Hi Heather;

Thought you would be interested in this article, if you hadn't already seen it.

David C Johnson, MD

Begin forwarded message:

I saw this on the BBC and thought you should see it:


*Disclaimer*

The BBC is not responsible for the content of this email, and anything written in this email does not necessarily reflect the BBC's views or opinions. Please note that neither the email address nor name of the sender have been verified.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you today to perhaps give another insight into what teaching in the age of COVID looks like in WCSD.

Before I begin, I want to say that I feel safe at school. My kids have been incredible. The biggest “issue” I’ve had to deal with is reminding two of my middle schoolers that they can’t high five each other. The masks, the cleaning between classes, the social distancing, it’s all working. My admin is absolutely incredible, and no doubt struggling knowing what all of our days look like. But they are doing everything they can to keep everyone safe and supported.

But I am not ok. I’m not. I’ll say I am in front of my kids, and I’ll say I am to parents, but that is not truthful.

I am working 14-15 hour days right now. I have 167 students on my rosters. 53 of them are full distance learners. I start my day by videoing my lesson to them and answering all of their questions. The first day of school, I was up to 42 emails by 8:15 from my distance learners, because they needed support I could not give while teaching in person. Luckily, as a highly effective teacher, I have figured this out, and the volume of stressed out emails has lessened. Most of my distance learners are thriving.

Then I have my in person kids. While I’m supporting my distance learners, I also have three different types of schedules to juggle for children I teach face to face. I have my hybrid kids who are at school, my hybrid kids at home, and my kids on special assignment I see every day. That’s four different lessons I need to be ready for every single day. However, my in person kids are also thriving when they are in the classroom. We are loving the smaller class sizes, I get to actually have conversations with kids, and I love being in my classroom.

Some things are working, yes. But that is all because of the culture in my school. In reality, the sheer amount of work that goes into just getting through a day as a teacher right now is astronomical. But I get it, life happens, and we are all on overdrive. All hands on deck. However, I have no more hands to give. I have been teaching for 12 years, and I will be frank, I’m great at my job. However, I am not ok. I may be making it work, and I may have a smile on my face, but I am not ok. I’m spent.

Please understand that I WANT to be teaching. I’m not complaining, I’m educating the people who directly affect my work environment. This is not about my admin, this is not about what my school can do better, because I feel 100% supported by them. This is bigger than that. The public and WCSD
leadership need to know what the realities are right now. We are breaking, and it’s week 2. Please know that we need consistent direction that takes place NOW and that helps support us and is equal across the board. Putting off the hard decisions because the results are uncomfortable trickles down, and making everything a site decision is unfair. We feel unheard, under appreciated, and ineffective. This type of expectation is unsustainable, and again, the people making the decisions to put all hands on deck seem to not understand that. This is not something we can continue to do without it negatively impacting our physical, mental, and emotional well being.

In the last board meeting, President Raymond said she’s foggy at midnight and doesn’t make her best decisions at that time. Neither do I, but it turns out that’s a part of my everyday life now, so I can prepare my four lessons I need in order to teach the next day with a smile on my face.

Thank you for your time,
Katie Wallace
This is primarily for Dr. McNeill, since I ran out of the time during the last Board meeting and was not able to finish what I intended to say. Although that moment for me was very impromptu and I was terrified I wanted to end by saying how much I support and respect Dr. McNeill as our Superintendent. I think the right person is leading us, although there have been decisions made I disagree with regarding COVID, I sincerely believe with her leadership, as well as with Deb Biersdorff at her side, and with Calen Evans leading ENT that WCSD can turn itself around and we can collectively-ALL OF US-Trustees, Educators, Administrators, ESPs... come together and empower WCSD by fighting for state level funding formulas that are pro education, rather than against. In my 19 years of teaching across 4 districts and 2 states (CO and NV), I have observed our morale in every area of education, physical health, emotional health and idealism continually become shattered, more than likely because we are all so disconnected from one another within the establishment of education. Also, I understand the ugly side of Nevada's Governor going after a school Superintendent so publicly and how I can never understand the level of politics being played that high up, but I can only hope with all of the amazing talent we have in our district we can figure things out together and not implode ourselves.

I am trying so hard, as many of my colleagues are to remain true to our mission as educators in this new era of teaching while at the same time remaining loyal to my own value system as a elementary school teacher and trying to find my voice so as not to come off as disrespectful to anyone in WCSD, while I try to advocate for our marginalized students of color at Loder. Where's The Funding is my battle cry directed at our politicians and our Trustees, whom I hold responsible for fighting for us and WITH us as we go up against a state establishment that seems to be okay with the lack of equity due to large classroom sizes in NV as well as the lack of funding for classroom resources. Personally, I am not okay with Nevada's public schools raking 50th in the country-over and over again. It's not a cool look for us. It isn't very Nevada Strong in my opinion.

I want to end by saying how grateful I am as a disabled military Veteran to be receiving 2 additional years on the teaching salary scale in WCSD. This is why I chose to teach in Reno, rather than returning to Las Vegas where I would have picked up the 80 days of leave I had accrued before I left for CO, and I would have returned to a district where I would have eventually earned a higher income as a teacher. The fact that WCSD honors military veterans by recognizing our service to country and rewarding us financially is beyond respectable in my opinion. I thought a district who has integrity to our countries Veterans is a district I want to become a part of.

I'm not ending yet, I also want to say how much I love teaching at Echo Loder. The community, the talent, the commitment of our administrators is beyond any level of humility and grace I have ever experienced in education. From our coaches, who are now DL teachers, to our office staff, nutritional staff, paraeducators, families, and students I am honored to be a part of this amazing learning community.

Still not done, The folks in our C&I Department, as well as our PD department also continue to inspire me. Two years ago we had district level coaches, the best of the best, come into our classrooms and collaborate with us and mentor us, and to witness their talent and strength was also inspiring to me as an educator. The summer, the Online trainings we attended, were very beneficial to me as a DL teacher, and I appreciate the people who are behind the scenes making all of this happen. The people in our district are why I stay.

Nearing the end, I could state my utter disappointment in the many decisions that have been made in the past 5 months, including the disappointment I have for myself sometimes, but I think you are hearing quite enough from everybody. We may ALL be making mistakes right now, but at the root of it is that we have good people leading us. Honest people. People who have worked their way up through the ranks and have worked at schools similar to Loder, so they know what we know. We all know what we need to make this wheel spin better. WCSD, compared to other districts, has a lot to be thankful for in my opinion. We also have a lot to work on. I truly hope our Trustees can become a part of the solution as we move forward.

Although, I have been very vocal recently, I hesitated writing anything...I'm trying to avoid writing too much on social media these days...I don't want to say the wrong things and I do not want Dr. McNeill to take all of the burden of the decisions that are being made. I do not think that is fair and I certainly know she had a rough time the past few years and
she hesitated taking this position as our Superintendent...she has been on the receiving end of retaliation from her Supervisors, so she knows what direction she wants to take us as an institution. Ultimately, I trust her leadership. It's the establishment of public education in our country, as well as in NV I hope to see fundamental change within.

Nearing the end again. President Raymond, Thank you so much for taking the stand you did this week with some of the very public nastiness regarding another Trustee's personal life. While I never ever would pass judgement on family matters or the personal lives of others, the retaliatory nature of this Trustee against other educators is exactly what Dr. McNeill stands against. It is a very ugly side of our business and I hope we see less of these types of abuse of power within the entire establishment of education.

Respectfully,

Agnes Coleman

Let the beauty of what you love be what you do    -Rumi
From:    Thursday, August 27, 2020 9:08 PM
Sent:    Public Comments
To:      [EXTERNAL] Mask concerns

I am reaching out because I have attempted to connect with the principal of my daughter's school to no avail. On Tuesday when my daughter came home from the first day of school (Yay school is open) she told my wife and I that one of her friends at school was not wearing a mask. When she was asked about it her response was “I don’t have to wear one”. This student lives around the corner from us and our children have played together with other children in the neighborhood and having talked several times with her parents we know of no known medical conditions to have her exempt. I do know that her parents believe that this whole COVID 19 pandemic is made up. I know Washoe school district has done a lot to open schools and we as parents appreciate and are trying to help keep schools open for our children and the teachers and make school as safe as possible. As a business owner I know the struggles of having my employees and customers protected as we are in customers homes everyday and use all appropriate protective gear to keep everyone safe. I have waited a few days In hopes the Principal would respond to my email as I know she’s busy but I also feel that this may be time sensitive before it gets too late. I’m concerned about the health and safety of my daughter, her classmates and teachers if this child is allowed to interact with them without a mask. I’m also concerned about the example this is setting to all of the kids in the school. My daughter is in 2nd grade at Bud Beasley elementary school. If you need any further information please reach out to me.

Mike Miller
Dear School Board Trustees,

I am writing to urge you to support Jeff Church as the temporary replacement for District A. Scott Kelly has resigned because of his personal and legal issues. On Sept 5th Scott Kelly failed to show up for a Zoom Candidate forum. Scott Kelly's problems appear to be long term. District A needs a representative for the long term.

District A needs a replacement not for a few weeks, but to represent the District in the long term. Since Jeff Church is poised to win the election, he is the obvious replacement choice. Jeff's appointment would allow Jeff to hit the ground running and then he will end up being a better representative for District A.

I am a voter in district A. I want a trustee that I can trust. I trust Jeff Church and urge you to support him for the replacement of Scott Kelly.

Thank you,

James M. Benthin
To Whom It Might Concern;

I support Jeff Church for the open seat on the School Board. I have known Col. (Ret.) Church for many years and have followed him in his activities at School Board meetings. He is fully aware of the importance of a proper education of our most important resource; our children. I'm sure you are also fully aware of Jeff's attendance at your meetings. He is, therefore the most logical replacement for Mr. Kelly. Thank you for your consideration of Col. Church.

Sincerely, Msg. (Ret.) Roger M. Edwards

Retired Nevada Air National Guard (37 years)

Former Chairman Washoe County Planning Commissioner (8 years)

Former Chairman Washoe County Regional Planning Commission (4 years)

Former Chairman (and current Vice Chair) North Valleys Citizen Advisory Board (8 years)

Member and current Vice President of the Golden Valley Property Owner's Association (22 years)

Past Chairman Washoe County Republican Party (1 year)
Please appoint Jeff Church to the Washoe County School District as Trustee.

Thank you,
Laurie Agnew
Reno
Please appoint Jeff Church to the open trustee position on the WCSB. Thank you, Barbara Kirk

Sent from my iPhone
From: Darla A. Lee
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 1:05 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Replacement

We urge the School Board to appoint Jeff Church to fulfill the term of Scott Kelly.
George & Darla Lee
Sparks, NV
Hello,

Please appoint Jeff Church to take over disgraced Scott Kelly’s position.

Jeff cares deeply about our school district and will be a good steward of our budget and money. Jeff is our very best choice for Washoe County School Trustee.

All of us in Reno are counting on you to do the right thing - appoint Jeff Church, now!

Sincerely,

Bev Stenehjem

Reno, NV 89523

Sent from my iPad
From: Judy Covert
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 3:06 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Jeff Church

Please appoint Jeff Church to fill the vacant position left by Scott Kelly. He is the best choice and we were going to vote for him in November!!!

Sincerely
Jim and Judy Covert
RENO NV 89521
Please appoint Jeff Church to take over Scott Kelly’s position.
Jeff cares deeply about our school district and will be a good steward of our kids and money. Jeff is our very best choice for Washoe County School District Trustee.
All of us in Reno are counting on you to do the right thing - appoint Jeff Church, now!

Sincerely yours

Sharon Graham

Reno, NV 89523
Please appoint Jeff Church to take over disgraced Scott Kelly’s position. Jeff is a man of integrity and cares deeply about our school district. Jeff is the very best choice for WCSD trustee. We are counting on you to appoint Jeff Church NOW!
He is the man for the job!
Thanks in advance,
Vicky and Bill Holbrook

Reno, Nevada 89509

Sent from my iPad
I realize that you had difficult factors to consider in the decision about how to approach this school year. The health department’s recommendation should have been the only factor to use in coming to a decision.

I own a cafe so you might imagine the trauma I felt on March 15, receiving the mandate to close. My employees and I felt tremendous impact, one of my waitresses had just shyly started college classes despite her dyslexia, another had just purchased a new car. I had $3000 worth of food to give away and compost. That mandate though, on March 15 was crystal clear to me. It was extremely unpopular and extremely responsible. I recognized the familiar dread of facing a night when my three kids would be taking turns vomiting with the flu. I recognized the quick decisive action of a mother.

If our entire community had acted equally with that same level of consideration, we may have been enjoying a normal school year. Irresponsible, selfish people decided on the disaster we are experiencing now. This school year is a disaster!!! The district handled the rapid response to school closure last winter and spring. I was very active in my childrens’ schooling, as a volunteer in classes and as PTA president concurrently at two schools in Southern California. I was DAZZLED by the excellent response.

You, the board, deciding on this sloppy mess of multiple versions, has f—ed it up for all kids. My granddaughter is an 8th grader at Clayton Middle School. Her doctor father wouldn’t allow any of his children to attend school so our plan has always been online only. The mess you made has resulted in complete chaos for kids/teachers/administrators/support staff. How could you possibly have thought that this could go any other way?!!! You tried the limp childish easy way and created catastrophe for all of us!! Now we’re heading into real flu season, it can only get much worse. Shame on you.

Barb Giacomini
Daughters Cafe
Please appoint Jeff Church to the District A School Board Seat.
Thank you,
Jim & Diane Johnson
From: Cindy Sassenrath
Sent: Monday, September 7, 2020 4:20 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Appoint Jeff Church to fill seat vacated by Scott Kelly

This is the smart move since Jeff Church is on the ballot in November anyway. Jeff is a long time resident and doesn't have the personal or legal problems that forced Scott Kelly to resign.

Thank you!

Cindy Sassenrath
Hello,

I am writing to you tonight as a parent and community member. Tonight, I am looking at the Washoe County Health site and noticing the following:

**June 1, 2020**
Active Cases: 549  
Hospitalizations: 58  
Deaths 61

**July 2, 2020**
Active Cases: 1019 (doubled in a month)  
Hospitalizations: 85  
Deaths:77

**September 7, 2020**
Active Cases 1140  
Hospitalizations: 90  
Deaths 146

In just 3 months, our active cases have doubled (but likely more than doubled because there is still a shortage of tests, and everyone who SHOULD be tested is NOT being tested). They have gone from 549 to 1140, a difference of 591 MORE cases.

In just 3 months, 85 people have died.

**Hospitalizations** have gone from 58 to 90, an increase of 32 people.

Even with increasing infection rate, hospitalizations, and deaths, WCSD has found that it is in everyone’s best interest to bring hundreds of children and staff together. Where is the data/science to show this in the best interest of teachers, families, and the community? It is clear our mitigation strategy is failing and putting more people at risk, specifically, educators and district staff.
Kevin Dick has advised WCSD not to open school with rising cases. Even so, the doors are open.

It is well known that some Sparks HS classrooms don’t have A/C and temps are near the 100s. Teachers are working without breaks and/or training or resources to create content for on-line teaching. There are reports that WCSD has not been forthcoming about “positive” cases in the district. Also, children with “positive” family members are still allowed to attend school.

School has been open **15 days**, and there are reports of “positive” covid cases all over the county and in multiple schools. It’s safe to assume that cases, hospitalizations, and deaths will only increase with the opening of schools. At what point will the district protect students, families, staff, teachers, and administrators? When our cases have doubled again? Hospitalizations reach 100? Deaths reach ?? And, when will administrators consider the undue stress on teachers...like working 12 hours a day! I talked with two teachers in the past week, and they both said they are working 12 hour days. Check in with your employees. Ask them how their lives have changed. Ask them how their workloads have increased.

I understand the strain the district is under. I just wonder, when will enough be enough?

~Concerned Parent & Community Member
What is the plan to get substitutes? We have had absences with staff, but no available subs. Why isn't there a procedure for the green house and other buildings who house hundreds of teachers/staff to be called in? I thought all hands on deck, meant all hands helping out without barriers to jump.

Thank you

Vicki Bowley
What are you doing for those teachers that should be doing distance learning and are still teaching in person in the classroom? Cora Academy set up dividers and plexiglass for the teachers gave them safe sanitizer to clean with and hand sanitizer that doesn’t smell like tequila. At what point do the teachers putting their lives, health and safety on the line matter to you. You truly appear to only care about the election coming up and not the teachers who you pay so little insurance is not that great and expect them to risk their lives. My son-in-law and sister are both teachers that you’ve given ridiculous PPE for their safety of their health. I am so disappointed in all of you!

Regards

Lori Zegers
Dear Board of Trustees,
I received a call to action by teachers that are fearful of speaking out. Please stop trying to create a classroom as we formally knew a classroom to be. All the names; hybrid model, Distance Learning, Blended Learning, etc. are limiting-beliefs. At this moment in time we need to be thinking limitlessly. We did not use a bike to design a car!!! We need to be thinking outside of the box!

I have nothing to lose by speaking out today. I do this for all the teachers who believe they can’t!

Teachers are doing all that they can do amidst a terrible crisis and I salute each and everyone of them. I also hear them say they are spent and feel fragmented with the constant changing of the game, un unsureness, and feeling overworked mentally and physically.

As a former teacher in WCSD for 23 plus years, I was involuntarily forced into retirement in 2010 because I was a whistle blower. Thank goodness it was the last year of my career when we as professionals began to be silenced. Unlike many teachers, I had 22 years of teaching in WCSD when it was all that a District should be. I had fun creating, collaborating, building curriculum, and learning best practices while teaching. I always held a professional voice, felt respected, I felt heard, and always valued. I was proud to be a teacher.

After fighting a valiant battle that led to a law suit with the District I surrendered when diagnosed with breast cancer. I knew my heart was forever broken. I learned I had been a fool, after spending every fiber of my being being working to be the best image of what a teacher should be... I blatantly and abruptly learned an ugly truth. The people I had respected cherished and held in regard absolutely held NO value for my voice. I honestly believe my breast cancer was brought on because of my broken heart and the stress I endured. The bullying I suffered was huge, but today I realize it is NOTHING compared to what is happening to our teachers today.

It’s easy to get newby teachers to say all is going well. They are walking a line and they know it and so do their superiors. I invite you to talk to those that have been around a 15 or more years and that are also giving their heart and souls to do a great job, but they know they are losing their heartfelt desire to teach because teaching is being manufactured for them and it is not the way they want to teach. What they absolutely loved does no longer exist. The life as a teacher is being sucked right out of them.

Where is the creativity today in teaching? When do we even get to problem solve as professionals. Where is the respect for the teachers to write their own script of how they are going to teach and ignite the minds of their students? Forcing this program and forcing that material as the one to use is not the answer, nor will it lead to any breadth of success anywhere.

The family just got back from two neighboring states and they are only are doing Distance Learning. The teachers and the parents we spoke to are so grateful. They are doing some interesting and creative minded pods, etc. they are creating groups of fours in their classes and setting up
Google Classrooms with families, etc. Why the push for all Elementary students to be in class? I understand some students are on the computer doing what they would be doing if they were doing Distance Learning. This seems absurd.

If we have reduced educating our children to it honestly meaning addressing "the necessary childcare needs of children", then no matter what we do, we are failing everyone!

I would honestly like to know, "Why was more time NOT spent on making “A Best Practice Distance Learning Model for our students beginning in March instead of pushing in class for students in August?"

Why not allow the genius minds of TEACHERS to come up with delivery models to teach their assigned class(es). It is my dream that one day, administrators will once again desire their teachers to problem solve by encouraging them. Step aside and empower these teachers because currently they are wilting 💔 and sooner or later they will not be willing to go through the motions any longer.

Let teachers teach... Listen to what they say and don’t deny what is being said each and everyday! They are on the field they are not the spectators! After all, it is a pandemic... and the teachers have some great ideas for delivering quality instruction. They just need the freedom to think, the respect to inspire, the time to collaborate, and lastly, the passion that made them want to be a teacher to not be squelched!

Warmly,
Tammy Callahan

Sent from my iPad
Good evening,

I was looking over the agenda for tomorrow, Tuesday, September 8th, 2020 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees and had a question on item 4.01 (page 3 of the agenda) presentation from Students attending various schools throughout Washoe County School District on their experiences from their first day of school (presentation only), my question is how was the selection process on choosing the students that were chosen? Was this opportunity open to every student; in-person, hybrid, and full distance learning students?

Thank you and I look forward for the presentation!

Julie Hitchcock

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Good evening,

According to your websites' reopening plan, it states on page 12 of the reopening plan under Enhanced Cleaning that "Ventilation in all WCSD classrooms and portable classrooms has been adapted to increase the amount of fresh air intake and continuous circulation". My question(s) are:
1. How often are we increasing the amount of fresh air intake into the school and continuous circulation? I thought it was every hour??
2. Is there a checklist to check and initial that this has been done/completed? If so, is the documentation somewhere for parents/public to view on the website broken down by each school or is this something we can view at our child/ren's school?
3. How do we know this is being done? Especially with the smoke the last few days.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Julie Hitchcock

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Superintendent McNeill, School Board Trustees, and Washoe County School District Staff,

Please be leaders and make a decision at tonight's board meeting on what the district's standards are for closing schools in regards to COVID-19.

As of the writing of this comment, I can find reports of 27 different cases** or suspected cases of COVID-19 across the district, one case is the school where my kids are enrolled. You have continually postponed a solid decision after getting overloaded with multiple power point slides that show the same data in different interpretations. Why don't you demand something simple that every trustee and parent can see and source with simple clarity and make a decision already?

If you need a source for data to use, the Washoe County Health Districts publishes their data every day in a press release, and on social media.  
https://twitter.com/covid19washoe

If you need a standard, you can use the one by the Federal Government's COVID-19 report.  
If you don't like that, you can use the one by the State of Nevada's "Road to Recovery".  

Or pick something from the slide presentation of Truckee Meadows Regional COVID Task Force's "Risk Meter".  
https://tmrpa.org/covid-wc/
But whatever you do, pick something. I am not ready to explain to my kids, when another classmate/teacher/staff member at their school tests positive for COVID-19, that their school district still has NO PLAN/STANDARD.

So please, I ask you again, make a decision at tonight's board meeting.

Sincerely,
Larry Kates

Note **

Only 19 of those 27 COVID-19 cases reported in Washoe County School District appear in the districts "News Releases" page. You do a disservice to the community when the local news outlets publish information and you do not.
https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/1250
This comment is about the last minute closures that are taking place. I’m sure you are aware of the stress and strain this puts on families. I hope the issue of smoke comes up in one of these meetings and a mitigation is found. I am concerned that our buildings do not have adequate filtration in their HVAC systems to handle the circulation of air and removal of smoke particles. In my opinion having a learning center with a quality HVAC filtration system will improve the lives of many of our children who must stay at home on “smoke” days in buildings without any means to clean the air. We are all subject to the same air at home or at school and it is mind boggling that we can’t figure this out. Many families lack the technology to do distance learning. Ours does. We were told that only students in the distance learning model will be provided technology. Well, here we are again with distance learning thrust upon us with no means to keep up with our learning plans. Wildfires are nothing new to our area as well as the smoke that goes with it. I am disappointed at the fact that our school leadership had opportunity to address this situation with plenty of time before the school year began and even with a delay in the start of the school year, did not take action. I am disappointed at after taking surveys about distance learning and requesting technology the fact remains it is unavailable to our children.

Respectfully, Richard Luebke
Hello I'm a parent of a first grader child. The school is doing a live teaching class which are not working really well. My question is how possible is to have a teacher just working with the ones at home? My name is Rocio Ranadey and I will be happy to talk about this with anybody to get better quality education for the kids.

Sent from my iPhone
I am writing about a situation at my school that has the potential to negatively impact many lives and create disruption at a time when we should be focused on building a community of socially and emotionally strong learners.

It is no secret that this year has been filled with ups and downs. My school is now faced with a possible loss of allocations (teachers). Losing teachers through the overage process will further add to the turmoil and upheaval that our staff and students are already dealing with.

To accommodate a growing population of distance learners, my school (like many others) has closed classrooms in the following grades: Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd grade. The in-person teachers that are in these grades currently have caseloads that are manageable. The distance teachers have between 26 and 35 students and are serving multiple grades.

If one teacher allocation was lost, this would result in a loss of a 3rd grade teacher. The teacher who is newest to our staff would be forced out of the school, and her class would be split between the remaining 3rd grade in-person teachers. Aside from the emotional upheaval this situation would create for both teachers and students, our remaining in-person teachers would then be at max capacity according to COVID guidelines. If anyone else enrolled in 3rd grade we would not be able to accommodate all the learners and some students would have to rotate out of the classroom into “overflow” groups throughout the day.

If two teacher allocations were lost, we would also have to close a 2nd grade classroom and split the students from the disbanded classroom into the other remaining 2nd grade in-person classrooms. This would result in an immediate overflow situation where many 2nd graders would not be able to be in the classroom with their teacher for parts of the day.

The overage process is painful during a normal year with students and teachers who have formed bonds being forced to say goodbye to each other in the fall. But now, with everything students and staff have dealt with, losing teachers in such a situation would be extremely damaging. We also lose the ability to accommodate a growing population of in-person learners.

Please consider suspending the teacher overage process this year. Students and staff have already been through enough.

Cindy Anderson
Caughlin Ranch Elementary
First Grade Teacher

Every day is a good day!
08 September 2020

I am unable to attend tonight's WCSD Board Meeting and respectfully request an accommodation be made to read my letter aloud during the public comment portion of tonight's meeting.

Dear School Board,

I appreciate you all have been saddled with an unprecedented task during COVID and now the challenges of air quality the fires have caused. My sixth child to attend school in WCSD is now in fifth grade so I have seen many ups and downs over the last 20 years. The current state of distance learning and how the district prepared for it is a major concern.

You have told the public many times that you were prepared for distance learning but it simply isn't true. Teachers were not prepared or trained to use Microsoft Teams and school administrators were given very little guidance or a policy to follow. Even now, three weeks into the new year there is a void of information for Parents, Students, Teachers and Administrators. Sadly you the board have told the public you prepared the teachers and administrators when you did not. It is time to take responsibility for your lack of guidance and leadership in this public forum and commit to do better. It's not fair to let the teachers and administrators bear the public pressure for your failure to provide our children with a quality educational experience.

In addition to the lack of training and guidance on distance learning you have failed the students and parents by not providing technology to allow students the resources to learn online. Many kids in my daughters' class do Zoom calls on their parents cell phone. My daughter's teacher told us it would benefit her if we could get her technology to use at home. Because my daughter is on and IEP I reached out to see if any resources were available through her IEP. The answer I received was not acceptable and we decided to purchase a chromebook for her to use at our own expense. And furthermore when we told her teacher we had purchased it she said it would be nice if she could bring it to class because they don't have any technology in the class for her to use. This doesn't make any sense when you the board said many times you had technology in place for distance learning. It appears you don't even have it in place for classroom learning needs.

Times are hard and I do appreciate so much of what you have done...but it's time to do better.

--

Best Regards,

Van

Van Fortier
Ten out of 14 days since the start of the 2020/2021 Washoe County School District school year, as of 9/3/2020, have been in-person school. Of the other 4 days, 3 have been "cancelled" due to smoke in our area, and one moved to "distance learning" day. It wasn't until school day number 10 that parents of students in WCSD were told what criteria was being used for closure of school/distance learning for smoke in the area. That criteria was provided at a level of 150 AQI on 8/28/2020.

It took WCSD 2 full weeks to communicate what criteria was going to be used for school closure/distance learning.

On 9/3, I woke up at 5am with an AQI of over 150, yet school was not cancelled/shifted to distance learning. There was not a single mention anywhere on what might happen, even when the forecast for smoke to return to our area was communicated via social media (from weather stations in our area) before 8pm last night.

Lastly, parents were not even told whether or not school was really in session, or not, until after 7am the morning of 9/3, again with a AQI of greater than 150.

I believe in transparency. I believe in communication. I believe in a better way of handling this. I expect better. I demand better.

How can, we as parents, be ok with this lack of communication, lack of clear decision making, and lack of development of policies in a timely fashion that is meant to support not just students, but parents and teachers themselves?
Good afternoon - first, I'd like to thank you all for the hard job/decisions you are having this year. Anyone who criticizes you should run for the Board...
Second, I'm here to advocate for high school fall sports. I feel like we are simply delaying the inevitable. Also, our children need the socialization. This is a critical item for students wanting to pursue sports in college - other high school students around the nation are able to play and that puts those athletes at an advantage over our athletes. Put a group together to come up with the "rules" for playing/for fans. It seems to me that if rec sports (soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, etc.) are able to play then so are high school sports (football, cross-country, tennis). I can't imagine that winter time is going to be a better time to "test" these waters. Please, please consider. I know you have a lot on your plates.
Thank you,
Hello Board Members,

I’m here representing my profession, my colleagues, and my school. I felt compelled to speak with you tonight about concerns I have with the way funding and allocations will happen this year. Schooling during Covid has been anything but ordinary or traditional. We, as a district, therefore, need to look at how we can fund schools so that teachers stay in already established classrooms and continue to receive the level support given during the first weeks of the school year. The “all hands-on-deck” approach needs to continue with the funding and prioritizing teachers in classrooms. The final numbers for allocations at my school are not yet in but every scenario we have considered will lead to a devasting number of teachers being lost. This will cause a domino effect of chaos, including classrooms being collapsed and overstuffed with kids, a lack of staff in the school to safely distance students, a lack of appropriate staffing to help with sanitizing and disinfecting high surface areas, and the eventual need to establish overflow rooms staffed with non-credentialed teachers. **We must** prioritize humans in classrooms during the pandemic. Teachers **must** be able to safely distance students and attend to the emotional needs of kids during these difficult times.

I understand our district is underfunded. I have some suggestions. I encourage the Board to look at paid platforms for compliance such as, MyPGS, SLO requirements, SBAC, DRC, MAP testing, and School City platforms. When we are operating under a pandemic, the value of these platforms **must** be re-evaluated. Millions of dollars will be spent collecting data that will not be as reliable as under normal operating conditions. We should funnel this money directly to classrooms and teachers to keep kids safely distanced, to keep classrooms properly maintained and sanitized, to keep all students with a credentialed teacher during their school day, and to keep the stress of ancillary workload demands on teachers to a minimum, so they can focus more intensely on their students.

Thank you for your time,

Laura Murphy
I am writing this email out of complete frustration. I wish I could be at the meeting to make a public comment, but, elementary contract hours are until 3:45 and I have an IEP after school. I am the distance learning teacher at my school for kindergarten math, and all of first and second grade students. I have about 80 students spread across three grade levels that I am responsible for. This is in no way fair to me, or my 80 students.

With the 80 students comes 80 something parents. Add in grandparents and step parents and that number is closer to 100. Pretty much all day every day I am answering messages and trouble shooting with parents. That in itself is a whole job. In person teachers have anywhere from 8-20 students at my school. Again, I have 80. I am still being held to the same standards as the teachers with 8 students. I still have to grade (which took me several hours on my holiday yesterday), give the assessments (I will discuss that later) and do the SLO.

With 80 students in the lower grades, it is impossible to teach all of the instruction and these students are NOT getting a fair and equitable education despite me working many, MANY hours over my contract. Many parts of lessons are skipped, and parts that I do assign to be done independently are not getting done. Several of my students still aren’t showing up to my live lessons. Yet I have to complete a SLO, give grades and assess. With so many things out of my control, I don’t understand how I can be held to these same standards.

I am only able to provide two live zoom sessions per grade level a day. During those Zooms (or Teams meets- I have tried both) my internet often crashes, kicking me out of the meeting. Yes, in both Zoom and Teams. For the past three weeks these 80 students have received spotty instruction from a frustrated teacher due to unstable internet. My pleas to IT have gone mostly unanswered. I am teaching from the school. The district has repeatedly said we were ready to support distant learning, but with an unstable internet, clearly we are not. I am left in tears most days because I can’t get through a live lesson without freezing or having to restart.

With the assessments, there is no way to guarantee students are being truthful. How do we know parents aren’t feeding students the answers? When I can get Zoom to work, I can almost always hear parents coaching their student on what to say. This is in no way going to work for a SLO.

I don’t have any answers, and I am often told by others that they don’t either. But I do know that no one is working until midnight finding the solutions. Why do we teachers put in all these extra hours when you are not? I am working until midnight most nights lesson planning entire days for three grade levels. If you were all working these late nights, we would surely have better solutions to our problems by now. I think about everyone in this district and the people on the Board of Trustees and wonder why you are not working late into the night or on the weekends to come up with solutions or fix the issues that we are all having. It has been three weeks of this, and yet I still have 80 students and unstable internet. Why have you all not come up with something better? I am tired of working every night and weekend and only being ready for one day at a time.

I am not sure that everyone knows that this is the reality teachers are facing. We are always told to not work past contract hours and only do what we can get done during our day. I would literally have nothing planned or ready if I stuck to my contract hours. I am writing this on my lunch break that I finally took at 2:30 because the rest of my day is spent on live meetings and figuring out why websites aren’t working for students.

The only thing I can suggest is giving more allocations. I have heard reports from other schools that teachers wanted to be distant teachers but weren’t allowed to be. At my school, I volunteered for this position because no one else wanted to. We need more teachers so my 80 something students can have a fair and equitable education. As far as the internet goes, that needs to become a bigger priority to get fixed. I put in my initial request with IT over a week and a half ago. I have spoken with them one time, and no solution came of it.

I realize this comment is talking in circles. I am extremely frustrated that these students are not getting all they deserve, yet I am giving all that I have and more.

Tara Hayworth
Good Evening Washoe County School Board Members,

We, the students of Washoe County School District come to you today to voice our concerns regarding recent events of hate and anti-Blackness in our country, this along with the importance of combating racism through the implementation of diverse, anti-racist textbooks and curriculum in our schools is why we stand before you today.

Not only due to the recent events in which there have been multiple instances of racism against Black communities, but also due to the institutionalized racism set against all minorities in our country since its beginning, we wanted to bring attention to the problem of anti-Blackness in America; specifically, how we can fight to be anti-racist and encourage a productive dialogue on race and identity among our student bodies.

We are leaders of an organization called Diversify Our Narrative. Our main goal is to integrate the use of anti-racist and diverse texts in English and Literature classes. We hope that this accomplishes a more diverse and rich education for students of all backgrounds. We aim to do this by advocating for a mandate that a minimum of at least one book in every English/Literature and Comprehension class be by a person of color AND about a person/people of color’s experience(s). We also ask that teachers have the autonomy to choose books from the recommended list provided OR that the chosen text accurately portrays those in said communities.

We are not asking for these decisions to be implemented immediately. We only ask that you give it deep consideration while we gather support. We are aware of and appreciate the district’s already implemented effort to acknowledge racism and its issues. We have all read “To Kill a Mockingbird” in class and thoroughly enjoyed it. However, we do not believe the current curriculum is inclusive to the great variety of races and backgrounds in our community, nor that the experiences we read about are directly from the victim’s mouths. We are currently working closely with librarians and teachers as we believe they are the backbone of this desired change. We look forward to working with you to change this and strongly believe that the inclusion of students in this will greatly benefit everyone. We are prepared to work closely alongside you and we thank you for your time. We also are open to suggestions of how to move forward in implementing our goals successfully.

Diversify Our Narrative’s mission and leaders can be found at their website: diversifyournarrative.com.

The names of the students, alumni, school faculty, and parents/guardians in agreement with our proposal can be found in your emails within 24 hours.

Again, we appreciate your time. Thank you for the work you have done and we look forward to presenting to you again in due time.

Chantal Gabrielle Ebonia and Ana Inukai, Students
September 8, 2020

Dear Trustees,

As the President of the Washoe School Principals Association, I would like to first acknowledge the incredible effort that WCSD employees at every level have shown to get schools open during difficult circumstances. Teachers, bus drivers, custodians, clinical aides, principals, district leadership and support staff and so many more have met extreme challenges and have persevered to meet the needs of our children and our community.

In order to continue the safe operation of schools, I would like to express a concern that I have heard from many of WSPA’s members and offer a solution. Staffing levels at some schools are presenting challenges with safely providing an education for our students who attend in-person in both full-time and hybrid models. Even prior to this pandemic, it could be difficult to consistently find substitute teachers to meet students’ needs. There is now serious concern that situations could arise in which there are not enough staff members at a school to safely maintain the protocols put in place to avoid the spread of the virus.

In addition to considering metrics for when schools might be closed or moved to Distance Learning due to risks presented by school and community virus levels, I encourage you to consider metrics to mitigate the risk presented by staffing shortages.

In collaboration with district leadership, school leaders could determine a minimum staffing level under which a school can operate and establish protocols for communicating with families and staff when they fall below this level. This metric would allow our district to continue to safely provide educational services to our students without creating emergent situations when staffing levels fall below what is required for safe operation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Don McHenry
President
Washoe School Principals Association
Dear Washoe County School District Board of Trustees

This year has been challenging and trying for us all: as parents, leaders and members of the community, business owners, and employees. We all are trying to manage and cope to the best of our abilities while taking precautions to remain safe and healthy in the face of a world pandemic.

You, as trustees of the school district have the additional burden of making decisions that impact the community at large, and directly impact our most vulnerable population, our students.

I appreciate the thoughtful and thorough consideration both the district and trustees have demonstrated with the reopening of our schools. You have employed the science, the best practices, the extreme precautions and added measures that have been implemented to ensure our students, teachers and support staff remain safe and healthy.

It is with that same thoroughness and thoughtfulness I implore you to advocate to the Nevada Interscholastic Athletic Association to reopen fall sports for our students, with, of course, the utmost consideration for the health and safety of students, staff, coaches, and support staff.

The health, safety and well being of individuals must come first; I am convinced we all share this belief. I also believe that in order to fully protect the health and safety of our students, we must consider mental as well as physical health. Our students have endured an enormous amount of upheaval in their daily lives - just considering their school life, not to mention their home lives. Schedules, routines, social interactions with peers, mentors, teachers, counselors, social workers; in some, leading to depression, increased volatility of home environments with parents working at home, additional stresses on single-parent households and high school athletes reduced potential to earn college scholarships when more than 30 other states are providing fall sports programs.

Sports participation provides students with structure, routine, purpose, challenge, mentoring, camaraderie, positive social skills, and sense of belongingness, meaning, and importance. Organized sports provide a safe outlet for physical activity, competition and socialization -- All critical components of a mentally healthy individual.

One of the health concerns not addressed by social distancing, mask wearing, and hand washing is the mental concerns our youth face. Sports are not the “be all do all” answer for everyone, but it is for many. Is it not worth saving students from the debilitating, or worse, destructive, outcomes of mental illness?

Research continues and much is still unknown regarding COVID-19, but research exists regarding the benefits of sports participation at the high school level.

Of course, I ask your same thoroughness and thoughtfulness in recommending the return of sports - utilizing the most current science available to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
and safeguard students, coaches, and support staff. Participation, as has always been the case, would be totally voluntary.

Please consider the opportunity for our teens to participate in fall sports, the countless benefits for the mental health of our students, and a significant motivating factor to keep them in school and progressing toward graduation.

Sincerely concerned,

A Washoe County School District parent that has seen too many incidents of mental anguish at the result of students not participating in sports activities.
Please reopen athletics and reopen fields.

Parents can sign liability waivers that will alleviate the school district from any liability.

Thank you

Zak Woodhead
Risk Manager | Odds On Promotions
President Raymond, Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill, Tomorrow, my entire class and I can finally return to our classroom after being excluded on August 26th for 14 days. Not only were we excluded, but 4 other staff members were as well. In addition, an intermediate teacher had to stay home with her child who is in my class, adding to the shortage of staff. This case disrupted 24 households and could have been completely avoided. Despite your trust in the public, there are many families that are not screening their children before school nor are they keeping their children home while awaiting results from a Covid test.

The shortage of staff at my school has caused a logistical burden. Teachers have been unable to eat lunch, take a break and meet to lesson plan. This has nothing to do with our amazing administrators. Everyone has been working so hard but there is no money for additional staff, no substitutes available and the all hands-on deck promises the district has said repeatedly, is false.

I recently wrote a letter to a district leader about what happened at my school and how the district should emphasize to parents not to send their children to school if they knew they’d been exposed or were waiting on test results. The leader replied that “despite safety measures, there have been and will be positive cases of Covid 19. Please know we are working days, nights, and weekends to support our staff and students and assure their safety and well-being. We highly value and respect ALL of our staff and welcome feedback and suggestions.” In response, wouldn’t it have been wise to start district wide digital learning at the beginning of the school year so that you, your leadership team and teachers wouldn’t have to work nights and weekends, there wouldn’t be any infections of staff and students at schools despite the safety measures being taken, money that our district doesn’t have wouldn’t be spent on PPE, cleaning supplies and a district Covid nurse that doesn’t call staff back within 24 hours because she is unable to keep track of all the cases? Most importantly, many teachers that you highly value and respect wouldn’t be even more stressed, overworked and sadly embarrassed about our districts poor decision making compared to other districts within the state of Nevada?

There also needs to be clear communication and common protocol district wide about exclusion. Margaret Allen told many watching the District’s Q and A forum on August 10th that “at the Elementary School level, we will exclude the whole class including the teacher for 14 days.” If this is true, then why is my class the only full class that has been excluded? Is it because we had only been in school for two days and we were following Ms. Allen’s protocol at that point? The decision to exclude my students and five staff members for the full 14 days was made by the Health Department in 30 minutes. Following our date of exclusion, cases at the elementary level have had 24 hours to “evaluate the situation.” Has the procedure been changed due to the massive shortage of teachers and substitutes who are unwilling to put their lives on the line because they aren’t paid enough and therefore makes it more difficult to run a school efficiently and safely?
There is also a major communication problem between the Health Department and School District. The health department didn’t contact me or my student's families until 5 days following our exclusion. This is completely understandable because in their July 28th presentation, Kevin Dick and Heather Kerwin told you there would be a delay in notification due to the amount of cases and the lack of contact tracers available.

I am of the mindset that when there is a problem, solutions should be shared. Unfortunately, I have no solutions today because all the letters and comments staff and community members have sent you the past few months have disappointedly fallen upon deaf ears. Thank you
Dear Dr. McNeill and members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing you today to ask you to reconsider the way teacher allocations are being handled this school year.

As you and I are fully aware, funding in our school district and state is just not there. I understand this immensely. My concern is that with the stressors that us teachers are already swamped with, our district is WILLINGLY moving forward with our normal allocation process. The problem is teachers are just now at week 4, getting into the swing of things with their students, during a pandemic. And now schools are being forced to have teachers be overaged into a new position at a new school with all new students. I hope you understand how much this negatively affects, the teachers, their students (old and new), their families and especially the morale in WCSD.

My school is expected to lose 5 teacher allocations, meaning 5 teachers will be overaged elsewhere in the district. This will affect our ENTIRE school. We will have teachers moving from in-person teaching to distance learning. We will have distance learning teachers moving to in-person teaching. We will have grade levels combining classes making our classrooms over maximum capacity (considering we have yet to receive a single desk from WCSD and we have only tables filling up our space!). But most importantly, we will have STUDENTS who will be getting a new teacher in the midst of this stress-filled time.

Our students come to school everyday and look forward to seeing their constant. Their constant in their lives are their teachers and the adults at school who care about them and love them. Imagine pulling away their teacher, and moving students to a new teacher. This will cause unnecessary chaos and heart break among our students and families.

I urge you to reconsider our allocation and overage process and FREEZE positions where necessary, and make overages a voluntary process ONLY to fill allocations where needed. I hope you will work with the unions and bargaining units to make this happen.

We are WCSD, we can do this. But we NEED your help. Now more than ever!!

Sincerely,

Amanda Mendenhall
Hello, 

My name in Michelle Rutherford and I am a Chemistry teacher at Damonte Ranch High School, a WEA member, a member of Empower Nevada teachers and a parent of two students who attend Damonte Ranch.

I would like to say that in spite of teaching 204 students chemistry at this current point in time at Damonte Ranch HS in person hybrid and full distance, things in and out of the classroom are going as well as can be expected without the tools and software that would make this a better experience for students.

That said, I want to comment on an occurrence that never should have happened at my site. With three out of ten of our science teachers resigning in July when they saw the risk they would be exposed to when they came back to work, we had to hire three new science teachers before school opened. One of these happened to be a “critical need” and an experienced 30 year retiree interviewed for the position. He declared this at his interview and was assured by our administrators and human resources that his hiring would not be a problem under the critical needs designation. Then after attending all the teacher training days and two weeks of teaching students, he was told that HR did not approve his critical needs status and he could resign or would have to continue at a substitute rate of pay until all overages were placed. They did not know at the time when this this change might happen or his job might get approved as a “critical need.”

He has continued to work, plan, attend IEP meetings and distance teach his students which we all know cannot happen during normal hours in spite of this pittance of pay. How this was allowed to happen in this particular circumstance in unforgivable. What would happen if he refused to accept a position for which an agreed upon salary was revoked? You would have 5 classes of Chemistry students sitting day in and day out with an unqualified substitute with no lesson plans, curriculum or accountability. I would think this would be upsetting for many parents and students. This type of occurrence is just one of the many ways disappointments I am feeling at the moment by areas of our building administrators’ control.

By the way, thank you so much for this amazingly generous teacher for continuing to work with our students at little more than minimum wage.

Michelle Rutherford 
Science educator
Damonte Ranch High School

“A change today means you can reimagine tomorrow.”
Dear Trustees,

The staffing situation at North Star Online School must be handled yesterday. My 7th grader's teacher has over 75 children in his class and because of this, has no time to meet with the students and conduct lessons with them. My 7th grader doesn't even know what the man looks like and it's the third week of school. They need more staff at every level because these kids are already falling behind due to no fault of their own.

Sara Zober
To Whom It May Concern,

I'm the parent of two students at AACT. I think it's important for you to know that they currently feel safe when they're at school -- at least as "safe" as a person can possibly feel in an enclosed space with 15 people and bad ventilation. This is due SOLELY to the Herculean efforts of their teachers to normalize this extremely irregular situation.

But this is the part that pertains to the board: my children and their friends have lost all faith in the district. They do not think you care about what happens to them. They're not stupid -- they all have internet access and read. They know you're not using science to make your decisions about the virus and that you set parameters and then change them. They know that you've turfed your decisions to other entities because you're too afraid to make them yourselves. They know you've lied and blamed decisions for smoke days on others. And let's not even get into Scott Kelley...

My point in all of this is that right now, you are terrible role models. You need to do better. If you want kids to be interested in science and math, then you should probably pay attention to things like the health department and statistics. If you want kids to have respect for authority, you should probably take the advice of experts. And if you want kids to be trustworthy, you should probably be trustworthy yourselves.

Sincerely,
Tammy Soong
Dear Trustees,

I am incredibly frustrated after reading the RGJ article detailing your decision to find another data set to determine the point where it is unsafe to keep in-person learning available.

You have now decided to use an unfinished, unproven method to establish the criteria for COVID-19. If you were unsure of what method to use, you should follow solid scientific and health information as none of you are qualified to make that assessment.

Another issue regarding school closures for health safety’s air quality. The AQI number last week exceeded 150 which is the “unhealthy” range. This is the number you decided was the data point to be used to close school campuses. And yet, they are open.

When your previous decisions did not meet your opinion, you decided to change the criteria.

If you just wanted to ‘throw a dart’ to make these decisions, at least you could have been honest about it. If you have a hidden agenda (political pressure, count day or sometime else) you should not keep your position.

Sandra Martin
I want to start by saying that I am a social worker and an advocate.

Washoe County School District recently drafted and disseminated the *Culture of Respect Resolution* which states, “The Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, the executive staff, and the organizations representing employees of Washoe County School District . . . are committed to actively cultivating and promoting safe, orderly, and respectful environments . . .”. When I read this, I noticed that the provision of a “safe environment” is the primary concern denoted therein. Further, if we dissect the word ‘respect’, we find that the definition includes language specifying a due regard for feelings and rights of others and an, “an act of giving particular attention/consideration” (Merriam-Webster). Given this information and the reality of what is currently going on in the district, it is my sincere belief that you have failed to engage in practices that are conducive to staff and student safety and also, that you have failed to promote a climate of respect with regard to staff feelings, concerns, and wish relating to their health, safety, and the safety of our WCSD students and families.

The metrics that the Board of Trustees discussed on 9/8/2020 relating to school closures, despite not being approved, have since been far surpassed by the data concerning the rate of Covid-19 infection in our community. Meaning, we are well beyond the point at which in-person learning is considered to be “safe”. This does not support the purported alignment with safe and respectful practices that are considered essential. It is my firm belief that your governance and decision-making in this matter not only can but should be called into question - by our staff, by our students, and by our WCSD families. I find that your inability to make decisions that encapsulate the concept of “Do No Harm” has turned from poor to grossly negligent.

I do not only speak for myself; I speak for the staff members who have put their affairs in order because going to work could quite literally kill them. I speak for the staff who feel expendable because their safety is not being considered with the level of care that it requires. I speak for the staff that are afraid to advocate for their own safety because the climate of the district, insidious as it may be, has effectively silenced them. I speak for the families that have left the district entirely because of the decisions that the board has made on their behalf. I speak for the students who are being traumatized by our in-school practices and lack of connection with teachers and other students. Finally, I speak for our community - which has been deceived into thinking that their interests are being considered with due regard to their safety and well-being.

Given the circumstances that we find ourselves in, it is imperative that you make a decision based on scientific data and with the interest of the health and safety of our staff and students in mind. In
this, it is imperative that the SAFETY be the deciding factor and not alliances with elected officials, concerns about jobs and labor, or loss in federal funding.

Sincerely,

Michelle Roney, LSW
(She/Her/Hers)
Safe Schools Professional - Esther Bennett ES

Confidentiality Notice: This message (including any attachments) may contain confidential, proprietary, privileged and/or private information. The information is intended to be for the use of the individual or entity designated above. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, please notify the sender immediately, and delete the message and any attachments. Any disclosure, reproduction, distribution or other use of this message or any attachments by an individual or entity other than the intended recipient is prohibited.
Hello,
I am writing to voice my concern about this year's allocation of teachers. I have recently learned that my daughter, a second grader at Sepulveda Elementary school, could lose her distance learning teacher, Lisa Cohen, due to the teacher and enrollment allocation policies. I understand how this process works and its importance regarding the budget and making sure resources are where they are needed but this is not the year to add another disruption. Our family took the time to carefully weigh the options for this year's return to school. Some of the things we took into consideration when selecting distance learning were: continuing to have her enrolled in Sepulveda to aid the transition back to in-person school and keeping her at our zoned school to help maintain teacher allocations and resources. We have been so lucky to have Ms Cohen as Amelia's teacher. She has developed a schedule that engages the children with a great balance of virtual teaching and independent work. These last few weeks have alleviated so many of the concerns we came into the school year with.
I do not think it is a good idea to move resources around in this climate. Children will be moving in and out of the schools all year and it is terribly disruptive to move teachers around as well. I also do not think that all teachers can effectively develop and instruct through a distance learning model and this should be considered when moving teachers around. Please consider waiting to assess the allocation of teachers until after the winter holiday break or better yet next fall. This will give schools time to see what resources are really needed.
Thank you for your time.
Adrienne Brown
From: Kate Pflughoeft  
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 4:49 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] status of schools

Hello,

I understand that it was difficult to make the decision regarding opening schools and that it is equally to make a decision regarding the criteria on if and when schools should move to distance learning. But please make a decision. Our kids have been in school for more than three weeks and families are anxious. Some of us are more worried about the risk that we are imposing on our kids when we send them off with only a mask and hand sanitizer and others are worried about where their kids will go during the day if the district does go 100% distance learning. Then there are the teachers that have to not only worry about their own safety and their own kids, but also how long they can work the very long hours that they have had to put in. As a parent of a second grader, I know that my son is a better student in school than he is at home and that psychologically school in person learning is wonderful, but really at this moment in time is it safe? Listen to the public health officials and scientists, while the case burden is going up slower than anticipated in our community, it is going up. Give us some peace of mind and go to a 100% distance learning model tonight.

Thank you
Hello,
I just was wondering in this conversation... You are referring to just students who are currently on distance learning at this moment, correct? Or are you referring to ALL students who may not have devices if we were to ever move to full DL? I feel like these are two different situations and I'm not clear which you are referring.

This was sent from my phone, please excuse brevity and typographical errors.

Amanda Schlatter
Assistant Principal
Mathews Elementary School
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Could you please comment as to whether or not our students who are being excluded because of potential symptoms have to have a negative test to come back, or if they come back if they are not symptomatic?
It is beyond me why the district would change the hybrid schedule on Holiday weeks. Parents plan on a consistent schedule week to week and now everything is the exact opposite of what has been planned for. How is hard is to stick to the same schedule?????? Had I not looked I would have sent my kids to school tomorrow when they should be doing distance learning.

Michael
Please appoint Jeff Church to take over Scott Kelly’s position. Jeff cares deeply about our school district and will be a good steward of our kids and money. Jeff is our very best choice for Washoe County School District Trustee. All of us in Reno are counting on you to do the right thing - appoint Jeff Church, now! Sincerely, Wayne Van Der Wal
Reno NV 89511
From: Adrian Lowry  
Sent: Tuesday, September 8, 2020 6:11 PM  
To: Public Comments  
Subject: [EXTERNAL] public comment

I am disappointed in the school district for putting our children and faculty at risk. It is incredibly reckless and I hope you come to your senses before children start dropping dead. Furthermore it is terrible that you will allow people to show support for women, lgbtq, and other groups but you will not allow teachers to support their Black students because the concept of Black lives mattering is too political for you.

Thanks,  
Adrian Lowry
I hope that you all understand that teachers are spending 3-4 hours a day taking attendance for in person and virtual students. This is not counting the students that are attending fully online. You are expecting us to track these students down when the most we do for students who miss in person instruction is an automated voice message. Please start to consider the amount of extra stress, time, and pressure you are putting on the teachers in your district. Pretty soon you’re going to have a bunch of burnt out teachers looking elsewhere for jobs and before you know it, we’ll drop even further in educational rankings. For the sake of students and teachers, get it together.

Sent from my iPhone
Hello, Board of Trustees,

I had hoped to come to speak today but I was unable to due to a previous health commitment.

I wanted to speak as a substitute teacher. Recently, a substitute teacher was placed into a classroom because a teacher was being tested for COVID. This was on a Friday. The substitute teacher was then told on Monday that she had to isolate for 14 days because the teacher had tested positive.

Substitute teachers do not have any benefits. This substitute is now unable to work for 2 weeks; no way to make income. Purposely putting a substitute in a classroom that has a possibility of COVID-19 not only affects the income of the substitute but the health of a substitute who has no health benefits from WCSD. This is the equivalent of someone having COVID-19 and taking off their mask and coughing in the substitutes' face.

I think it is criminal and possibly illegal for an administrator to put a substitute (or any person) in this position without disclosure. This is shameful, possibly illegal, and should be investigated.
I have voiced my discontent with the WCSD board with previous emails during board meetings, I have email Dr. McNeil directly, spoken with my area superintendent and school counselor. I believe my two students belong in school, in person. I am extremely concerned, disappointed with the lack of planning and of course the execution of said plans.

How do you expect our students to receive a quality education, when on their distance learning days at the high school level my student is receiving minimal course work requirements?

How do you expect our students to receive a quality education when they do not have their teachers available for real-time help when on distance days? The hybrid model has brought confusion, inconsistency, and lackluster education. The teachers have been forced into a position of failure. There is no way to expect them to give attention to distance students while simultaneously conducting in-person classes. This year is a train wreck and we as parents and community members are just told to be patient and that it will all get figured out. Well, our patience has expired and our students need the quality education they deserve immediately.

I urge you to make an all-in decision of in person or online .... one way or another just give our students a quality education!

-Chris Dennewitz
If there is a threshold beyond which one cannot staff a school safely, surely the fact that my third, fifth, and seventh graders in North Star Online School have over 70 children in their class must be part of that threshold.

Yours,

Sara Zober
School buses service each and every school!! What is your plan when a bus that delivers to Paulokidas and Depoali and Damonte High comes up with a positive case of a driver?! Come on!! Please use your brains
Scherry Green

Sent from my iPhone
How do you justify not allowing 50 people into a high school gymnasium but force classrooms to have 23 people in them daily? Please look out for your teachers and students!
I live in district A. I would hope that the Board remain open to applicants who were on the ballot during the primary election, although they did not finish in the top 2 and will not be on the ballot this November. Had the events reported a few weeks ago come to light a few months ago, I believe our district would have very likely voted differently. I think many of us now feel we have an impossible choice to make in November.

Thanks,
Lydia DeFlorio