship Enterprise D gets attacked by a Borg cube- “resistance is futile”. Perhaps it’s just me but limiting liability is like the people in charge are simply attempting to do as Pontius Pilate did with Jesus Christ as he symbolically “washed his hands” of what happened next. Force people back to work if you must but do not remove your responsibility for doing so; actions have consequences- tread carefully for you risk the safely and lives of many.

A particular emphasis was made within your committee to talk about mental health and the mind set and well being of our students; I pondered this and I arrived at this final conclusion. You say that social distancing is negatively impacting our students, that it is stunting their social/emotional growth (I will not contest this however); what happens when a student is exposed and falls ill of COVID-19 is forced into quarantine? The feeling of being isolated now is bad enough but what happens when that is compounded for a student adding insult to injury when they get sick and become even more isolated. Given that people can be infected more than once what will happen to a student’s outlook on life if they potentially catch COVID-19 more than once? Working in various youth related programs over the years I have struggled with parents sending their students to school sick; what are the ramifications/consequences for parents who willingly send their students to school sick with COVID-19?

In closing I realize that returning to school poses much risk to staff and students alike; it is my hope and prayer that those responsible seek to act in manner that adheres to reason and scientific data. I am deeply troubled at the current course and plan currently set forth; it feels like we educators and students are like sea divers being thrown into a pool of great white sharks. My final thought is this: your board of trustees continue to meet via video chat yet it is your will that we return to the classroom;the irony and exceptional hypocrisy is not lost on me-- if you do not risk meeting in person then why should we risk working for you in the classroom? Good leaders lead by example.

Respectfully,

James.
Please have elementary go back to school on a hybrid model. Protect our little ones. The parents who want full time for our little ones are just looking for a free babysitter.

Sent from my iPad
July 14, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

Please address these questions before making plans to reopen schools.

Should you even consider reopening? The board states it acts on a do no harm agenda. I copied questions from the CDC’s tool that assists administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?

Is the school ready to protect children and employees at higher risk for severe illness? How?

Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

If there are any no responses at this point, the answer is to NOT REOPEN.

Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

How do you implement and enforce healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and wearing a cloth face covering?

How will cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation be increased?

What plans have been developed to implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival?

What is the plan for if students or employees get sick? Will they need to quarantine? Will they have to have a negative test result before coming back? What happens to all those who were exposed around that student/employee?

Do we have funds for the extra cleaning materials for every classroom at every school?

Who provides extra masks for students that lose or ruin theirs? Where does this money come from? Are these masks the kind that have a window, so others can see facial expressions and see the lip and tongue movements for speech?

Is the a/c recirculated air, or fresh air from outside?

Plexiglass costs $140 for one table divider. Desks costs $58 each. Schools cannot afford new furniture to replace tables that are in the classrooms. There is a shortage of desks, so managing social distancing that way is not feasible. Is there any money to purchase these items in bulk? How about for the extra supplies since students are not allowed to share, including math manipulatives that are reused each year and shared amongst students?
Classrooms cannot fit the number of students enrolled per class. Larger classes will be adding another class from breaking down other classes. Those new classes will be managed by a non certified teacher in another area of the school. Even in the grades with class size reduction, there are too many students to fit within the confines of social distancing. Where will these students go since all other areas of the school will be used by additional classes from the other grades taking up residence in shared spaces, like the cafeteria and library?

Will teachers be allowed to have small groups for reading, math, centers? Will students be allowed to do partner work? How do they do this if we have to social distance?

How will students be monitored when using restrooms? Will bathrooms need to be cleaned after each person’s use?

Thank you for answering these imperative questions and ensuring the safety of every individual in the school community.

Sincerely,

Nichole Yco
Dear Trustees,
I hope this message finds you well. I am writing today to strongly urge you to reconsider your previous decision of opening schools on August 17, 2020. Decisions should be made with data, not just opinions. Therefore, I would like to present several strong pieces of data that support delaying the reopening of schools:

1) Our health department COVID-19 Dashboard daily indicates that as of today, we are at 258 cases per 100,000. In this situation, it truly is negligent to ask teachers and students to return. The appropriate number for schools to reopen, as quoted during the meeting, was 100 cases per 100,000 or fewer. This number is over 2.5x this number. Based on this number alone, schools should not reopen. Additionally, if you look at trends, this number is not falling.

2) Some of the decisions made by the board were based on the notion that children may be lower carriers based on the board members’ comments. I appreciate using data to make this decision; however, newer and more complete data suggest something else entirely. A new report suggests that children of all ages are susceptible to coronavirus infection and may also spread it to others. In fact, 260/344 of the camp participants native to Georgia who were tested positive for COVID-19. I understand that this information was not available at your last meeting, but it is available now. This information should urge you to change your decision. Please see this link for more details: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/07/31/georgia-children-covid-outbreak/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/07/31/georgia-children-covid-outbreak/)

3) The proposed reopening plan itself is not comprehensive and leaves too many burdens placed on administrators. One thing that you must understand is that asking administrators to decide upon quarantine protocols, cleaning protocols, and other procedures related to infectious disease is not reasonable. People in the medical field, such as virologists, study for YEARS to learn how to make effective decisions on this. The plan needs to have district-wide safety protocols established for a safe re-opening.

We all want things to be “back to normal,” but they aren’t. I believe schools can open, but not now, and not like this. If the school reopening plan does not go well (which I believe we all know it won’t in its current state), parents, teachers, and the public will lose faith in WCSD, the board, and our teachers. There has been enough bad press about our schools, our district, and our elected officials. I urge the board to delay school openings until: (a) we have fewer than 100 cases per 100,000 county-wide; (b) we return to 6 feet of distancing in K-8 classrooms; and (c) there are more comprehensive safety protocols in place for all schools, leaving administrators to do their jobs, not the jobs of infectious disease experts. Waiting until the last minute to make the inevitable call will just make this harder on our parents, teachers, and community members.

Best,

William Toledo, PhD

William Toledo
Assistant Professor of Elementary Social Studies Education
University of Nevada, Reno
To Whom It May Concern,

I recently took an introductory Community Health class at the University of Nevada, Reno under the Professor Amy Fitch who earned her Master of Public Health (MPH) in Epidemiology & Biostatistics from UC Berkeley. As I will be in Community Health Science classes for the remainder of my time at the University, this class has made me question a lot of things surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and response.

Some of which being the implied horror, tragedy, and fear that have struck many people worldwide. However, if the virus is something so contagious and deadly, I have a few questions: Why are people still allowed to eat at restaurants, go into any public setting, or work when the only protection we have is a Disposable Filtering 3 Ply Mask or a reusable cloth mask when those dealing with an avian influenza A virus (mush like that of the 1918 Paandemic which is supposedly more mild than SARS-CoV-2) are required to wear "disposable gloves, solid-front or wrap-around gowns, scrub suits, or coveralls with sleeves that fully cover the forearms, head coverings and, where appropriate, shoe covers or dedicated shoes, eye protection and a surgical mask, or full-face shield, because of the risk of aerosol or droplet exposure" (WHO labortory biosafety guidelines for handling specimens suspected of containing avian influenza A virus)?

In light of that information, shouldn't the people who are also interacting with others who may be contagious take the same precautions, like the general public? Also, how is it protecting anyone when restaurants are allowing dine in, but require customers to wear masks until sitting down at a table or receiving their food despite the socially distanced table? If the virus is so contagious and deadly, how can people be allowed to eat in groups that are 6 feet apart, but cannot walk around a public area without a mask being 10+ feet apart??

Due to my increasing curiosity and confusion surrounding this pandemic, I even did the math to attempt to understand the deadliness of this virus. These are a few of my findings:

On 10 July 2020 (see Figure 1-3 below), the world population sat at 7.58 billion with 12.5 million reported cases of COVID-19 and 559,998 confirmed deaths worldwide. However, this information leads to the mathematic findings that there is only a 0.16% possibility one may be symptomatic and test positive for having COVID-19. Unfortunately, there was a 96.6% chance any one of those positive patients would recover… Oh, sorry, a 4.4% chance they would die. Conversely, on 30 July 2020, the world population sat at 7.8 billion with 17 million reported cases and 667,000 deaths. Thankfully, 9.96 million people positive for COVID-19 recovered! Again, the math shows that in the last 20 days, although the possibility of testing positive for COVID-19 is now 0.2%, the possibility of recovering from the virus is 97.1%. Again, in the last 20 days, the possibility someone recovering from the COVID-19 virus increased by about 0.5% from 96.6% to 97.1%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Positive Cases for COVID-19</th>
<th>% with COVID</th>
<th>COVID Deaths</th>
<th>Case-Fatality Rate (%)</th>
<th>Recovery Rate After COVID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Positive Cases</td>
<td>Deaths</td>
<td>Death Rate (%)</td>
<td>Infection (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 July 2020</td>
<td>7,500,000,000</td>
<td>12,500,000</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>559,998</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>96.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 July 2020</td>
<td>7,800,000,000</td>
<td>17,000,000</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>667,000</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>97.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All numbers are based on those worldwide as of the dates given.

Figure 2
Figure 3

Positive Cases vs Population

- Category 2: 7,800,000,000
- the 10th: 7,500,000,000

Positive Cases | Population
--- | ---
12,500,000 | 7,500,000,000
17,000,000 | 7,800,000,000
This is AMAZING news and should be shared. It should not be hidden from the public as many people have lost their jobs or family members and are losing hope. Show them that there is still hope that this virus will be like that of the flu, common and nothing to worry about unless you or someone you know is at risk. The whole of the states’, nations’, and world’s population are not “at risk,” they are able to fight off this virus and receive that antibodies necessary to fight off this virus like every other virus and have that immunity. With a 97.1% survivability rate, there is no need for a mass vaccine or any other medications. It should only be considered for those that are at risk and have had complications. It should be lifesaving as the preventative measures are already in place: exposure to the asymptomatic.

For comparison I’ve found some numbers for the influenza pandemic of 1918 and the 2009 H1N1 pandemic and SARS-CoV-2. As they are from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, I made sure to emphasize that all of the following numbers are for and of the United States only. It is also important to note that all positives are assuming that each person tested and given a positive result had a symptomatic virus and illness resulting (whether or not it was severe). It is incredibly important to assume all positives are derived from those with symptoms that may have been similar to those with the typical virus in question because there are growing numbers of people testing themselves even though they are and remain asymptomatic, such as sport teams, corporations, government run and regulated businesses (including the military). In light of this information, I will now give you the numbers according to the United States CDC.

**SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)** (all data assumes positives are cases and cases have symptoms)
- 4,405,000 positives
- 151,000 deaths (rounded up)
- 328,200,000 population as of 2019

Total population positive for COVID: **1.34%**
$$\frac{4,405,000}{331,003,000} = 0.013421$$

Total deaths of positive cases: **3.428%**
$$\frac{151,000}{4,405,000} = 0.03428$$

The case-fatality rate for COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in the US alone is 3.4%. BUT that is a 1.34% % chance that you will have contracted the virus (SYMPTOMATICALLY)!!! AND **96.6%** recovery rate meaning you will be back to normal and healthier for it!!

**FLU** (all data assumes positives are cases and cases have symptoms)
**2018-2019 typical flu season:**
- 35.5 million illnesses
- 34,200 deaths
- 328.2 million US population 2019

Population ill with influenza viruses: **10.82%**
Case-fatality rate for influenza viruses: \(0.096\%\)
\[
\frac{34.200}{35.500.000} = 0.00096338
\]

While 10.8\% of the population will be exposed to an influenza virus, there is only 0.096\% chance they will die. Comparing COVID-19’s 96.6\% chance of recovery, the “typical flu” maintains a 99.9\% chance of recovery.

1918-1919 H1N1 flu pandemic (the US introduction to an avian influenza)
- 33.990.000 illnesses (CDC says about 1/3 of the world was infected, so we will assume 13 of the US was also infected as I can’t find any “positive case” data)
- 675.000 deaths
- 103 million population
- (CDC)

Population ill with influenza: 33\%
\[
\frac{33.990.000}{103.000.000} = 0.33
\]

Case-fatality rate for 1918 flu: 1.99\%
\[
\frac{675.000}{33.990.000} = 0.01986
\]

2009 H1N1pdm09 Pandemic:
- 89.3 million illnesses
- 18.306 deaths
- 306.8 million population
- (CDC)

Population ill with H1N1: 29.11\%
\[
\frac{89.300.000}{306.800.000} = 0.2911
\]

Case-fatality rate: 0.02\%
\[
\frac{18.306}{89.300.000} = 0.000204
\]

In this case, the CDC emphasizes that many younger people had antibodies from the virus (considering they caught, may or may not have been symptomatic, and recovered).

In summary of the mathematics above, I will now compare the numbers using tables and fewer words. Even if we disregard the total US population in each instance (which only emphasizes the fact that the numbers of infection and death are extremely low for the SARS-CoV-2 virus) the numbers still remain incredible:

In this case, the CDC emphasizes that many younger people had antibodies from the virus (considering they caught, may or may not have been symptomatic, and recovered).

In summary of the mathematics above, I will now compare the numbers using tables and fewer words. Even if we disregard the total US population in each instance (which only emphasizes the fact that the numbers of infection and death are extremely low for the SARS-CoV-2 virus) the numbers still remain incredible:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virus</th>
<th>US Population</th>
<th>US Illnesses</th>
<th>US Deaths from Illness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1918 H1N1 Flu Pandemic</td>
<td>103,000,000</td>
<td>33,990,000</td>
<td>(estimated 1/3 of the US population) 675,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 H1N1pdm09 Pandemic</td>
<td>306,800,000</td>
<td>89,300,000</td>
<td>18,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019 Flu</td>
<td>328,200,000</td>
<td>35,500,000</td>
<td>34,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Pandemic</td>
<td>328,200,000</td>
<td>4,405,000</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It does seem that COVID-19 has claimed more lives than the others, however worldwide (as of 30 July 2020) the number of people infected sit at 17 million which is considerably less than each of the preceding pandemics in the US alone. Another comparison between the tens of millions of people infected with each time, the US numbers for COVID-19 are at 12.95% of those for the 1918 pandemic: the pandemic that is most compared to COVID-19.

I understand any loss is a horrible loss, but all things considered, a mortality number of 151,000 is great compared to that of 657,000 to a flu virus that we now encounter daily. Granted, the first year is the worse and there is potential that this pandemic will continue and claim more lives just as all other flu viruses continue to do. A virus mutates and infects without showing obvious signs to humans and these specific viruses can continue to be carried in birds, pigs, and dogs (Kessler) meaning that they have potential to re-infect a human host.

It is my hope that people, news outlets, and other professionals will realize that stopping a virus from spreading, although it may work with quarantines and social distance for a short time, is entirely impossible. A virus like influenzas and coronaviruses will never disappear entirely – take the flu H1N1 virus for example (CDC). Just as colds and flues spike when school starts for kids, the coronavirus will continue to spike the more people come in contact – mask or no mask (as seen by the California Assembly’s test positives despite the masks that were worn at all times) (Hawkins).

This information only further proves that mask mandates and mandatory vaccines and distance will not benefit us as a social and communal society. By limiting numbers and interaction between strangers and friends and extended family, our bodies are unable to be exposed to viruses and bacteria that ultimately promote a herd immunity and boost the immune system. Never mind that humans require social interaction and physical touch to promote learning, empathy, mental and, yes, physical health (Mental health and social relationships).

Yet, our government continues to silence our certified medical professionals to make profit off of our personal well-being. Medicine and science must be left to those qualified, not multibillionaires with no high school degree, college education, or degrees in epidemiology, medicine, virology, or public health (Bill Gates and friends, I’m looking at you). We must forget the big money that is currently attempting – and succeeding – in policing the citizens of these countries when it is entirely unnecessary, and quite frankly, impossible to stop a virus.
Not only are we doing a disservice to our own health and those around us by not allowing ourselves to be social, but we are also depriving our youth of learning opportunities and safety. With social distancing, stay at home orders, and mask mandates, young children are unable to understand facial expressions and make them themselves which can often times help them, and adults, understand what is being said to or expected of them.

In my personal experience (as I work at a daycare) with infants and toddlers, a glance can go a long way when the whole face is involved. They also pull masks down looking for the features they have that we might have. When working with older kids that are required to wear masks themselves, they have difficulty understanding the severity of a situation, lack pronunciations of simple things, and unfortunately are commonly mistaken for someone else. This poses an incredibly dangerous risk: child trafficking and exploitation.

It is easy to take a child when no one is paying attention and often it is too late when someone does realize their child is gone. A few months ago, it was harder to hide a child while showing their whole face and masks were few and far between. Today, with masks being “the new (and unfortunate) normal,” it is easier to abduct children and hide them in plain sight by wearing a hate and a mask. As we can see, it also means that they are the victims of domestic violence and social media leading to exploitation. Less in-person interaction is dangerous for those that cannot abandon their situation out of fear, ability, or understanding (Ochab).

It is my hope that information given in this document will be scrutinized and analyzed to portray the reality of our current situation so that we may return to the society we left behind in March of 2020. To stop the misguidance given to the masses by avoiding the importance of the numbers and the comparisons. Returning all students to face to face education without Plexiglas shields and facial expression inhibitors if they so choose. Returning workers to their jobs and deeming all business essential. Returning to our life as it should be: free to wear and say and believe what each individual wants.

I hope we will once again be free to make our own decisions without the social backlash surrounding many “medical topics” of today. Media and news should give us the information allowing us to choose what to do with and about that information. The media and news should never tell us how to think or what to think.

Best Wishes,
Mackenna Miller

Undergraduate Student at the University of Nevada, Reno
Majoring in Kinesiology under the School of Public Health
Works Cited


(CNN) - Two more teenagers, between the ages of 14 and 17, have died from Covid-19 in Florida -- bringing the total deaths of children and teens in the state to seven. More than 38,000 minors have contracted the
Of course it’s not good for children to be out of school! But now we have an even bigger problem—a global pandemic that can kill millions of people and shut down our whole economy including our schools if we don’t stamp it out! It is NOT waning in Washoe County, it is growing and spreading faster. It will do so no matter what havoc it causes or how much we resent each other or fight amongst ourselves. The priority has to be stomping out the spread of virus until we have a vaccine. We will save lives that way and be in better position to start back up. That time will be lost and we will have to adjust to older kids in lower grades, etc. But they will be alive! Our teachers and parents will still be alive! That comes first!

Sent from my iPhone
Heads up in case you did know...

You can’t help kids grow emotionally or socially from the grave.
BUT, you can impact and impair them for life long emotional and social problems as they try to deal with the death blows that are about to occur thanks to all of you and your infamous decision to open.

This is one for the history books for sure...

Sent from Mail for Windows 10
Martha Schwalbe Reed High School

From the first survey and at every opportunity since, I have said that I am willing to go back to work in person as long as there was hot water and soap available in all the restrooms in the school. I believed that the district would follow through with the procedures that they said would be put in place. Apparently that's not the case.

I used a student restroom today, August 6, and there was no hot water and no soap. I heard at both board meetings men say there would be hot water and soap in every restroom in the district. Since this is a problem at Reed, it would seem that it's a problem throughout the district. If students can't wash their hands properly with hot water and soap, the small bottles of hand sanitizer won't last long.

This situation is ridiculous. It's been clear from the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic that handwashing is one of the best ways to stop the spread of the virus. Why wasn't the district leadership working to get hot water and soap in all restrooms in all schools last April? This is another example of reacting to the situation instead of being proactive.

I'm very disappointed.
Hello parents and families I work for a health organization I have been working the entire COVID pandemic I have been working anywhere from 14-16hr shifts per day we do not have proper PPE and yet we manage to remain safe from the virus that is affecting us this 2020 year. I would like to state that at this point as a healthcare worker I would NOT be concerned about the COVID I would be more concerned about all of our children’s MENTAL HEALTH, DEPRESSION, OBESITY that has taken over for the kids that at this rate have no options but to maintain at home it is absolutely absurd that this continues to be an issue and it is absurd that a complaint has been filed to the OSHA that would be like me saying hey guess what we don’t want to take care of our patients because it is not safe guess what with proper PPE and proper precautions it is very manageable and it is your duty as TEACHERS to provide education to these children that need to socialize they need to have some kind of freedom it is also absurd that we can have things like waterparks, daycares, lex night club and other things open for the people around the county but they can’t have theirs education that WE pay for what you should be fighting is the rights of these kids this is NOT and I re peat NOT for people that just want daycare we are talking about ALL of our KID’s FUTURE! Can you imagine being stripped away from your entire world as a child and now you are being told that because of selfish reasons YES SELFISH REASONS they can’t get the proper education it is SELFISH to think about your self and not your children or the children that have learning disabilities that will further delay them from where they need to be. I am not only standing up for my own 2 children but the children of others we are literally one week away from Start once the meeting hits that is 5 DAYS from school re openings WE as parents can not afford your indecisiveness WE all have life’s and for those of us that are essential WE must work can we come to a civil decision and really truly think about what we are truly doing to these kids put yourselves in the position that they are in and think really hard would I want to be confined no friends can’t go anywhere can’t do anything can’t have education where do you see yourselves ending up?

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

The information contained in this email may be confidential and/or legally privileged, including HIPAA Protected Health Information or information that is proprietary or trade secret. It has been sent for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you received this communication in error, please inform the sender and destroy all copies of the message. The organization accepts no liability for any damage caused by transmittance of this email. Thank you.
I understand the need for an “all hands on deck” model however how can the school district provide safety to those certified and classified specialist such as music, library and ETS being asked to visit each class in their classrooms for 30 minutes twice a week in the Elementary setting, in order to provide teachers with 30 minute lunches and planning time. We are being exposed to the entire school population multiple times a week for extended periods of times. I do not feel this is a safe approach. Please advise.
I do not feel comfortable to be pulled to sub. This has been a practice, but how do I cover SDI and sub for an entire day. I know we are going to be pulled more often during Covid 19, and I am no longer willing to do this. What are the options? How will the district fix this issue? Not providing SDI is violating the IEP.
Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I will try to keep it short.

As the parent of an incoming first grade student I want to express my concerns for the safety of my daughters school staff. Based on the correspondence I have received throughout the summer I do not believe our schools district is ready to accept these students. I do believe my daughters school has done all it is capable of doing at this point in time to keep both students and staff safe, however I think the lack of guidance from the county and state has been very harmful to the process of reopening.

I fully intend to send my daughter to school for in person learning this year and believe it is necessary to do so, but I want to support the teachers and staff in a safe and comfortable reopening. I would like to see a plan explaining how teachers will be provided the supplies and space they need in order to succeed this year. So far it seems these challenges have fallen directly on the teachers shoulders and I do not feel the county is sharing equally in this burden.

It is all of our jobs to keep our community safe.
Hello Everyone,

I want to first begin by saying that I hope everyone is safe and doing well during this difficult time. I sympathize with all the parents here (I am one too) and the teachers for having to deal with all the stress since the pandemic hit the nation.

We really need to think about our priorities here. Schools re-opening will have dire consequences that may make us regret our decisions today. We need to think as human beings who care for one another and value life. We should not be risking any child, parent, teacher, yard duty, etc for nothing. The potential of one life being lost should be enough for us to know this is wrong.

I understand the importance of education but people are struggling right now and we should be focusing on how we are going to move forward as a community. Re-opening schools are only going to make things WORSE.

Please reconsider. DO NOT OPEN SCHOOLS!

Thank you,

Rosalinda Rosales
To the Board of Trustees:

In reference to Agenda Item 5.04, it is of my opinion that we should conform to similar metrics already set in place by other states in the Western Regional Pact. These metrics include: the number of cases reported per 100K population in a rolling 14-day period, test positivity percentage in a rolling 7-14 day period, percentage of hospitalizations in a 7-14 day period, and adequate resources to investigate, hospitalize and provide PPE supplies.

Some of the metrics are used to show a decline and/or stability in the number of COVID cases. In my opinion, those metrics should be:

100% distance learning if <100 in 100K in rolling 14-day or 10% positivity in rolling 7-day
Hybrid if >50 in 100K or 7% positivity
In-person if >25 in 100K or 5% positivity

Please note that these numbers are based on our current ability to test, provide PPE and manage a 20% surge in hospitalizations. Should the county lose their ability to provide these things, then it should be full distance learning.

Given these metrics or something similar in nature, I find Agenda Item 5.05 to be a moot point. However, I would like to point out that there is a downside to using metrics. Is the WCSD prepared/flexible enough to fluidly switch between the different learning environments? If they are not, then, for the sake of everyone involved, distance learning would be the logical choice to avoid disruption.

If for some reason the decision remains the same, parents want to know specifically how their child's school will handle social distancing. As a former substitute teacher at Van Gorder, Rita Cannon, Jerry Whitehead, Sparks Middle and SSHS, I can tell you first hand that situations such as bathrooms, hall passing, lunch, PE, dismissal, etc. will be a logistical nightmare to keep students socially distanced, not to mention the extra burden on the staff that has already accumulated thus far.

Bathrooms—will there physically be a staff member in the bathrooms supervising at all grade levels
Note: this would at least keep the shared vaping and smoking at middle and high schools at a minimum

Hall passing—even with a hybrid model, will there be too many students to keep them socially distanced. will the students abide by the 6'

Lunch—where will the students eat (particularly during inclement weather)
Note: I have yet to see a middle or high school that can manage every student at lunch, even with multiple lunch periods.

PE—is there enough space in the locker room to change 6’ apart, are there enough lockers to assign 6’ apart (that goes for regular lockers too), will team sports be eliminated

Dismissal—will it be staggered to prevent bottlenecks at the exits
This is but a small sample of all the questions that parents want to know. Please have the schools give the parents specifics and stop giving the general blanket statement that the WCSD is doing everything they can to keep everyone safe.

If we return, I hope that each of you takes the opportunity to visit each school in your respective districts during the first week to personally witness and address the issues surrounding our school openings.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Shannon Kenny
I am fine with the whole day in school and a day of distance learning. The issue that I have is that here we are less than a week before school starts and I do not know when my kids will actually be physically going to school. I have a type one diabetic and need to bring his stuff to school. I also need two weeks’ notice to get time off of work. I am now missing two days of work due to the ineptness of Cold Springs Middle School. I also do not trust the administration of Cold Springs Middle School to ensure that both my kids are on the same track. The reason being is that last year, Cold Springs Middle School lost my youngest child. If this happens again, I will call the cops and take the entire Cold Springs Administration to court for child endangerment.

Brian Kelley
Despite the fact that I highly disagree with opening schools right now against the advice of the WCHD, you gave yourselves very little time and parents are losing faith in your ability to make decisions. School is supposed to start in one week and no one has any information to share with parents. I have chosen the distance learning option for my third grader on an IEP, and his team cannot give me any information on what that actually looks like or will require from me. How are parents supposed to plan and feel comfortable with their decisions, when they are going to receive information less than a week before school starts? Additionally, I have an 8th grader who we are allowing to do the hybrid option. I received a call from his school that they are not prepared to release schedules yet, and hope to by the end of the week! This is highly disorganized and adding unnecessary stress to parents as they try to figure out what exactly is going to happen next week.
Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my public comment. My name is Breana Edgerton and I come from a family full of teachers - both locally and in neighboring states. There is no doubt that education is a critical part of a child's life and there is no doubt that children learn better in person where all different types of learning can be addressed.

I am not a student at this time and I am not a parent. I can't begin to understand the hardships they've been through and will continue to go through as COVID lingers in our world. However, I can sympathize. This "new normal" isn't ideal for anyone, but we can make our way through it together.

I know that there were long deliberations about reopening schools. I know that you heard from the Unions. I know that you heard from the Washoe County Health District. I know that you heard from frustrated parents. I hope that you heard from many teachers and Administrative staff. I know you considered the long term effects this will have on students. I know you considered a lot of different options and scenarios. What I'm not sure of is if you've paid attention to all of the reports coming in from schools reopening throughout our county. We are lucky, northern Nevada hasn't been hit as hard by COVID like many other larger cities have. Our cases are not currently out of control, but reopening schools creates this possibility. It's proven and is happening at this very moment - Georgia and Indiana being the first examples.


There are many school districts that have opted for entirely online learning for the fall because they understand the risk of reopening. I know this is not an ideal situation for them either. It's not something that they want to do, but they've made that choice for the safety of their students, teachers, and staff. Teachers that are part of school districts that are remaining closed are able to create lesson plans rather than focusing on crisis management plans for how they will teach in an unsafe environment.

I implore you to come to a different conclusion. It's not too late. If we've learned anything from this unprecedented time, we've learned that things can change in an instant. COVID can take over in an instant. Take away someone you love in an instant. Create long term health problems in an instant. Change your life, in an instant.

Please, I don't want to lose someone I love because they chose to be a teacher. Please don't put them in a position to choose between their livelihood or their life. Please don't ask them to bring this virus home to further infect those who share their home. I beg you to reconsider. We will return to school, but we can't return yet.

Thank you for your time,
Breana Edgerton
From: CATHY JOHNSON
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 4:34 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Virus Report from Australia Schools

Dear Board Members,

At the forwarded message, scroll down and read the report re: Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Australian schools. A large study involving 1.8 million school children.

This study reinforces your wisdom of opening the schools here and I believe, if widely circulated, the findings would greatly relieve the worries of many parents and students. It may also encourage other school systems to follow your lead.

David C. Johnson, MD

Begin forwarded message:

From: COVID-19 News | Doximity <support@doximity.com>
Subject: What to Know About KN95 Face Masks
Date: August 6, 2020 at 7:21:47 AM PDT
To: "David Johnson, MD"
Harvard Magazine

Failing the Coronavirus-Testing Test

The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health

Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Australian Educational Settings: A Prospective Cohort Study

JAMA Internal Medicine

Trends in ED Visits and Hospital Admissions in the First Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US

BMJ

Treatments for Covid-19: Living Systematic Review

JAMA

COVID-19 and Dexamethasone: Strategy to Avoid Steroid-Related Hyperinfection
I have heard from district teachers that they are being asked to create their own guidelines for physical distancing inside their classrooms. The school leadership and district leadership is not providing this guidance for teachers. This is horribly irresponsible. The district needs to provide health expert guidance on physical distancing for teachers and students. Asking teachers, who are education specialists NOT health specialists is pure negligence.

Kate
From: Jones, Beth  
Sent: Monday, July 27, 2020 10:29 PM  
To: BoardMembers; Public Comments; Rombardo, Neil  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Letter not included in public comments

It appears my letter is not listed in public comments, perhaps no one received it? See below:

Please confirm receipt...

Beth

Importance: High

Board Members and Dr. McNeill, I know to class learning. I would like to know the following answers and hope these items are addressed and considered when determining my children’s’ future.

First let’s discuss Special Education. What is the plan when it comes to those students on an IEP? How is distance learning the least restrictive environment? How do you plan to attend to the needs, accommodations and education plan for my son? I assure you – SPED via Zoom was not effective, nor were his minutes met. Obviously with the return of schools I’m extremely concerned with his regression from distance learning last semester, not to mention most of his school career he hasn’t even been taught by a Special Educator but rather a substitute (not a certified special educator or even a certified teacher.) Now with the threat of distance learning again this fall, I demand to know what the Special Education Department’s plan is for students like my son. He deserves more than Zoom!

In response to the WEA letter, and any considerations being made by the letter submitted on their behalf. I understand, not every teacher is in the WEA and many teachers who are were not polled nor do they agree with what is in the letter. For those teachers who want to return, let them. For those families who want to return, let us!

Survey Results – I would like to know the percentages from your 64k families as to returning to school vs distance learning? How about the 8k staff, how many want to return vs distance learn? Please base your decisions on the majority – not a union who represents a percentage of the 8k staff; what about the thousands of staff who don’t belong to the union and the 64k families who have no part in their statements. No other business or industry would allow the pressures from a small portion of their staff to dictate the 64k customers (families) – you have offered choices, that is more than fair! In my opinion, if these teachers are so fearful to return to school, they should also be fearful to dine out, pick up a latte, go to Wild Island, etc. Will they be sheltering at home until schools open? Not leaving for any reason? Will they be required to be logged in teaching via their computer, in their home, the entire day? I promise you this is not what happened in April. I heard of zooms from the beach, out-of-town zooms, and sometimes, no zooms at all.

Finally, regarding funding, in business – if you don’t use something, you cut it! If you develop ways and behaviors that no longer need things like school buildings or teachers, they will be cut. Our kids need school buildings, they need teachers,
they need Special Education! I can tell you, you are losing “customers” – families are pulling their children from WCSD and enrolling in private schools, most of my neighbors have decided to do this. Many have already sought tutors or other means of educating their kids. How will this affect funding, teachers, schools in the future? This will broaden the gap, those with means will find ways to be educated and those without, won’t.

I appreciate you reading my letter, however that is not enough, I do want answers to many of these questions. Please don’t make this a yelling match, of who can be louder in their fight/position regarding all of this – it’s about our kids, getting educated, in schools. Safety is critical, but these discussions have happened, plans have been made, money has been spent, choices have been given. If families/teachers don’t like returning to school, they have alternative options, don’t take away our option of returning!

Thank you,
Beth

Beth Jones • Owner

Beth Jones, Owner
I urge you to open our schools for normal, in person instruction. Give us kids a real education, not a political statement by teachers and their unions that want to keep schools closed to affect the upcoming election. CDC says schools are safe, students are safe. Teachers need to get back to school and teach, else find new jobs! If the school won’t open, give us vouchers so we can take our kids to schools that will teach them.

Consider that once the district went to distance learning, my son never once got to attend a live class, never once had a chance to talk to any of his teachers. As best as we could tell, teachers dumped out assignments each week, then disappeared on taxpayer paid vacation. Don’t let this happen again!

It is bad enough that Nevada schools rank 45th in the nation, don’t make this worse!

Matthew

Matthew Weaver
Dear School Board Trustees,

I am sending this public comment to once again urge you to listen to public health experts and not open schools on August 17th. There have been numerous warnings that opening schools too soon will be costly to students, teachers, and our community. Your decision does not just impact students, it impacts the entire community. I was deeply disappointed to see how most trustees ignored the recommendation from the Health Officer to delay the start of in-person instruction. In fact, it was shocking to see some of the trustees ask questions that appeared to be politically driven in nature to public health professionals. It was also apparent that many did not have a deep understanding of COVID-19 or how this pandemic works. I would urge all of you to get more familiar with this novel infectious disease and to better understand how testing, tracing, and isolation is key to driving down our numbers. When you invite another opportunity for the virus to spread (i.e., opening schools), you are creating additional work for the WC Health District. They are already underresourced and understaffed. It is taking almost a week to get test results back. Opening schools will only add to this backlog.

Also, as a parent of a student who was supposed to start Kindergarten, I am thoroughly disappointed with the lack of information and resources provided by my son's school and the district. I have asked numerous times what the district is doing to identify children with medical conditions and have been told basically nothing. I would think the WCSD would have developed a plan to identify children who have medical conditions that put them at greater risk but that has not happened. Parents do not fully understand the risk for their children by returning to schools with inadequate protections. Without significant upgrades to ventilation systems, all the "deep cleaning" is not going to protect students or educators. This disease is not transmitted by touching contaminated surfaces so all the extra cleaning is really not necessary. Also, I am being told by my son's school that we have to provide masks and hand sanitizer for our children. I thought the district would be providing those. I still have no idea what distance learning will look like for my son, who his teacher is, what the daily schedule will be, etc. We are being told that the plans have not been approved and to just continue to wait. This is unacceptable. WCSD had all summer to develop plans for distance learning and we are still waiting to find out. Parents were given just a few days to decide if they should transfer to North Star, with again, little information about the curriculum. Knowing that schools will have outbreaks and will need to transition to distance learning, there should have been numerous plans in place already. We, as parents, are being told by Superintendent McNeill to "explore our options"....well we have and there is little to explore. What we hear from the WCSD and the schools is often contradictory.

If you continue to push the plan to reopen the schools without adequate plans in place, I hope that many of you will be prepared for the consequences of your decisions. What will you do when a child or teacher is in the hospital? What will you do when there are not enough subs to keep a school open? Will you take responsibility when this all goes south?

Delay the start of school so that community spread can slow down, adequate plans can be put in place, and ensure that students, teachers, and families will be safe and healthy.

Theresa L. Bohannan, MPH
Hi there,

We are a Hunsberger family and have loved our experience with that school. We were dismayed to see that WCSD pursued full in-person classes for elementary. We had hoped for a hybrid model that would have reduced the daily strain on teachers trying to keep our kids safe while reducing the transmission rates.

We were also disappointed that Washoe did not seem to have a very clear plan for distance learning that we could do through Hunsberger. We felt that last spring's distance learning was reactive to the situation and completely understandable. However, the district has had nearly 6 months to plan for the fall semester and nearly all disease experts suggested back then that COVID would be with us well into winter and beyond.

We also explored NorthStar, and even spoke with a representative, but 3-6 hours per day for 5 days a week for a first grader seemed unrealistic, especially since all of his learning would be 1-1 with a parent.

We had really hoped to keep our son enrolled through the district, and keep the funding whole with the school, but the poor communication on a distance learning plan and WCSD’s determination to fully open the elementary schools despite the urging of health professionals and the teachers union has given us pause. Given the information we have and the vast amount of information that we lack (such as plans for when cases arise, how distance learning will be conducted, etc), we made the hard decision to homeschool.

We hope to return to Hunsberger, but given the current course of action, we’re making the assumption that we’ll have to homeschool for the foreseeable future. I do hope that WCSD considers introducing approved homeschool courses that allows our son to remain enrolled while completing an educational program that is well fleshed out and designed to make home learning fun and rigorous. We have chosen to use Blossom and Root + Wild Math but also considered Oak Meadow.

Thanks for reading. I know that your job is not easy right now and we're all trying to do our best. I wish that WCSD had spent less time trying to reopen and more time trying to adapt to the current situation that we’re all in.

Casey
From: Susan Kaiser  
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 10:32 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] reopen schools safely using distance learning; then re-evaluate applying new data

Washoe County School Board Members:

As a 25 year veteran science teacher with National Board Certification I am calling on you to apply the scientific problem solving skills that I required of my students during my tenure with WCSD. In the event the observable data conflicts with the scientist's hypothesis that hypothesis MUST be revised to reflect the improved understanding.

As the weeks of summer ticked by, many people worked hard participating in long meetings, searching for guidance on safe conditions and problem-solving all manner of policies and procedures for students and staff. All of this work was founded on the assumption that the novel coronavirus would be retreating by the time the new school year began. This scenario has not played out and in fact the Covid-19 cases are on the rise in Washoe County.

As the scientist must follow the data to revise their scientific understanding, the decision of the Washoe County School Board to open schools for face-to-face instruction should be revised to reflect the very real possibility that people gathering in schools are at great risk of contracting Covid-19 and dying. Even one death of a person from an exposure to the novel coronavirus at school is too many.

The science says:
1. The number of Covid-19 cases in Washoe County are on the rise with the highest number of positive cases 123 recorded on August 6th.
2. The recommended distance between individuals is 6 feet to reduce transmission.
3. Frequent, effective hand washing for 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer will reduce the transmission rate. Yet, this may not be able to happen and the available amount of sanitizer is very concerning.
4. Proper wearing of masks will reduce transmission yet will be problematic for young kids and defiant students who may even use this tactic to disrupt the classroom by refusing to wear a mask or worse intentionally exposing others by coughing or spitting.
5. Kevin Dick, the Washoe County Health Officer explicitly recommended against reopening school for face-to-face instruction.
6. People of color are at higher risk of contracting Covid-19 so children and adults of color will be placed at increased risk if schools reopen.

The government recommendations are
1. The level of virus spread in our community should be considered in any school district reopening plan. This is not happening in WCSD.
2. Groups of more than 50 should not congregate. Every school will exceed this number during some times of the day: dismissal, lunch time.

Focus your energy and efforts on providing the digital devices for the students who do not already have these learning tools so that everyone can be learning while staying safe from this pandemic. I encourage you to sum up the courage to make these changes in the course of the 2020-2021 school year because peoples' lives depend on it.

Respectfully yours,
Susan Kaiser, NBCT
Hello,

Teachers and student lives should come first. WCSD has not developed a strong enough procedure to return to school this Fall. Please do not return to in-person instruction.

--

Aria Overli

ACTIONN Organizer
I was appalled by the district’s response to the principals’ legitimate concerns regarding the opening of schools because of its nasty tone discounting their concerns and instead focusing on the way they were conveyed. These principals are under stress trying to do the best for the students and staff. To treat their concerns so cavalierly showed a complete lack of respect. One wonders if this is why individuals didn’t go to district leadership. Could it be that they felt they would not be listened to or even might be retaliated against? The district needs to work hard to have positive relations with its employees at all times and especially in this trying time. This letter does not make principals feel the administration would even listen to them.

It seems to this community member that employee concerns are being disregarded. We all want what’s best for our students and a stressed and scared staff whose concerns are discounted is not going to achieve this. It’s up to you as the school board to do something about this.

Bonnie Barber, community member
Hello,

I would like to ask the Board what their plans are for Music Programs within Distance Learning and/or North Star. Specifically, for the specialty programs like Golden Strings, Jazz Band, Etc. Will students attending North Star have access to Elective Music Programs like Golden Strings (currently available at Billinghamurst Middle School)?

Thank you for your time.

--
Namaste`,

Phillip Paul
Dear School Board Members, We appreciate the long hours you have put in regarding the issue of schools re-opening. Thank you. We also strongly urge you to follow the advice of District Health Officer Kevin Dick and to postpone all re-openings at this time. "The unknown unknowns" must factor into your decision. Despite your admirable attempts to provide safe conditions, there are too many random variables in this situation. I am an atmospheric physicist and I urge you to follow the science and spare the lives. My wife concurs.

Sincerely, James G. Hudson, PhD
Karen A. Hudson

--
Sent from Galaxy phone or android watch
From: Jauquetta Kron  
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 1:36 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] school reopening.

I just wanted to throw out there, setting wash stations outside the school for before entering the school. And maybe with this taking up more time of the school days maybe extending the school time. And, will there be recess’s? also, how will common colds be handled.

Thank you,

Jauquetta Kron  
Revenue Auditor  
Nevada Casino Holdings, LLC  
P.O. Box 1847  
Sparks, Nv 89432

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I tell you what that is some awful family dynamics. I have people in my blood family I cant stand but I sure wouldn’t send them into what you’re sending us into. Shameful WCSD BOT and Dr. McNeil. People will get sick, people will have giant medical bills and some of us will die. I hope you enjoy your decisions. If only I worked in a district where they actually cared about teachers, like one of the thousands that are doing Online Only. Shameful.
Due to the high number of cases in Washoe County, I feel it is irresponsible to re-open the schools. Re-opening goes against the input of the Health District. Every day, more information is coming out about children being spreaders of COVID and also being affected more so than thought originally.

Schools in other parts of the US are already opening with negative consequences, many of which we will see in the next few weeks. Our schools are not equipped or prepared for re-opening. I understand that there are vocal community members arguing for a full reopening, but I would urge you to look to science and see that it is not safely possible at this time. The lives of our children, teachers, administrators, and staff are at play. Even one death is too many.

Best,
Katie Silva
I have read that you are measuring from the center of each desk to center of the next desk. Which makes it less than 6 feet apart. The CDC recommends from edge to edge.
Thank you for your inquiry to CDC-INFO.

Your request for information was forwarded to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Response Team. We hope you find their reply helpful.

Thank you for your inquiry.

We would recommend measuring from the outer edge of the object.
Also, I have heard that some teachers say that they are not going to wear masks in the classroom. That they don’t want to scare the younger students.

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone
How are medically susceptible to deadly outcomes via covid and multiple comorbidities to interact? Please don't just repeat bumper sticker slogans. Really, can there be measures or policies that still allow our dignity and life safety?
can the parent request their special needs kids stay in the main IEP class, rather than go into a gen-ed classroom time as in the past?

B.J. Perez

Sparks, NV 89441
Dear School Board Members,

The teachers don’t want to go back. They are writing out their wills. This is not to be dramatic, they are concerned, with good reason.

The kids are going to feel their teachers’ fear and frustration and that will translate to the teaching. This is NOT conducive to good learning.

The principals say, they aren’t ready. (RGJ article last Friday.)

Washoe County Health Department Head, Kevin Dicks is advising you not to open.

80% of teacher polled by Empower Nevada Teachers do not want to go back until it’s safe.

I understand we must find solutions for parents who have to work or who cannot provide support while their kids do distance learning, but that can be solved. Bringing all of the kids back, even on a hybrid schedule WILL FAIL. We will have people getting infected... most will recover, some will not...I’m wondering how you will feel when that happens?

I know you are doing your best, and the kids need contact with their peers. Perhaps the schools could help parents in low and middle income neighborhoods create in-tact learning pods that quarantine together.

Rich parents are bailing, they are hiring teachers and are creating pods of 5 - 7 students. We are going to end up with incredibly disparate results in learning this year.

Please get creative, bringing the kids back is the wrong answer for this moment in history.

Thank you,

Jane Grossman
Reno, NV 89511
Here’s what teachers are saying... please listen!

"Totally heartbroken."

"I feel like a sacrificial lamb."

"I thought I was a teacher. Oh no, a social worker. Wait, a police officer. Now a front-line health care worker. Just stop!!!
Dear Superintendent McNeill & School Board Members,

I am writing to you as an educator and resident of Washoe County. I am very concerned and disappointed by the lack of response and decision making that the school district has made in regards to reopening schools for face-to-face instruction.

Direct action has been taken in the enforcement of mask policies and the continued closure of certain businesses such as bars in counties of Nevada that show an increased rate of Covid-19 cases. However, you and other county officials have failed to take action in the reopening of schools for face-to-face instruction in these very same communities where positivity rates are not yet under control. Washoe County recorded 78 new cases of COVID-19 Wednesday 8/5/2020 as the seven-day positive test rate jumped to its highest mark in 32 days. The cases were discovered through 203 tests, the lowest number of tests since June 24. The seven-day positive test rate jumped to 8.2%, the county's highest mark since July 4 [SOURCE: https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/05/coronavirus-nevada-covid-19-updates-cases-deaths/3296303001/].

How can the Washoe County School District confidently continue to plan for in-person learning when the county has reported the highest positivity rate since July at 8.3%? Successful school openings have ONLY been accomplished in other areas when the positivity rate within the community is below 5% for AT LEAST two weeks as recommended by the World Health Organization. In addition, school openings across the country in states such as Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Indiana, Tennessee, and Texas have already had disastrous consequences resulting in outbreaks of Covid-19 among students and staff. Similar to WCSD, Mississippi school boards ignored their county health officer's warnings: "It's impossible to imagine that we are not going to pay the price for cramming kids into schools right now," said Mississippi health officer Dobbs, who voiced his preference for delaying in-person instruction and requiring universal mask use when reopenings occur." [SOURCE: https://www.forbes.com/sites/mattperez/2020/08/05/here-are-the-early-opening-us-school-districts-already-battling-cases-of-the-coronavirus/#ec5178a79baf].

Given that all of you have ignored similar warnings by Washoe County Health Officer Kevin Dick that "dark days" are ahead for Washoe County if our schools proceed with in-person learning plans along with the evidence from other states that have reopened schools and immediately suffered outbreaks, as the superintendent and our school board members you are forcing teachers, school staff, and students into an extremely dangerous environment that will inevitably lead to virus outbreaks, lifelong health complications, and death.

ALL three local major education associations in Washoe County (Administrators, Teachers, & Education Support Professionals) recommended that the district begin the school year with remote learning until cases are down and schools have the proper time to implement safety guidelines, but were all three ignored by those in district leadership. Additionally, you have made statements that you have not heard "informally or formally" that schools are not ready to open by principals and school staff, which from the questions asked in forums and by comments made by your very own employees directly to you on various platforms is just completely false. The WEA has also recently submitted a complaint to OSHA and has obtained legal counsel about the district's inability to provide a safe working environment for teachers and staff. As teachers have been to their school sites, masks and other protective equipment have not yet arrived, air conditioning/HVAC and ventilation systems have been found to not be in working order (which need to be addressed immediately given the airborne spread of this virus), and the reduced social distancing from the recommended 6ft to just 3ft (which is NOT based in scientific data on how to reduce the spread of Covid-19) in order to
increase class sizes put all teachers and school staff members at risk and make a safe work environment impossible. A picture posted on social media just on Monday 8/10/2020 showed a VERY crowded hallway at Reno High School where social distancing was in no way enforced as students waited in a building with no air conditioning to retrieve schedules and get ID pictures taken---ALL activities that could have been done safely online.

Many schools are short custodial staff that are required to implement and maintain proper cleaning and sanitizing procedures before, during, and after the school day. There has been no implementation of some sort of health screening before entering school that was identified in surveys from the district as a vital component of any reopening plans by both educators and parents. In addition, schools have not secured testing for Covid-19 that can be completed with results quickly and efficiently in order to identify positive cases and prevent any positive person that has been in the school building to cause a wide-spread outbreak. WCSD has also not addressed how the district can ensure the safety, health, and financial security of their employees who have limited sick days to compensate for multiple quarantines as necessary, as more mounting evidence is released that young children can spread Covid-19 just as efficiently, if not more so, as adults [SOURCE: https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamhaseltine/2020/07/31/new-evidence-suggests-young-children-spread-covid-19-more-efficiently-than-adults/?fbclid=IwAR13YA4-R_G7sVlfDsv99f2OAUQQW7pPCah-mzkmVTh-lgrnZ7NifaWqm7Il#473d796719fd].

While some of the smaller more rural school districts in Nevada that have less spread and fewer positive cases of Covid-19 may benefit from reduced restrictions in their reopenings, larger districts that have not yet gotten a handle on their current positivity rates need to be given stricter guidelines and their reopening plans MUST be directed to continue distance learning until the positivity rates are reduced and remain at a lower level for the minimum of two weeks. While Clark County has decided to make the responsible choice in having students and teachers continue remote learning for at least the start of the year, WCSD has ignored the recommendations of their education unions and county health officials, as well as concerns expressed directly from educators, and have shown blatant disregard for their employees within public education. My fear is that Superintendent McNeill and the Washoe County School Board have set the stage for a mass exodus of educators in a district already plagued by a teacher shortage and bad morale.

I am pleading with you to please reanalyze the data that has been provided to you and take a step back by directing all schools within Washoe County to NOT open schools for in-person learning at this time. You have left far too many decisions up to administrators at school sites, when you should have been the guiding force in implementing a more robust distance learning program and ensuring that ALL schools are on the same page for health & safety guidelines. I do not want the WCSD and state of Nevada to join the list of communities being featured on national news for having deadly results after rushing into face-to-face instruction. Ultimately the current plan will force schools to once again proceed with emergency shut downs and implement crisis learning plans as it is not a question of IF, but WHEN outbreaks will occur. I should not start off this already uncertain school year attending the funerals of my students and colleagues--or having them attend mine.

Thank you,
Rachel Fisher
Hello,
Please reconsider your decision to begin in-person schooling on August 17th. The schools and staff of Washoe County School District are not prepared for the arrival of students. Despite your bullish attitude and attempts to allay staff member's fears, the system in place is inadequate and your staff members are feeling ill-prepared and frightened. I have seen firsthand that your schools are simply not ready. Covid-19 case numbers are on the rise in this county and across the state. You must acknowledge this. Returning 60,000+ students and staff to buildings will lead to illness and death. It is not too late to change your minds and make the responsible choice to begin the school year using distance learning. Thank you,

David Zepeda
From: JESSE MARTIN
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 5:54 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pause Reopening Plan

Dear Board of Trustees,

There are two main reasons that WCSD should pause the August 17th reopening.

The first reason regards the current positivity rate. In Washoe County, the seven-day Covid-19 positive test rate rose to 6.9% as reported yesterday 8/10/2020. Health experts including epidemiologists and the CDC recommend that schools not open until the community has a reached a positivity rate of less than 5% for 14 consecutive days.

The second reason is that although the superintendent claims that WCSD will be ready for reopening, available information proves otherwise.

Recent social media and news outlets have reported that teachers and parents are concerned about the safety of opening at this time. Health and safety protocols are broad without the necessary specificity to address the spread of SARS CoVid-2. The emphasis is that school site administrators and teachers will “figure it out”. This is not acceptable. This should be organized and overseen directly by Health officials.

Recent observations and communications from WCSD demonstrate that there They are still not organized and ready to open. On Monday the RGJ reported “The Washoe County School District said it will aggressively exclude an entire elementary school class for at least 10 days if a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19. For middle and high schoolers, the plan is less clear and could mean multiple classes are excluded for 72 hours”. The plan did not have final approval as of Friday.”

Friday, Ten days before school opening the plan is still not approved! You need to approve plans with input from the implementation specialist to ensure what looks good “on paper” is actually doable with resources available. You cannot wait until the day before opening. Everyone needs to know the plans. Everyone. Parents, students, site administrators, teachers and the community.

On social media a person commented “Our principal - who is phenomenal and has spent weeks preparing plans to deal with this chaos- was advised to “get creative”.
“Get creative”? This is not the correct answer when the question is “How do we put 22 students in a room maintaining 3 feet distance when mathematically only 17 desks fit?”. Another response to a question about implementing guidelines was “figure it out yourself. We don’t know”. No. Just no.

Now is not the time to “get creative” or “Figure it out yourself”. Now is the time to follow the guidelines and rely on scientific and medical data to guide decisions.

The decisions regarding our schools opening for the school year 2020 should be data driven and evidence based, not conjecture and wishful thinking

If you are not able to provide the answers and solutions to the problems, then WCSD should pause and figure it out BEFORE opening.

Thank you,
Sandra Martin
I am a former educator, parent, and extremely concerned resident of Washoe County. Why is the district being so utterly irresponsible with their leadership during our global health crisis that is impacting Nevada and Washoe County in a major way? Why is leadership skirting around their responsibility by responding to the principal's union's statement that schools aren't ready to reopen with, and I am paraphrasing, "Well jeez and shucks! They never told us that!"

Kristin McNeill and every other district position of leadership should be absolutely ashamed in how they are handling this. ABSOLUTELY ASHAMED.

If the district can't handle making responsible leadership decisions and would instead rather cave into parental pressure to make detrimental decisions for our community, then perhaps you should rethink your professional roles as leaders.

I am disgusted. The district is trying to blame everyone but themselves for the horrendous choices they've made toward the 2020-2021 school year.

- Jenna Varshabi
Attention Board Members for the Board Meeting on August 11.

Trustees,

The district had five months to figure this out.

I want you to understand what's happening on our end with school and how my daughter's mental health is being affected by our "choice".

School starts next Monday. As of today none of us on distance learning still have ANY information on distance learning from the school. My daughter found out on TikTok today that she has a schedule on IC. Not the district, not the school...TikTok. I can't get ANY answers from the school other than "we will get an email" and an answer to my direct question "is it Edgenuity?". I called last Monday and I called today.

The email SSHS sent out today gives some information for in person classes but things are still unanswered. I have friends with kids at Wooster who still don't even have a schedule.

My daughter struggles academically and was put in difficult electives which involves math and things she will NOT be able to do without paying for tutors.

My daughter is a cheerleader so her options to maintain the sliver of normalcy she has to continue being tied to her home school is limited.

We have ZERO guidance with just one week to start of school. They are clearly NOT ready for this and have no idea what they are doing.

For months I said publicly online that the district had months to figure out distance learning and it would be better. I have been proven wrong.

At this point I have spoken to many parents who like me, are looking at legal action for not offering our students an equitable education to those in person. Never in my 20 years of involvement with the district (having served with Dr. Hager, Paul Dougan etc including the PUC committee and the Council and Regional rep for the NV PTA did I ever consider this measure).

We have no options for chosen electives on her schedule. I have no guidance to change that. There is no information on musical theater or photography which she would have been doing in person. She was given electives that she has no interest in and will certainly struggle.

We have heard (only confirmed by the principal's secretary today) that we are using Edgenuity which has a 1.8 star rating and has been found to be lacking in core standards.

Our children are being left behind. My daughter was tier II intervention and was already lagging somewhat behind. We are fortunate to be able to afford tutors. Many cannot.
I realized after the last board meeting that you had all (Minus Trustee Holland) had made up your minds on going forward and the meeting was theater but I BEG of you and all of you now to truly listen to the parents, teachers, principals and staff that are telling you, YOU are not ready. If parents, teachers and principals cannot answer these questions one week before school starts, then the planning is not complete.

Sincerely,

Michelle D. Beck

Spanish Springs, Sparks, NV

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Dear Board of Trustees and Dr. McNeill:

I received this from a fellow teacher who wanted to remain anonymous.

"I wanted to share some troubling news about how reopening schools has impacted my students when they choose to stay at home.

Last night, I received a few text messages from one of my yearbook editors. For context, I will provide a summary of the misinformation and negligence of the district as well as the student’s understanding of what her school promised to do for her. She attended yearbook camp online over the summer and was eager to help online with the program (we use a cloud program for the design, copywriting, etc.). She has also been in Health Science Academy the last year and wanted to continue the program for her career pathway after graduation.

In late July, a ConnectEd call went out and some information about deciding to return to an A/B modal, fully online, or full return (if the following special group criteria was met). The district prefaced with a conditional, if a student were to return in an online capacity, our site’s instructors would continue to provide the education she needed for her career pathway and other educational needs.

This summer, this student suffered from two different ailments (not COVID related) and she needed to take more than 3 weeks off from work. Her immune system is weak, and after discussing her concerns with her parents, she chose the online option. Her reasons being that she didn’t want to get others sick at school or run the risk of spreading COVID to her peers and family. She made an informed decision based on the information given by the district.

On Thursday, our site’s faculty returned for training. The socially distant spaces echoed with uncertainty; responses with “we still don’t know” and “I will get back to you at a later time” and “check with HR about that.” Many of the concerns of teachers narrowed on the focus of our students. The district has taken a student-centered approach to education since before I started the profession, with the outlier and founding message that school safety is of the utmost importance. Why might you ask? Building relationships, creating safe spaces, trust, respect all provide and enrich students with a higher achievement gap percentage. The data is there. So, many queries went towards the concern of three-four year programs at each site. If you don’t already know this, each high school in Washoe has a special focus or career pathway choices unique to the school. Our programs include Gifted and Talented (including Capstone), HOSA/HSA, and Culinary (I may be missing one or two). These programs, once complete provide students with an advanced diploma, up to 20 credits in college, and real life training with professionals, volunteer hours, and 21st century skills. So naturally, teachers asked what will happen to these students who choose online?
Edgenuity (the online choice platform - a credit recovery program) does not offer courses to satisfy these programs at our school. So the response was, well, “if they are not a senior, they can continue their final year” though it may inhibit their ability to receive the diploma or credits towards that career. This student just found out last night that she was not enrolled in these courses. The deadline for enrollment was yesterday at the end of the business day. The student then said she wanted to try to enroll at North Star online (I won’t discuss the problems with that here), but the deadline for enrollment has passed as well, two weeks ago, I believe.

We are doing more harm than good with this uncertainty; destroying the career and life choices for our next generation. Three weeks ago, the union had requested that the district heed the health experts and close the first nine weeks until a full plan was in place for safe reopening. That was all that was proposed; come up with a plan that works for our students and addresses the health and safety concerns of the community.

Sincerely,

A teacher"
I have a few questions regarding if and when we go to distance learning for the entire district.

How does the district plan to accommodate students and families who don’t have technology, need more than one computer in the home?

How will the district support students who are at risk (CIT, foster care, domestic abuse)?

How does the district plan to support families who need to work? Is there a plan in place to support families to create their own pods within their communities so students can go to school digitally, with adult supervision, and allow parents to continue to work?

It seems as though there should be a plan communicated to families, staff, and the community so
we can rally together and make distance learning work for everyone should we go to that scenario.

Thank you.
From: Andrew Cristancho  
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 8:09 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Cc: Questions; BoardMembers  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Message from Superintendent McNeill - Follow up from concerned parent  
Importance: High

Hello WCSD Team including Esteemed Trustees,  
I just wanted to follow up on this thread, (below), ahead of your meeting today.  
Myself, my family and several folks in the community, (as you know), feel the WCSD BOT has made a huge mistake in judgement in moving forward in opening for in-person classes this coming Monday, (August 17, 2020). I was astonished that the Board came to this decision after the express warning from your top health official Kevin Dick. I was also astonished that it was suggested by one of your members to Mr. Dick that perhaps it would be his responsibility to close schools if there’s an outbreak instead of the board’s. This is not the case as reported in this recent RGJ article: https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/05/education-updates-ahead-wcsd-unr-tmcc-opening-students/3302475001/. I respect you all highly for the work you do for our children, teachers and community, but I feel that sentiment was an abdication of responsibility. I would also like to support the WEA’s decision to file their complaint; to me it seems fair, appropriate and sound and is consistent with the Nevada Revised Statues that were cited in the complaint. I would also call you attention to the robust reporting coming out of Florida and Georgia, where schools there have opened and outbreaks have occurred...this was predictable.  
I too realize the need for children to be in school, but that’s a given and a constant; the current COVID19 pandemic is not...it is temporary. This time in history calls for extraordinary measures and leadership, please make the correct judgement call and reverse your decision to open schools to in-person learning. Instead throw your resources and your creativity and your hard work into providing the very best distance learning you and the District can provide. I understand that you may not follow my urgings, which are by the way the urgings of several in our local community and around the country; if you do not I hope that I am wrong and you are correct and everything will work out just fine with no outbreaks, no sickness and no fatalities caused by COVID19 in our Washoe County Schools.  
Thank you for your time and thank you for all you do!  

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Help Community!  
Thanks,  
Andrew Cristancho  
NNRMLS Director | Training & Engagement

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From: Andrew Cristancho  
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 4:55 PM  
To: Public Comments Washoe County Schools <PublicComments@WashoeSchools.net>  
Cc: questions@washoeschools.net; BoardMembers <BoardMembers@washoeschools.net>  
Subject: FW: Message from Superintendent McNeill  
Importance: High

Hello Esteemed Washoe County Schools Team and Board of Trustees,  
I just wanted to respond to this email with a my, and my family’s full throated support of Washoe County District Health Officer recommendations that you explained below!  
I, and my family and others I’ve spoken with in the community, believe that starting the school year fully online is the wisest, and safest, course of action for our children, our families, our teachers, our faculty and our community!
I think this pause in physical opening will enable your intelligent, creative, adaptive and hard-working team the space needed to address this serious issue more fully. One tidbit I’d like to share from the Austin Beutner Los Angeles Superintendent of Schools: He said, (and I am paraphrasing here, you can hear his exact quote if you follow the link below); that surely we all agree that it is imperative that all of our students return to school as soon as possible, but if you believe that then you must believe that before that happens that funding must be found for implementation and execution of a comprehensive testing and contact tracing regime for students, teachers and staff so that they can return safely. It’s a small price to pay. (Of course the testing and tracing is not the WCSD preview, but would fall on our community health officials.) I heard him speak during an episode of the Washington Post’s podcast “Post Reports.” If you’re interested here’s the link to that episode: http://podcast.posttv.com/itunes/post-reports.xml

Thank you for listening and thank you for your amazing dedication to our children, our WCSD team and our community! I’ll try to carve out some time to watch your upcoming meeting!

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Help Community!

Thanks,

Andrew Cristancho

NNRMLS Director | Training & Engagement

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From: WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT <email@blackboard.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 23, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Andrew Cristancho
Subject: Message from Superintendent McNeill

Good evening, WCSD families—

This is Superintendent Dr. Kristen McNeill with an important update to all of our District family:

Today, the Washoe County Board of Health met to discuss the current situation and statistics surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic in Washoe County.

During the discussion, the Washoe County District Health Officer recommended that all of our students engage in Distance Learning only as we begin classes next month.

The School District Board of Trustees will hear a presentation from the Health Officer during its meeting on Tuesday, July 28, at 2 pm and will consider this recommendation at that time. I encourage you to watch the meeting online as important decisions are made concerning the upcoming school year.

Once again, the Washoe County District Health Officer is recommending that all of our students engage in Distance Learning only when we return to classes next month. Our School District Board of Trustees will discuss the recommendation at Tuesday afternoon’s meeting. You can watch the meeting online on our YouTube site https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCChHIK-aa3yh6Z4EHo1Zntwg
We appreciate your flexibility as we confront these health challenges together, and we will provide further information as soon as possible.

Thank you, stay safe and have a good evening.
To Whom It May Concern:

At what point will a school be shut down to quarantine for an outbreak? The L.A. Unified School District originally stated (when schools were set to open) that if 5% of the school population contracts COVID, the school will be shut down for two weeks. What will happen if there is an outbreak at one of our schools? Already, we have seen 8 faculty being asked to self isolate at Grace Warner Elementary, will they be self isolating through the first week of school? Will there be enough substitutes available during outbreaks, or will there be periods of time where schools must participate in distance learning because of the lack of substitute teachers?

Nicole Fierro  
Sparks High School Alumni
Dear Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill,

I want to begin with thanks, as a member of the WCSD Family. Superintendent McNeill, thank you for your acknowledgment in your email to staff yesterday that even during times of disagreement, we are all showing up every day with the best of intention for our students and sites. President Raymond, I am particularly excited about the agenda item around threshold metrics used to determine appropriate learning environments based on COVID spread in our community. As we are all anticipating the start of this next school year, we continue to be met with wonder and imagination for how this historic year will work. I look forward to when this particular metric is more definitive than what we can imagine.

Typically in education, we celebrate both wonder and imagination. After creating a safe learning environment we ask our students (and our staff!) to engage in inquiry, to question, to synthesize, and to form judgments. We get excited when our students (and staff!) create new products from their inquiry.

Sometimes, however, wonder and imagination are our enemy. A pandemic, unfortunately, is one of those times. When each day brings a new article about how the novel coronavirus is attacking our communities, our parents, our grandparents, and our children, there is just too much left to wonder. In regular life activities, we wonder what is safe to do still? What do we need to adjust to stay as safe as possible? How can I preserve my kids’ mental health but also their physical health? How can I stay sane? Will I prioritize in-person learning for my children or the definitely safer distance learning option even though my kids will miss out on important social skills? Is my family as safe as possible so we all come out on the other side of COVID together? We are all imagining the worst because we know we aren’t through this - - - yet.

With everything that individual staff members are wondering in our personal lives, having to also imagine what will happen at our school sites in five days is putting many on edge. A good number of us still wonder:

- When the CDC guidelines and the governor’s directives don’t match, how do I keep my students as safe as possible?
- What does “community conditions decline significantly” mean in the context of current community conditions being more than double the WCHD recommended levels for reopening schools in person?
- In a headline society, does the AAP’s statement advising that “we should leave it to health experts to tell us when the time is best to open up school buildings” carry as much weight as the headline of the same article saying “pediatricians, educators and superintendents urge a safe return to school this fall?”
- When we hear the premise “do no harm,” who are we leaving out in our decision-making during a pandemic, which is inherently harmful?
- How do my site’s plans for distance learning compare to other sites’ plans? Is there equity for our students in our differences?
• If our schools who have been impacted by positive COVID cases now are ready to open their doors to students on the 17th, are they also ready to be open to staff tomorrow?
• When I am told by a Board member that the one or two deaths that could happen need to be balanced with the needs of everyone, I am heartbroken when I wonder - who will those one or two be?

One thing I definitely do not wonder or have to imagine is how hard EVERY person is working to plan for the start of the school year. While there are big questions that persist, I also know that site administrators and teachers will whole-heartedly step into their sites on Monday and somehow, by the superhero power of being a teacher, know what to do. Their smiles will shine above their masks, and their kids will feel love beyond measure.

As I have stated as a parent, and I agree as an educator, in-person education is the best option for all of our students who would like that option. And I reiterate my thanks for the attention of the Board and Central Office to these very big questions that persist as we all move toward the day and time when what we imagine becomes reality.

With appreciation and the most respect,
Mary Culpepper
Lincoln Park Elementary
Dean of Students

"It is always about the people, not the things." - Michelle L. Trujillo {Start With The Heart}
From: Kate Pflughoeft
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 8:59 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] school reopening

Dear WCSD Board Members,

I understand that the decision to reopen schools was difficult and that you had to weigh public safety vs the economic needs of the community and the challenges of distance learning. While I share the concerns that all students have equal access to learning materials, I do not believe that you fully considered our current degree of Covid in our community. The 14-day average cases (per 100,000) is more than double that designated as elevated by the Governor. I ask that you delay the opening of schools until our county can reduce our number of cases. In the last school board meeting a plan for distance learning that was presented. This plan was a huge improvement over that used in the Spring. Please implement this plan until our case numbers are under control. As of this morning the RGJ has reported on 2 elementary schools that have had cases of COVID during a week that is teacher/staff only. How is this going to work once the kids arrive? Please do not sacrifice our families, you can make distance learning work for the short term.

Thank you,
Kate Pflughoeft
I want to express how alarmed I am that WCSD is opening schools right now. We are in a full blown pandemic and several health agencies are not saying that it is safe for these kids to return to school. Trustees are saying that they believe it is safe because the Governor's Health Task Force has approved it but this is just picking and choosing which medical professionals agree with the WCSD agenda. Washoe County Health District does not believe it is safe and the CDC does not believe it is safe. We know that this will lead to disaster and death.

Schools in Washoe County are chronically underfunded. A few years ago our voters were asked to raise sales tax because our schools were literally falling apart. If we cannot afford to maintain our schools during a booming economy then how are we going to be able to maintain our schools when revenues are going down and maintenance and safety costs are going up? It is wishful thinking.

Safety requires everybody in the school to respect the rules of social distancing, wearing masks, sufficiently cleaning, and acting responsibly. We have seen pictures out of Georgia, where children are not at a safe distance, and children are not wearing masks. We have seen pictures here in Washoe in the past week, of children who can not even stand in a queue while practicing safe distancing. Children are not capable of comprehending risk at the same level as adults. Children are not capable of the same level of responsibility as adults. This is not to mention that many adults are not taking safety precautions. If we cannot get adults to take safety precautions then how can we think we will get children to take safety precautions? It is unbelievable. How can you risk so many people's lives on such preposterous expectations?

WCSD must postpone opening or move fully to online schooling.

Thanks,
Adrian Lowry
Regarding the school Board Meeting today, Tuesday, 8/11. I am asking that schools be virtual until a comprehensive and safe plan is in place.

It is my understanding WCSD schools don’t have PPE, and administrators don’t even know what staff will be returning. We are already seeing COVID cases in schools, and no plan on quarantining.

Why are we harming our teachers and students? For what purpose? When teachers start dying or racking up thousands or hundreds of thousands of dollar medical bills what are you going to do for your staff?

Are you really going to let children die over this?

Please consider what you are doing. What you do now will have a profound impact on all our lives.

Do not all children deserve better than risking death to be in school? Even if it’s only a small percent, what children would you choose to doom?

Thank you for your time.
August 11, 2020

I am writing today to urge you to reverse course on opening Washoe County schools in person. Our community is nowhere near where we need to be in regards to controlling the spread of COVID-19 to safely reopen schools. Not to mention that in the first three days of teachers being back at school, one school already has 8 staff members self-isolating at home. Eight staff members who, if they self-quarantine for 14 days, will not be available for the first day of school. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Beyond the fact that our community is not where it needs to be to safely reopen, we are learning more and more about the disease every day. 97,000 children tested positive for COVID-19 during the last 2 weeks of July. Clearly this is a disease that affects children, too. We don’t know the long-term effects of infection by COVID-19 on children, either. No, they don’t typically appear to require hospitalization (except in the case of the severe inflammatory condition that can occur), but there may be other long-term residual effects that we have not yet discovered. Children have accounted for 9% of the U.S. cases to date. Dr. Sean O’Leary, a pediatric infectious disease specialist at Children’s Hospital Colorado and vice-chair of the Committee on Infections Diseases for the American Academy of Pediatrics, said, “I think it’s [the 40% surge in the nation’s cumulative total of child cases] showing that yes, kids can get infected and can spread the infection.”

Teachers are being forced to choose between their livelihood and their health, a choice that is totally unfair to ask anyone to make. A classroom is not the same work environment as say an office building or even a retail store. Teachers want to teach; most teachers come to the profession as a calling, not just a job choice. Of course they want to be with their students. That is not the issue. The issue is health and safety, two things that cannot be guaranteed in a classroom this year. Last spring, teachers were recognized and identified as the heroes and skilled professionals that they are. Now, we are acting as if they are disposable and easily replaced. Shame on us.

The Washoe County Health District supported distance learning at the July 28, 2020, board of trustees meeting, a suggestion that was blatantly disregarded in the vote to reopen schools. We must listen to the scientific professionals when making these decisions. They have the knowledge and expertise to be able to guide us as safely as possible through times like these. Ignoring their advice is irresponsible and dangerous.

I implore you, please reconsider opening Washoe County schools in person. Please. For the health and safety of our children, our teachers, our administrators, our parents, our grandparents, our community. We all want things to return to “normal”, but trying to reopen things too early only sets us back on the path to this goal, and now is too early.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marilyn Knuth
When will be provided with access to a non-toxic soap/water-based cleaning/disinfectant solution approved by the Washoe County Health District? It is almost Wednesday and school is starting on Monday.
Hello,
Thank you for all the hard work! I realize everyone has worked very hard on behalf of all students. I appreciate and value your time and consideration.

Could someone please address how distance learning will be handled for Special Education and Regular Education learning?

I don’t think it’s been made clear. Will teachers from other schools outside our kids “Zoned” school be teaching our distance learning kids? Or will they be taught by teachers from our “Zoned” schools? (Especially Spec. Ed)?

Our kids are familiar with Staff from their schools.

How will we know the curriculum, the quality of instruction? Would we get a less experienced teacher? A difficult or teacher reassigned because they’re tenured and no Principal wants to work with them? Would we have a choice of teachers if it’s clearly not a good “fit”. Or, will we “get what we get”, with no choices, and teachers our kids aren’t familiar with?

I’m Spec Ed mom. I am very concerned about Civil Rights, ADA, and all potential legal violations protecting Special Education Students. We don’t want “the best”, just a level playing field. Afforded the same education and educational opportunities afforded to “in school” students.

Why should our kids have to have teachers from other schools? Why would it be acceptable to be assigned a teachers we don’t know, our kids not familiar with? Why is it acceptable for students “in person education” be afforded the right to change schedules/teachers? How is it an equitable education?

I’m concerned for all distance learners, will they receive equitable education? Will they receive any and all considerations given to “in school” learning students?

There’s a huge legal aspect. Please be advised. I’m not an angry, constant complainer. However, If I don’t advocate for my Son-no one else will. So, I’ll be watching. The laws protecting Spec. Ed students are clear. It’s not what schools “can do”, it’s what schools “must do” to ensure an equitable education.

My Son needs familiar faces from HIS school for Distance Learning. He’s entitled to the same choices, learning experiences and teachers his classmates would receive at Billinghurst.

Please take into consideration, not only does every child have the right to an equitable education. EVERY child. Special Education students have multiple layers of legal protection.

Please, address the issue of equitable learning for all students.

Thank you,
Nadia Entriken
I would like to know if you have updated the filtration systems in the schools? I believe all faculty and students should be tested before school starts. Do you have any plans to get that done? They say that 1 in 4 kids carry the virus and don’t know they have it. Children are the number one spreaders. Schools need to wait a couple of more weeks until they open.

Sent from my iPhone
From: Reynolds, Debbie  
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:52 AM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: Letter to Board of Trustees

August 11, 2020

Dear Superintendent Kristen McNeil and Board of Trustees:

When faced with the challenges of returning to a classroom during this pandemic, I quickly realized that a Distance Learning teacher would be a much safer option for me as I have lots of underlying medical conditions that could cause serious short-term and long-term health complications.

I was pleased that the district was offering a variety of options for families including Distance Learning so that I could remain teaching for the year. Realizing that I had a good chance of being approved for one of those positions, I spent many, many hours over the summer watching training videos for SeeSaw, Virtual Classrooms, Microsoft Teams, District Curriculum, Filming and Editing my own classroom videos, DL classroom management and the list goes on...including the District online PD.

Now I sit here immobile because things are changing every day and no decision has been made about who will be teaching the DL positions or what grades or how many students they will have and we are only 3 work days away from the start of school...all while numbers of parents calling in to change their child from in-person to DL are skyrocketing. Our admin and teachers have met to come up with “creative ways” to solve these scenarios but none of them are good for students and best solutions would include extra allocations to our school sites, not just “greenhouse employees” visiting for the first week to lend a hand. What happens after that week and we don’t have any extra “hands on deck!”

For myself, Distance Learning has now become my top concern. When I applied to the ADA and asked for an accommodation, I did not have any idea it would include teaching 30-40 students across 2-3 grade levels. Looking at many schools, this is the only viable solution without more staffing. This would be so incredibly stressful! The stress from these past two weeks has already caused me to have a flare up of my autoimmune diseases, and I am struggling with pain, sleep and anxiety. I fear what is going to happen when I begin delivering online face-to-face instruction for 2-3 different grade levels, read, plan and implement 2-3 different grade level curriculums and provide SEL to 40 students and families.

This scenario will take 14 hours a day to do, and I know this is happening all over the district. We all know that this is not BEST practices. It is not even fair practice, it’s perilous, inadequate and inappropriate. So now, I am replacing one unhealthy environment with a very stressful and unhealthy accommodation. The extra stress will most certainly cause my health conditions to worsen.

Distance Learning is supposed to be fact-to-face contact with time to address individual needs at the same time. This is not an online curriculum that we have had years to design, collaborate and deliver to large numbers of students with access to video streaming, online resources, cameras and new technical equipment and other seasoned online teachers.

I hold you all accountable for my health and this mess that you have put our administrators, teachers, parents and especially me in. You have no idea what position we are in because none of you have ever been in an Elementary School classroom for any great length of time.

I am appalled that I am being faced with taking a medical leave of absence for this school year because you all continue to make very poor leadership decisions that will have an adverse effect on so many.
Debbie Reynolds
What kind of loss (student or teacher) does it take to realize opening school at this time is dangerous? Are you prepared to handle the grief within the school and still promote the best learning? You have put in a lot of thought in trying to promote re-open schools but..... now is not the time especially when news reports show that children are being more affected. PLEASE RETHINK YOUR DECISION. Not opening is much less a disappointment than loss of life.

A concerned former educator, former volunteer, and citizen of the community
I want to know why you are not doing temperature checks twice a day before a student comes in and after lunch. I know for a fact my grandchildren father doesn't have a device at home.

So how many other people don't check each day before school.

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device
Hello Trustees,

I am writing to urge you to delay in person instruction and instead focus on accommodating all students and teachers with distance learning.

With a 9 week delay the district can fine tune the process and straighten out the overwhelming confusion so many parents are facing right now. Every parent I know is finding that none of the choices being offered work for their families needs, or they are getting vague, confusing, and conflicting information from the district and their school.

The scattered plans as they stand now do not keep children safe nor effectively continue their education. While I understand the desire to offer choices, each option being offered has not had time to be fully developed, leading to massive confusion and ineffective instructions for so many students. Please take the time now to focus on just distance learning that accommodates all students needs and take the 9 weeks to make sure returning to in person instruction can be done safely.

I acknowledge that many families are facing a difficult decision regarding returning to work vs. keeping their children safe at home. I do not feel that they should be forced to make that decision. Delay the start of in person instruction and ask the state to offer support to families who cannot return to work until it is safe to send their children to school.

I also want to acknowledge the difficult position that teachers are in right now. It is simply not fair to ask our neighbors (many of them also parents of school aged children) to put their safety on the line by requiring they return to classrooms without fully developed plans to keep them safe.

Please consider what choice a teacher with minor health issues and a child needing tiered support should make to keep their family safe and continue the education of their children and students.

Thank you for your time,
Georgia Russell
How will IEP’s be addressed. We have not heard anything about how our children's needs will be met, or taken care of as we haven't even received their school schedules yet. As a mother of a child with Autism the unknown is very scary for my son and my inability to provide him with ANY answers at all is a bit frustrating. I know everything is very fluid and decisions are changing daily; however when the decision to go back to school was made there should have been some focus on special needs students.
Why not do online until January 2021

Sent from my iPhone
[EXTERNAL] Do the schools have a alcohol base cleaner for the teachers on the desk to use or a soap n water cleaner? We need to protect our teachers, staff and children.
My question is can I still enroll my kindergarten into distance learning. What will I need to do to make this happen. What program do I need?

Sent from my iPhone
Please see below my public comment for the WCSD Forum on 08/11/2020. My name is Stewart Terry, my fiance is a WCSD teacher, and we have two children in WCSD.

What is the justification for constantly reporting to the media that the health and safety of your students and staff is your "highest" priority when WCSD leadership ignores the county health authority's advice to not re-open in person learning at this stage of the pandemic? The story being told to the media by WCSD does not reflect the actions of WCSD leadership in ignoring the advice of health officials. This amounts to willful deception, does it not? What is WCSD's plan to manage civil liability for willful untruth on the health and safety of students and faculty, in public meetings that are subject to Nevada's Open Meeting Law?

Thank you,
Stewart Terry
Having listened to friends and relatives who are teaching and reading other local posts on social media regarding WCSD opening next week, I feel the need to ask you once again to STOP this crazy plan to open at this time. There is no reason to hurry into this situation. Even if you do go back this fall, the principals and teachers are NOT ready. It is extremely disheartening to watch you (WCSD School Board and Superintendent) put all the onus on principals and teachers and custodians to open up this quickly. Teaching assignments are just now being communicated?!?! You expect schools to prepare for all of this in less than a week? To me, you are behaving like trump, who has shifted all of his responsibilities to the states and governors with little to no financial help or leadership. You, too, are putting everything on the shoulders of the principals, who I am sure are extremely stressed out trying to deal with the incredible load from you.

I have been saying for months, and several emails to you, to put your energy into creating learning pods for those areas that in-person instruction is needed with WCSD assigned to work with those students who need them in safe and small environments. Instead, you are forcing teachers to work and NOW forcing students to attend (reports of online registrations being cut off) when you have tried to say you care about safety and will take care of all the problems.

Rumor has it you want to open so you can close in a few weeks. What a waste of energy and time. Look at the national outlook of schools who are going back and decide if WCSD wants to be associated with those who appear to not care or those (most) who have made the choice to be safe.

Now that college football is also cancelled, and political conventions, the school social distance number has returned to 6 feet and the COVID positive testing and sickness numbers are NOT getting better, might you consider being on the right (correct) side of history and show that you care about your teachers and principals and staff.

I am so disappointed in you. I have always supported you and WCSD in the past as I taught for you for more than 30 years before retiring last year. Now, I am sad to say that you have lost my support and I wonder what has happened to common sense and caring for your employees. PLEASE consider changing this insanity and delaying the opening of school. It is not necessary to be stubborn and sticking to your ill-conceived plan.
Dear WCSB Members,
I just wanted to thank you for your decision to give families a choice of in-person or distant learning options for the start of the school year. This is a generous decision. Please know that, despite all the criticisms and news stories designed to create panic, you have made the correct choice.

If you have been examining that statewide data, you will have seen that COVID metrics have been trending down since your last meeting. In fact, in the last seven days, hospitalizations from confirmed cases are down 19.5% statewide. Locally, recoveries have begun to outpace new cases. This is a great thing and provides us with hope.

I wrote one of the first health and safety plans approved by the state regulatory agency (Nevada Gaming Control Board) to reopen a medium-sized business here in Reno. I just want you to know that as important as the health and safety plan is, being able to learn and change is also important and a key to safety. Be ready to adjust for optimal efficiency and mitigation. That is the key to success. Do not panic. Do not induce fear. Smart informed decisions and cool heads will prevail. I have all the confidence in the staff to bring safety matters forward and know that principals and staff will handle them accordingly.

The families that have chosen to send our kids back for in-person learning are here to help. Reach out to the schools' bodies and we will do what we are able. Thank you to the teachers, support staff, and leaders for your support of education and the safety and well-being of our children.

Finally, just a reminder that your choice to allow limited in-person learning continues to be backed by the medical community, our national center for disease control, and new studies like this one in the UK: [https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53718066](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53718066)

"There is little evidence of coronavirus being transmitted in schools, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson has said. Mr Williamson said the government was being guided by the best science as it accelerated plans to reopen schools to all pupils in England next month...The evidence is clear that children are much less likely to become very ill from coronavirus than adults....A review of 18 studies suggested children might be half as likely as adults to pass on the virus."


"One of the world’s largest studies of its kind is expected to conclude that there is little evidence that coronavirus is transmitted in schools, according to a UK media report on Sunday, giving a boost to their proposed reopening next month. Professor Russell Viner, President of the UK’s Royal College of Pediatrics and a member of the government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), told ‘The Sunday Times’ that a forthcoming report by Public Health England (PHE) would help put parents’ minds at rest as the UK prepares for a full reopening of schools after lockdown and the current summer holiday period in Britain. “This is some of the largest data you will find on schools anywhere. Britain has done very well in terms of thinking of collecting data in schools,” he said. The study was carried out in 100 institutions in the UK and is expected to be published later this year. About 20,000 pupils and teachers in 100 schools across England were
tested to monitor the spread of the disease up to the end of the summer term – which runs from April-July in Britain. "It is absolutely essential for schools to reopen in September. The risks to children from Covid are very low and the risks of school closures we know are very serious," he said.

Thank you for your time,
Brandon Siri
Can someone go through what an ACTUAL day is going to look like at all levels from Drop off to pick up, whether that be bus or in person, including buses, before lunch, recess, hallway passing, and release from school to avoid crowded hallways?

What exactly are the details of “mask free” times?

Thanks,
Kathy
Dear School Board,

Thank you for meeting today. I would like to keep my public comment brief.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) recommends that schools open only if the positive test rates in a community are below 5%. We are currently sitting between 7.5-8.5% here in Washoe County, and we are at 11.4% in the state. Both of these numbers are well above 5% - each percent above 5% represents a significant increase in risk. I am asking one simple request: please follow the AFT guidelines and delay the in-person opening of schools until we are below 5% in Washoe County. I believe this will happen soon if we all work together. If we open schools now, the number will rise, and we will need to shut down, which will be hard for families and teachers.

We already have four schools (possibly more, by the time the board receives this) that have had COVID-19 cases and needed staff to quarantine. This is before students come, so this will become more common next week. If the board makes the decision to delay school re-openings until we meet this important safety threshold, families and teachers will have time to plan for online instruction for the coming weeks until we can get our numbers under control.

I beg you to consider this. You will be helping students and families, and saving lives.

Best wishes,

Dr. William Toledo

William Toledo
Assistant Professor of Elementary Social Studies Education
University of Nevada, Reno
Is WCSD ready to open schools for ALL students on Monday? We've elected distance learning through our elementary school for my son with high-risk medical issues. As of today, I don't know how distance learning will operate. Should he be in a Zoom meeting on Monday morning? I understand that these are unprecedented times, but the many remaining unknowns leave me worried that school won't be starting for my son on Monday morning. Will there be compensatory services if school doesn't start as scheduled? Make-up days? All the focus seems to be on in-person learning. Please share additional information about distance learning for the kids that can't be there in-person.

Thank you,

Mary Beth Collins
Dear Board of Trustees,

I have one child on an IEP and one on a 504. Both need to be physically in school to make progress. I believe the relatively less effective options of distance/hybrid models would have grave impacts on my students. I generally support the options offered with the current reopening plan. However, due to the risks posed by large gatherings and the additional challenges of managing distancing in classrooms, I believe WCSD should not open schools at all without temperature checks at the door and adequate PPE for teachers and students in need. These are the basic entry requirements I encounter at every doctor's office I visit, and they do not have nearly the numbers of individuals to deal with that schools do.

It is an egregious and deadly abdication of responsibility that our Federal Government has left us with inadequate testing capabilities. The result is that we really have no good choices that meet the needs of students and teachers. All options present great risks of one kind or another. That we are even considering going back to school without the ability to test frequently, widely and get results back rapidly seems extreme, desperate and dangerous. If there were any way that WCSD could perform routine (batch?) testing on a portion of each schools' students and staff, with same-day results, I would add that to the basic requirements I would expect for a relatively safe reopening.

Regards,
Stephanie Crowne
From: Adrianna Benjamin
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:29 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] I support the safety of teaching and support staff - please invest in distance learning NOW

WCSD,
Over the past month, it has been disheartening to see the district disregard the recommendations of the County Health District, principals association and teaching association and forge ahead with in-person school instruction this fall. I plead with you to urgently switch to distance learning for all students at least until October. Other nearby school districts (including Placer Co., which has lower covid-positive numbers than Washoe Co. currently has) have switched to distance learning until October. For the safety of our entire community, please reconsider your plan and switch all students to distance learning.

Thank you,

--
:: :: Adrianna Benjamin :: ::
To the Board,

We are opposed to reopening of the schools. Based on what is known about Covid, we do not believe it is yet safe for kids or teachers to return to the classroom. More information seems to be coming out every day on the impact on children as well as how they may spread the disease. You apparently have decided the risks are minimal. We strongly disagree. My wife is a former elementary school teacher and we have raised two children. We would not support sending our children or returning to teaching in the classroom under the current conditions. The Washoe County Health Department has declared it unsafe to reopen schools at this juncture and you have blatantly chosen to disregard their findings which we feel to be utterly irresponsible. Furthermore, the schools district is unprepared to fully implement distance learning for all students as you have focused your efforts on returning to in school education. We have personal information from two elementary schools where the majority of parents have elected to keep their children safe at home. Furthermore, you don’t seem to be listening to either your principals or your teachers and make unfounded statements that you haven’t heard dissension from the rank and file. What are they supposed to do when you make a unilateral decision that school is reopening? Short of striking, there seems to be little they can do to make you listen. You need to open your minds and ears and reach out to your staff and community before making decisions for everyone.

Donald and Nancy Petersen
Reno, NV

Sent from my iPad
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From:</th>
<th>Robert Thompson</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sent:</td>
<td>Tuesday, August 11, 2020 1:34 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>To:</td>
<td>Public Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>[EXTERNAL] Outbreak protocol</td>
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How will you hand outbreaks
Class, wing, school what is the plan?

Sent from my iPhone
Dear Board Members:

I’m sure you’re all keeping up with the latest studies and hopefully you can see there’s a dearth of evidence that it’s safe to send our kids back to school. We’ve had cases in two WCSD schools this week and they have not even reopened yet. Per the NYT we’re looking at ~450 positive kids returning to our district on the first day based on community infection rates and the size of our schools. How long will that take to spiral out of control?

Take a look at the public comments. Take a look at the community data. Take a look at the Health Dept’s recommendation. You should be embarrassed and ashamed to think that opening is a good idea.

Geoff Smith
I thought that UV rays killed this virus? If that is the case why can't playground equipment be opened? Kids need some physical activity throughout the day. I am sad my son does not get to experience the joys of going to school, you all have turned it into a prison sentence. I am not qualified to teach him and that is the only reason I am sending him to in school learning.

Please reevaluate the recess and playground equipment usage. We allow our kids to play at parks!

A concerned parent over the mental well-being of our children.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Hello,

I have a 12-year-old daughter, who will be attending 7th grade at Billinghurst Middle School this year. I am very concerned about the COVID19 pandemic and students/staff returning to schools. I understand the need for in-person instruction as I saw the impact of distance learning on my daughter at the end of the last school year. I have decided to try the hybrid model despite my concerns because I know my daughter wants to return to school and have social interaction with classmates. I feel that the reopening should be delayed to make time for better planning and preparation. I am currently 5.5 months pregnant. My 66-year-old father also lives with us. Both of these things factor into my concerns regarding the school year. I worry that my daughter will contract COVID19 and either spread it to myself or my father. I sincerely hope that the school district takes situations like these into consideration. If there is an outbreak of cases at my daughter's school I will be immediately pulling her for my safety, the safety of my unborn child, and my father's safety. I urge the Board of Trustees to reconsider reopening on August 17th. Even pushing it out 4 weeks would give teachers, principals, parents, and students time to plan and prepare. I support WEA in their opposition and I stand with the teachers, students, and staff who feel it is too soon to open. I know these are difficult times and we cannot prepare for every variable. I do think we can make sure families and WCSD employees are safe while still educating children. Thank you for your time.

--
Amber Falgout
Northern Nevada Manager
Battle Born Progress
All students should attend classes five days a week as a normal school day and year. Any other class schedule steals from taxpayers who have paid for and got zip over the last few months. If the school board officials cut class time for any student; then they should refund my tax money paid to support schools in Washoe County.

Paul E Smith

Incline Village, NV. 89451
Hello all
5 days in counting til reopen! Still no plans for Strategies special needs distance learning?! Why no communication and still no plans?? We have had 4.5 months to prepare for this situation with Covid pandemic! We all want some honesty and transparency.

Concerned parent

Sent from my iPhone
From: Briant Gibb  
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 2:29 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for Board of Trustees Meeting 8/11

Dear Washoe County School District Board of Trustees,

Thank you for holding your regular public meeting to discuss questions and concerns regarding the re-opening of schools in Washoe County School District. As a 12 year teacher in the area and with two children attending schools in WCSD, I bring to you my unique perspective. I write to you as a professional who has devoted ample time to the profession of teaching with a genuine care and interest in young people's lives. Like many other teachers, switching to an online/virtual format for teaching/learning last Spring was not a desirable shift. It came with a lot of bumps and hiccups in the way. However, recognizing the serial encroachment of COVID-19 cases in the Washoe County area, I implore you to re-consider your decision to re-open schools beginning soon. This being a novel virus that public health specialists are continuing to study to learn more about the dangers and risk associated with both children and adults becoming infected by the deadly disease is heart wrenching. Like many opinion columns or news stories around our nation, I am very cognizant of this deadly wave infiltrating our neighborhoods, our homes, and more importantly our schools. Elderly people are not the only ones impacted by this pernicious disease. Both healthy adults and children are experiencing health complications and in worst case scenarios death. Please do not underestimate or belittle the powerful effects of this stealthy virus. Again, I beseech you to delay the re-opening of schools until the Washoe County Health District reports cases coming down in our community and we get a better grip on containment and contact tracing. As a teacher and dad, I understand the importance and meaning of in person learning for our children. I am a staunch supporter of this notion. Just not now. Please take immediate action by delaying the re-opening of schools. There are too many concerned teachers, administrators, support staff, bus drivers, and families to be careless and hasty in your decisions. Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Briant Gibb
Why are you not taking the temperature of all staff, students, and any parents/guardians who come onto each campus daily? Almost every other large business in the state does that daily.
I don’t trust the decision to reopen the schools next week. Therefore, my kids will not be attending in person school next week. I would trust a science-based decision to reopen, such as a certain test positivity rate, or a number of positives averaging less than 10/100k etc. After meeting these criteria recommended by health professionals, I would want to know that all teachers and students are being provided with PPE. Lastly, everyone needs to be tested before returning and routinely tested throughout the year. None of these things are in place and the district appears in chaos. It’s a disaster and you should be ashamed. People will get sick, some will die, and this pandemic will never end if you continue with plans to reopen. How do you think you’ll be able to live with yourself?
To the Board of Trustees:

I do agree that the students need to get back to school and continue learning, however, right now is not the time to return to school.
We do not understand the long-term impact of Covid-19 and subjecting 64,000+ students and 8,000+ staff is simply irresponsible.
You still have time to make the right choice to begin distance learning. There will be a time for all students and staff to return to schools but right now is not the time.

Thank you,
Cheri Fierro
Hello,

I am writing this as a concerned teacher and community member. Daily, since before COVID-19 and the spring semester and up until 12 noon today, there have been dozens of homeless people camping and being around our school on second street called Innovations High School. While they are not camped on our campus they have been frequenting our campus to sit on benches that were made for the scholars to have lunch and breaks outside (during lunch and supervised times). My concern is that RPD and WCSO have not taken mine and other staff reports seriously and have not dealt with this issue that has been long-standing and is now threatening a safe outdoor space for our school's students and staff.

Additionally, our campus is not "closed for lunch" and to take a break out of the building, get/buy lunch and enjoy their lunch break my scholars will be subjected to this population that is naturally unhygienic and definitely not wearing masks or social distancing. My students, who mostly walk could take 3rd street when they go out for lunch at the surrounding Keystone and fifth st businesses. I and my colleagues are committed to this issue and according to NRS, there are to be no homeless people on any school grounds at any time during the school day. Because of the threat to our safety and the safety of our students, I am bringing this up to public comment. We will also continue to report AND alert the media of this issue.

With the homeless population being what it is because of what is going on in our area, this issue will get worse before it gets better. I would hate to see the district in hot water for not being proactive enough for the students and staff at Innovations who deserve as much as safe and homeless free environment as other schools are afforded.

Thank you!
Dear Board of Trustees and Dr. McNeill,

I am a parent of an AACT graduate and an AACT senior. I am also a special education teacher in an elementary school. I am very concerned about the 3' of distancing in both elementary school and middle school. I have not seen the science behind this directive. It feels as if it is to play a numbers game. In middle school, it is very rare to have students who are 10 years old. I have yet to find any scientific evidence suggesting that three feet of social distancing are appropriate for middle school students. The AAP suggested that it *may* be okay for our youngest students. "May be okay" is not the same as "is okay". For our middle schoolers, when they hear 6', realistically they are closer to 3'. Now that the rule is 3', I doubt that it will be possible for them to stay that far away. They will be significantly closer than that. This will be dangerous. Can you help me to understand the logic behind it?

I have also been thinking about our developmental preschoolers and our students in CLS and Strategies. Many of them are in diapers, regardless of age. What is the protocol for that? I feel there is just so much that we don't yet know and school is starting in just under one week.

I do appreciate what the district has been trying to do. I understand the hours spent, early mornings, late nights, and weekends. Most of my summer was spent worrying and trying to figure out how to best serve my students whether they choose distance or in-person learning. I have so many concerns. On top of that, I have many people in the public claiming I do not want to teach, I should just quit, I am lazy, I don't care about my kids. None of that is true. None of that is true for any teacher I know. We miss our students like crazy. Whether in person or at a distance, teachers will *absolutely* be teaching their students. There are no bonbons being eaten on the couch.

Sincerely,
Kristen De Haan
I am a community educator on the other side of the Sierra. I frequent Washoe County and care deeply for an educator under your employ, their 2 daughters and their 8 school-age cousins.

As a family, everyone has changed their habits to protect each other. It has been incredible to witness how they have come together to protect the vulnerable among them. That is what families do. Whether its aging parents (grandparents to 10 students in your district) at high risk of morbidity were they to contact covid, or young kids who have fought their way back from Failure to Thrive... Doing the right thing was never a question.

They took the shelter in place seriously, banded together from a distance to ensure everyone's physical needs were attended to by way of food, water, shelter and mental health wellness. It has been an incredible learning experience. But the only reason they were able to learn together was that they valued each other's safety and well being above the fantasy of returning to "normal" life.

It is unethical to expect teachers return to the classroom. Expecting students to return to classrooms is absurd-- classrooms where teachers are unable to provide safe access to PPE and actual safe distance to slow the spread of COVID-19 within your buildings. Absurd.

Thats just it, slowing the spread is the bare minimum of human decency. If you are making the conscious choice to bring children and their educators (many of whom are parents themselves) into the petri dish of in-person education, you are actively choosing to kill students, their teachers and their families. You are making the direct choice to end the life of undetermined number of humans in Wahsoe County.

Children. Adults. Elderly. You are assessing the risk and saying, yes, some number of us should die for the sake of a "normal" school year.

I am a math man, and cannot help but be curious, what number you are comfortable with.

Lets break it down by grade?

How many kindergarteners will you comfortably dispatch for the sake of in-person education?

How many 1st graders have you decided are expendable in an effort to ensure that the remaining first graders -- the ones who dont end up dying that is-- to get to be inside the physical classroom today?

Second grade was my absolute favorite year of school. I connected deeply with my teacher--a certified principal I scored for the entire year and we're still friends 34 years later.

How many second grade teachers should we expect to die before Christmas?

Id like my family and our friends to be able to plan for life as much as you and yours Im sure would like to do the same.

That being said, how many bereavement condolence greeting cards are you purchasing for your administrative staff to send to families when the head of their household, the educator you employ, dies after workplace exposure?

As a district, how do you plan for 2021 4th grade when 1/3 of your 2020 third grade class dies of Covid?

I might expect you could see where this is going. But I havent seen that level of awareness in your decision making process in response to this global pandemic thus far.
So I ask that you look back to your own 5th, 6th and 7th grade years. How many of your classmates died in those three years? How did their death impact you personally? Your academic experience?

More students and teachers in your district will die in the next three months if you make the choice to return to in-person/brick and mortar classrooms.
It is simple, really. If you return to the building more people will die. If you are pro-active and jump feet first into distance learning, you will be saving actual human lives.
Kids who are excited to learn! Kids who do not need to watch while their teachers, classmates and siblings die one after another.

As a third generation educator, in my family, we consider education to be the frontline of our nation's journey to equity and accountability.
You MUST hold yourself and your team accountable for making equitable decisions in the interest of the entire community --ensuring the weak, small and disadvantaged enjoy the opportunity to live to graduation--
Leveraging your status-quo comfort on the backs of educators and bearing down on the knuckles of students...THIS is not how you want to be remembered.
The opportunity to be on the right side of history is upon you.
Do whats right for Education. Do whats right for Washoe County students and their families. Do what is right for the teachers you employ. And do what is right for all of Wahsoe County by delaying in-person education for the duration of 2020.

In Solidarity,
Tyx Pulskamp
3rd Generation Educator
Hello Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill and WCSD Family,

Below is a screenshot pulled from the presentation from the BoardDocs. The WC Dashboard shows the number of "New Cases in Last 14 days, per 100,000 Population. The measurement that has been used in our community has been measured per every two weeks. The measurement at this time was about 240 cases per 100,000 population, well over the threshold for elevated transmission. This page states that anything ">100 equals Elevated Disease Transmission."

Five slides later is the slide below. Why is WCSD not using the same data that is being displayed to our county? According to WCSDs data we are only at 107.74 cases per 100,000 population. I feel that this is very misleading and confusing to the community.
Lastly, the board requested that Superintendent McNeill set a threshold for which schools will close according to new cases per 100,000 population. What is presented as a recommended action is "Administration will monitor daily community wide COVID case counts per 100,000, daily changes in confirmed case counts, and focus on weekly changes in case counts per 100,000. If, based on two or more consecutive weeks of available information (>=14 days), community conditions decline significantly, the Superintendent may decide to place all schools or some subset, on full-distance learning."

What exactly does "decline significantly" mean? That is left open for interpretation. I believe that a quantitative threshold should be set at which decisions can be made, and the metric should be in line with the data that is collected by the Washoe County Health District. Afterall, using the term "decline significantly" would not be defensible when using data to drive decisions related to student achievement.

Thank you for your time and the hard work you are all doing. I know that this is a difficult time.

Sincerely

Marcus Culpepper
As you sit from home working or safe in your offices... have you heard the news? Children are dying from Covid-19! How dare you go against the White House Task Force and recommendations from our own health department! Nevada is in a “yellow status” meaning we should NOT open our schools. When children, teachers and families start dying how will you live with yourselves?

Sent from my iPhone
The problems many parents and myself are experiencing are due to the district sticking to plans that made sense in April and May, but have not adapted to our current COVID-19 situation as it has worsened in July and August. Back in late May/early June, my wife and I supported the Hybrid Model for our two middle school students in our survey responses. But, as cases increased considerably in Washoe County and medical research and the experiences of schools that have already opened demonstrated very clearly that children can and do get COVID-19, and spread the virus, and at much higher numbers than was once believed, this is no longer an appropriate response.

I do not envy the school board and administration’s situation, but the lack of insight in developing additional options and the lack of attention paid to the district’s online models has caught up to them and therefore us and our children. A new plan forward is required, and quickly!

The lack of a suitable online curriculum option for our students became very clear to me as I looked into these options for our children. Our district administrators flat out misled us parents, and the school board, into believing there were two really great online options that would be available to our students. The truth, and they were well aware of it, was that Northstar could only accommodate a fraction of the students that would want that option, and for all the fanfare, the district Edgenuity program in reality offers little more than a bare bones core curriculum to our students. If this is to replace an in-person curriculum, it’s not even close! There needs to be considerably more course options through Edgenuity, including gifted and talented class options for starters.

A possible solution to a problem often brought up regarding students that do not have a parent available during the school day, computer or internet access is simply to allow these students to return to their schools. A considerably smaller group of teachers, could assist them with their online work. High need groups like English language learners, students with disabilities or IEP needs, and GT students if no such classes can be offered in Edgenuity, could be included as well while still easily meeting CDC and WHO social distancing requirements of six feet, not the fantasy three feet our governor approved. The rest of the middle school population could use a much improved version of
Edgenuity or online instruction through their home school, incorporating a greater variety of courses and the student’s actual classroom teachers as much as possible.

To say making such a change is not possible this late in the game, is disingenuous. Many schools and colleges for that matter across the country are having to make this pivot and are willingly making drastic changes to their reopening plans in reaction to their current COVID-19 situations being much worse than anticipated. This or a similar solution is necessary as our current COVID-19 situation in Washoe County is much worse than it was at any point in the spring.

I am hopeful that we will reach a point where our children can return to in-person learning later this semester or after winter break, and look forward to that day, but forcing our students, teachers and other support staff back into classrooms too early will not benefit anyone if they just have to shut down again. It will only make the situation worse, and curriculum changes at that point will be even more difficult to implement. Not to mention the terribly unnecessary human costs involved if one student, teacher, staff member, parent or grandparent loses their life or suffers lifetime health problems due to our district administration and school board’s lack of planning and resolve.

Thank you for your willingness to engage in this conversation,

Keith Bingham
Washoe County School Board Members:

Understanding that this is a complex issue...the primary consideration HAS to be the health and safety of students, faculty and staff (not to mention those they come in contact with after school). So, when you make a decision, it makes much more sense to listen to the experts, which in our case is the Washoe County Health Department. The consequences of not doing so are being seen throughout the country; and I’m sure that none of you on the Board want to have the illness and death of one, let alone myriads of people on your heads. There is no good reason for not stepping back, and taking this a step at a time...taking the pressure off everyone, and working towards a sensible reopening, based on science, statistics, and good health practices.

Sincerely,

Pete Allen

Reno
I am horrified at the way this board and district leadership have weaponized the needs of the marginalized. How dare you ask our children to endure this trauma as though they're safety is at odds with the needs of their neighbors?

I am appalled the way you have treated staff, both as individuals and as a collective. There is shrugging and the insinuation subs are ready to replace all educators who value their health. But then there are statements to the public that educators have never had any complaints. That's called gaslighting and it's psychological abuse.

I beg you to teach our children to value their neighbors. Follow the data. Close school buildings for 9 weeks.

Educators are not lying. We are terrified. And we will not be ignored any longer.

Ashley Wade
I'm a teacher in the district and I would like to agree with Mr. Marks. We're not ready.

Stacy Maddox
I'd like to remain anonymous.

I have some concerns and questions about our students returning to in-person learning especially as it pertains to my pre-k student.

1 - If a student or teacher has a doctors note allowing for them to not wear a mask will I have any options as a parent to not put my child near that person?

2 - Will my child’s teacher be assisting them in the restroom and with hand washing as they’ve previously done?

3 - What happens if the other section of pre-k that shares a classroom with ours has a student test positive for COVID-19 will our teacher and/or class also be quarantined?

4 - Pre-k students are emotional and cry often, do we have information or protocols on eyes or just eye touching spreading the virus and how will they be comforted?

I’m sick to my stomach over having to think about these things and I know the teachers must be too but seriously, they’re genuine concerns so maybe it’s best we don’t put students back in classrooms? It feels like there are an awful lot of unknowns and the price is too high to risk going back.

I’m also very upset and concerned that you have decided to go against the recommendation of the health district, it seems very arrogant of you all to think you know something they do not... I’m disappointed that your decision also seems to be tearing apart our school community by making this a “sides” issue. Heartbreaking all around.

Thank you for your time!
You are all essential workers. That means you need to get back to work. I am in essential worker and I go to work every day as a fire fighter paramedic putting my life on the line. It is your job to teach our children to give them a future.

David
Hi and thank you all for all of your hard work. For a lot of people you have made a decision that so many did not believe you would. Sending the kids back to school is the right choice. The people who oppose it are those who have not done there research well. There are several studies and other countries proving that children are at low risk and do not transfer it among each other or to adults. My question is about the safety of my child having to wear a mask. There are no studies showing long term effects on children from having to wear masks, but there are serious repercussions to adults. So you can only assume the same effects and worse for a developing child. How can you allow children with no vaccines to go to school and then force me to make my child wear a mask. Also I will not have people who are not medical professionals teaching my child about mask wearing, which is medical advice and it will not be done without me present. Also how do you plan on protecting children from harm when all kids are wearing masks and you can not tell them apart? Again thank you for being on the side of those who believe it is ok to send the kids back. I would like to ask all one more question. If masks actually work and everyone has to wear one, then why would it be not safe to open everything? Masks stop the spread right?
I am a classified librarian and high risk. While teachers are expected to go back to their classrooms with reduced numbers, I am expected to push in to 26 classes each week. Why does my life have 26 times less value than a teachers?

As I understand the WCSD outbreak protocols, if a teacher or student tests positive for Covid, then that teacher and that class is excluded for 14 days. Because I will have been in that classroom, I am also exposed. If I’m exposed, I could spread to every other classroom. Am I expected to quarantine for 14 days EVERY time a student or staff member tests positive?
Please please please!! Listen to your teachers!! My daughter is one of the most dedicated teachers you will ever have the honor of having in your school district. She loves her students as if they were her own children because to her they are & I know without a doubt that she is thinking of their health and well being as well as the staffs when she says they are not ready to go back! I really hope you are prepared to pay the consequences when children and adults start getting sick with this life threatening virus. I know I am not alone when I say that if you any harm comes to my daughter because of your thoughtless and reckless decisions I will not take it lying down. You really need to listen to the health professionals and follow their lead. PLEASE!!!

Sent from my iPhone
Superintendent McNeill and the WCSD Board Of Trustees,

I am writing to express my absolute horror and utter disappointment at the dereliction of duty on your part as to protecting the health, welfare and safety of not only Washoe County School District students, but that of the staff, teachers, administrators and the families of the students as well.

Throughout the process of the numerous board meetings as well as forums relating to this topic, you have shown nothing but disdain and disingenuity toward medical science as well as the many real-world examples of the health crises that the reopening of schools can, has and will cause as related to your haphazard reopening of our county's schools, even as you purport to listen to health experts like Kevin Dick, who relayed his recommendation to not open schools for in-person learning at this time in your board meeting on 7/28/2020. You claim to have deliberated your decisions; it doesn't take someone with any sense of what the word "deliberation" means to understand that this was simply not the case. Instead, you played like you actually cared for and listened to what Mr. Dick said and then promptly went back to the discussion on reopening the schools in the manner that you have chosen. That's not deliberation, that's a dog and pony show and an embarrassment to the educational system and the constituents that you represent (the same ones that will, with all hope in mind, vote each and every one of you out come election time.

As we sit in the midst of the pandemic's effects on school districts in various states with documented evidence appearing every day as to the likelihood and extent of transmission in children, you stand ready to send our children and the community surrounding them into a brave new world of quarantines, positive COVID cases and unfortunately perhaps the saddest of them all, community deaths owing straight to your negligence relating to working with the facts regarding this virus. Instead, you kowtow to the parents who look at school as a good place to put their children for daycare and even more strikingly, have no understanding of what a reopening will mean to the safety of the Washoe County community. The board has shown no ability to work independently of public pressure to protect the community and it would be delusional to think that you're following your mantra of "Do No Harm"; rather, you're performing some sort of dance around the truth because you're afraid of the headlines. Perhaps, instead of being afraid of those headlines, you should be more afraid of the ones that read, "Outbreak at Washoe County School Sickens Many". Or how about, "Washoe County School District Outbreak Sickens Hundreds" or, at the expense of being morbid, "Beloved Washoe County Teacher Dies Of COVID-19". Perhaps you should think about the truth instead of believing that your "plan" (a term I use loosely) actually will work to any effect.

I can't wait until each of you in the Board are up for election because you don't deserve the esteemed positions you hold and when your grand plan fails to protect the community health, I hope that the voters in Washoe County will show you the door because our children, our community and our future deserves better than the half-hearted assurances and half-baked logic that you've presented in these decisions. It's absolutely disheartening to think that we're relying on your district to teach our children facts when you can't even listen to the facts yourselves.

You should be ashamed of yourselves both in your disregard for the facts and your treatment of your staff in rolling out this plan with no concern for their concerns and circumstances regarding this virus. As I sit here
watching the Board meeting on my television and watching these brave teachers express their deep concern over the reopening plans, it reminds me of the cowardice of the Board in making these decisions.

Sincerely,
Ron
Knowing that reopening the schools was a very hard decision for all, we, the community of parents, caregivers and grandparents are very grateful for the decision to reopen in person. This is for the welfare of the students, academically and emotionally. My grandson who attends Roy Gomm, is so very excited about being back in that building again. We as grandparents back you up 100%.
Praying that the year will be a wonderful one for both staff and students.
Many thanks again to all.
Hello,
I have two questions:

1. WCSD has mentioned that siblings of a student who is excluded based on a positive test will be excluded based on symptoms. How does this policy account for and address the general scientific consensus that a large amount of disease spread is caused by asymptomatic individuals?

2. The elementary schools are largely going to be moving to a multi-session day, how does the district plan to maintain legally mandated teacher to student ratios to support this scenario, without increasing staff or breaking teacher contracts for work hours?
   - If the plan is to increase staffing, does the district have a plan to fill these positions in the 3 business days that are left before school instruction begins?

Thank you,

Concerned citizen,
James Williams
The air system at Pine Middle School does not work. Zero air flow for a day and a half in my room. It doesn’t work. Work orders aren’t working. It’s not okay to put students in a hot room with no circulation. This is the district’s responsibility.
Dear Washoe County School Board Members,

We, teachers, have so many questions. They are not being answered, and it is not our principals fault. They ask, and except for a chastisement, no action is truly taken.

Teachers: We need gloves to put items on students’ desks before school.
District: Teachers will have no gloves.

Teachers: We begin our day with breakfast, masks off, Covid released.
District: There are filters, on the roof! I remember at the July 7th board meeting - Adam Searcy stating, “Air filter systems are too expensive, plus it’s Covid air out, and then Covid air right back in.
Teachers: Did he just say what I thought he said?

District: Told at back to school elementary and middle school staff meetings to teachers and staff, “Inside, students must be 3 feet apart. Outside students must be 6 feet apart.”
Teachers: That is nonsensical!
Teachers: No, I have not been drinking, but I guess WCSD Administration has been!

Teachers: We cannot fit 20 desks in our rooms and have a 6 foot plus our body width walkway from front door to our desk/runway stage to the bathroom/sink to stay 6 feet away. What should we do?
District: Oh, just do run by’s. You’ll be fine.
Teachers: What is a run-by?
District: Just walk quickly or run through the 3 feet distanced desks, you would need to linger for 15 minutes around a Covid positive student to have any chance at becoming infected.
Teachers: Are you making a joke?
District: No, we are serious. That’s all you need to do.

Teachers: And the questions with no answers just goes on and on and ... 

Thank you for reading and contemplating the above, Annette “Annie” Ricks

Sent from my iPhone
Dear BOT and Dr. McNeil,

We must not reopen in-person instruction until our Covid numbers are down to levels in accordance with CDC and Public Health Department recommendations! It is irresponsible to continue to expose our community to this unknown disease. Reducing distancing levels from 6 feet to 3 feet for elementary was a sucker punch to hard working teachers, staff and principals who must operate in a closed environment with inadequate distancing. Your decision to reopen elementary schools full-time against health guidelines is very disturbing! I hope you will reconsider with cases more than double what they were when you voted at the end of July.

Concerned Teacher, Parent and Community Member
Good evening,

What message does it send to students that NFL players have the option to opt out of returning to the sport while teachers are not even given the option to provide only distance learning? We must value the lives of our teachers and students and wait to reopen schools until we can do so safely.

Sincerely,
Hannah McMahon

Sent from my iPhone
Hello.

Please move the school start date back to the end of August or after Labor Day. Here’s why....
WE ARE NOT READY TO OPEN.

Staffs have been chomping at the bit to get back to work and have been ready to plan for kids to learn. However, the ineffective and inefficient planning efforts on the part of the district over the last 5 months has left us UNABLE TO PLAN and unprepared for what is to come in SIX DAYS.

Only today were we were given information on who would be staffing Distance Learning, which in turn determines the number of in person teachers we will have to teach the students who walk thru the doors on Monday.

Only today, the staff at my school was told that we would not receive Distance Learning teachers from the “Cadre of Distance Teachers”. In fact, it turns out that this “Cadre of Distance Teachers” is only comprised of individuals who were afforded accommodations by meeting ADA criteria.

Only today have we been notified that we are faced with assigning teachers to distance learning positions based on a forced volunteer basis. Teachers have been put in the unfair position to have to “volunteer” against their wishes to distance teach and now have to prepare to teach in SIX DAYS.

Only today, has our staff been told we have to make major grade level shuffles. As a result of the shuffling, we have also had to shift “in person” teaching assignments and pull teachers out of their grade level expertise to teach completely new grade levels in order to accommodate both the in person and distance learning needs. This will require room and materials movement. SIX DAYS. Not to mention the new grade level curriculum that these teachers are unprepared to teach effectively.

What is most frustrating about this...

We have teachers in this district who desperately want to teach via distance learning but cannot get the ADA accommodation because their maladies do not meet the ADA criteria. 
AND, we have teachers who desperately want to teach in person but who are now, only today, being told they have to distance teach by default because we have to solve this “in house”.

ONLY TODAY, YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO AFFORD RESPECT TO ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS YOU REPRESENT. I IMPLORE YOU TO PUSH BACK THE REOPENING DATE OF SCHOOLS UNTIL WE CAN GET OUR FEET UNDERNEATH US.
GIVING SCHOOLS SIX DAYS TO MAKE PREPARATIONS TO BE READY TO TEACH AND LEARN IS DISRESPECTFUL TO TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS, AND MOST OF ALL OUR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WHO BOTH YOU AND I SERVE.

Thank you.

Shawna Baker, Special Education Teacher and 24 year WCSD Veteran
Agnes Risley Elementary
LEAP testimony tonight acknowledges they have withheld funding while COVID testing and contact tracing lagged to a point of neglect. This is unacceptable.

Our community should not move forward with school in person on the hope that LEAP and Chair Lucey will change. We need to see them follow through on robust investment in our community's health before putting our children and families at greater risk.

Thank you,
Ashley Wade
Dear Washoe County School District,

My name is Kelsey Parker and I am a newer teacher in Washoe. I am currently at Echo Loder Elementary School. Echo Loder is a wonderful Title 1 school led by a fabulous team of administrators and supported by an incredible group of teachers and I feel that is has become my home and safety over the last year. I am writing to you because I am upset and am tired of feeling like I have no voice. I am tired of feeling like I will blink, and everything will change.

I ended my first year of teaching during distance learning and prepped to move on to team teach kinder the following year. I was blown away when I heard we would be returning in person during a pandemic. I am 26 years old but I have a heart condition and don’t qualify for ADA. Of course, I am still high risk but don’t have the luxury to say, “No, I don’t feel safe returning to school in person.” That isn’t a luxury most teachers were offered. Still, I pushed on and then prepared to go back and combined my room with my new co teacher.

Well, that too quickly ended. Of course we couldn’t team during a pandemic, we’re going to have smaller class sizes, so I, within the last two weeks, have been switched to second grade.

I came back in Thursday with mixed emotions and with just a little over a week and prepped a whole new classroom. I had my numbers and they were lower but that is a reason I finally felt more comfortable. We may be forced to return during a pandemic, I may be forced to now switch grades weeks before the beginning of school, but my class would be smaller, safer, easier to manage and distance appropriately. As I am sure you guessed, that too didn’t last. Our numbers are too low. My school is being torn apart, my fellow teachers are anxiously working, uncertain that any of us will have a safe position at our school, our home, during a pandemic.

As you can see, the administration is working incredibly when they have been given no answers and have no answers to give us, only kindness and support. My class was split because my principal knows we will be forced to lose our allocations. We were told we’d get students from Smithridge and we’re given allocations to match. Unfortunately, their principal is accepting school variances for all the students we’d anticipate we’d have, to keep us safe in our school, in our home. That isn’t the case now though. We are preparing for the district to not let us keep the allocations we were given and are looking at a huge amount of our teachers to be moved and then forced to restart in a new school during a pandemic. I do not feel safe. I do not feel valued as an educator, respected or taken care of. I feel like a number just like my students are looked at as a paycheck.

Educators should not be forced out of their schools during a pandemic, during this chaotic period of time. Please, take care of us, respect us especially during this time and with everything you are placing on our shoulders. I am now not only worried about my health but now my job security in all this. Please, consider freezing allocations and keeping teachers in their schools, in their homes where they feel safest during a period of history that is unsafe and unpredictable.

I appreciate your time, thank you,
Kelsey Parker
Echo Loder Elementary School
From: Janine Luciani
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 5:44 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Reopening Plan

I have a son starting high school this year. Based on what I have learned so far, distance learning vs the hybrid learning are NOT equitable. If I choose to keep my son safe, I have to give up the teachers he would normally be working with and opt for an online program that is inadequate.

I feel like you are digging in your heals and sticking to your plan (or lack of plan) because you made a decision. Good leaders reevaluate decisions when it is clear a mistake has been made.
In the forum, it was stated that for the good of our community, employees should limit traveling outside of the area. How dare you! What you are doing WILL be a detriment to our community.

Opening schools WILL spread the virus. There will be causalities and DEATHS. I just hope you can live with that.

Sincerely,
Janine Luciani

Sent from my iPhone
The district has no gloves for teachers. They are told to use dish soap because they can not use disinfectant without gloves.

There is a shortage of disinfectant. We have to water it down half as much as before.
I went to UNR for the sole purpose of teaching in Nevada schools. This will be my third year in our district at the school I LOVE. I find out today that my allocation might be lost.

Why are we doing this teachers that LOVE their job and their school? Why are we already going back to 23 kids in a classroom when a month ago it was 13? Why do my students have to use a chair with a clipboard while higher income schools get desks? Why are we putting SO much pressure on principals instead of making direct decisions as a district?

These are all questions that almost every teacher has that aren’t being answered. Sad that our district doesn’t seem to care about our teachers well enough to keep them at their school in a time like this. I’m not asking for distance learning. I’m asking to be in the classroom, that I was allocated for, at my school with my kindergarteners.

If it’s too difficult to answer those questions, then why are we going back to school?

-Yet another frustrated teacher
It is unethical to return children to schools before this pandemic winds down. Children do not have a say and will be thrust into the public setting of the classroom when we are still inconclusive about the affects of Covid19 on children and their long-term health.
Dear Board Members, I was just notified that my school needs to close tomorrow due to Covid19 exposure. Several other schools have either had to close or have several people self-isolate and the school year hasn’t even begun. Teachers anxiety levels are at an all time high. When is the right time to error on the side of caution and distance learn for the first quarter?
To Whom It May Concern,

Could there be consideration for protecting our new hires with health benefits that start immediately! It seems dangerous to make the decision to send new hires into the classroom (“front lines” as we were told by a zoom training), but not protect them with health coverage until 90 days in, right now with the pandemic. What if they fall sick (or even die) to Covid or bring it home to their family who need medical attention? That’s a lot of burden to carry for 90 days physically, emotionally and financially! Please adjust the time line for health care benefits and protect the people you are sending into the schools during this pandemic!

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns. I’m looking forward to hearing the answer to this question.

Jody
One data point does not a "trend" make. Also, while the public health department can shut schools down, I understand there must be an actual outbreak before they intervene. Please don't try to pass your duty to ensure safety to the health department.

Stacy Maddox
Statistics Nerd
The Health District has already given WCSD a solid, clearly understood number. They're not political actors on the state or national level. They're experts whose children attend our schools. They are wholly invested in the health of all our schools because it directly affects their families.

PLEASE listen to the advice the WCHD has already provided and use the cases per 100,000 for the threshold to identify community safety and opening school buildings. Our lives depend on it.

Thank you,

Ashley Wade
I loved what you said trustee Kelly about if there is an increase how do we know it’s because of school. I completely agree with you. We shouldn’t close school because of a big outbreak if it’s not because of school and the kids.

Sent from my iPhone
I am a parent of a parent with two teens. We live together in a multi generational household. I am frankly terrified of August 17. I am frantically looking for an alternative living space until someone at the district can tell me I am going to be safe from my own grandchildren. I can empathize with our teachers. We won’t know who our a symptomatic Covid carriers are, let alone those with symptoms. Where are the tests? Who will administer them? How soon will the results be known? To the extent possible we need to put students on remote learning until these questions are answered! Sincerely worried, Diane Crowne  PS: I’m 80 yrs old.
Your job is to educate our kids, not be the health department. If there is an issue they will close a school or schools or district.

You cannot keep these kids in limbo on a daily, weekly or bi weekly basis. Kids need structure and consistency. And so do parents.

A matrix should not be used by the district.
The health department has admitted the data is lagging and cannot provide information on kids who have tested. A complete failure of the testing system which is not the districts problem to solve

Janna Rager

Sent from my Sprint Samsung Galaxy S9.
Why is the school board grandstanding? I'm at home watching your meeting and you are actively looking for a metric to fit your past decision, really?! Your teachers are not happy, do you really think my children will get a quality education under the circumstances?

-Chris Dennewitz
Board of Trustees,

Where is the personal aspect of this? If even one child dies, Trustee Kelly, it is one too many.

If you all cannot even agree on matrices, then you do not belong making this decision. Schools should remain closed until you can come to a proper and safe conclusion.

I have lost two people due to Coronavirus and until it happens to your family, you do not respect that the Coronavirus is in charge, not this sad Board of Trustees who are covering their butts instead of taking a stand for the safety of our children, our teachers, and our school.
Asking staff to come in for an entire week during an outbreak is a disaster. People will call in sick to protect their families, and then the remaining staff will be overextended. How can this decision be made?
If the threshold to close is met, you are saying it is a public health issue and must happen quickly. The other issues (food) can be worked out. You cannot say the threshold was met but inconvenient to act quickly.

Merle Herman.
Sent from my iPhone
Dear Trustees,

The data should be looked at daily. We are looking at 14 days, but one group of 14 days stops before another one starts is not how to look at it. Every day would be looking at the last 14 days and as soon as it’s above your line, you shut down. If someone has a temperature above normal, you don’t wait 4 days to address it. It already took 14 days to get there.

Thank you,

Paula Korinek

Sent from my iPhone
I submit this comment as a former attorney and a current parent and clergy member.

Waiting to close the school after it becomes necessary to do so is dangerous, unnecessary, and unconscionable. We close schools the day of for snow days, so it can happen. It is understandable that shifting to online is no easy task, but refusing to do so because parents need to know, while students and staff are continued to be put at risk is criminal. There was a time for preparation for making this change. It was the 8 weeks of summer that should have been used to prepare a plan so this change could happen on a moment's notice. Sending children to school knowing that they are at risk is unacceptable.

I can't imagine how much liability you will incur by knowingly sending children to school while knowing that the benchmarks have been passed. Please don't open the school. I don't want to have to do their funerals.

Benjamin Zober
From: Stacy
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 10:11 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] When will plan take place?

Now that the Board has made a decision on the metrics that will be used and desired in the number of metrics that will flag a need to close when will the plan start? This coming Thursday? If so, could school in fact not start on Monday?

This message is being sent from my iPhone; please excuse any typos.
Thank you for reading my comment. I am a parent of an incoming Kindergartener and a licensed educator.

I urge you to listen to the voices of teachers, principals, and support staff.

- When an employee says “we aren’t ready” you need to listen to them. Staff is being asked to perform functions they have never done before in a matter of days while dealing with the stress and trauma of a pandemic. Believe the boots on the ground. They see what is actually happening. It goes against their nature to speak out - if they are taking the time to tell you something is wrong at the peril of their livelihood...something is wrong!

- It is easy to say “we have provided 50,000 masks” but the reality is that you are asking community members (teachers, students, etc) to risk their lives with a single fabric mask and a bottle of hand sanitizer against a new, airborne virus. We do not know the long term health effects of COVID19.

- Jumping back and forth is bad for our community. We will be going to distance in a few short weeks based on cases. Let staff create streamlined processes to service our community during distance learning by giving them time, support, and continuity. Sometimes the fight against the inevitable prevents you from doing a good job on plan B.

- I was just told that my daughter will not be screened for Kindergarten because we chose distance learning. This is not an equitable education. Distance learning can be robust and effective, but schools need TIME and staffing to make it work and iron out details.

I sincerely thank the board for their time and effort in this unprecedent time. You are people and I genuinely think you are doing your very best. Keep up the good fight.

Best,

Jenny Snaza

Parent

Sent from my iPhone (please excuse typos)
The metric for opening school buildings that is recommended by the CDC, the NIH, the State of Nevada and the Washoe County Health District is: until such time as the community transmission rate of Covid 19 is reduced to fewer than 100 cases per 100,000 for at least 14 consecutive days, schools should remain closed and Distance Learning should be implemented.

The current Community Transmission rate (as of today, 8/11/20) is 218 cases per 100,000. Over two times the recommended rate.

I urge you to take immediate action to put Distance Learning in place at all Washoe County schools, until Washoe County meets these federal, state and county guidelines for 14 consecutive days. THEN we will be able to open schools, once and for all, and be able to stay open!

Lives will be saved, our community will be grateful.

Thank you,
Cindy Gray
Teacher, WCSD
I am a retired educator, mother, and grandmother here in Washoe County. My concern is not only that we may be opening schools too soon and not prepared but that we are sending new hires into a life threatening situation without health insurance. Why can’t we protect new hires by adding insurance sooner or least waiting till Sept 1st when they are able to acquire their own. Cobra insurance is not affordable and to acquire your own you have to wait for it to take effect. There is a gap where a transfer from another county’s insurance expires and when they can acquire their own insurance and you are opening schools during that gap. What does it hurt to wait a few weeks till we feel it is safe or that we are better prepared? Most parents and teachers wouldn’t mind having a shorter summer next year if it meant safety for our kids and staff. If someone is expected to put their life and their families lives in danger shouldn’t we back them up 100%? Thank you for your time and allowing me to say how I feel.

Sent from my iPhone
At a meeting of school staff today that I attended, a school nurse gave a presentation that went on for over 2 hours. She “badmouthed” many things that WCSD has put in place, and told us to listen to HER recommendations, and to contact HER if we have concerns, rather than follow the flow charts or other materials provided to us by WCSD.

Many staff were confused and angry with her information, and this contributed to distrust and confusion about the opening of school.
I recently learned that new Washoe Co teachers (and other employees) currently do not receive healthcare benefits for 90 days.

While I can understand this policy as a “norm” during “normal” times, it seems extremely uncaring during this “once in a lifetime” pandemic we are currently living in.

We desperately need experienced teachers. And one of my experienced family members is starting at a local middle school. He was teaching in another NV county until this year, when he applied for, and received a teaching position closer to his home and family in Washoe County.

He is cautiously excited about starting with his new school, but he and his wife are concerned about COVID19 and the fact that he was not to receive healthcare benefits (for himself, his wife and two children) for 90 days.

Because of some miscommunication, the temporary healthcare coverage they are paying for out-of-pocket is not effective until 9/1.

He and his family are currently uninsured.

He is already at work, preparing himself and his classroom.

Students are starting in 6 days.

He is an essential county worker.

If you truly value him (and your other new employees) for what they are willing to do for our community during this exceptional period in our history, please consider an exception to provide him (them) with the peace of mind of having immediately effective healthcare coverage.

Thank you for your valuable time with this matter,

Cheri Adelman
Sparks, NV 89436
(one of the zip codes mentioned as high in numbers during tonight’s WCSB meeting)
From: Coats, Patricia
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 11:49 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Hiring

What is going on with the hiring and posting to the job board? I am about to go into a self-contained classroom with a full student count and no paraprofessionals! One position has been requested to be posted for over a week and yet it is still not posted to be applied to.
Good evening,
I’m writing as a mom of third grader and as concern citizen. I’m shocked and disappointed that WCSD doesn’t care for teachers, all school employees and students in Washoe County!
All I have seen is Neglect by pushing for schools to open when EVERY single information given from Health Department to Principal’s Union, Teachers and parents protests, our cuts in the budget in the pandemic that WE ARE NOT READY TO HAVE SCHOOLS OPEN!!!!!
How dare you talk about all “the measurements” as precaution that will take place when we ALL KNOW that is not workable! Schools with no proper AC working, no enough PPE, parents to screen for fever ?!? (When we know there are parents who will do the opposite and let their kids go to school even if they are not feeling well)!!!! Students (especially) elementary to go to school to traumatic experience or being taught by stressed teachers And where they social interaction with other students is minimal!
I’m highly disappointed.
But knowing that behind these decisions to rush to open schools are trustees, some of their terms Will come to end in 2020!
Schools are NOT ready and you know it! Don’t push for it! Students and teachers lives matter!!!! As lives of their family members!!!
Mirna Zovkic
I have 4 children in the district and I am very concerned. I was positive that I wanted my kids to return to school up until tonight when I heard teachers voice that the schools are not ready. If teachers feel they can not keep the kids safe then why are we opening? Everytime I reach out to anyone at any school to ask a question I keep getting the response of I don't know just yet or we are working on that. It is less then a week until the first day of school. Why don't we have answers? Why are children going to be allowed to wear face covers that the CDC has already stated are less effective then not wearing one at all? If I can't enter a school campus how am I going to make sure my pre-k and 2nd grader with ADHD make it to me? Some of my kids go to a school in a low income area my kids have been sick numerous times in the past because people would send their kids to school sick how is this going to be prevented if no one is at least taking temps? Most parents in my area need to work and can't afford child care so they send kids to school. I have not had any communication from the elementary school except to see if my kids would be attending in person classes. Not even to let me know the teacher my son's 1st grade teacher choose for him will not be at this school this year. I have had no communication from the high school except to see if my child will be attending the hybrid model. Now I would like my kids to stay home were I have kept them safe for the last 6 months but I don't even really know my options. I know all the online schools have closed registration, I have absolutely no information on what distance learning is to look like? So now I feel like I have no choice but to send my kids were they will probably get sick maybe end up in the hospital or possibly lose their life. I feel like my kids are nothing but a number and a payment to everyone in this district.
Hello Trustee Holland,

I just received a message from my email service stating that my public comment had been kicked back as undeliverable. I am hoping that sending it to you will help. Here is the comment I was hoping to add:

Good Evening WCSD Trustees,

I had intended to stay out of tonight's fray given the nature of the public interaction between the district and I this week. However, given this current discussion, I would like to weigh in on the current topic of setting a metric used for closing schools.

I realize that there was not an action item listed tonight for delaying the opening of schools. However, it seems to me that the current agenda item offers an opportunity to set a metric that we are not currently meeting. In doing so, you would be able to set a standard for safely opening schools.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,
Don McHenry
President, Washoe School Principals Association