
From: Emmicah
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 10:34 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WCSD Reopening plan question

Hello,

I have a question for the school board. A couple of weeks ago we saw Gov. Sisolak cut millions from our education budget. I would like to know how the school district is planning on providing the necessary cleaning supplies to the classrooms in order to meet the extended cleaning procedures that they have proposed. As I'm sure they are aware, a lot of families have parents who have lost their jobs so a lot of them have parents who can't afford food or school supplies, let alone cleaning supplies for their children's classrooms. Thank you for your time.

Emmicah (pronounced em-ma-kuh)

From: Shouhua Wang
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 11:05 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] It is not safe to open school at all

Based on data and severity of pandemic, it is not wise at all to open school during the worst period of pandemic. Think about thousand students gathering in school for a day and then back to thousands of homes in the community, repeat this contact-and-spread process every day in both directions, and anyone who is not epidemiologist or virologist can image the power of spreading through schooling. Even one student infection will generate a number of new infection clusters both at home or school before anyone even notice it. The strategy of WCSD is :Let school open, if infections occur and become out of control, then we shutdown school. Guess what, first, there is no doubt it will be out of control once school opens, second, the new health crisis to students, teachers and their families, which can be prevented, is intentionally created. The consequences and scale of new wave of infection from schools will be much more severe than what it is now. Worthy it? Definitely not. How much students can learn during the panic environment? How much teacher can teach during this uncertainty? How effective will the sanitation and distancing measures be? We all know the answers.

Opening school should be when new infection number goes to a baseline, e.g. single digit for Washoe County, according to Dr. Fauci. Now we are in one of the worst and hot spots.

Sent from my iPad

From: Jed Spangler
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 11:08 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thank you for opening schools.

Thank you for opening schools despite pressure and push back. Schools are vital to our society in many ways, and this is an important step in a return to normalcy.

I understand people are concerned and even scared, but so were the doctors, nurses, police, fire, grocery store workers, delivery people, etc that have been working this entire time. Now it is the school's turn to do their part.

Thank you,
Jed Spangler

From: Christie Whiteside
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 2:59 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Schools re-opening

I am extremely concerned that the board is rushing a decision to open the schools based on politics and pressure and not on science. As we have seen in communities around the country, Covid-19 cases begin to skyrocket among schoolchildren, school staff and their families as soon as schools have re-opened. As a consequence, cases generated in the schools cause a cascade of new cases throughout the community. I wish that the school district would re-consider opening for the time being and focus its energy on making distance learning an equitable solution for all. The impact not just to those families with students and employees but to the wider community of school-driven outbreaks, which cannot be contained is too great. We also know that it is untrue that school age children are unaffected by the virus. How many will have to get sick before you exercise common sense? How many will have to die for your rash decisions? We also now know that asymptomatic cases of this virus often come with multi-organ impacts that we do not yet know the duration of. The consequences of your failure will be too great for the entire county. There are too many questions and you are not providing schools with the resources or the guidance or the leadership they need. You are failing the entire community in your haste. Please understand the science. It is not safe to open the schools at this time and you are leaving us all more vulnerable. Shame on you all.

Christie Whiteside

From: Rosie Mann
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 8:01 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School openings

What are you thinking? Schools back East have opened only to have to close again due to Spread of Covid. Isn't the health of our teachers and students more important than supposedly falling behind a few more weeks? It seems to me that getting the disease under control would be more important rather than being part of the problem..... This is a recipe for disaster!
Rosie Mann

Sent from my iPad

From: Topher Reynolds
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 10:42 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Schools reopening

Why are you opening the schools now? Everything else on the planet is being delayed due to COVID-19 risks with the thought of participant's safety as the utmost importance. Why on earth would the opening of our schools, jeopardizing the lives of students, faculty, staff, and families, not be affected by a delay? Why now? I believe there is no "good" reason, only "political" reasons behind any decision that does not end with delaying the opening of our schools.

Christopher Reynolds

From: Andrew Cristancho
Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 8:13 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: BoardMembers
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Distance Learning Meal Service

Hello Washoe Schools Team!

I just wanted to drop you a quick note to say how impressed I am with this ongoing program. I know you did this at the end of last school year too and I think there was some provision for summer as well.

My wife and I just think this is so humane and so kind, and though we don't have the need to take advantage of this generosity we know there are many in our community that do and that will. So on behalf of them and us; thank you for all you do for our community!

Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Help Community!

Thanks,

-Andrew Cristancho

NNRMLS Director | Training & Engagement

From: WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT <email@blackboard.com>

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 6:02 PM

To: Andrew Cristancho

Subject: Distance Learning Meal Service



Good evening, families—

This is an important message from the Washoe County School District Nutrition Services Department.

Our records show that your students will be engaging in Distance Learning as the school year begins. Each week, we will be providing five days' worth of breakfasts and lunches for students who will not be attending classes on campus. There is no cost for families who qualify for free- and reduced meals. Families who do not qualify for free and reduced meals will need to pay and are encouraged to put funds into "My School Bucks" to cover these costs.

If you would like to pick up meals for your student, please fill out the form provided at the district website at www.washoeschools.net. Click on "Food Resources" at the top of the page. Here, you will find the meal order forms, applications for free- and reduced meals, pricing information, links to pre-payment, as well as a schedule

for picking up weekly meals. We will need an accurate count to ensure everyone is served, so please fill out the order form if you would like to pick up these weekly meals.

Five days' worth of breakfasts and lunches will be available for pickup each Wednesday from 3pm to 4pm at North Valleys High School, Sparks High School, and Wooster High School. When you arrive on campus, please look for signs that will direct you to curbside meal distribution locations.

Once again, families that qualify for free- and reduced meals will not be charged for these breakfasts and lunches. Please visit the website— www.washoeschools.net and click on “Food Resources” at the top of the page.

Thank you and have a good evening.

From: David George
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 7:36 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School closure for 08/17/2020

I understand why schools are closed today, but why cancel distance learning?

David George

From: Peter Fleischmann
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 1:02 PM
To: BoardMembers; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Disappointed

Hello

I want to express my great disappointment in the handling of the reopening of schools. While allowing each school to make its own plans for how to safely reopen it has put an enormous workload on the teachers and staff beyond their normal duties. Additionally has done very little to assure parents and spouses of staff that they will truly be safe while at work.

The plan to return was in direct contradiction to the recommendations of the county health department. Why do we have experts provide their input if it is going to be blatantly ignored? The concept that children are immune to the virus is rapidly being proven wrong. They are no less susceptible to the virus than adults. Additionally they can be carriers of the virus causing issues for staff. Going to school in this country should not be a life threatening endeavor.

As staff has returned to school in the past week multiple schools have had suspected or verified cases. The districts response of using "an abundance of caution" and making the few people stay home for a day or two is far below the normal preventative guidelines. How can you be so sure those exhibiting signs have not been in contact with others at school? These instances are occurring with just staff, what will be the reaction when the schools are full of students? With siblings in different classes and schools the virus could spread like wildfire. If the district was using "an abundance of caution" they would not be sending staff and students back to schools against all recommendations given by the experts.

To add insult the district cancels the first day of school due to wildfire smoke! Using the nearby wildfire as an excuse for not properly planning or second guessing the decision to return to classrooms in very disappointing. If an airborne issue such as smoke is such an issue then why isn't an airborne virus treated as an issue?

Take care of your staff and students. Don't start school in classrooms! They are not guinea pigs for our society. Treat teachers with the respect they deserve. The respect they received for all the hard work they do daily, even during non school hours, to teach our children by everyone when school was sent to distance learning at the end of last school year. Until a vaccine is widely distributed and in use by all classrooms shall remain empty.

Concerned Father and Teacher's Spouse

Sent from my iPhone

From: Tria Garnsey
Sent: Thursday, August 20, 2020 6:49 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School Reopening

We are now on day four of the academic year, and the district has been forced to cancel classes both virtual and in person due to lack of appropriate ventilation as directed in the reopening plan. In the first week alone, this is now a 50% cancellation rate as the valley is blanketed in wildfire smoke so thick you can barely see down the street.

You reopened schools because parents needed to go back to work. You reopened schools so students could have socialization and routine. Well, how's that working out?

Instead of closing schools during a global pandemic, and allowing families time to make arrangements for exclusively distance learning, those who've chosen to send their children back are now in a rock tumbler having to pivot from day to day, risking their employment on top of children's, families', and staff lives.

What does it cost to cancel school so often? It costs not only the dollars you were so hungry to snatch up when you decided to open in person, but it also costs stability for students, quality of mental health for parents, and possibly food, clothing, and housing for those families on the edge.

You risked these things for what ultimate gain? Sending children back into what are apparently unsafe environments even when there isn't an incurable, untreatable virus running roughshod over the planet in a state where Harvard University has recommended a return to stay at home orders due to escalating case rates and education is already last in the nation behind even US Territories? How is that a benefit to anyone?

I've kept my two children home for now, and will continue to monitor the performance of WCSD as a whole, but you're not making a compelling case for their return, and are instead stacking the Pro list for entire disenrollment against yourselves.

Do better.

Sincerely,

Demetria Garnsey
Lemmon Valley

From: jim hawthorne
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 9:06 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] School reopenings

WCSD, school has been open for only 2 days so far at Mcqueen High School. Yet, despite the assurances I have gotten about there being 6 feet social distancing in classrooms, mask requirements at all times (not eating/ drinking), and 1 way hallways, and all the other things so important for school safety, I have heard it is not enforced. Desks are not 6 feet apart in all classrooms. I am so concerned for students, staff, and caregivers. You have no idea who is asymptomatic, as no testing is required. There is a 7.6% positivity rate in Washoe county as of yesterday. To say I am disappointed in the school board would be a tremendous understatement. You went against WCHD advice, yet failed to inform parents of that before they had to choose education model. All this will be remembered when School Board elections come up. Stay safe everyone. Jim H-

From: Mackenna Miller
Sent: Friday, August 21, 2020 10:47 AM
To: comments@cnn.com; nynews@nytimes.com; letters@usatoday.com; jnpearce@sltrib.com; moffitt@sfgate.com; Susana.guerrero@sfgate.com; eric.ting@sfgate.com; madeline.wells@sfgate.com; amanda.bartlett@sfgate.com; grant.mare@sfgate.com; NationalStoryProject@npr.org; Public Comments; ndeinfo@doe.nv.gov; mframsted@health.nv.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: COVID-19 NEWS
Attachments: Screen Shot 2020-08-21 at 10.32.14.png

AGAIN. Numbers are NOT worthy of shutting down the economy and preventing children and families from returning to school and work. As a social species, we NEED to be back in full capacity to better our HERD IMMUNITY and provide the unchanged social interaction while simultaneously respecting the RIGHT to CHOOSE TO WEAR a facial covering.

I have done extensive research that does NOT CONFIRM the benefits of face coverings or social distancing measures or stay at home orders. STOP FILLING EVERYONE WITH FEAR.

STOP pretending this VIRUS can be eradicated with these orders. STOP spreading the lies that this is the DEADLIEST PANDEMIC. Because it IS NOT TRUE. This virus will continue to be around for years, there is no stopping it. But if we don't return to pre-covid normalcy, suicides and domestic abuse and depression rates will be on YOUR HANDS.

What happened to standing up for what you believe in and DOING THE RESEARCH. HELL, LOOK AT THE NUMBERS. They are extremely miniscule considering the world population at 7.5 BILLION and cases (Not even deaths or symptomatic cases and it is not removing those that are recovered) are at 22 MILLION.

This is a pandemic in the way that it has invaded every country. It is NOT a pandemic that has killed millions of people worldwide or even in an individual country.

STOP PLAYING THE GAMES AND GIVE THE FACTS. We are 100% safe to return to full capacity and go back to living our lives WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS.

Please, be the voice of the people. Please, give us the TRUTH. Please make a difference, not a dictatorship run by BIG PHARMA AND THE MEDIA.

On Mon, 3 Aug 2020 at 23:22, Mackenna Miller wrote:

To Whom It May Concern,

My personal interest in this subject has led me to draft this email. It is my hope you will read it in its entirety and reflect on some of the things noted.

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Best Wishes,

Mackenna Miller

From: Allison Platz
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2020 9:14 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Distance Learning

First off, thank you for the hard work through this incredibly difficult situation. I have 2 children-one starting high school and one starting middle school. We chose the hybrid education model. They were so excited to go to school last week...even with masks, distancing, etc. They did not care about the strange setting or situation.

I am very nervous about what the future looks like for school. I have heard rumors about no real distance learning plan and the possibility of packets. I am pretty sure we will be at distance learning for all very soon. I am a health care worker in the community and I am realistic about the situation. Teachers need to teach new curriculum. It would be safe to teach in their classrooms with no students and live stream material. I realize not everyone has access to a computer. I would say most have smart phones. Some local private schools are live streaming. How are they doing it? I know they have more money and fewer kids but there has to be something that would be possible. A school television channel? More families probably have TVs at home. For instance, 7th grade ELA might air from 8-9 am on M/W/F. 7th grade ELA teachers would be responsible for the content of the show. There are 7th grade ELA requirements/guidelines/standards I am sure that the district attempts to meet. Then the individual teachers would be responsible for their own schools and kids via email, zoom, Microsoft Teams. Not every subject could be taught this way but some of the core courses could definitely fit this model. Could the local PBS station support the schools? Afterall, the PBS mission is to "serve the American public with programming" by "using media to educate and inspire."

Some children are going to miss out during this pandemic unfortunately. It is a horrible situation. Schools cannot be closed. You are feeding some of these kids, they are picking up meals. Teachers could be available for appointments/group learning/etc. Blocking off the front of the classroom with a plexiglass partition for teachers to keep a safe distance but able to teach content. Maybe live streaming from the cafeteria with social distancing desks or chairs? This is a time to get creative. Teaching is essential. We need you to act like it. You have to be out in the community--safely of course but your presence is needed.

Get creative WCSD. Get it done.

Thank you!!

From: Patricia A Fager
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2020 10:58 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Calculations for shut down

The calculations for the criteria to go to full DL due to covid outbreaks, seems to be complex,; due to lag times figured in , is the district using existing cases or new cases. Obviously someone at the district is doing these calculations, I assume on a daily basis. In the interest of transparency, can they please be posted on the website?

Patricia A Fager

From: Rachel Fisher
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2020 7:30 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] CLOSE SCHOOL BUILDINGS NOW!

Washoe County's alarming rates of positive Covid-19 cases far exceed all recommended levels by both local and global health officials to open schools safely--and as such ALL school buildings within the WCSD should be closed for AT LEAST the next 9 weeks. The metrics you are currently considering for approval are all 2-4 times higher than the highest possible numbers to open school buildings safely when you look at the actual recommended metrics formed by health experts.

"Washoe County is the second-hardest-hit county with just over 10% of the state's cases and 1,391 cases per 100,000 residents. Washoe County reported 107 new cases on Friday (8/21/2020) afternoon, the *highest figure in eight days*. No additional fatalities were reported in the county; the total number of coronavirus-related deaths remains at 131."

[\[https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/21/nevada-passes-64-000-total-cases-covid-19-hospitalizations-down/3409889001/\]](https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/21/nevada-passes-64-000-total-cases-covid-19-hospitalizations-down/3409889001/)

The Harvard Global Health Institute, has concluded that schools can only open safely if a county has fewer than 25 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000, and the World Health Organization's recommendation in order to open schools is when the Covid-19 positivity rate is fewer than 5%.

Our own county health officials have repeatedly told the board of trustees and Superintendent McNeill that our community will suffer dire consequences of reopening while we are in the Yellow Zone. Washoe County Health District Officer Kevin Dick has told you that schools should hold off on in-person instruction because the county exceeds 100 new cases per 100,000. Heather Kerwin, senior epidemiologist at Washoe County Health District, has recently said that 100% of schools in WCSD will have students coming into the building who are positive for Covid-19. She continued saying:

"It's frustrating when you provide data to really well-informed and educated people and they are like, 'OK, that doesn't fit my agenda and so I'm going to go forward ... with what, maybe, I wanted to do even though the data is not telling me what I want it to say,'" she said of school officials." [\[https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/15/wcsd-schools-opening-monday-reno-coronavirus-nevada-covid-19-cases/5586873002/?fbclid=IwAR08hxXvu1BZqAxm9zoBcn7_FfiunypmAmwi77poNsZEARAJZTNYZz3n1NA\]](https://www.rgj.com/story/news/2020/08/15/wcsd-schools-opening-monday-reno-coronavirus-nevada-covid-19-cases/5586873002/?fbclid=IwAR08hxXvu1BZqAxm9zoBcn7_FfiunypmAmwi77poNsZEARAJZTNYZz3n1NA)

Now, when you took your doctorate classes for education they did not cover being in school leadership during a pandemic. But do you know who DID go to school about how to handle a pandemic??? Doctors and epidemiologists. Why do you insist on continuing to ignore the experts when they say that SCHOOLS SHOULD BE REMOTE UNTIL OUR NUMBERS ARE DOWN.

Already in the week prior to the return of students into school buildings 6 different schools had staff members test positive for the virus, and in the only 2 days of being open to students even more schools are reporting positive cases. I know that a teacher at my school has been tested due to being exposed to a student who tested positive--however she is being told that if she is asymptomatic that she can return to the classroom BEFORE her results are finalized. What will be the public's reaction when they find out the extent their children have actually been exposed without any notification from the school or district???

In addition to you needing to close school buildings due to Washoe County's high rate of Covid-19 spread, the air quality in our community due to smoke from fires that are not close to being controlled and contained continues to remain at

dangerously poor levels. You made the decision to not have students come into the building as our new ventilation protocols from Covid-19 require outside air to be pulled inside the buildings every hour---with current conditions causing smoke to be constantly pumped into the building; however, district officials and administrators have insisted that staff still be required to come into these buildings with unhealthy air. So while you have shown some concern for students' health, you seem to be perfectly okay in damaging those of your dedicated employees within the WCSD. You need to demand that ALL school administrators encourage their staff members to work from home if they can do so. Right now for many educators, their only choices are to take sick days or quit if they have health concerns due to Covid and smoke inhalation. This is absolutely shameful on your part when our district is already plagued by teacher shortages--we NEED our teachers healthy and safe.

I am imploring you to close school buildings for the next 9 weeks in order to give the community a chance to lower the currently dangerous levels of coronavirus positivity in addition to the unhealthy air quality that will continue in the near future as our neighboring state continues to battle horrific fires.

Children are important. Teachers are important. Start making decisions like you actually believe that.

From: Suzanne Lewis
Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2020 10:56 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Board Meeting 8/25

Dear Trustees,

My comment is about Edgenuity. Have the Trustees/Superintendent tried it out before? Although North Star uses Pearson, my son's Accelerated ELA class links straight to Edgenuity. The class consists of pages of links and they all go to Edgenuity. In an accelerated GT class, they read the poem for them and tell them how to analyze it. There isn't even a chance for the students to do the readings/analysis on their own first. There are very little instructions for the essay assignment and there is not a rubric for how it will be graded. I have been trying to get my child out of this class, but so far there doesn't seem to be other options. I wanted to let the Trustees know how terrible it is as I know some students have only Edgenuity courses for their distance learning.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Lewis

From: Scott Dickens
Sent: Sunday, August 23, 2020 6:01 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Air quality and COVID

As poor as the air quality has been last week and forecasted for the entire week of August 24th, and it not being healthy inside of schools if the HVAC is to have the outside air increased for proper air movement within the classroom during this pandemic. Where is the logic in putting not only students at risk, but also the dedicated staff that must also enter the buildings?

From: Greenfield, Melissa N
Sent: Sunday, August 23, 2020 8:55 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Public comment

Dear Board Members,

I am dedicated resource teacher in this district. The anxiety of knowing that I can be pulled to sub at any minute and increase my exposure is overwhelming because I have a 73 year old mother with NO other family within driving distance to help take care of her. I have had to tell my mother to find someone to help her because I don't know when it will be safe for me to take care of my own mother due to the decisions this district has made with making special education teachers disposable. I would request hazard pay but that doesn't change the conversations I have with my last living parent. We need more people in the trenches to help us. I tried to make a reasonable accommodation with HR and I never got a response. I am simply asking to limit my exposure by not having to sub. I put that I am a caregiver and I am not able to have a distance learning position. Also, the caseload at my school didn't work out to have one person do distance and one do in person.

Further, special education teachers are being set up for failure when allocations are based on numbers and not minutes. How can we effectively help students with increased minutes when the allocations don't change until we get new students? This is why so many sped teachers are having to give up lunches and preps because we are trying to do what is best for these children. Basing allocations on minutes would allow for special education teachers to effectively meet minutes and complete their other job duties and have the luxuries of a lunch and prep.

Lastly, the conditions of some of our buildings need to be addressed. I work in a portable with some issues. Currently I don't have any windows that can be safely opened. To open them it requires standing on top of a counter and using all your strength and then they don't stay open. Increased air flow during these times would make my classroom safer. However, I can't even open my windows a little bit without potentially injuring myself. I am in the back of my portable and my door opens to another room. If there was a fire in the other room I would not be able to get out. This is unacceptable to have windows that can't be safely opened. I have requested in writing to the facilities department that my windows get handled so I can have safer working conditions and at this time I feel that it is being ignored. We also don't have any access to water and there are brown water stains on the ceiling tiles. The discrepancies between buildings in this district is awful. I am asking for something as basic as windows that can be opened with a reasonable amount of strength and safety.

From: Lisa Evans
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 8:40 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Why Aren't We Talking More About Ventilation? - The Atlantic

I ask the the SI and board read this Atlantic article. It strongly suggests that this virus stalks us indoors and we ignore proper ventilation to our peril. Since u have made the decision to re open schools it is imperative that WCSD get ventilation right. Poorly ventilated schools r poised to be super spreader sites. Please read and take appropriate action.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/07/why-arent-we-talking-more-about-airborne-transmission/614737/>

Sent from my phone. Pls excuse typos.

From: Stacy Norbeck
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 9:45 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] question about closure metrics

Good morning,

At the last meeting, the Board selected three key metrics which, if 2 out of 3 were met, would indicate school closure. There was a lot discussion in selecting these metrics to ensure parents, students, and staff could follow and track the levels so they could prepare for a potential closure. Unfortunately, these three metrics do not seem to be readily accessible to the public. I am asking for more clarification on how the public can track these metrics, and suggesting the District place the metrics on their website for easy access.

Thank you for your consideration.

Stacy

Stacy Norbeck, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, IPMA-SCP

General Manager, Human Resources



Carson City, NV 89701

Toll free: 800.291.6826

Fax: 775.887.2581

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From: Lisa Lee
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 10:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dismal Failure--off to a terrible start

Washoe County School Board Members,

As a parent of two children with medically complex conditions, I thank you for providing parents with the option for full distance education as we navigate this public health crisis in the best way we can for our families. However, it has become apparent that many of the teachers have not received training for (or lack competency in) setting up virtual classrooms for distance learners. These past two weeks have been a dismal failure for families and a most frustrating experience as families struggle to juggle jobs, obligations, and assist children with this process. I urge you to make other online options available to families so that our children are not left behind during this crisis. Thank you for your time.

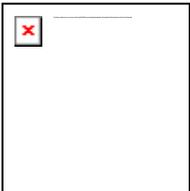
All the best,

Lisa Lee, M.A., CPRSS
Peer Director

[The Reno Initiative for Shelter and Equality](#)

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

– **Desmond Tutu**



From: LARRY KATES
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 3:59 PM
To: Public Comments; Taylor, Angela; Raymond, Malena; Minetto, Ellen; Kelley, Scott; Kathryn.Holland@washoeschools; Caudill, Andrew B; Calvert, Jacqueline M
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Transparency in Regards to Information about COVID-19 Cases, Close-Contact, and Exclusions in Schools

Dear Washoe County School District Board,

I have two students enrolled in District E schools, (the hot zone of Washoe County School District). Outside of the newspaper, and one phone call warning about a case at their school, there has been zero information/transparency to be found about COVID cases at schools.

I share the fears of the students, parents, educators and staff members worrying about the possibility of a someone contracting COVID at their school or worse having the school be the source of their own infection.

The internet is a great tool for the distribution of information: if we are driving to work, we can look at the Nevada Department of Transportation web site to see if there is an accident in the Spaghetti Bowl to avoid. We can look at the Reno/Tahoe Airport web site to see if a flight is on time or delayed. In regards to COVID-19 we can look at the Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center COVID-19 website and see the current status of cases/tests in the region. But when we look at the Washoe School District Page, we can find nothing in regards to COVID-19 cases in the schools.

Why isn't the school district in providing this information?

This is an excerpt of the daily Washoe County Health District^[i] report:

- Total COVID-19 cases in Washoe County: 6,767 (+55 from 8/22)
- Deaths: 133 (+2)
- Recovered: 5,487 (+92)
- Active cases: 1,147 (-39)
- Currently hospitalized: 85 (-3)
- Cases who have been discharged from hospital: 490 (+8)
- Total number of COVID tests performed in Washoe county as of August 23: 105,248 (+508 since 8/22) .

It has zero personal information about the people infected, but it provides the public

the same information used by the state, and nation to evaluate the effect of the pandemic in Washoe County.

The Washoe County School District/Health District's - Outbreak Response Plan for Schools COVID 19 and Other Outbreaks^{ii[iii]} lists categories for "Exclusion of Ill Students and Staff" (Section II.A), and also features an "Illness Report Log" (Appendix C). Would the district consider publicly publishing this information on a daily basis?

As a parent this is what I would like to see a report like this:

School Name _____
Student Population: _____
Staff Population: _____

CURRENT EXCLUSIONS

- Symptomatic or Positive COVID-19
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- Severely Immunocompromised or Critically Ill Positive COVID-19
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- COVID-19 Household Contacts
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- COVID-19 Close Contacts
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- Influenza Like Illness (ILI)
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- Gastrointestinal (GI) Illness
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- Pertussis
Student: _____ Staff: _____
- Other Illness Exclusions
Student: _____ Staff: _____

TOTAL EXCLUSIONS

Student: _____ Staff: _____

By publishing the data, which the schools are already collecting, to the students, parents, staff, as well as general public; the numbers will speak for themselves.

The community will see how COVID-19 affects the re-opened schools. Additionally this data can be used as a tool to identify if specific schools would be in danger of closing due to increased COVID-19 activity, foreknowledge of a possible closure is good for parental planning.

Please consider being more transparent with the information you are already collecting in regards to this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Larry Kates

ⁱⁱⁱ[i] <https://covid19washoe.com/press-release/>

^{iv}[ii]

<https://www.washoeschools.net/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=36479&dataid=44365&FileName=WCHD%20WCSD%20Outbreak%20Response%20Plan%2008%2014%202020%201846.pdf>

From: Stephen Brown
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 5:04 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Distant learning

WCSD Board of Trustees

At some time soon we will run out of room and money to maintain the brick and motor Schools we have. I have seven grandchildren with six of them girls, four of them are at the age to have kids. Distance learning has some advantage over a classroom because a person will learn to find more information then what a classroom might offer. I understand that there are disadvantages as well, like making friends and picking up bad habits like bullying. The Covid 19 pandemic has caused all kinds of issues. Taking advantage to advance to distance learning may seem costly but so is maintaining and disinfecting the Schools we have. I think that we should go with distance learning. We could use the money disinfecting the Schools getting PCs and public WIFI is working fine in Winnemucca. Thank you for your time.

Master of Organizational Management

Master of public Administration

Stephen Brown

--

Thank You
Stephen Brown

From: dmahin
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 5:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Covid-19 employee accommodations in your reopening plan

Dear Board of Trustees,

Having watched your past few board meetings concerning your school reopening plan, it is apparent that your employee work place safety accommodation policy for Covid-19 is based on ADA disabilities rather than the CDC defined at-risk populations such as those over 60, and persons with heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, diabetes, transplants, and other risks factors. Offering ADA accommodations for those with ADA disabilities has little correlation to protecting your employees with the CDC identified risk factors. So in making any decisions regarding employee safety, please remember that you still have these vulnerable populations in your workplace.

Don Mahin

From: dmahin
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 5:25 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Metrics for switching to distance learning

Dear Board of Trustees,

Your staff report for your metrics, to be used to determine if there should be a transition to full distance learning, does not make a specific recommendation of a set of metrics. It recommends adopting and implementing metrics, but does not appear to favor any specific set of metrics. The range of metrics discussed in the staff report vary widely; many would have you transitioned to distance learning back on August 17th and a few others would require higher levels of community infection to trigger a switchover to full distance learning. The version of the staff report in your agenda packet as of Friday proposed the undefined term "Significant Increase" in undefined metrics that you might choose to use. As of this morning, the staff report does not propose a single set of metrics and it urges you to adopt one or more, implement them and be cognizant of your vulnerable student populations. The comparison table that was added to your agenda packet this afternoon (copied below text of this email) shows that locally we are not meeting the Nevada Governor's metrics, or those of WHO, Harvard, or the CDC. The recent 7 day increase in Washoe County Cases (at 19.7 percent according to the staff report) exceeds your own staff recommendation of a 10 percent increase in cases metric. Please choose your metrics carefully based upon science and public health, and remember that you have vulnerable at-risk people in both the student and staff populations.

Don Mahin

The following material was added to WCSD Board agenda packet as of the afternoon of 8/24/2020

WCSD Key Metric Comparisons

New cases per 100,000 population:

Governor's Criteria: 200/100,000 in 30 days

Harvard Global Health Inst.: >10 cases per day per 100,000 7 day rolling average (Hotspot)

White House Report: >100 new cases/100,000 in 7 days (Red Zone)

WC Proposed: 100/100,000 rolling 7-day average

**WC Actual as of 8/22: 449/100,000 in 30 days, or 109/100,000 in most recent 7 days,
Or 16/100,000 per day**

Positivity rate:

Governor's Criteria: 7%

Harvard Global Health: does not use this criteria

World Health Organization: 5%

CDC: 5% (reported on 7/24/20 in the Washington Post)

White House Report: 10% (Red Zone)

WCSD Proposed: $\geq 10\%$

WC Actual 8/22: 8.7%

Increase in new cases in 7 days:

WCSD Proposed: $\geq 10\%$

WC Actual 8/22 over 8/15: 19.7%

Additional criteria recommended by others:

Governor's Criteria: Testing at $>150/100,000$ per day (WC Actual = 171.9)

Harvard GHI: Hospitalizations, deaths, testing and tracing capacity

From: Carol Morgan
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 7:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please do not re-open

I speak as a former teacher (in another state), addressing two issues:

1. School re-opening.
2. Distance learning.

SCHOOL RE-OPENING

Please close the schools now. Our children (students) and teachers are not expendable. We are talking about living beings. Other school systems across the country have opened and closed because Covid-19 cases went up. We do not yet know enough about the virus to risk the lives of our students and teachers.

In addition, you are not only risking the lives of students and teachers. You are risking the lives of everyone they come into contact with. Students and teachers are not just going to school and returning to their homes. They are going to grocery and retail stores and putting the general public in danger. This is simply not acceptable.

Teachers, you know that you are putting your lives and your students' lives in danger. Refuse to return to the classroom.

DISTANCE LEARNING

I recently learned that there's some discrepancy about whether students can learn through distance learning. This is ridiculous. For most students, of course they can learn this way. It simply requires their teachers teaching. The children are watching you, aren't they? Get online and teach.

Make sure you stop with the ridiculous review of already taught material. That's why you think they can't learn this way. You are boring them to tears. Teach them something new. Make it interesting. Make it fun. Invite their participation. Invite them to help you with the lesson plans. Ask them what they want to learn, too. Kids are naturally curious. Feed their curiosity. If you still can't teach them, then perhaps you need to quit and go into another profession.

As for the children who can't learn via distance learning, surely teachers can get creative and figure something out. I realize a lot of special needs children cannot learn well through distance learning and my heart is breaking for them because they need this attention most of all. Perhaps more teachers? Perhaps in-person learning can be made safer for them because more classrooms can be used. Perhaps parents can be educated by the teachers about ways to deliver the distance learning to their children. I don't know what the solution is for special needs students. I know, however, that there must be a solution. Get creative.

I also realize that many parents are either trying to work from home, have lost their jobs, or have had to work or return to work since March 2020. This is not an ideal situation for anyone. But with the \$600 per week unemployment checks stimulus and the additional \$1,200 and children's stimulus checks, surely these parents have some extra money to help their households perhaps to hire tutors for their children, whether their children are special needs or not? Our daily lives are in flux, but endangering our children by sending them back to the classroom is not the solution.

Carol Morgan

From: Valerie
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 7:48 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Board Meeting Public Comment

Members of the Washoe County School Board and Superintendent Dr. McNeill.

First, I would like to recognize that what we all have been through is unprecedented, confusing, scary and every other feeling in between; none of you have had easy decisions to make over the last several months and I do believe you have done the best you think you could have done.

I appreciate the numerous options for educating my children in this time but I don't appreciate the lack of preparedness for our schools, students and parents. At the same time I am frustrated by the lack of preparedness that has gone into opening our schools. There is no excuse for the technology issues we are all still experiencing. These issues should have been tested over the summer knowing this was a potential option for our students. The teachers should have been given time to learn and use these systems.

I do not understand where the disconnect is between the Board, the Superintendent and the District office to our teachers and staff. It was made clear in the last very lengthy meetings, yes I watched every meeting, that we would be able to pivot in a moments notice. Yet here we are and we can't. Teachers and staff are in tears, frustrated and worn out because there was no plan. And when you ask them to speak or suggest it they all say they will lose their jobs. So Dr McNeill is completely unaware of what the reality is with our most important employees.

Our Board members are even unable to answer simple questions about the reopening plan you all created and voted on. For example students are not to clean. Well students are cleaning their desks. Maybe not at all schools but several. There is no consistency between the schools because they were told to figure it out. At this point even each teacher is doing their own thing and the administration doesn't know what to do because they can't guide them. Why? The rules change hourly and have since staff reported back.

I am not sure how any of you expect our children to thrive in this environment. We can't ask our parents and children to be prepared when you are not. I don't know that I want to say each one of you have failed but I feel like you have. You have failed our staff, the parents and most importantly our kids who deserve the very best there is to offer for an education.

I think each of you should really take the time to see what the reality is here. I do not expect you all to have every answer and get it right all the time. At this point I do expect an apology to this community for lacking in your preparation of opening schools. I also believe that an apology for our first responders is needed for blaming them for the closure last week. You all should be ashamed of letting that one go and not correcting it.

If we expect our children to apologize and correct their behavior and this is a lesson we teach in our schools; why are you the leaders of this district doing not that? What message are you really sending to our schools, parents and children.

Valerie Brown

From: Kate Kirkpatrick
Sent: Monday, August 24, 2020 8:43 PM
To: Raymond, Malena; Public Comments
Cc: Jay Kirkpatrick; Sutherland, John; Grossman, Aaron
Subject: [EXTERNAL] not enough resources forces teachers out

Dear members of the Washoe County School District Board,

My youngest son is enrolled at Gomm Elementary School and we put him in the distance learning option this fall. Then we waited and waited to hear what that meant. Only two days before school was set to begin, the school finally received word that they would not be provided with additional teachers or resources to run the distance learning option that you so casually adopted. Principal Sutherland was forced to assign three classroom teachers at that very late date, giving these teachers very little time to prepare. They were also asked to teach more than one grade level, keep to district-adopted curriculum, and attend to individual student needs, all of which are huge tasks on their own - but are near impossible when coupled with distance learning.

Our assigned distance learning teacher was Mr. Aaron Grossman. Both my children have previously been in Mr. Grossman's class, and we know without a doubt that he is the best the WCSD has to offer. His handling of the COVID distance learning situation last spring was nothing short of a miracle, and more than once WCSD Board Members attended his virtual class sessions. Mr. Grossman was the WCSD Teacher of the Year and a finalist for the Nevada State Teacher of the Year award, and I hope you can remember how amazing his classes were. He deserves every bit of praise. Our youngest was also in Mrs. Kim Troy's class in years past, and she is a dedicated, caring professional who was also assigned as a distance learning teacher.

We received word yesterday that Mr. Grossman, along with Mrs. Troy, have both resigned their teaching positions at Gomm due to the impossible task that you have given them.

Your actions have forced these amazing teachers to leave Gomm, and our students now face terrible consequences. Having 2 of our 3 distance learning teachers leave abruptly after years as part of the Gomm family, sends a strong message that your actions have made it inconceivable for our educators to continue under the circumstances.

Now we face the prospect of the unknown: having to find educators willing to work under deplorable conditions with no extra assistance, and no time to prepare.

You have made a mess of what could have been a year for new technology, and exciting advances in education. Our schools, our teachers, and our distance learning students deserve better. You need to fix this problem immediately and assign extra resources to ensure that you keep the teachers you have.

Our students depend on it.

Kate Kirkpatrick

From: Daisy Buchanan
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 6:24 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Teams Issues

Good morning—

Maybe this time you'll listen if I start off with a positive.

I'd like to commend most of the 21st century trainers for their efforts in attempting to train the entire district in Teams in the course of a few weeks. This has been a Herculean effort on their behalf, but reveals the truth that their department is not equipped to manage and train all 7,000 teachers on Teams, yet another example of failed vision and leadership.

Here's a few points that have been brought up the leadership before that are either disparaged or dismissed, especially from 21st leader Terra Graves.

1. The training for Microsoft Teams is inadequate simply because there just aren't enough trainers. Why didn't Microsoft provide the training? Most corporations use Microsoft trainers! Who made the decision to have in-house training?
2. Teachers do not have adequate devices to run Teams. Most teachers have outdated desktops without cameras. Most teachers need to check out student laptops to work at home which are not equipped with the software to run Teams adequately. We are required to use our own devices, which don't always integrate with Microsoft Teams for a variety of reasons.

I feel the leadership needs to be "transparent" about how much money they spend on Microsoft, why we are not receiving adequate training, and why every single teacher has not received their own laptop fully equipped to run Microsoft?

It's another example of the complete and utter disregard they have for teachers. Quit drinking their kool-aid and LISTEN!
Daisy

Sent from my iPhone

From: LARRY KATES
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 7:48 AM
To: Raymond, Malena; Taylor, Angela; Minetto, Ellen; Kelley, Scott; Holland, Katy; Caudill, Andrew B; Calvert, Jacqueline M; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment for August 25, 2020 Washoe County School Board of Trustee Meeting, Board Agenda Item 5.02
Attachments: County State COVID Statistics.xlsx

Superintendent McNeil, School Board Trustees, and school board leadership team,

I would hope that in your consideration of adopted Metrics you address the following:

1 - Officially name the source they you will get your COVID data.

I suggest you select the Washoe County Health District.

Fact: the Washoe County Health District/Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center's publishes COVID-19 data daily via a press release^{i[i]}. Additionally the Regional Information Center has an online archive of their daily COVID press releases from March 2020. These archives allow anyone with access to the internet via a computer or smart device to see the case data.

In the last board meeting, Dr. LaMarca while explaining a Homeland Security slide, he said it *"comes with the caveat, 'Please send in your comments this report will be changing, it might not be available,' so it is not something we can be sure will be available to us."*^{ii[iii]}

Fact: The Washoe County School District is a recognized *entity* of the Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center. It makes sense that the Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center be named the official source of COVID data with which the district makes its closure decisions.

Additionally the school district should identify the exact "County Population" in which they determine all "Per 100,000 Population" calculations. The Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center does not have a "Population" posted but the State of Nevada uses a 478,155 for their calculations on the Nevada Health Response COVID-19 web site^{iii[iiii]}.

2 - In regards to the Metrics you choose, Evaluate them daily and not only on Wednesday.

Fact: the Washoe County School District criteria for closing criteria was met on 5 different days at the end of July.

WASHOE SCHOOL DISTRICT CLOSING CRITERIA									
Date	1: 7 Day Average of New Cases per 100,000 Greater Than 100 for 2 Consecutive Weeks			2: 7 Day average positivity rate greater than or equal to 10% of 2 Weeks			3. 7 Day Cases Increasing in New Cases Greater Than or Equal to 10%		
	New Cases Per 100K in Last 7 Days	New Cases Per 100K in Last 8-14 Days	Close Criteria Met?	Positivity Rate In Last 7 Days	Positivity Rate In Last 8-14 Days	Close Criteria Met?	Percent Change in 7 Day & 8-14 Day Cases	Percent Change in 8-14 Day & 15+-21. Day Cases	Close Criteria Met?
24-Jul	128.41	92.86	Open	7.30%	6.11%	Open	38.29%	2.30%	Open
25-Jul	140.12	100.39	Close	7.86%	6.62%	Open	39.58%	17.36%	Close
26-Jul	142.21	98.92	Open	6.89%	6.40%	Open	43.76%	25.46%	Close
27-Jul	135.94	101.22	Close	6.73%	6.59%	Open	34.30%	12.82%	Close
28-Jul	129.46	110.01	Close	6.79%	6.81%	Open	17.68%	24.94%	Close
29-Jul	132.38	109.17	Close	6.40%	7.48%	Open	21.26%	8.30%	Open
30-Jul	143.89	117.33	Close	6.61%	7.31%	Open	22.64%	28.67%	Close
31-Jul	129.87	128.41	Close	6.95%	7.30%	Open	1.14%	38.29%	Open

Data was sourced from the Washoe County Health District/Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center.

The closing standard shouldn't be like getting/avoiding a ticket while driving a car. In a car you could drive for a prolonged period of time over the speed limit and still not get a ticket if you were not speeding in the one moment you speed was checked by radar. The standard should be an alarm that goes off when you exceed the speed limit at any time and stays on until a reset metric has been met.

Fact: Even though the current metric were met on 5 days, schools would not have been closed under current policy since Dr. LaMarca and the operation center use "Wednesday" data for his weekly briefing on Thursday. The Wednesday July 29 met one of three criteria. This example further illustrates why daily and not weekly evaluations should be made.

Finally in full disclosure, since the start of the pandemic, when using a day to day versus weekly evaluation, July 7 stands as the only other day that the districts two or more closure criteria were met.

3 - Do not limit criteria to a Open/Close but rather use a Green/Yellow/Red model.

The federal government uses a three separate levels of each criteria they evaluate: Green is good, Yellow sends a warning, and Red is bad. The three levels work like letter grades in school: Passing, Danger of Failing, and Failing. The school should be able to incorporate a three tier system rather than have a simple pass/fail. Additionally alerting people that there is a danger of failing can focus more attention for what would happen.

Example:

Consider the US Standard for Diagnostic Testing Positivity Rate^{iv[iv]} using data published by Washoe County Health District/Reno-Sparks-Washoe Regional Information Center. On June 21 - COVID-19 Testing positivity rate exceeded 5%, going from Green to Yellow. The Rate slowly increased for six days (warning period) and on June 27 it exceeded 10% rate going to Red.

US COVID-19 Report - Diagnostic test result positivity rate						
Date	Total New Cases In Last 7 Days	Total Tests In Last 7 Days	Positivity Rate For Last 7 Days	Standards		
				Less Than 5%	Between 5% and 10%	Greater Than 10%
20-Jun	224	4,786	4.68%	Green		
21-Jun	232	4,213	5.51%		Yellow	
22-Jun	229	4,386	5.22%		Yellow	
23-Jun	270	4,404	6.13%		Yellow	
24-Jun	353	4,118	8.57%		Yellow	
25-Jun	298	4,229	7.05%		Yellow	
26-Jun	375	3,875	9.68%		Yellow	
27-Jun	394	3,730	10.56%			Red

COVID-19 evaluations will increase and decrease over time, and every time one standard goes from Green to Yellow, does not mean it will eventually turn Red. That being said, under all of the criteria evaluated in the US COVID-19 report, a standard never went from Green to Red, there was always at least one day of Yellow suggesting it may turn Red.

A couple of the benefits of the yellow warning period would be to alert parents that schools may be closed soon and that not school day-care may be required and, for food services to be alerted on a possible switch to full distance learning and the change in meal demands.

4 - Use a solid criteria (x many cases per period) and not a comparison of rate changes (X days to X days).

There is a problem in comparing percentage of change between two arbitrary dates. A 10% increase of 100 cases is 110 a 10% increase of 200 cases from 220. There shouldn't be equal action taken for 20 positive cases as there is for 10 positive cases, just because the base number of cases was different.

Identify 10% Increase in Total Cases per Week				
Date	Total New Cases 8-14 Days Ago	Total Cases Last 7 Days	Change in Cases	Percentage Change In Cases
15-Jun	187	231	44	23.5%
16-Jun	182	228	46	25.3%
17-Jun	214	191	-23	-10.7%
18-Jun	248	213	-35	-14.1%
16-Jul	536	436	-100	-18.7%
17-Jul	434	444	10	2.3%
18-Jul	409	480	71	17.4%
19-Jul	377	473	96	25.5%
19-Aug	458	511	53	11.6%
20-Aug	490	428	-62	-12.7%
21-Aug	446	491	45	10.1%
22-Aug	435	521	86	19.8%

Using Washoe County data, the increase between 2-8 June and 9-15 Jun was 44 cases, or 23.5%, the increase of 45 cases between 8-14 August and 15-21 August was 45 cases, but only 10.1% increase.

Likewise the 25.5% increase on 19 July took 96 cases, while the 25.3% increase on 16 June took 46.

This is why weekly changes should not be used as a school closure criteria.

5 - If the district meets a set closing threshold close immediately, do not wait.

Simply put this is a global pandemic. There shouldn't not be delay from when a closure point is identified and the schools are closed. If a fire were identified, and a fire alarm sounds, do you suggest students delay the evacuating the school? Of course you do not, so why advocate for a delay in closing schools?

That being said setting up Yellow Zone criteria, will provide students, parents, teachers, and staff a warning that a closure criteria is close to being met. This Yellow Zone status will allow everyone to prepare for a possible closure and help mitigate issues if the district is forced to close.

6 - If you are close by the numbers, please set/publish a standard for re-opening by the numbers.

Everyone is waiting on specific criteria set by the school board for when they will close the schools. What are the metrics that will be used, how many of the metrics will need to be reached for the schools to be closed. But once the doors are closed, no one has a set a metric for the doors to be re-opened.

Please address this, before everyone is in distance learning.

Thank you for considering all of the above points.

^{v[i]} <https://covid19washoe.com/press-release/>

^{vi[ii]} <https://youtu.be/2pC8lgPk1A> (3 hr, 52 min)

^{vii[iii]} <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>

^{viii[iv]} <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/White-House-NV-report.pdf>

From: Julie Sharp
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 9:52 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Playground equipment elementary schools

Please reconsider opening play structures at elementary schools. Public parks throughout Reno & Sparks are open and kids are playing there frequently. Studies have shown repeatedly that the risk of transmitting covid is lower than initially thought from touching surfaces. The schools are maintaining strict hand hygiene procedures after recess and the children are wearing their masks while outdoors. Please allow the kids to maximize their recess time outside and enjoy the playground for what it is.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Ariel Hunsberger
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 12:22 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please read aloud to the School Board and attendees

COMMENTS TO BE READ ALOUD TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

My family is full of dedicated teachers who love their jobs and their students, and need their paychecks, and have exhausted all their means of protesting the reopening of schools in person. You are not listening to them or taking care of them as is your duty as an employer.

The way you are ignoring all of the science and all of the recommendations from public health officials is not only negligent, but cruel and selfish. You KNOW that in a few days or a few weeks, Washoe hospitals will be overwhelmed with the students, teachers, and family members who will all suffer because of this catastrophic decision. That anguish and grief will be YOUR FAULT when you could have chosen the safer option of distance learning. You will forever be remembered as the ignorant and cowardly villains of this pandemic who condemned hundreds to die unnecessarily because you chose to follow an irresponsible agenda that ignores reality. You could still make a better choice and save lives.

If you don't, you will be at the top of the guest list for all my family member's funerals, and yes, I expect you to attend in-person despite all the risks that presents, since that doesn't seem to bother you.

I do not want your apologies or your tears, in fact please spare me. I just want you to make the only sensible choice, which is to move learning fully online until the pandemic is under control.

From: LARRY KATES
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 12:24 PM
To: Public Comments; McNeill, Kristen; BoardMembers
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fine Arts and Distance Learning

Superintendent McNeill, School Board Trustees, and School District staff,

Where is the equity?

The "Reopening Schools" slide decks (presented by the District Leadership Team) for the July 7, July 28, and August 11 Board Meetings all lead with the following Guiding Principles:

- All decisions based on a foundation of "Do No Harm"
- Ensure student, family, and staff basic needs are being met
- Ensure equitable access for all students

Well all three principles were not met in regards to my high school students return to school.

My students are not athletes, but performing artists. Though there are great plans to have high school sports return, there are published plans for the performing arts? The NIAA has moved fall sports to February so high school athletes will not miss out on their chance to earn scholarships. The district has a historical policy where students enrolled in North Star could be dual enrolled in their zoned school in order to play sports while distance learning. Of course those dual enrollments aren't available due to the COVID pandemic. Where are the dual programs for the distance learning students when it comes to performing arts?

Since the majority of high school students are either full distance or hybrid, can the board elaborate on what part of the in-class portion of a performing arts class makes it impossible for someone who is full time distance learning? Is there something unique about the time spent in a classroom that can't also be accomplished over a video conference?

The reason my kids aren't in school: I served the US Military in Iraq, I have been exposed to the fumes of the infamous Iraq burn pits, I am someone with a pre-existing condition.

- I do not want to be harmed, by my children being exposed, and thus exposing me to the COVID-19 virus.
- My basic need, for my children to continue on the educational path they started as high school freshmen is not being met.
- My kids do not have equal access to as students because the district chooses not to offer fine arts to the students in full distance learning.

Please explain how this is equitable.

Larry Kates

From: Scherry
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 12:30 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Not even close to being ready to reopen

Hello all

We are now into our official second week. My children STILL have teachers that are not get support and guidance they need!! WE ARE NOT READY WHAT SO EVER!!

My sons special needs schedule is still up in air because of stressed and overloaded teachers!!! His services from his IEP ARE STILL NOT SET UP!!

Why are you guys ignoring that fact that you have very limited teachers and then add to it you have put them in situation where they are overloaded and stretched thin. You fail miserably at giving support to teachers and principals .

Why are you lying to the community and portraying that everything is ready and going according to plan.

Parents, teachers, and students deserve ANSWERS and HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY. I'll get back to you is not an answer it's an excuse.

Frustrated parent of our community

S.Green

Sent from my iPhone

From:
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 12:53 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL]

I truly feel that the district staff, teachers have been put in a place of complete lack of preparation for this transition of learning. They need more time to lesson plan, prepare and organize and iron out all the kinks of virtual & hybrid learning. They were set up to fail and in turn have caused frustration to the families and students who so badly want to learn and be in school. However, it is so all over the place and the lack of communication is infuriating. I would highly recommend a re-start and switch to distance learning platform. Then transition into hybrid once teachers have been given proper training and fully prepared for the return to in-person learning. I don't understand the rush and give teachers a week or two weeks to iron it out.

I am extremely conflicted since I am now faced with making a decision to pull my kid out of hybrid and into distance, because of health concerns and the disorganization. I am now forced to downgrade my child's education that doesn't meet my child's educational needs in order to protect the health of my child. On the other hand, the hybrid model is disorganized, completely chaotic and frustrating. I was all for having my child return to school for routine and sense of normalcy. My child attended one day and school was shut down for smoke and now has friend's quarantined because of a case at school, yet the siblings of friend's aren't required to also quarantine? My child's virtual day was 30 minutes of work and very little to no explanation as to what to do. It is all such a frustrating situation, but I feel that the district had since March to start figuring out a plan and well, it didn't happen. Teachers should have been back in the classroom in July and start training and planning. I get contracts and all that, but this is a pandemic and normal went out the window in March and should be adjusted to meet the needs of the community and educational needs of the students. I feel the district has dropped the ball on this one and it is infuriating.

No name mention please

From: bryannadean
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 1:51 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] electives for online school.

Hi there, I'm a student at Spanish Springs High School. I had a question about why is it that for all the online schoolers they get their electives taken away like band. I was in band and we used the app band to send in videos of us doing sheet music. I don't see where it is needed to be taken away when it all can be done online. Choir can also be done online in a zoom meeting or by sending videos into the teacher. Take the news for example. They show kids in Orchestra doing an online zoom class and they did perfectly well. So why punish the kids who want to keep their family safe by staying home, and doing online classes when they have family members who do have health conditions, or they themselves have health conditions. How is that fair! I don't understand why you open up the schools when the numbers are rising in the pandemic. Do you hate children that bad to get them sick or pass it to their family, and make them orphans? Thank you for taking the time and reading this.
SSHS Student.

From: Debbi DeCalogero
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 2:46 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Are you Aware?

Washoe County Board of Directors

August 25, 2020

Dear Trustees,

As we all know, this COVID-19 time is something no one could have predicted or wanted to hit the world. But it has, and we must deal with it.

Are you aware that teachers are being asked to take students into their classrooms at 8:40 before their contract hours start for teaching?

Are you aware that teachers have had additional students added in their classrooms changing nearly daily?

Are you aware that teachers are asked to make "room" for yet more students which put their classroom over the maximum capacity allowed by Governor Sisolak's Directive?

Are you aware that cramming students into the classrooms are making it horribly difficult for the teacher to keep their mandatory 6 ft of distance per Governor Sisolak's Directive and their own personal risk?

Are you aware that allocations have cut positions and now parents are sending their students back to the classroom and there is not enough room?

Teachers are being told "to deal with it", "It is what it is", and "just make it work". Parents are not aware that these things are happening to their children putting them at risk. IF parents were allowed on campus, which they are not, teachers feel they would be surprised to see how squished their students are in a classroom where they are spending 6 hours with one 30-minute break.

WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS FOR OUR STUDENTS!!

From: Chelsea Steverman
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 3:00 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Questions about covid/closures

Public Comment

To the Washoe County School District, Board of Trustees,

As a working mother and ICU RN at a local hospital, I cannot help but speak to the inadequacy's put forth by the school district. The action plan that has been instituted is something that the board should be ashamed of. It appears as though most decisions made by the district are made out of fear (whether of covid or legal recourse) with little evidence to back the decision. Let me elaborate:

1. The decision to enforce masks on school age children: This seems to be a disaster in the making, very few young children are going to be able to keep a mask on, not share masks, and not touch their face. The governor mandated that children under the age of 9 do not need to wear masks, so please explain the basis for this decision. Would it not be easier to have hand sanitizer in every room, and to gel in and out as we do in the hospital and scheduled hand washing times? Please keep in mind that day cares have been allowed to remain open and have had NO COVID related issues through the spring and summer. I have gotten skin breakdown from my mask at work, and am able to take it off during the day. What about kids that must wear them for 6+ hours? Has this been addressed?
2. Closures: Recess has been restricted to "outdoor breaks" guided by teachers or staff members to avoid children touching each other. It does not sound like there will be any running/playing. So why has school been cancelled due to air quality? Wouldn't the kids be breathing the same air at home as they would at school? And before we blame it on a ventilation issue, has any school updated their ventilation system to "circulate more fresh air in" as per the covid protocol, with money allocated to schools by the federal government? And why would distance learning be canceled and a professional development day instead be implemented? It certainly seems that the school district was just plain not ready to open. Demonstrating again the lack of concern for parent's schedules and need to work and plan for child care, announcing the closures at 8pm at night is just not acceptable. Again, daycares are and have been open on all the days that the schools are closed. And then to blame it on lack of emergency resources available because of firefighters doing their jobs was infuriating, especially when both Sparks and Reno fire departments stated that was not a reality.
 - a. Recess: We know that vitamin D is useful in preventing/reducing symptoms of Covid 19, so why are we restricting outdoor time (other than due to the smoke)? Why not move classes outdoors while the weather is still warm?
3. Teachers: As a nurse, I definitely went through a "fear" phase when I realized I would be taking care of patients with Covid on ventilators, and as time went on, the fear became growth and the growth became knowledge. This is my job and I signed up to take care of sick people. Teachers are supposed to teach children. So why is it ok for them to protest in large groups but not teach our children? And by no means is teaching going to be easy with all the new restrictions and policies, but to not do it, in my opinion, is detrimental and for me, in my role, not taking care of somebody was not an option.

In my professional opinion as an essential worker, Northern Nevada has not even seen a "1st wave" of Covid 19 and we already know that the first case on the west coast was documented in February. It has already been here. I am not saying that it is not real or not scary. And closing our area down in the spring was really to give the hospitals time to prepare for an influx of patients, which we have never seen but are more than prepared for.

The effect of closing schools has such a huge impact, more so than just on our kids. We already know that screen time is bad for kids, lack of socialization is bad for kids and what about those kids that need school to feel safe from violence at home or just to be fed? Our society is built around schools, so parents can work and kids can learn. So, to the teachers who don't want work: please reconsider, chances are VERY GOOD you will be just fine: there are ½ a million people in Washoe county and we have had 131 unfortunate deaths- this is a mortality rate of 2% out of the confirmed 6,545 cases (in all probability, the case count is much higher, which would drop the calculated mortality rate even lower). You have a greater chance of dying from heart disease or cancer which kills 600,000 people annually.

4. Distance learning: The simple fact: parents who opt to do distance learning (either because they are afraid of Covid or because they believe the school district will close schools anyway) have been left in the dark. Upon the final hour before learning is supposed to start is when they have received any information regarding the details and expectations. This should have been planned for back in March when distance learning started, with regular communication to parents. It is an absolute joke that there was no foresight before the board decision made on August 11th. As a tax paying citizen, this is just appalling. This has left so many behind, causing children to drop out of school, be homeschooled, causing parents to quit their jobs to turn in to educators overnight. Our community has lost faith in the school district to adequately provide for a service that we will continue to pay for.

Thank you for reading/hearing my concerns. I want to believe that the school district is doing the best they can, but for all the above reasons, it is getting difficult to do so. Kids should not be brought up to think that it is ok to hide in the face of adversity, blindly follow the masses and fail to think for themselves. I want someone to advocate for our children, community, economy and do so with reason, not fear.

From: Jenna
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 1:52 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Hepa filters

So I am a teacher and I just watched two men come through my classroom and replaced the filter in my air conditioner with a very cheap filter that won't do anything except keep out large dust bunnies. Why aren't we looking at using hepa filters or filters that will help clean the air?

Thank you
Jenna

From: Yolanda Ortega-Gammill
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 4:16 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. McNeill and Board of Trustees,

I am writing today to express my concern and my disappointment about the recent resignation of Washoe County School District teacher, Aaron Grossman.

I know that Dr. McNeill and a board member or two have spent time in Mr. Grossman's classroom. I am certain that you are all aware that Aaron was a WCSD Teacher of the Year and a Nevada Teacher of the Year Finalist. Aaron is a Nevada Teacher Ambassador and a WCSD Teacher Leader. Aaron has served the district as a Literacy Coordinator, as an Instructional Coach and as a School Improvement Program Coordinator. And for many lucky students across the district, my own son included, Mr. Grossman has been a classroom teacher. I have yet to meet a veteran teacher in this district who does not know who Aaron Grossman is. I have yet to meet a veteran teacher in this district who does not hold Aaron Grossman in the highest esteem.

The attention that Aaron Grossman has garnered reaches far beyond WCSD and the State of Nevada. The Core Task Project, which Aaron helped develop, has been recognized by the Fordham Institute, the Gates Foundation and was featured on National Public Radio. Aaron is an absolute encyclopedia of knowledge when it comes to education, whether it be about Common Core, technology in the classroom or the latest research on the newest curriculums.

If you have spent any time with Aaron, you know he is a consummate professional. I am not sure when he sleeps because weekends, nights, summers, Aaron is creating and collaborating and sharing his work not only with educators in our district, but educators across the country. Take a look at his classroom website room360.org and the Facebook Group Just Two Teachers and you will be inspired and in awe of the innovation and work Aaron has put into his craft. It is obvious that Mr. Grossman has easily spent hundreds, of what I can only assume are non-contract hours, this summer prepping for both in person and distance learning this fall.

Put simply, Aaron Grossman is an example of the very best that Public Education has to offer. Aaron is a nationally recognized and respected educator and WCSD has been incredibly fortunate to have him. The fact that Mr. Grossman would resign, a couple weeks into the school year, and after hours and hours of preparation for the school year, should give us all pause. I am hearing more and more grumblings from the highly effective teachers in this district who are typically quiet and focused on their classroom. I am more than a little concerned that Mr. Grossman's resignation will not be the last of the very best teachers WCSD has to offer. Honestly, it makes me cringe to think of educators and leaders across the country asking Aaron why he left the classroom and why he left WCSD. I will not pretend to know anything about the specifics regarding Mr. Grossman's resignation, but in my opinion and with all due respect, I believe it would be foolish of the BOT and the WCSD leadership to allow him to walk away without a lot of conversation about his concerns.

Respectfully,
Yolanda B Ortega-Gammill

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From: Tyx Pulskamp
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 4:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Death over distance

Watching as the integrity of your district is further corroded by your leadership, I have no Washoe School District.

One pivot after another... And then, the fire and smoke.

The smoke was unsafe enough to close schools, but your employees safety was not important enough to effectively communicate.

The virus is no doubt more dangerous than the smoke and the communication is just as merky.

When sit there 6 feet from each other, I imagine you do so feeling safe.

Your staff and students deserve to feel safe too.

Nothing is safe about how this district is responding to the pandemic.

I wish I could help you. Or even hold hope that you will make the right decision.

Can you make the right choice for this community?

Will you?

Because the power to save lives is yours.

Do not let in-person education continue while colleges and universities around the country are closing left and right.

-Mr Pulskamp

From: Lyon, Art
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 4:49 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: ADA ACOMMODATIONS

I am an example of a teacher that wants to teach distance learners to reduce the risk of Covid 19. I submitted my doctor's note and need to teach virtually over three weeks ago. I have not been given any accommodations. There are two teachers teaching all distance learners in grades that have long term substitutes. I could have been given a distance learning position in those grades and was not. It is as if long term subs have more seniority than a teacher who has served for 12 years.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Sarah Davalt
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 5:36 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] August 25th board meeting

To whom it may concern,

I am currently watching the board meeting, and I must say as a parent I am very upset. There is a parade of teachers saying they are not ready to open and they are worried about their mental health as teachers.

I am sorry I have little sympathy for them. As a parent my first concern is my children! My children's mental health is not being considered. My 8 year old is suffering from depression related to the pandemic and is just craving some semblance of normalcy. My 11 year old is also depressed and trying to accept this hybrid schedule. The closures last week were especially devastating to him.

I am not only concerned about their mental health, I am concerned about their academic health. My children already lost 1/2 a year of learning due to the spring closure. And your lesson plans that covered multiple grades were a joke and an injustice to our children. This is especially hard for my son who is starting 6th grade, he is already starting behind 1/2 a year in such a pivotal and important year.

I do agree with the teachers that the current system of distance learning is not optimal, in fact I'm very concerned that on distance days my son is not getting any real instruction and will continue to fall behind.

WCSD had done very little that I can see since March to prepare the teachers or the students. Shame on you! 5 Months to figure this out, and you have failed and you are failing out children. As a parent I expect more from you and from our teachers.

~Sarah Davalt

But I expect they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn't. And if they had, we shouldn't know, because they'd have been forgotten. We hear about those as just went on -- and not all to a good end, mind you; at least not to what folk inside a story and not outside it call a good end. J. R. R. Tolkien (1892 - 1973), "The Lord of the Rings"

From: Chris Dennewitz
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 6:40 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Distance learning

The Washoe County school district and the board have completely failed our students. You had 5 months to execute a plan for our students, yet you have done very little. You have ignored your teachers concerns and it shows, my high schooler has had little to nothing assigned to him on his so called digital days.

How do you expect your teachers to teach in person and help online at the same time?

I as many other families feel WCSD is setting our students up for failure.

You should all be ashamed of yourselves!
-Chris Dennewitz

From: Lisa Lee
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:21 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Disgraceful Scott Kelley

Dear Board of Trustees,

Scott Kelley should be removed from his duties due to this abhorrent behavior and his perversions towards minors. This is beyond reproach.

<https://thisisreno.com/2020/08/school-trustee-scott-kelleys-behavior-harassing-oppressive-court-documents/>

Best,

Lisa Lee, M.A., CPRSS
Peer Director

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

Desmond Tutu