

PUBLIC COMMENTS

August 18, 2020

Sarah Martin

Let me begin by thanking Dr. Dorsey for using her experience as an educator to advocate for teachers in the last two board meetings. I am discouraged, to say the least, that I am emailing yet again, my fourth email, to advocate for my own safety as well as the safety of my family, not to mention that teachers be treated with respect and professionalism by some members of the BOE. It was my understanding that the vote in July to begin the school year virtually included teachers having a choice to teach from home or on-site based on the needs of their families. At this late point in the summer, I feel strongly that changing that plan, requiring teachers to work from the building, many of whom will need to find childcare or take leave because they cannot find child care or care for ailing parents, is creating a hardship in the workplace. As I have stated in my previous emails, I am the sole family caretaker for my mother who is diagnosed with advanced pulmonary hypertension and congestive heart disease. Her prognosis is that she only has a few months to live. If I am quarantined because someone in the building is waiting for COVID testing, then I will be unable to care for my mother during that time. If I contract COVID-19, I will not be able to care for my mother. She relies on my care for all of her needs. If I carry COVID-19 to my mother, it is highly unlikely that she will survive. Many teachers in the county are caretakers to children or adult family members with underlying health conditions. Why would you consider putting them at risk when it is avoidable? In addition, teachers have spent their time and money to prepare for virtual instruction from home because we were told that we had that option. Over the summer, teachers have spent their time learning best practices for virtual instruction. In previous years, CCPS math and reading scores rank as some of the highest in the state because of rigorous instruction delivered by your highly educated and dedicated teachers. We, and again, I am repeating a statement from previous email, have never refused to teach students. Teachers do not sit at home "doing nothing" as one board member implied on Facebook. Teachers spend their time learning best practice, creating lessons, executing direct instruction, evaluating student progress, meeting with individuals and small groups, and providing feedback. Teachers have always given their time, way beyond the contractual requirements, because we simply cannot do all that is required of us within the contractual limits. With that in mind, we deserve an apology from certain members of the board who have implied that we will not do our jobs unless we are required to be in the classroom "in front of a white board". It disturbs me to hear certain members of the board implying that teachers do not teach at home, but I was even more concerned that no one present at the meeting corrected that fallacy. There is no reason to require teachers to work from the building at this time. The county has created a required schedule of live time with students that can be done at home or on-site. If the BOE felt that on-site teaching was necessary, it should have explained the benefit for student progress and been decided with time to allow teachers to make arrangements for their families. Finally, I am not comfortable answering the survey because it specifically asks teachers if they will report to the classroom if they are required to do so. In short, you are asking me if I will refuse to do my job. No disrespect intended, but you asked the wrong question. You should have asked teachers if they felt that they would need to take leave if they were required to teach from the building, increasing the likelihood that they and their families will be exposed to COVID-19. Your question paints us into a corner of insubordination, and I refuse to answer that question. My answer is that it is not safe for me to teach from my classroom. My question to you is why do you feel it necessary to require that I do so. Please follow through with your original plan that allows teachers to choose virtual instruction from home or on-site. And please, be the voice of trust and respect for CCPS teachers. We deserve that much.

July 29, 2020

Katherine Rudy

The decision before you involves whether people live or die. It is more than just about the education of our children with regards to the opening of school buildings.

I am imploring as a concerned member of your staff, for the reopening of schools this fall to be all virtual. I am advocating for my colleagues, students, all members of our community with immunocompromised health issues and those who are over 65 years of age.

With students in schools, COVID-19 is not bound between the walls of the building once a child or staff member contracts the virus. The infected will, without a doubt, spread this to other members of the community. The median manifestation of symptoms, as per the CDC, is 4 to 5 days. And just as humbling, younger children often do not show symptoms at all, yet are still able to spread the virus. Teenage and young twenties people have been shown to spread the virus even faster than older adults. So during the timeframe, the time when symptoms do not manifest, the virus continues to spread and can cause serious health issues for unknowing members of our community.

Research has shown that one in every three teachers who contract COVID-19 will suffer very serious health complications. I can't imagine you would want to put anyone's health in jeopardy, much less CCPS teacher's by requiring them to teach in-person, when there clearly is another option that protects not only them but the students and community: distance learning.

I hope you, as leaders of our school system, are able to see the bigger picture of the effects of this virus and understand that human lives are at stake. I cannot imagine the feeling of knowing that citizens of our community who will die from this virus could have been infected by students or staff within the school district, which ultimately rests with your decision to reopen schools. With thousands of bodies within the school system there are bound to be cases of COVID-19. That is just how the virus works.

The education of my students is vital, so much so that I have spent well over 100 hours in professional development since the end of the school year. This doesn't include the countless hours of work starting on March 12th when we were notified of the closure. We need to be more cognizant in realizing that people's physical health and lives are more important. The social and emotional health can be much more effectively supported by removing the uncertainty of "will someone's actions cause me to get Covid" or even "will we close unexpectedly again".

I have great faith that my fellow CCPS teachers will do an amazing job teaching virtually. I myself have won a 3 year Nearpod License grant that will provide engaging instruction for my students. CCPS yourselves hired these teachers, knowing well that they are excellent educators. Along with this evidence and your providing professional development to us to prepare for virtual teaching, I am very confident that students can and will succeed through distance learning. Katherine Rudy, Manchester Valley HS, Family and Consumer Science, Financial Literacy, Investment, Credit and Banking & Budgeting Certified Educator

Christine Coughenour

Dear Dr. Lochart, I previously emailed members of the board but I would like my comments entered into the public record. I am a member of the Special Education Citizen Advisory Committee and I write to you today to voice my concern over the possibility of Carroll County Public Schools reopening for the 2020-2021 school year with any amount of in person instruction. I understand there is a group of parents strongly advocating for a return to in person instruction. I understand some of their points however, I implore you to consider fully virtual instruction, at least for the start of the school year. I work in the healthcare field and the prospect of sending all three of my children back to school for in person instruction is a very scary one. The number of positive cases and hospitalizations are on the rise and it is only a matter of time before things in our state will shut down again. We have no idea the long term effects of covid-19. We have no idea why some people have a worse case than others. While currently the death rate is low, I am utterly shocked and concerned that there are individuals who are ok with possibly sacrificing the lives of others in their community simply because the death rate is low. Our school system should not be ok with sacrificing any number of student or staff lives in order to reopen school buildings. I have completely read through the reopening plan for our county and the restrictions that need to be in place to facilitate a return to school buildings just does not seem feasible at all for students -especially our students with special needs- or staff. I have a child who will start kindergarten and I know this year will be crucial in shaping the foundation of her education for the 12 years that will follow. I can not in good conscience send my five year old into a building with teachers whose faces she can't see, wearing her own mask for hours on end, tell her that she can not play with anyone or make friends. I have a rising 5th grader with an IEP who has a terrible time wearing a mask due to sensory issues. He has friends he has not seen since school closed in March that I know he will be unable to refrain from trying to play with. He has ADHD and his medication typically does not start

working until 9am- his school start time is 7:45am which means he will have an incredibly challenging time remaining in his seat. He also receives services with a special educator multiple times a week in which he is removed from class and mostly with another small group of peers and they have group therapy in a small room. His special educator has a spouse with underlying health issues. How can I be ok with potentially causing a tragic situation within her family when she has been nothing but devoted to my son for the last 2 years? I also do not see how a classroom teacher will be able to successfully teach in a classroom where they are also responsible for having their students maintain social distance and wearing their masks. To further complicate matters, there is a strong possibility that any number of students and or staff -even a whole school- will need to quarantine for 14 days, without advance notice, due to someone in the school community testing positive. I'm sure this will occur more than once. Our children need and thrive on consistency. While I understand there are obstacles to digital learning, I feel there are far more obstacles to resuming in person instruction when we are not yet in a place safe enough to do so. I know that if we shift focus to bettering digital learning, all the children can receive the quality education owed to them. During distance learning this past spring with my rising 5th grader, He still received the special accommodations afforded to him within his IEP and his special educator and general educators went above and beyond with him. Oftentimes spending additional time with him. The effects that this will have on the mental health of students will be detrimental, especially those students with special needs. How can parents or school staff expect children to report to a school building where they are prohibited from really socializing with their peers? Where they must maintain distance from their friends? Where the chance of increasing anxiety in children is astronomical? The effects that this will have on the mental health of your staff will be detrimental. I would love to send my children back into their school buildings. However, I am not willing to put their health, the health of our family, the health of their teachers and other school staff or the health of the patients I care for at risk when digital learning is completely viable and much safer for all those involved. I hope that the entire board is taking into consideration all the options to make a decision that is the safest for all those that this decision will impact. Thank you for your time, Christine Coughenour

Delaney Gilman

As an alumna of Carroll County schools and daughter of a current educator (who is over 60), I am writing to express how imperative it is that Carroll County schools go **fully virtual this fall**. I am terrified for the safety of my family and our community. Frankly, I'm ashamed of my hometown for going against the guidance of the surrounding counties and considering opening for in-person classes.

Teachers, educators, and staff already put so much into an often thankless job. Do not ask them to now risk their lives. I understand that the situation is not ideal and that parents need to work, however the reality is that there **will** be outbreaks if school reopens. We do not want to reflect back on 2020-2021 as the years there were pages in every yearbook with obituaries of lost students, teachers, and staff. The cost is too high.

The decisions made this week are quite literally life or death.

Greg Wilson

Dr. Lockard & members of the board, I am a current CCPS educator and former CCPS student. Throughout my years as a student, even as a grumpy anti-authority teenager, I always felt secure that the faculty and staff had my best interests and safety at the forefront of their minds. As a tech-ed teacher in a carpentry shop, safety is my watchword. I teach students not to simply mindlessly follow regulations, but to understand and appreciate the danger of the work they do, and the machines they use. Safety decisions are always a trade off - how likely is it something will go wrong? How bad will it be when that happens? Is that worth the work we do? Sometimes, the answer to "is the risk worth the work we do?" can be "yes." But what is worth the life of a child? What is the magic, economic number we could shoot for in our recovery period for us to say "yes, I'm willing to let my students die?" What about 20-40 of our students across the county? And what about our staff? Teachers are expected to show humility, and to make everything about students' welfare at all times - but teachers are scared. I am scared. Students will be separated from each other for their safety, but teachers will still come into contact with dozens or hundreds of students a week, who can easily carry the virus with no symptoms. Many teachers and staff are considered high-risk. Do not make them choose between their careers and their lives. We do not have a deep bench of long-term substitute teachers during the best of times. If even 2% of our

teachers resign due to concerns over their health, the entire system will be spun into chaos, and we won't be able to solve it by simply packing more kids into a classroom. None of this even touches on the long-term effects this will have on the teaching career, nationwide. Retention rates are already low for new teachers. Imagine being a high school or college student, right now in 2020, who was considering going into teaching. How are we going to show that new talent that teachers matter? Why would anyone in their right mind join a profession after seeing this disaster play out? Getting qualified STEM teachers was difficult last year. This year, college graduates with programming degrees will be looking at Google, where they already know they can safely work from home through the summer of 2021, or school systems where staff is being forced into face-to-face interactions against the recommendation of the CDC and the WHO. (The salary difference from normal times will of course still be in place.) We must also be cognizant of the example we set for our students. We will never be able to look them in the eye and say "wear your seat belt" or "don't smoke cigarettes" when we do not take the clearest scientific advice on the most immediate threat to their lives. We lament America's failing position in math and science education compared to other nations, but when faced with a clear, science-driven course of action, we consider ignoring it - then ask those very same children to go on to college to study science themselves. Nothing could be worth the risk and long term ramifications you are asking parents, teachers, and children to take on. Nothing. Thank you for your consideration.

Kimberly Jillson

I am writing to respectfully request that you vote that CCPS begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually.

My husband, a Maryland ER physician on the front lines of covid-19), and I, a physical therapist, both have concerns about the health and safety of students, faculty and staff if CCPS opens in a hybrid model this fall. Our concern extends to the ability of teachers to provide a robust education to students if the county is offering both a hybrid model and a distance-learning model for those who opt not to return.

As health care professionals, our email is buzzing daily from work and professional organizations with the latest research and statistics on the virus and pandemic. The scientific community has learned a great deal in a relatively short period of time for a novel virus, but there is still much to learn. And much of what we know and have learned is concerning.

Our concerns are include the following:

- *the ability of students to realistically keep masks on for the duration of the school day (to prevent the spread of aerosolized droplets that transmit the virus)
- *the psychological effects of students wearing masks all day, not being able to be within 6 feet of another student or teacher, and the anxiety students may feel regarding the possibility they may catch the virus or another student or teacher may catch the virus
- *the logistics of realistically keeping students 6 feet apart from other students and teachers (how will teachers look over work, pass out papers, tie little children's shoes, etc.)
- *what will happen should a student or teacher develop a fever or cough- the worry that will result and the need to quarantine and/or test that teacher/student and every student/teacher that person has been in contact with
- *the test is unpleasant at best- we worry about the trauma of children possibly having to be tested regularly
- *what will happen during cold and flu season that begins in late fall when nearly every person has a cough, runny nose, fever, or GI issues (will everyone have to be tested? quarantined?)
- *the possibility that schools may need to close shortly after a hybrid model begins because of outbreaks
- *the trauma that would result should a student or teacher test positive and have an adverse health outcome or death

*the ability for teachers to realistically provide a robust education for all students if some students are participating in the hybrid model and others are strictly distance learning

Research is unclear on how much children are able to spread this virus. In many countries where schools have reopened, cases of the virus are much lower than this country and that research would not apply. Additionally, many children in this country have been relatively secluded for much of the pandemic so it is difficult for researchers to gauge their ability to transmit the virus. And, while children, so far, have suffered the lowest numbers of severe cases and deaths, there have been incidences of both. Please note that, in addition to mortality, we must also look at morbidity. Just because a person survives the virus, does not mean they don't suffer long term or permanent adverse health effects. And, we must also consider the adults who will be in buses and school buildings along with the children. Many schools in the county are old and there is no possible way their ventilation systems are up to the task of handling an airborne virus.

If the school year begins virtually, our hope is that teachers can enter the building to teach synchronously from their classrooms, utilizing all of their resources. Depending on the number of teachers in a building/area at once, perhaps they can even teach without their masks on, making it much easier for children, who rely on facial expressions, to understand and learn. Teachers can focus on giving a quality education to all students this way. For students who are at-risk, unable to access distance learning or have special needs that cannot be accommodated outside of the school building, perhaps they can come into the building in smaller groups to receive services they require. Only having these students enter the building ensures much lower risk for everyone involved.

We are aware that there is a vocal group in Carroll County promoting the re-opening of schools both with and without restrictions. Some of these same people also feel that masks aren't necessary. Members of this group plan to rally/protest outside the Board of Ed meeting tomorrow. My family will not be outside in a group rallying or protesting for distance learning for the very same reason we are pushing for schools to remain virtual for the first semester of the school year. It is irresponsible and unsafe to congregate in groups like this. It is against the CDC recommendations and it puts others at risk.

And, lastly, the prior Board of Ed meeting was not conducted fully in person. If your small group does not feel safe meeting in person for less than a full school day a couple of weeks ago, it is unfair of you to determine that it is safe for teachers, staff, and students to do so on a regular basis this fall.

Please vote to begin the 2020-2021 school year virtually and give teachers the resources to make this a more robust model than the spring. Please re-evaluate at a later date for the second semester.

Thank you for the time and consideration you have given this matter.

Jennifer Bruce-Maskeroni

I am writing you today because, like so many other teachers, I believe that there is no perfect solution for school this fall. There is, however, a safe solution. That solution is an all-virtual start.

I know others have written you with statistics and projections and comparisons to what other counties are and are not doing. I won't echo any of that here. Instead, I'll tell you a little about me—a teacher and human being in your school system—and about the other human beings I spend my days with. I am a mom of two wonderful children and a wife of one very lucky husband. I am also a sister, daughter, granddaughter, cousin, aunt, and sister-in-law within a large, wonderful-if-complicated, extended family. This year, I will be starting my 12th year teaching students in Carroll County Public Schools. After teaching students English and Freshman Seminar at Century High School for six years, I have now supported ELLs as an ESOL Resource Teacher at various schools for another five years and am ready to start my sixth. While I primarily service Mount Airy Middle School and Mount Airy Elementary School, I also regularly help out at South Carroll High School. My very first administrator made a practice of correcting teachers who said they taught [_____ subject], saying instead that they taught students [_____ subject]. This is a message that I internalized right from the very beginning, and it has served me well (as well as, I'd like to think, the students, families, and colleagues I've worked

with) by reminding me to keep people at the front-and-center of whatever I do. What we teach is certainly important; who we teach is paramount.

As a member of the Class of 1999, I was a Liberty High School valedictorian but--more importantly--a third-generation CCPS graduate, continuing a family tradition started by my paternal grandfather, great-uncle, and grandmother, respective graduates of Sykesville High School and Mount Airy High School (the same building in which I now teach elementary school students ESOL). Another grandmother and my father both graduated from South Carroll (as did my aunt, uncle, and sister-in-law). Like me, my late brother, two of my stepsiblings, and several cousins are graduates of Liberty High School. My stepmother was a Westminster High School graduate; my stepsisters, stepbrother, and youngest sister graduated from Century; this year, my youngest brother will be part of Century's Class of 2021. Two of my nephews and my niece are in CCPS elementary schools. Additionally, my oldest child spent his elementary school years at Linton Springs Elementary School and loved it so much there that I paid the out-of-county tuition for him to finish elementary school at LSE after we moved to the Frederick County side of Mount Airy during his 3rd grade year. I only say this to help you understand my history with, pride and investment in, and dedication to this school system.

Despite the higher salaries of other counties—especially for National Board Certified teachers like myself—I have always loved CCPS and regarded it as my home. I love my job. I spent countless hours at home planning and coplanning, grading, modifying assignments and assessments, developing professional development, communicating with parents and other teachers, and doing all the other things that there just isn't time for during the school day. My husband frequently points out that I do a lot I'm not paid to do; my response to him has always been that, if I don't do it, it's the students who suffer, and I can't let that happen. This past spring, I was part of the successful effort to get two food distribution sites in Mount Airy (at Parris Ridge Elementary School and on in the Pheasant Ridge mobile home community) and, afterwards, spent an average of three days a week in Pheasant Ridge helping to make sure our students and their families there had their basic needs met and were able to successfully access and utilize Google Classrooms and other platforms used for virtual learning. I pour my time, my energy, my creativity, my heart, my personal resources, and sometimes my health into my job. And I love it. I can't imagine teaching anywhere else but in CCPS.

Unfortunately, right now, I can't imagine teaching at CCPS under the proposed hybrid model either. As I'm sure you can imagine, the kind of support and instruction I do as a Resource Teacher is basically impossible to do from the CDC-recommended distance of 6 feet. As an ESOL Resource Teacher, the majority of my day involves me going into other classrooms to support ELLs in learning both class content and English at the same time. This typically means me sitting or standing next to a student or group of students and whispering or talking quietly so that I don't disrupt learning for the other students or irritate the classroom teacher; when I'm in a classroom, I help anyone who needs it--not just our ELLs--and try to do anything and everything the classroom teacher asks of me. As a former classroom teacher myself, I remember all too well the feeling that if I could just clone myself that I could support more students, so in addition to explicitly supporting our ELLs, I make myself into an extra set eyes, ears, and hands, and extra source of feedback and encouragement, an extra provider of love and gluesticks and notebook paper, an extra checker of agenda books and do-you-have-your-homework, an extra compassionate and knowledgeable adult able to pull small groups for reading or review or to get absent students caught up. Regardless of whether students are native speakers of English or ELLs, they know I will support them, love them, and hold them accountable for their learning; the classroom teachers I work with know this as well (and the looks of relief that cross their faces when I enter their classrooms is a constant reminder to me that we are all already being asked to do too much). When I'm not working with students in a plug-in situation, I pull individual students and small groups of students for specific ESOL support during Flex and, occasionally for newcomers, during certain segments of their regular classroom time. Even though I am lucky enough to have the use of an entire classroom in one of my buildings and a nice big corner in another, my students and I are usually right next to each other. Physical proximity is part of working one-on-one with students in a way that is conducive to engagement, feedback, and forming relationships. I will wear my mask and make sure my students are wearing theirs, but this will significantly hamper their ability to use non-verbal cues to decipher meaning, especially at the beginning of their English-learning. With masks on, I cannot show them the full extent of my facial expressions--something that newcomers respond to even when they cannot understand a word of English. I cannot show the way to place my tongue between my teeth in order to make the "th" sound, something that's typically very difficult for Spanish-speaking students. I cannot catch their eye from across the classroom and mouth "Skip number three. We'll do that one during Flex." And, if I also cannot get close

enough to them to whisper a message, I will have to either speak that message from 6 feet or not speak it at all. I will have to resort to telling them things that I could be showing them. That's not to say I won't try to do my job to the best of my ability; of course I will. However, I worry—the kind of worry that keeps me awake at night—that the simple fact of my presence in a classroom will put everyone else in that classroom at risk.

Let me give you some numbers. During the 2019-2020 school year, I supported 18 ELLs in grades 3 through 8. The ELLs in elementary school were each assigned an AM and PM classroom for a total of 11 different classrooms (not including related arts classes). The majority of those classrooms also included either a special educator, an instructional assistant, or both. My middle school ELLs were on 3 different teams of 4-5 teachers; again not counting related arts classrooms, they were assigned to 14 different classrooms. In my two schools combined, there were a total of 25 different classrooms I plugged into during a given week (again, discounting times I may have had to plug into related arts classes, co-plan with a reading specialist, math specialist, or special educator, or attend team or grade-level meetings and PD that included teachers I didn't normally work with). Let's say that each of these 25 classes was comprised of 20 students (which they weren't—most had significantly more); that's 500 students plus 25 classroom teachers, plus 7 special educators, 2 speech pathologists, 8 instructional assistants, 2 reading specialists, and 2 Media Specialists, 2 Media Clerks, and 1 math specialist I interacted with in a given week. Then there are the staff in the Main Offices I saw when I signed in, the school nurses I frequently had to visit with one of my ELLs, the on-site permanent subs, the custodians, the cafeteria staff, the administrators, and substitute teachers (both long-term and daily). Without even accounting for the individuals in that last sentence, I'm already up to a minimum of 545 adults and children across two schools that I come into contact with in a given week. To complicate things, last year I also helped cover one of my teammates case-loads at a high school while she was out recovering from brain surgery; given the extremely small number of ESOL Resource Teachers our county budgets for, it's extremely likely that I will have to cover for or one or more teachers again this year. At South Carroll, I primarily instructed the 10 students in the ESOL classroom and plugged into 6 additional classrooms. If we again assume a class size of 20 (which was not usually the case), that's another 120 students, 6 classroom teachers, several IAs, a few special educators, the office staff, the Media Specialist, substitutes and 12 other classroom teachers whose classes I didn't regularly plug into but who I saw during their planning times to touch base about ELLs and their progress. If I *only* count the students and classroom teachers—none of the other people I have to regularly interact with to support my ELLs AND none of the individuals a student I interact with then interacts with during the rest of their day—that still brings me to a total of 657 students and classroom teachers from 3 schools.

Let me respectfully ask you, ladies and gentlemen—if you were, say, a 3rd grade STEM teacher, would you want me coming into your classroom on a Thursday afternoon knowing that I had already interacted with more than 657 individuals in 3 different buildings that week?

I am a sensible and hygienic adult, and I will, of course, take every precaution necessary to keep from bringing one classroom's germs into another's (or one school's germs into another's), but I also know that there are elements of life—especially in a school—that you simply cannot control. I have also had children sneeze directly into my eyeballs. They also (especially the little ones who aren't so great with the handwashing) hug me without warning, touch my face, hair, badge, pencil, etc. They grab my arm to take a good look before telling me they can teach me how to wax my arms like they help their mom. They cry on me. They wipe their noses with their hands or cough all over my laptop, and I can clean and sanitize and hand wash all day long, but if this coming year is like every other year I've been a teacher, sooner or later I'll come down with something.

And sooner or later, that something I've come down with? I'll give it to someone else—one of those 657 others who are also in other classrooms, who ride busses, who have siblings and parents, who maybe have grandparents or other relatives who live with them. It has occurred to me—during those times when I'm awake and worrying my heart out—that I could expose many, many, many people at three different schools and in several different communities. The proposed plan says that a single exposure will necessitate a school being closed for 48 hours for cleaning. In a single day, I could unwittingly cause 3 schools to close and—more importantly—almost 700 people to be exposed. Some of those almost 700 people or their families could become seriously ill—3 of my current ELLs and 1 of my former ELLs had family members contract COVID-19 during this past spring; it took 6 weeks for the mom of one of these students to be released from the hospital—with lasting health complications. Some of these almost 700 people could die.

Ladies and gentlemen, my mere presence in a school puts everyone in that school and everyone who comes in close contact with everyone in that school at risk. If I contract COVID-19 and am symptomatic, I will likely infect a large number of people; if I contract COVID-19 and am asymptomatic (more statistically probably for my age-group and health status), I will likely infect countless others. The possibility of this is personal for me. My grandfather and his brother (the graduates of Sykesville High School I mentioned earlier) were raised in children's homes because their mother contracted TB when they were children and subsequently spent the rest of her life as a patient and later employee at the Blue Ridge Sanatorium in Charlottesville, Virginia. My grandfather was 2; his brother was 4. My grandfather's first memory is being in a crib in a room with other young children and crying and crying for someone to give him comfort. No one ever came. My grandfather and his brother grew up 159 miles from their mother, 117 miles from the rest of their extended family in Sperryville, Virginia who could not care for them because of the economic hardships of the Depression. They grew up without a family, without a childhood, without feeling that they were at all wanted, and without ever being hugged. After numerous TB relapses, their mother lived until the age of 54; however, she experienced health problems all her life and was never able to live with her children past their 2nd and 4th birthdays. My grandfather and his brother both went on to lay down roots in Sykesville, MD, to have families, and to have what most would consider successful lives, but please believe me when I say that they have never recovered from growing up without a mother and without a family. Statistics tell us that minority groups—specifically Latinos/as—are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. They are also more likely to live in poverty—as my grandfather's family did—more likely to distrust government institutions—as my grandfather's family did after watching relatives and neighbors be displaced during the formation of Shenandoah National Park—and less likely to have health insurance. Added together, the likelihood that me exposing one of my ELL families could have significant, lasting effects—both physical and emotional—is enough to give me serious pause. These families have given up so much already. I do not want to be the reason someone grows up without a mother (or father or grandmother or sibling), institutionalized and isolated from the rest of their family and everything they know. I haven't yet decided whether or not a hybrid start will warrant my resignation from a position that I love and have dedicated my life to. But it might.

Again, I will obviously take every precaution to ensure no one is infected because of me. But I'm also left wondering if each of those almost 700 people I'm in contact with is doing the same. I am, as far as I know, relatively healthy. My husband is a two-time veteran with PTSD who, because of his PTSD, doesn't take care of himself medically as he should. I have a 19 year-old and a 7 year-old. My parents, stepparents, and in-laws are in the 65-and-older bracket. My father is a colon-cancer survivor with a compromised immune system. My nephew is on the autism spectrum and doesn't understand things like masks and social distancing. My stepbrother—one of my best friends—is an ER doctor at Carroll Hospital Center, and his wife and his children—my sister-in-law and my niece and nephews—are some of favorite people in the entire world. I've seen them once since March for fear of passing along germs to them that could make any of them sick, but especially my brother since he could then take those germs to the sick and vulnerable at Carroll Hospital Center. He already risks his life every day he sets food in the hospital; he doesn't deserve to carry the guilt of additional lives lost as well. My mother—my actual favorite person in the entire world—works part-time at the Brightview Senior Living retirement community in Westminster. I've seen her three times since March and always at a distance for fear of getting her sick and of giving her something that could then ravage Brightview. I miss my mom and her hugs. I miss them so much. My grandfather—the Sykesville High School grad, the boy who grew up without a mother, the man who is like a father to me—is undergoing chemotherapy and radiation for pancreatic cancer, and I will not risk exposing him to anything, even something as minor as a cold. I talk to him regularly but last saw him in June, and if I am in school buildings at all in the fall, I will not risk exposing him to any school germs. There is a very, very real possibility that the last time I see him in person before he dies will be the day before teachers have to return to school. This man—this wonderful, strong, brave man—does not deserve for his life to end as it began: without the love and presence of family, without the hugs we once took for granted. And we—the teachers of CCPS—do not deserve having to make these choices when a safe alternative exists.

I know these are times like none of us have seen before; there's so, so much we still don't know. At the start of this pandemic, a scientist whose name I can't remember said something about social distancing that I will never forget: that if all our efforts at social distancing work and we flatten the curve and buy enough time for a vaccine to be developed, it will appear as if the threat was never really that bad to begin with. That's the Catch 22, of course. Taking the necessary precautions to protect everyone will likely make it look like those precautions weren't ever necessary. That's the same attitude, in my opinion, that I believe those in charge of our nation's, states', and counties' schools should adopt:

caution. And bravery. Because I'm certain you will feel the anger of those who will say that such caution was never necessary. But, when the alternative is the kind of recklessness that ends in devastating loss, you will be able to say at the end of this that your students, your staff, and their families did not contract and/or spread COVID-19 under your watch, that you did not sentence children to a life without parents or loved ones, that you did not deny families the ability to hug their loved ones when those hugs matter so, so much right now—that all these things did not happen on your watch and in your schools while you stood by and let it happen knowing—KNOWING—that there was a safe alternative.

Ladies and gentlemen, I know there are many factors you're weighing in making this decision, but the safety of the human beings in our school system must be paramount to all those other factors. Those human beings matter. An online start keeps us all safe while science has a chance to catch up and bring us all back together again.

Kelly Doolan

Members of the Board of Education, I would like this to be included in the public comments. I am writing this letter to express my concerns with starting the school year using the hybrid model and to express my very strong feelings that we should start in a complete virtual model. The logistical nightmares the hybrid model presents, the impossibilities of implementing the guidelines set forth by Governor Hogan, Karen Salmon and the CDC, and the possibility of people DYING by returning to school are just some of the reasons we need to strongly consider an all virtual opening to schools. As a School Counselor in the county, I would like to share why I feel sending students back to school in the middle of a pandemic under the restrictive guidelines it requires will be harmful to students both socially and emotionally. I know many people are calling for schools to open because they feel students need the social and emotional supports that school offers. During non-pandemic times, that is absolutely true. Carroll County teachers and staff are incredibly skilled at not only teaching academic skills but providing safe, nurturing environments that children can flourish in. As a School Counselor of the only primary building in the county, the staff at my school works incredibly hard to provide the social and emotional supports that students need in order to be available for learning. As teachers, our number one priority is making sure students feel safe both physically and emotionally while at school. I'm sure all of you are familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of needs and how this impacts learning. As teachers we learned this early in our training and we take it very seriously. Below you will find the concerns that I have about the social and emotional needs of students if we begin school in the hybrid model. 1. Sending students back to school in the middle of a pandemic is confusing. These children have been home for five months practicing social distancing, not being able to see their grandparents for fear of infecting them, not being able to eat in restaurants, or gather in large groups. Many of their parents will still be working from home when these children go to school as Governor Hogan has encouraged this when possible. Now we are telling them, "Don't worry. None of that applies to going to school. You'll be fine." Kids are smarter than that. Give them more credit and realize how scary and anxiety provoking this is going to be for many of them. 2. Students will be returning to sterile, cold classrooms where there will be no interaction between students and little interaction between teacher and students. Teachers will be standing at the front of the class and required to maintain a distance of six feet at all times. There will be no small group instruction which is where the majority of our instruction takes place. This will make it incredibly hard to build loving, trusting relationships with students. When students don't feel love and trust, they do not take risks and learning doesn't occur. Being unable to receive age appropriate comfort from staff members will result in attachment issues and will be harmful over time. 3. Small children are going to be expected to adhere to developmentally inappropriate behavioral expectations pertaining to social distancing for hours at a time. This is going to cause a tremendous amount of stress for small children. 4. Students will be restricted from engaging with peers who are in the same room with them all day. Their natural desire to make friends and feel included and accepted by their peers will be met with feelings of confusion and dejection. It will be incredibly confusing and difficult for them to process. Students will not be able to play with each other, share materials or toys, and just be kids. There will be little joy associated with their schooling experience as many of the fun and engaging activities that teachers have typically done in the past will not be possible. How can we possibly help children to love learning in these conditions? 5. Small children experience A LOT of separation anxiety at the beginning of school. For some students it may take up to 3 or 4 weeks before they begin to feel comfortable separating from their parents and entering the school building. With the hybrid model, this will take twice as long. I am called to parent drop off repeatedly the first month of school. I usually look that child in the eye, tell them that it is going to be ok, and take that child's hand to lead them into the building. I won't be able to do this anymore. I won't be able to hand them off to their classroom teacher who will then embrace them in a

hug and let them know that they will be ok. Five year olds will be forced to stand alone in their classroom while their teacher stands six feet away and tries to console them. Picture that for a minute and tell me that your heart doesn't break when you imagine that happening to your own child. 6. With students and staff in masks all day, students will not be able to use facial cues to determine how people are feeling and to determine whether the strangers that they have just met are emotionally safe individuals in whom they can trust. This will be one more barrier in building the crucial relationships that are needed so that learning can occur. 7. When a child or the teacher becomes ill due to Covid and the class is required to quarantine and can't come to school for 2 weeks, it will add to the uncertainty and anxiety that this pandemic has already created for our students. 8. When a teacher or student is out for an extended length of time, students will experience stress and anxiety as they worry about whether their teacher or friend is ok, whether they will return to school and whether they will ever see them again. 9. Students will have to live with the guilt and shame of not knowing whether they infected a family member by bringing Covid home from school. Some of these children are being parented by or live with grandparents. Many of their parents have underlying conditions. Do we really think that attending school during a pandemic is psychologically better for them than the emotional trauma they will experience when someone in their family dies and they think it is their fault? 10. When a student or staff member dies, what type of crisis support will be put in place to manage the grief that is associated with these deaths? On top of all the anxiety that will be associated with going back to school, the death of a student or staff member will only add to the emotional and mental load that will certainly impact student learning. I am one School Counselor in my building of almost 500 students. The American School Counselor Association recommends that the ratio of counselors to students in a school building be 1:250. Counselors are already overwhelmed by meeting the social and emotional needs of their students during non-pandemic times. Again, people are going to die. In closing, I would like to say that I sincerely hope that when board members are casting their vote for whether school will start in the hybrid or virtual model, that they are taking all factors into account and that they are not voting in order to please a vocal group of parents or for political reasons. These are our children we are talking about. Let's not make them political pawns. Let's show them that we care about their physical, mental and emotional well-being by starting the school year virtually and waiting for in-person instruction when we know that students will be safe. Let's leave the scientific experiments to the experts and not try to do it ourselves with our most precious resource. Our children. Thank you. Sincerely, Kelly Doolan School Counselor CCPS Parent of two CCPS students

Jason Bulger

My name is Jason Bulger and I have four sons in the county school system between grades 7-12. They have consistently and effectively demonstrated a commitment to compliance with handwashing and the wearing of masks. In the spring, we got to see how well distance learning worked for them. It did not. I am in favor of them returning to the class room setting this fall. I say that with their age and "maturity" in mind. I don't believe the elementary students would comply as well, but I could be wrong.

Sandy Johnson

I am the parent of four CCPS students as well as a 4th grade teacher. I miss my students. There is something magical about the moment when a student grasps a concept and you can see it in their eyes. The energy of a group of children gathered in the same room to learn, play, talk, and be children cannot be truly duplicated in an online setting. But a room of 15 desks, 3 feet apart where students will spend SIX hours without leaving (except for restroom and recess breaks) is not the answer. I want students to return to our buildings as soon as possible but the hybrid plan is not the answer. I have some genuine concerns about what learning and teaching will look like under this plan. How can I check my students' work if I cannot even come within 6 (or 3) feet of them? How will they use math or science materials if they cannot share them? How will we collaborate for group work? What will specials look like in the classroom if they cannot share materials? If sitting in front of a computer was difficult for learning, how are students going to be successful sitting at a desk all day long without even leaving it for lunch? How will my students eat if they can only sit 3 feet apart if they are wearing masks but are expected to eat in their classroom? What are my B cohort students (Th, Fri) doing online if they haven't received the in person instruction to complete tasks? Who is assigning the online work if I am in my classroom in front of students 4 days a week? If online students have questions, who responds to them or do they have to wait until Wednesday when I am teaching online? If one of my students gets sick does that mean that the entire 4th grade must quarantine (and I have a 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th grader so will everyone in their classes quarantine as well?)? I

did the math and if every student and teacher who is either in my classroom or in class with one of my children has to quarantine, that would be 400 people!! These are only a few of the questions that have been keeping me awake at night while I wonder about what the next school year will look like. If you are not prepared with answers, then clearly we are not ready for a hybrid scenario. If you vote yes for hybrid, I expect a detailed description of how each of these issues will be addressed and would welcome you to my classroom to demonstrate the procedures. I know there is tremendous pressure for all of Maryland to be reopened but Carroll County schools are not a science experiment to benefit the rest of the state. Please do not let influence from other counties sway you but instead take your guidance from CCPS stakeholders. If groups seeking to reopen schools must recruit those from other counties to champion their cause, doesn't that mean that the true voice of the Carroll County resident is asking you to begin school online and wait until other government buildings can be reopened before bringing children into school buildings? Whatever you decide, please make a decision today so that students, parents and teachers can prepare for a successful school year. Thank you, Sandy Johnson

Sara Aguilar

I am sure you are inundated with emails at the present moment so I will attempt to make this as short as possible. I am one of the many concerned teachers in Carroll County. I would love to return to my classroom and interact face to face with my students every day.... when it is safe. To risk the life of even one person within the school system is unacceptable. There are too many unknowns about this virus. Recently, research suggests that even for those who do not end up hospitalized, there may be long lasting effects on organs such as the lungs, heart, liver, kidneys, etc.

I think about the mental instability that comes along with distance learning, but at least the students are still able to connect via technology. What about the mental instability that comes from being scared of contracting a virus and bringing it home or having one of your fellow classmates be hospitalized due to viral transmission within the building? Research suggests middle and high schoolers are capable of transmitting the virus at a rate comparable to adults. If we are urging adults to minimize large gatherings, then why are we putting our youth at this risk? They are our future. Should we really be risking their futures when there are so many unknowns?

This email has been focused upon students up to this point because of course I always think of my students first. However, I must also mention the adults within the school system. I have asthma so I am at a higher risk of having complications should I contract the virus. I have small children at home, more specifically a 5 month old. Again, not enough is known to fully understand how the virus would affect my young daughters both short term and long term. This is just my home situation. There are teachers like me as well as teachers who live with their parents or other high risk individuals.

Please consider my concerns when making your decision. Nothing about this situation is ideal, but the safety of our students and staff must come first.

Thank you for your time and best of luck with this difficult decision.

Samantha Azat

As you meet today, potentially to decide what will happen with the coming school year, I urge you to remember that health and safety in school reopening is not a partisan issue, or shouldn't be. We need decisions to be made to protect our county's constituents, and based on what will truly be best for the children. Being in school two days a week will not help children learn any better (in fact, basic pedagogy indicates that a lack of consistency will be disruptive to their learning), and it will most certainly endanger their lives and the lives of the teachers. Please do not place a burden of fear and guilt on children by requiring them to potentially contract or spread COVID to their teachers, parents, or loved ones. Please do not place the burden of fear and potentially life-altering or life-threatening demands on teachers, who only want to stay alive and stay healthy while still working for the children who mean so much to us. It is imperative to make a decision that is not motivated by partisan, capitalist bias, but by a need to protect and serve those who care for and are part of the community in which we live. Please make the kind and smart choice for a virtual start to the semester.

Lee Ann Crochunis

Please consider my comments as part of the public record. Our family continues to advocate for returning children to schools and advise you to do all you can to do so. While my personal preference would be a return to school as “normal,” I support the hybrid plan as proposed by CCPS and permitted under the State’s Phase 2 of Recovery.

The BOE and CCPS must place students FIRST as it considers its plans. It was disheartening to hear many of the teacher-citizens who spoke at the last BOE meeting consistently list themselves first in the list of people who should be considered in reopening plans. Much like employees in other industries, teachers are essential workers and must perform their job in the manner in which it is necessary to best educate students. What is best for students includes factors of risk to physical health from the novel coronavirus, *as well as* risk to mental, social, and other aspects of physical health. We must take a holistic view to education and well-being of students. In-person teaching and learning is the best way to do it and no one needs an advanced degree to be deemed credible to say so.

While I am also not a public health or medical expert, I can apply critical thinking skills (touted by our education system as a desired student ability) to analyze a wide-range of articles, studies, and other material written and provided by various experts. As is often the case, there is disagreement among experts and studies; therefore, it is impossible to argue that the Board must “follow science and the experts’ advice.” Which study and which advice? There are many experts and studies that support a return to in-person learning; others insistent we must stay away from each other for the next two years! We – students, teachers, parents, humans - are never “safe;” some level of risk of illness, injury, and even death is present when engaging in just about any life activity. If we wait until it is “safe” to return to school, we never will.

I specifically encourage you to consider the return to school for Career and Tech students. The State is clear that local jurisdictions have the authority to determine which groups of students may return to school in-person. I urge you to allow a full return for the Career and Tech students, whose programs are specifically designed around practical, hands-on learning. If the Career and Tech Center does not allow for enough space for distancing protocols, then I recommend you to look at any extra space at Westminster High School that could be utilized. This would certainly be available if you vote for virtual learning for the rest of the student population, and is likely available in a hybrid learning environment (e.g., band and chorus rooms, etc.).

For us personally this school year, one of our daughters will be attending a private school that is returning 5 days a week in-person. That is what is best for her and fortunately, we are capable of providing that. Our other daughter will finish her K-12 education in CCPS, regardless of model, for her senior year. Accepting a fully virtual model when not required will likely lead to a future that includes virtual learning, virus or no virus. Coupled with dis-enrollment for private or home school options, some employees who do not want to return to school will get their wish because jobs may not be needed (or may not be afforded), permanently, in the future.

Please approach your planning and solutions around questions that begin with, “How might we...?” rather than statements that begin with “We can’t do that because...” The hybrid plan put forth by CCPS appears to have done this. Stick with it.

July 28, 2020

Lisa Z.

Dear Board of Education members: I would like to submit my opinion on the re-opening of schools and urge you to consider all of the data and moving parts. My concerns with the hybrid model, which initially sounded good (until I really thought about it) are the implementation. At this late date, do you have time to install hand sanitizer stations? Have you ordered plexiglass to be installed? What about classrooms with tables instead of desks? What happens if a teacher gets Covid? Does the entire class have to stay home now? What happens if a student tests positive? I would obviously love to

see my student back at school, but I am not willing to sacrifice safety to the teachers, other students, and population in general.

Hope Knauth, Upcoming 3rd Grader, Manchester Elementary School

I want school to be virtual because I don't want my grandparents dying. They live with me and have some health problems. They helped me a lot during virtual school. I love them and I don't want it to be the school's fault that they die.

If we go in to school, I will be staying home and my parents will go to school because they are both teachers. My Grammy only knows ELA and specials, so I wouldn't have my parents to help me do school and I wouldn't have a full school day at home, which I like. My mom and dad could get COVID and bring it to my grandparents. That would make me feel very sad because I already had my great grandma die a year ago (not because of COVID) and it was sad.

That is why I don't want school to open back again.

Beth L.

I would like to respectfully submit the following as public record: Dear Dr. Lockard and members of the board, I am writing as a concerned community member who is both a mother and teacher of elementary-aged children. I am thankful you have chosen to serve the families of Carroll County and make difficult decisions in choosing the correct educational path for our children. It is very unfortunate you must use COVID virus data and research, rather than educational best practices, to make decisions about returning to school. I encourage you to make your decision based on serious considerations for the safety and health of our students and staff. At this time, we cannot make decisions about returning to school this fall because we are tired. We are tired of the loss of normalcy. We are tired of the constant worry about getting sick. We are tired of worrying about if our children are getting farther behind in school. Every parent is worried about children losing out on educational and social experiences. We are all struggling with job loss, debt, and bills. Our entire community has been affected by the fallout of this virus. For these reasons, we must continue to be vigilant. In light of the recent increases in COVID cases in Carroll County, we must continue to stay distanced, stopping the virus from spreading to any more families. In order to protect our community, we must make the unfavorable decision to continue virtual learning to start this school year. I do not want to choose the option of virtual schooling for my child. As a mother, I see my child growing impatient with the monotony of distance learning. I know she is missing out on the in-person instruction she would receive in school from teachers who are experts in the content areas. I know she has not learned and will not remember the content as thoroughly in the virtual learning environment. I see her missing friends and teachers, missing out on social interactions and learning experiences at school. I know virtual learning is not the best method for educating our children. I do not want to choose the option of virtual schooling for my students. As a teacher at a Title 1 school with many families struggling below the poverty line, I see the need and disparity between families. I know the best place for children is in school. I know some students need to be in school not only to learn but to be fed and cared for physically and emotionally. I see and acknowledge the hardship families are facing as society remains closed. I want schools to open again so we can go back to "normal". I want to help my students because I know they are struggling. I see the faces of our parents and children as I volunteer at the food distribution sites passing out food and supplies. I hear the stories when we talk. I know virtual learning is not the best method for educating our children. All of these things considered, the decision to proceed with remote learning is not a decision we are making based on what is best for educating our children. This decision needs to be made to ensure we protect our children. As a mother and teacher, I can attest with 100% confidence that despite the best efforts of families, educators, bus drivers, custodians, administrators, and students, many students will contract the virus. The virus will spread to our families. Most children and adults will have mild symptoms and recover, however, some children will have serious complications and some will die. Knowingly allowing for the possibility that any one person will die, and knowing current data confirms this as fact, is unacceptable. We can recover from education loss, debt, job loss, loss of social and emotional interactions, being inconvenienced, so on and so forth. We cannot recover from the deaths of our children and community members. Therefore, in the best interest of public health and welfare, I urge you to choose the continuation of virtual learning for all CCPS students this fall. Thank you for willingness to serve and make the difficult choices for our children and families.

Allison Gordon

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I am writing as a concerned parent. My daughter is entering the 2nd grade this fall at Linton Springs Elementary School. I am writing in support of a complete virtual opening in the fall. My concerns are that we do not understand the full effect that this disease can have on our children. I am unwilling as a mother to put my child and other children in dangers way. If we can have 6 months or a year to understand what Covid-19 can do to us we will understand how to open successfully. Reopening now with the hybrid schedule is irresponsible. Our teachers and students deserve a chance. I believe that if you reopen the schools they will close one by one because someone at the school with inevitably become ill. This is not a time to take chances. Teachers and staff do so much for children and have for years. We cannot ask them to die because people have to work. My comments can be used for public comment at the meeting. Thank you for your time and I pray you make the right choice to keep our students and teachers safe.

Jamie O'Brien

Hello, After recent increases in the number of Covid-19 cases in our state, I believe virtual learning would be the best option for students and staff. With an outbreak being identified as one case, I feel it would be in the best interest of our children to keep them in a safe learning environment in their homes. I know many are concerned about the mental well-being of our children, but what good would it do them to be excited about a possible return to school, only to be shut down by an "outbreak" for an indefinite amount of time. I also feel that there is inadequate staffing in the schools to keep our children within the current safety guidelines. How can we keep students 6 feet apart when our Elementary school has over 300 students at 50% capacity? Who is going to be sure these children are practicing social distancing in areas of the school when staff isn't always present (i.e. restrooms)? I believe there are still too many unknowns about the virus itself to make the decision to return safely to public school, especially when we are limited to how many people can enter other public establishments. I hope all of these concerns are being taken into consideration when making the final decision. Why risk our children and teaching staff's health if there are virtual options? Thank you.

Kristin Krantz

Dear Dr. Lockard & Board Members,

I would like my comments to be a part of the public record. You are entrusted with the safety of our students and the staff who work for you, and I believe the only way to act on that trust is to start this school year all entirely virtually. At this stage of the still unfolding pandemic it not only makes sense to do so in light of health and safety concerns, but also for educational quality. Why dilute resources to in-person and virtual, with neither likely getting the full support needed? How will you ensure there is equity? Keep our kids and staff safe and focus on one method - only virtual. The decision you make now will have far reaching life and death consequences. An image I keep returning to is that if we resume in-person learning, every school yearbook will need to have an "In Memoriam" section for the staff and students who died from COVID. That is what you are taking responsibility for in making your decision. I have children who will be starting 6th and 10th grade, and I will not be sending them into a classroom. Yes this will be disruptive to my work and for our family, but these are extraordinary times and we are called to step up and make hard choices that put the common good first. I hope you will each choose to do so.

Sarah Martin

Dear Members of the Board and Superintendent Lockard, Please make my comment public. I have proudly taught CCPS elementary age students for 20 years. Teaching is one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and I can honestly say that I have loved every minute of my career in the classroom because of our close learning community: students, families, faculty, staff and bus drivers. Because the safety of our learning community is a first priority at CCPS, schools should open with 100% virtual learning for the first semester. Just yesterday, the Carroll County Times reported a spike in positive Covid-19 cases in people under 30. "Carroll County Health Department data released Monday afternoon indicated a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases largely fueled by positive tests among those under 30 years old. Fifty-nine new coronavirus cases over the past 72 hours were announced by the health department, the most

new cases in a single data report since late March. Of those, 20 were between 10 and 19 years old and 17 were in the 20-29 age group." Because this situation continues to evolve, CCPS cannot assure parents that their children or their children's teachers will be able to return this fall to in-class learning safely. Also, many of our students are being raised in multi-generational households, by grandparents or great-grandparents. Being in a classroom with their peers increases the risk that they could carry the virus home to a high-risk family member. Many of our teachers are caregivers to parents or children with underlying health conditions. I am a caregiver for my mother who has a terminal lung disease. If I contracted Covid-19, I could no longer provide care for my mother. If I carried Covid-19 to my mother, she would not survive. Some of our teachers, as well as our students, have underlying health conditions that put them at high-risk should they contract the virus. Thankfully, we know how to avoid infecting the members of our learning community and can take action by opening schools with 100% virtual learning to keep everyone safe. Finally, I feel the need to address some of the concerns regarding "insufficient learning" with the virtual platform. In March, the school system did a remarkable job providing home based learning for students with little to no warning. Teachers learned a new platform and worked every day providing lessons, evaluating student work, providing feedback and offering Google Meets to maintain contact as a class. I do not think we have data to prove that virtual learning with harm our students or hold them back. In fact, I found that most of my students were engaged, met the learning outcomes, and appreciated the timely feedback that I could give them in a virtual environment. As far as equity is concerned, Harford County is addressing the needs of technology and in-school instruction with elective learning hubs. Families who need assistance with technology can elect to enroll their child in a hub, a classroom of no more than 10 students, who are provided with the technology and connectivity that they need, with proctors who assist students with the lessons created and administered virtually by teachers. This allows teachers to focus on quality instruction, evaluation, and feedback because they will not be expected to teach and create in class and virtual learning which would be required in the hybrid model. I think that learning hubs increase equity for students who need access to technology. Again, this is elective so families and teachers have control over their safety based on the needs of their families. CCPS should be proud that they provided meals, social/emotional support, as well as instruction even in the early days of the pandemic. We have learned since then, and I feel confident as an educator that CCPS will be able to meet the needs of our students while ensuring the safety of every member of our learning community by opening in the fall with 100% virtual instruction. What I want now and what I want most are not the same at this time. What I want now, is to see my students faces, to eat breakfast with them like I have done every school day for years, hear them laugh, watch them learn and play. What I want most, however, is for my students and their families to be safe. Because I want them all to return to school only when it is safe to do so, and I want to see all of their faces when the year ends. The loss of one is too many. I cannot imagine risking the health and well being of even one of those precious young people, especially when we know that virtual learning would be the safe choice. Thank you for thoughtfully considering my input. Respectfully, Sarah Martin

Lindsay Jensen

Dear CCPS BOE Members and Dr. Lockard, You have been faced with an enormous decision to make that involves whether people live or die. It is more than just about the education of our children with regards to the opening of school buildings. I am demanding as a concerned member of our community for the reopening of schools this fall to be all virtual. I am a parent of 2 elementary school children, but am advocating for all members of our community with immunocompromised health issues and those who are over 65 years of age. With students in schools, COVID-19 is not bound between the walls of the building once a child or staff member contracts the virus. The infected will, without a doubt, spread this to other members of the community. Symptoms of the virus do not manifest themselves until about 5 days after contracting the virus. And just as humbling, children often do not show symptoms at all, yet are still able to spread the virus. So during that timeframe, the virus continues to spread and can cause serious health issues for unknowing members of our community. Research has shown that one in every three teachers who contract COVID-19 will suffer very serious health complications. I can't imagine you would want to put anyone's health in jeopardy, much less CCPS teacher's by requiring them to teach in-person, when there clearly is another route: distance learning. I hope you, as leaders of our school system, are able to see the bigger picture of the effects of this virus and understand that human lives are at stake. I cannot imagine the feeling of knowing that citizens of our community who will die from this virus could have been infected by students or staff within the school district, which ultimately rests with your decision to reopen schools. With thousands of bodies within the school system there are bound to be cases of COVID-19. That is just

how the virus works. Of course students' education is important, but we need to be more cognizant in realizing that people's physical health and lives are more important. I have great faith that CCPS teachers will do an amazing job teaching virtually. CCPS themselves hired these teachers, knowing well that they are excellent educators. Along with this evidence and your providing professional development to your teachers to prepare them for virtual teaching, I am very hopeful that students can succeed through distance learning.

Kenneth Jensen

Dear Carroll County Board of Ed. Members and Dr. Lochart, I previously emailed all Board of Education members, but I would like my comments entered into the public record. I am writing to you as a concerned parent in regards to the county's reopening plan. I am a father of a son who will be in 4th grade as well as a daughter who is entering kindergarten. I have my Ph.D. in Virology from the University of Maryland and spent several years traveling to Liberia to first serve as a Lab Director of a Diagnostic Lab during the 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak and in the subsequent years as part of the PREVAIL and PREVAC clinical trials that were being operated in coordination with the National Institutes of Health. I currently work at MilliporeSigma where we partner with clients to bring lifesaving therapeutics and vaccines to the market, including the COVID-19 vaccine. I would like to strongly urge you to listen to the public health experts in the field and NOT the community at large. While I understand that there will be a vocal segment of the population that does not see any risk to sending kids back to school, the data says otherwise. A public search of Carroll County Schools shows approximately 25,500 kids enrolled in schools throughout Carroll County. Using a mortality rate of just 0.02%, that means 5 kids would die just by sending them back to school, not to mention all of the other potential non-fatal health issues kids can develop (please feel free to google Kawasaki Disease and COVID-19). This doesn't even speak to the potential impact this virus can have on staff. Please note, I said staff, not just teachers, because I feel as a community we are forgetting about all of the support staff that are required to make a school operate. All of the office staff, the school nurse, the janitors, all of those people will be at an increased risk of catching and spreading this virus. In addition, I would like to point out that kids no longer just live with parents. We are seeing more multi-generational homes and kids living with grandparents. All of those seniors in the community will be put at increased risk if we open schools. Everything I have seen on social media sites focuses only on the pros and cons of schools opening as it relates specifically to kids, but please remember, kids only make up a portion of the community; and we all have a moral responsibility to protect all members of the community. In my professional opinion, I believe sending kids and staff back to school would be a grave mistake and that we should not be opening schools until a vaccine is readily available to the community. Once immunity within a community rises above 70-85%, effective disease transmission is stopped, as a result of herd immunity. To think that we will naturally arrive at herd immunity, is purely based on misguided logic. Without a vaccine, herd immunity was never established for Measles, Small Pox, Polio, or Chicken Pox, just to name a few diseases. Since my last email, several events have happened. First, as I am sure everyone is aware, 18 members of the Miami Marlins baseball team and support staff have tested positive for COVID-19. This is on a team that has 30 players plus support staff, under the careful watch of doctors and being continuously tested. The outbreak started with 4 players testing positive and quickly spread within the team. If this can happen to a professional team that is being tested multiple times a week, what do you expect to happen in a school setting where parents routinely send their kids to school sick or will give them Tylenol before sending them to school, so that they won't have a fever? In addition, I have become aware of 2 Board members, Mr. Kiler and Mrs. Battaglia making improper public remarks. Mr. Kiler has attended public rallies in support of the "Return 2 Learn" group, which supports physically re-opening schools and has advocated for not students not wearing a mask and that he personally refuses to wear a mask. I saw where Mrs. Battaglia made disparaging remarks about a CCPS teacher on a Facebook community page and was arguing with community members, in what I would deem an inappropriate manner for someone in her position, clearly advocating for re-opening schools. I find it troubling that both Mr. Kiler and Mrs. Battaglia would try to influence the community in public forums. I would ask that both Mr. Kiler and Mrs. Battaglia recuse themselves from the upcoming vote as they have a clear conflict of interest and are placing their own personal feelings ahead of the health and safety of the community. Please do not open schools just because it will make your life easier when dealing with the public. You were given a great responsibility, being put in charge of overseeing the education of the community's youth. Listen to the experts and people who study this virus, who are developing vaccines and therapeutics for it, not people who have pre-conceived notions of what this virus is and does and are un-willing to change their opinion because they don't want to be wrong. Sincerely, Kenneth Jensen, Ph.D.

Nicole Rhodes

Dear Members of the Board, I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Nikki Rhodes and I am both a CCPS parent and employee. My two sons attend William Winchester Elementary, and I am a third grade teacher at Elmer Wolfe. Like so many other families, our lives changed drastically on March 13. We listened to the news, to the experts, and I listened to my gut. We stayed home. We stayed away from family and friends. We started ordering our groceries online and every single meal we consumed was homemade. When we transitioned to distance learning, I balanced prepping for, teaching, and grading work for my own students with making sure that my boys kept up with their own work. As a single parent, it was challenging, messy and sometimes exhausting, but we did it because what other choice did we have? We continue to stay home. The only difference in scenery my boys get is their scheduled visits with their father. When they come home, we quarantine. We are still having our groceries delivered. We barely see family. Not much has changed in our behavior since March 13 because not much has changed in the community. Since last Wednesday's press conference with Governor Hogan, I have found myself wondering, "If nothing has really changed, then why would we even consider going back to school?" Governor Hogan outlined ways that Maryland citizens can continue practicing vigilance in light of the fact that the pandemic is not over. Among these items were: Staying safer at home Teleworking when possible Moving activities outdoors Practicing physical distancing My concern is that if these items are still being recommended by the state of Maryland as best practices in fighting Covid19, then why would we even consider returning to school buildings in August or September? If staying home is safer, if working from home is safer, if being outside is preferable to being indoors, and if we are still being told to maintain a 6 foot distance from others, WHY would we go back? Why would it be appropriate to risk our kids, teachers, and staff on the front lines of this pandemic? I understand that getting "back to normal" is important for the mental health and well being of our kids. I understand that in person instruction is far better than virtual. I get that many parents are going to have a hard time finding childcare for another several months should CCPS continue to do distance learning. However, as a county and as a community, I think it's far more important that we keep each other safe and alive. I shudder to think of what my life would look like if either of my precious boys got sick, or if I got sick and was unable to care for them. I shudder to think of sitting on my boys' beds and explaining to them that one of their classmates or one of their teachers won't be returning to school because they are gone. CCPS teachers showed up in the spring. We learned a whole new way of teaching. We poured our souls into making our students' online experiences as authentic and purposeful as we possibly could. We celebrated as each student tried something new, did the work, and remained engaged. We can do that again. We SHOULD do that again. I cannot imagine how the hybrid model will be any better for kids. Without being able to work in collaborative groups, sit together at lunch, or play together at specials and recess, how is this helping them socialize? How will kids being forced to attend child care the other 3 days per week keep anyone safer? How will teachers enforce distancing and mask-wearing in classrooms full of young children? How will we take care of our own families if and when we become exposed and have to self-quarantine for 14 days? I'm asking you to please consider people like me, parents like me, when you make your decision this week. I'm asking you to consider the lives of the students we all love so much. We're safer at home. Please keep us safe. Sincerely, Nikki Rhodes

Nicole Rhodes

Esteemed Board Members and Dr. Lockard: I would like to respectfully request that Mr. Kiler recuse himself from the vote on the school reopening plan. He has attended at least 2 public rallies in support of the Return 2 Learn group. This group aims to disrupt the Board process by coming from out of Carroll County to voice their opposition to any plan that does not include physical reopening. They believe they can strong arm our Board as a way to influence other counties, pushing them to reopen as well. They have no vested interest in our schools or our children other than to use them as political pawns. This is not a political issue. This is an issue about the safety of our students and school staff. By participating in these events, Mr. Kiler has proven to have a biased which will not allow him to be objective in this vote. He has voiced that his position cannot be swayed by impassioned pleas from the community that he serves. To allow him to publicly support a side and then vote on the situation is a clear conflict of interest. We call for Mr. Kiler's recusal so that a fair vote can be made after all CCPS community input is carefully considered. Thank you, Nikki Rhodes

Jen P.

I would like to respectfully submit the following as public record: Dr. Lockard and members of the board, As a CCPS employee of 18 years and a parent of two elementary aged students, I am writing to express my sincere concern for

teachers, students, and staff if we return under the hybrid model. I am adamantly opposed to the hybrid model and cannot fathom how this will successfully work without someone contracting the virus. I am in full support of the all virtual model as we return to school. I, along with my colleagues, would love to be back in the building with our students. But we don't want to do this if there is even the smallest risk that our students and children could be exposed to COVID-19. As I listen to the precautions that the governor is asking the general public to put in place, I am confused about how anyone thinks we can safely put 200+ students and staff in a building together for 7 hours. And 200 is a low number; many schools will have many more students and staff in the building at one time. The governor is asking people to "stay safer at home; work from home if possible; avoid public transportation; move activities outdoors; wear face coverings; and practice social distancing" Each one of these items goes directly against putting students and staff in the buildings. We can keep our students and staff safe and avoid risk of exposure if we begin the school year under the all virtual plan. The logistics of having students in the building is going to be difficult if not impossible to enforce. Children are social by nature and are not going to have the self restraint to stay apart from one another. The learning experience that will take place in the classroom will not be the same experience that occurred pre-COVID. Teachers will be spending the majority of their time making sure students have their masks on, are staying in their own space, and aren't sharing materials. All of this goes against our philosophies of good instruction where students are working together on shared experiences in small groups having conversations that lead to understanding. This cannot happen safely in the building at this time. However, I do believe that teachers can develop a sense of community and valuable learning experiences virtually. Is it ideal? No, but it can be done and it can be done successfully and without risks to any students or staff. The inconsistencies to instruction that the hybrid model would bring will cause a barrier to learning. It makes more sense for students to engage daily in a virtual space and have a consistency of practice and instruction. Yes, I understand that this is difficult for working parents. I am one of them - I get it. But we cannot simply put our students back in the building and pretend that COVID is going to disappear. This is real, it's here, and we need to do what's right for our students and staff to keep them safe. The hybrid model also poses a problem of child care for many teachers and staff members. We will have to be in the building 4 days per week and will have to find care for our own children 2 of those days. What are your plans to support those needs? If you can't help your staff members care for their children, many may be forced to take a leave or quit and who will take their positions? It seems that many of the arguments in favor of the hybrid model want to argue that children aren't as affected by the virus. We simply don't know enough information to deem that accurate. And what about the staff members and their families? Why is it ok to unnecessarily risk the lives of our teachers and staff? I say unnecessarily because our jobs do not need to be high risk. An EMT, nurse or doctor cannot effectively treat a patient virtually, a police officer cannot protect people virtually, a fire fighter cannot fight a fire virtually, but a teacher CAN teach virtually and it can and will be done effectively. I can assure you that learning WILL happen even if we do not set foot into the building. Please remember that school will not be closed, the school building will be closed. I saw the amazing things that teachers did in the Spring when they were thrown into distance learning and quickly adapted and continued to teach their students. Just imagine how much they have learned through that experience as well as how much we could prepare in professional development to deliver before the year begins. I work with some of the most dedicated, professional, and caring teachers out there. Contrary to popular belief, teaching from our homes takes a lot of time and effort. This is not a vacation for us and I can guarantee that the staff I work with will do everything in their power to make sure every student is engaged in learning. As an employee and a parent, I urge you to decide on the virtual model. It is the ONLY safe choice and it will be effective. Thank you for your time.

Amanda Merriam

My name is Amanda Merriam. I began my journey in Carroll County in 2012 when I did my student teaching at Piney Ridge Elementary. Shortly after I became a substitute teacher, I have had many long-term sub jobs before I was finally hired as a full-time teacher. I have been a special educator in Carroll County Public Schools for 4 years. I have also chosen to work Extended School Year every summer for each of those four years, including this summer. This year as we start the 2020/2021 school year, school will look extremely different. After being abruptly told in March to leave the school, two weeks later were told to begin instruction virtually. We have seen many changes in how lessons are being taught but we have also seen how educators have adapted and rose to meet every challenge. It is imperative that we make a decision that is safe for all students and staff. It has been said many times that there is not a perfect solution. While this is true, there is a safe option. We need to begin the year through virtual learning. As stated before, I am a special educator. I typically work with 12-20 students throughout the day, spread between at least 6 different classrooms. My students sometimes require hand-over-hand teaching. These students sometimes spit and scratch,

throw their glasses, and require support in the restroom. I'm not complaining; I know this is part of my job and I love it! But it should not be required of my position to fear that this close contact could expose myself or my family to a deadly virus. Not only am I concerned about the health and safety of myself and my family, but that of my fellow colleagues and students. The long-term impacts of this disease are still unknown, and that is only if people that show symptoms actually survive. I myself was an unbeliever of COVID-19. I believed as an avid runner I was immune to it, but after witnessing several marathon runners test positive, including, within the last two weeks, some at the local running store Run Moore, and fight the disease I have since changed my stance. Even runners who have the strongest lungs imaginable are weakened and hindered by it months after having it. How can you ask me to live with the anxiety or guilt of knowingly exposing the people most precious to me? I am a single mother to a 10-year-old boy who attends school in the county. I'm worried for his safety and cannot guarantee that I can let him attend school in person. Even making that stance you are asking me to come home and still put my baby at risk. Recent news reports from CNN on July 23rd indicate that a child as young as nine years old has passed away due to COVID-19, there were no underlying conditions! That could have been my child or yours. The students, those kids that should be at the very forefront of this decision. Many students are already anxious about the return of school. Many students just want to get back to a way of life of meeting their friends, playing at recess, sitting and talking about books on the carpet during reading groups. Has anyone told them this isn't happening?! That the old way of school is going to look completely different due to social distancing. What are we even doing for recess, since that still hasn't been decided? I also worry as a special educator how my job will now look; my job requires manipulatives and yet I won't be able to use them because of cleaning. Students will constantly be told "no," "move away," "wear your mask correctly," and "you cannot touch that." This goes against nearly every principle I have been taught as an educator, where I have learned that students need a hands-on experience. I also worry that our first job will not be instructing students but will rather be disciplining them for disobeying rules put into place by the CDC. How do you expect teachers to build a rapport with students when we are more concerned about them following directions than learning and listening to their needs? One of my students has a sensory problem, sometimes clothes bother her, how is she expected to wear a mask for long periods of the day? Do I ignore that she strips off the mask to make sure she's being instructed, or do I enforce the mask hence alienating my chances of ever meeting her needs educationally? This is not even mentioning all of the students and staff that would be considered at a higher risk due to age or other underlying health conditions. School is supposed to be safe, collaborative, inclusive, and social, not a sterile and uncaring environment. I miss going to school. I miss my seeing my students in person. I miss my coworkers and friends. I miss getting to school two hours before it starts and leaving only after volunteering my time coaching students. But going back to school terrifies me. Two weeks ago my son asked why I was so anxious about the return of school. I finally sat him down and explained it to him. I presented a hypothetical situation with that included myself and my son. I stated, "Let's say I test positive for Corona, that would mean every single one of my students that I instructed will now have to stay home in quarantine for 2 weeks until they are tested." Because of the nature of my job and instructing students from multiple classes I then state, "every single one of the classroom my students are in for general education will also have to quarantine for two weeks, which includes the teachers and potentially the other teachers class will have to stay home. The way that special areas teachers are coming into classrooms also spreads the disease, therefore there is no guarantee that they have not been exposed so now they have to quarantine too. But wait that's special teacher area teacher she also taught every single grade level. We have just wiped out an entire school we are now in quarantine! But let's hypothetically add another part of the situation, that special's teacher, they work at two schools in the county; now we have officially quarantined two schools in the county." Oh, did I mention that my son goes to a different school than I teach? So because I'm quarantined and positive with Covid, therefore he is quarantined and perhaps not positive quarantined nonetheless, his class and his teacher need to be quarantined, then the special areas teacher for his class needs to be quarantined and I have just eliminated another school in the county. Three entire schools in quarantine because of one family of two people. This does not only potentially include just the schools, entire families will need to be quarantined because of the exposure of their child to them. I realize the chances of this happening are not likely, but it could happen. It's a scary scenario but it could be your reality. When I said it like that through my anxious terror, I realized I couldn't send my son to school without risking his very life. The more I think about a hybrid model, the more questions and uncertainties I have regarding how students and staff will be kept safe. I trust that you, as informed people, will make the safe and appropriate decision. Begin the year virtually to protect your staff, your students, your babies and future, and their families. By beginning online, you are giving us hope to eventually return to school in person this year. No one can learn if their basic needs are not met, and that first need is safety. Thank you, Amanda Merriam
Special Education Teacher Robert Moton Elementary School

Erin Pearce

This fall, a completely virtual model is safer, smarter, and more responsible for the school, it's students, it's teachers and it's staff. Sending children and adults alike into a setting where it is likely some of them will become sick and die is abhorrent. This county rarely sends its students and faculty/staff to school when the weather is poor for fear of injuries or death in transit, how is this any different? Please consider how you would feel sending your child, husband, wife, sibling or friend into an environment where this virus will be passed around. Children rarely listen to adults when their lives are not on the line, why should this be any different? Teenagers will do what they want, regardless of the rules or consequences because they can't fathom how the consequences will really affect them. Teachers are supposed to be there to educate, not chase the students around and get them to behave and adhere to strict social distancing guidelines that many adults even have trouble sticking to. Please let at least the first semester of this upcoming school year be a virtual only model. Support the educators, give them the resources and support they need to encourage students to participate in a meaningful way and follow through on consequences for students who have access to the work and the ability to complete it but choose not to anyway. Save their lives! A virtual mode is the only way to accomplish this.

Mindy Torres

Dear Esteemed members of the CarrollK12 Board of Education and the Superintendent,

My name is Mindy Torres. I am a mother to 3 students in Carroll County Public Schools. 2 of my daughters will be entering high school at Century High and my oldest will be a Senior placed at Strawbridge via her IEP. I am writing to plea that you do not open schools in ANY fashion until it is FULLY safe to do so.

Since schools closed in March, it has been stated numerous times that the health and safety of our students and educators must always be our top priority and our guiding principle during this crisis. Much is still being learned about the COVID-19 virus. The recent surge in the infection rate should give us pause around the state's preparedness for safe in-person school instruction in a short six- to eight-week time frame. In this current situation, we believe that the "Precautionary Principle" should guide us. This means taking the most preventative action in the face of uncertainty to protect students, educators, and our communities. Simply said, CCPS should not reopen schools unless they are safe. Unfortunately, many local districts and communities don't have the necessary resources or capacity to maintain even the most basic prevention measures of six feet physical distancing and limiting contacts, much less the other important preventative actions such as personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and tracing, or adequate ventilation and cleaning supplies.

While no one method of prevention by itself is 100 percent effective, layered strategies boost prevention with each measure knocking off some percentage of exposure and potential infection. This includes a clear and manageable plan to implement measures like physical distancing of six feet, reducing the number of contacts, face coverings, handwashing, daily health screening, support for sick and at-risk people to stay at home, robust testing, good ventilation (with absolutely no recirculated air), and cleaning and disinfecting.

We should be clear-eyed about this reality. How can we physically reopen schools with lower thresholds of safety than we currently have for restaurants or hair salons? Safe school reopening will require the state to coordinate consistent public health department operations that offer a uniform symptoms checklist and safety protocols; data transparency and accessibility; increased testing dedicated to schools for students and staff; rapid case notification and contact tracing; isolation support and medical care for our most vulnerable students and families; and health monitoring of students to serve as early understandings of transmissions in schools and warnings of any school-based outbreaks. It is also imperative to develop and implement training for all school employees on safety protocols and to direct that Illness and Injury Prevention plans be updated and adopted prior to the first day of in-person instruction. As an educator, I too want to be back with our students doing the work that we love, but we cannot ignore science, facts, and safety. Absent a specific plan for each school that includes a clear line of responsibility and accountability we have two options: 1. A high-risk in-person opening, even under a hybrid model. 2. Start the new school year under robust distance learning protocols until the virus is contained in local communities and proper safety measures can be put into place. It is clear that communities and school districts have not come close to meeting the threshold for a safe return to in-person learning, even under a hybrid model. In fact, with recent data provided by Governor Hogan, some age ranges of people are going backwards. How can we reasonably expect hundreds of students, and in some cases more than 1,000

students, to come together on one campus for an entire day without putting their health and the lives of every adult on that campus at risk?

From a public health perspective, the best course of action would be to focus on improving our ability to provide robust, quality distance learning until the virus is marginalized and safety measures are addressed. Just recently, on July 7, President Donald Trump implored the nation's schools to physically open amid a new wave of COVID-19 diagnoses. In doing so, he pointed to other countries' abilities to reopen their schools as evidence that America's schools needed to do the same. President Trump ignores the fact that these other countries invested heavily in PPE, health and safety protocols for education and testing – the very resources that he is threatening to withdraw.

I am deeply concerned that politics are being played with the lives of children and the educators who serve them. Safe school reopening and equity for our communities requires funding. Does CCPS have the funding to provide what is required to keep staff and students safe? We should not have to put our students and staff in harm's way. We should not compromise on funding or school safety in the home of the greatest number of billionaires in the country, who have increased their net worth by 25 percent during the first three months of the pandemic. We need safe schools before anyone returns to in person instruction of any kind. I implore you to do what is safe, not what is political.

July 27, 2020

Samantha Azat

Thank you for taking the time to read my email, and for providing a detailed recovery plan for how we may handle the crisis of COVID-19. Having read your plan, I noted that three of your four plans involved a partial or full return to in-person learning. As the whole country debates what is to be done about school in the time of COVID-19, I, as a teacher in CCPS, along with so many others, implore you to save lives by having a fully virtual return to school in the fall. There is no safe way to have in-person school, and though my fellow teachers and I are saddened by this, we also see that it would be nothing short of catastrophic to return to our classrooms this year. Below are just some of the reasons that virtual education really is our only option.

- 1) Mask wearing will be impossible to enforce. We at the high school level already struggle to enforce county dress code (not to mention the prospect of politically charged students who may see mask-wearing as a violation of their rights), and elementary school students can hardly be expected to keep a mask on all day without playing with it. How can we hope to enforce this most basic of safety measures?
- 2) Many classes that require hands-on learning, such as gym, chorus, band, and dance, have no safe way to operate in person, even with masks and a modicum of social distance. If we are sent back in person, you would effectively be depriving those students from learning in those subjects.
- 3) Dividing students up onto different days does nothing to limit the time of exposure - it only takes a few minutes to contract COVID-19, and a student spending several hours in the classroom will still invariably contract it from others. Additionally, you would be asking teachers to be exposed nearly every day to all students, making this model ineffective and unethical.
- 4) As we saw this year, high schoolers are perfectly capable of true learning online, IF and only if standards and grading are reimplemented. The only reason we didn't see greater learning this past spring was because students were aware they didn't really need to try to maintain their grade. However, if grading expectations are put back in place, motivated students can find great success in this method - and if they can, isn't it our responsibility to allow them to learn this way to limit exposure and save lives?
- 5) As a high school teacher in an overcrowded high school, I (and many others) float (move) between classrooms throughout the day. This means there is no option to isolate myself or my students from other classes. How can we function when teachers like me can't even limit exposure to our own students?
- 6) High schoolers don't require child care, which should eliminate concerns from parents and make online learning for at least high school students an obvious choice.
- 7) From CCPS recovery plan - "Teachers who are ill will need to stay home and a substitute will be required to teach the class." - We as a county already have a hard time finding substitutes, and this will be impossible during the unsafe conditions of our buildings! Additionally, will you provide additional sick days that do not take away from the teacher, since you are putting them in a dangerous situation AND requiring their absence?

- 8) From the CCPS Recovery Plan - "If the principal cannot find a substitute or appropriate coverage for a classroom, and social distancing is still required, students may need to stay home and participate in virtual learning." - How do you plan to orchestrate and communicate this? In high school, students have four teachers a day. Since this circumstance will most certainly occur, will students be required to miss time in their other classes because one of their four teachers is sick? Will they be asked to come to school, thereby spreading the illness contracted from that one class to their other classes? How will you let parents know that one of their teachers is out?
- 9) I noted in one guideline by CDC that, if in-person learning must occur, it would be safer to have all students just stay with one teacher throughout the day - in high school, students all have different schedules, so this is entirely impossible and will make COVID spread even more rapidly.
- 10) Evidence is revealing that children can and will contract COVID under these circumstances. If only the bare minimum projected percentage - 0.0016% - of exposed children die (given our student population is approximately 25,200 students), that still means approximately 40 children will die in just CCPS. Are you willing to receive 40 lawsuits AND be responsible for 40 grieving families?
- 11) From a Kaiser Family Foundation report - almost 1.5 million teachers are considered to be part of the high risk group (approximately 24% of teachers and staff). Are you truly willing to risk the lives of ONE FOURTH of your teachers while working in impossible conditions just to get students back into buildings?
- 12) Even those who do not die from COVID-19 are still at serious risk of permanent damage to their bodies, and very little information is available about how this manifests in children. Reopening schools, therefore, seems more like a rash and dangerous experiment than an acceptable, well-thought-out risk.

And these are just SOME of the concerns teachers, their families, parents, and their families are anxious about. If you are interested in reading more about this perspective, I encourage you to read this article:

<https://mrsteacherlife.wordpress.com/2020/07/09/nobody-asked-me-a-teachers-opinion-on-school-reopening/>

Teachers are often asked to "build the plane while flying", as we were this past spring, and we have handled those circumstances admirably. However, you cannot put the burden of a worldwide crisis like this on the shoulders of teachers and families and expect us to handle it. In short, it is unreasonable and nothing short of unethical to send students and teachers back to buildings where their health is not merely in question, but decidedly being sacrificed. It is not fair or logical to try to make schools an exception to CDC guidelines simply for convenience and to restore a sense of "normalcy" that currently can't exist. Therefore, it is imperative that we use this time to make virtual learning as effective as possible, and that we return to virtual learning until coronavirus has been fully handled.

John Stevenson

As an educator with over 20 years in the classroom, I want to resume in-person education as soon as it can be done safely and responsibly. Sadly, now is not that time. I say this knowing that virtual learning will be significantly more difficult for all involved. I love my students and I love teaching but I'm in the 'high-risk' category and am very concerned about returning to in-person education before a vaccine is found and widely available. The truth is most school employees are scared that they will get sick (or worse), bring the virus home to loved ones, have a student in their care become ill, or experience the death of a coworker.

Given that Maryland confirmed 1,288 new coronavirus cases on July 25, the largest single-day increase in new confirmed infections since May 19, it is a guarantee that CCPS teachers and students will become exposed to COVID-19. (<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-coronavirus-numbers-20200725-kcvfye3bmfhflfdvya2enoeisa-story.html>.) It's clear that the pandemic is not over and will continue to affect MD residents of all ages for the foreseeable future. The CCPS BOE is still meeting virtually, and sports/activities, with only a month until the scheduled start to the 2020-2021 academic year, have not yet moved to Phase 1. These facts say much about where we are. If Major League Baseball, with million-dollar athletes backed by team owners in a multi-billion dollar industry, cannot keep their best assets safe, how can CCPS expect to do so when many schools struggle to keep bathrooms clean and stocked during normal times?

I understand that some members of the CCPS BOE are considering a hybrid model for the fall semester. This plan sounds good on paper but is much less practical in person. The superintendent of the Ashland Public Schools (MA) recently invited the school committee, board of health, selectmen, town manager and others involved in school reopening guidelines to literally take a seat at the table – and on the school bus – to see how 3 and 6 feet of spacing looks and feels like from the students' perspective (https://www.nbcboston.com/news/coronavirus/ashland-public-schools-provide-sneek-peek-at-socially-distanced-return-to-classes/2164657/?fbclid=IwAR2gF7iXSuG1MK3rX3qn71W-uJY8rhQ9eDdUHZG9OsLBW_Wx4Jek7aZuLOY). Following the demonstration, the superintendent said many involved in the demonstration were shocked. If you're seriously considering a hybrid model for CCPS, I strongly encourage you to participate in the same type of demonstration to experience what it will be like in person before making a final decision.

Here are some additional questions for you to consider. Please accept my apologies if you've already addressed some of these specific issues - this is a fluid issue and it's often difficult to stay current.

High-Risk Staff/Students and Accommodations

- Will staff/students be required to disclose specific medical issues in order to qualify as high-risk or will a doctor's note deeming them as high-risk be enough?
- If a staff member is immune-compromised and not comfortable returning in September and chooses to take FMLA, is the 12-month waiting period still in effect if that staff member later becomes ill/pregnant/has a sick family member within that 12-month period?
- Will there be a cap on sick day usage for staff members who have accumulated more than 50 days? 75? 100? Will regular sick-leave bank rules be in effect?
- Do we have a plan to recruit substitutes during this time when there is already a shortage? Many substitutes are in the high-risk category.
- Will we offer more money for substitutes since the risk of infection is high?
- Will we cover health insurance costs if a substitute gets sick as a result of working?
- What process will be in place for non-tenured teachers to feel comfortable advocating for themselves without fear of termination?
- Are there any plans to offer retirement/buyout options for staff who have preexisting conditions and/or are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19?
- If staff members contract COVID-19 at the workplace, what will be the procedure for documenting and securing benefits?

Student/Staff Health and Safety

- How will staff be supported financially if they become permanently disabled by contracting COVID-19 while during their job?
- Will parents/guardians be asked to sign a waiver protecting staff in the event a student gets sick while in loco parentis?
- Will families need to sign waivers of disclosure if they've been exposed or tested? Do we violate privacy laws by asking?
- Will staff members be required to sign waivers promising to not hold the district/school responsible if they get sick? If so and they refuse to sign it, will they lose their jobs?
- How will contracted bus companies be held accountable for cleaning/sanitizing procedures?
- Were professional organizations consulted for each content area?
- What measures are we taking to ensure that students have access to a clean mask each day? There are families that cannot afford masks and/or cannot wash masks every day.
- If a child is exposed to COVID-19 at school due to the child taking their mask on and off during the day, is the teacher responsible for this? Would families be allowed to sue?
- What health concerns will allow students/staff to not wear a mask? There are students/staff with sensory disorders and medically-treated anxiety who are unable to wear masks.

- Parents have been known to give their children Tylenol before sending them to school with a fever. Has consideration been given to doing mid-day temperature checks?
- Will students or staff who exhibit symptoms be required to show a negative COVID-19 test to return to school or work?
- Will there be an aide on every bus to monitor distancing and mask use, since the bus driver will be focused on driving?
- Will bus drivers be able to take students' temperatures at their bus stops prior to getting on the bus to avoid them even coming to school if they have a fever? What about high school students who drive themselves to school?

Quarantine/Self-isolation

- If a staff member encounters another student/staff member who tests positive for COVID-19, does the affected staff member lose sick days while in quarantine? What if a staff member needs quarantine multiple times in a school year?
- If a staff member needs to quarantine, what are the professional expectations for substitute plans during the quarantine period?
- If a staff member does not have enough accumulated sick leave to cover a mandatory quarantine and is not tenured or covered by FMLA, will their pay be docked?

Daily Classroom Routines

- Are there new procedures for fire drills? Active shooter drills? Evacuation drills? These are done multiple times per month and require close proximity.
- When students eat lunch, they need to take off their masks. What is the procedure if a student sneezes? How will staff ensure that students do not share food/utensils?
- If staff need to travel room-to-room who will sanitize teacher desks and materials in each room between classes? Will time between periods be longer so that staff can gather materials, use the restroom, and get to another room?
- Will one-to-one paraprofessionals need to stay 6 feet from the students with whom they work?
- Are staff personally responsible for enforcing masks/social distancing? How are CCPS employees legally protected if students have trouble following the new rules and become sick?
- Are there protocols for students who soil their mask (allergy sneezes, vomit, etc)? Are they required to bring a backup, or will the school provide it?
- If students pretend to cough or sneeze on each other or a staff member, how will this be handled at a disciplinary level?

Evaluations and Standardized Tests

- How will staff be evaluated on standards that require collaboration (professionally and in the classroom)?
- Given that the DOE has said schools must be prepared to pivot to remote learning at any time will SLO's be suspended again this year?

Specials and Extracurriculars

- How will students be protected in band/chorus/gym classes where wearing a mask is impractical?
 - Can students share general music classroom instruments (drums, rhythm sticks, etc)? If so, will time be provided to disinfect these instruments between classes if these teachers end up on a cart because their classroom has been taken over to accommodate social distancing? Will we provide the disinfecting supplies? Many instruments can't tolerate regular cleaners.
 - If students can't sing, play instruments or participate in team sports, will the curriculum be re-written to accommodate these changes? If so, when will this happen? What, if any professional development will these teachers receive?

- What will Physical Education classes look like?
- Will libraries in schools be closed, or will we implement a cap on the number of students able to enter at times like lunch and after school? Will custodians/media specialists be required to disinfect any books that are returned? What about headphones and laptops?
- How will specials teachers be kept safe after a rotation of 100-150 students daily?

Cleaning

- Staff are not allowed to use disinfectants like Lysol; they are only allowed to use approved cleaners. Will we provide educators with CDC-approved COVID-19 effective cleaning products to use in classrooms between class changes?
- Will staff members be required to bring work home to grade even if it might be contaminated? Most teachers must grade student work at home because there isn't enough time in the day to complete it during school hours. Will parents, students, and administrators be informed that teachers will not be grading hard copies of student work as quickly as usual in order to allow papers to be quarantined?
- Many classrooms utilize flexible seating like stools, yoga balls, etc. In some cases, these are used for behavioral reasons or as part of an IEP. Not all of these items can be easily wiped down. What are the staff/custodial expectations for sanitizing these items between classes?

HVAC

- Will HVAC/air quality specialists be brought into every building to assess the air quality and check for proper ventilation? Older schools are prone to air quality issues and COVID-19 is said to spread in poorly ventilated areas.
- Will HVAC/air quality reports be shared with parents and staff?

Finally, I'm aware that other school districts are receiving letters of resignation, requests for leaves of absence, Family Medical Leave (FMLA), Emergency Family Medical Leave (EFML), Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL), Exemption status, and leave under the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA) (which provides up to 12 weeks of leave for employees unable to work because their child's school is closed). (https://huusd.org/blog/superintendents-letter-to-the-community-7-25-20?fbclid=IwAR1XLt3kq_JjrTI-16ofQa1vjPx81Fpfh2ghE9YOJ2iKWSOikZT2k8VVu3U). Given the input you've received from CCPS employees, it's not unreasonable to expect these same requests if you choose an in-person plan for the fall semester. What, if any plans do you have to accommodate these requests and fill these positions with only weeks until the beginning of the fall semester?

Ultimately, it is clear that virtual learning is the only viable, safe option, and that the hybrid model will cause a multitude of problems and unsolvable concerns. It is vital that we spend at least the first semester in virtual learning.

I'm sure that you're receiving an overwhelming number of emails from many stakeholders. I certainly don't expect a personal response; I just thank you for taking to the time to consider my input.

Jennifer Eddins

Dear Carroll County BOE,

First and foremost, I want to thank the Board and Superintendents for your tireless efforts in assessing the best path forward for the education of our children and cannot begin to imagine how difficult a process this must be. Thank you also for allowing constituents a voice.

President Sivigny, at the meeting on July 8th, you stated that the Board will not be able to make everyone happy. I agree and acknowledge there are passionate people with divergent viewpoints advocating for multiple populations. We as parents are not asking for you to make us happy, rather to make our children **whole**.

The Core Statement of the CCPS BOE is: Building the Future.

Our children **are** the future. However, our children are the ones that will bear the most long-term negative effects from disrupted learning and ineffective education methods. I am sure you have heard from teachers, students, and parents alike that the distance learning approach executed this spring was woefully inadequate at best.

The stated aim of school closures during a pandemic is to decrease transmission among children.¹ Yet there is no compelling evidence that school closures are effective as a public health strategy for limiting the transmission of COVID-19.²

The American Academy of Pediatrics asserted again last week that “children learn best when they physically present in the classroom.” Even the ever-cautious Dr. Fauci stated in a recent interview that keeping schools closed in September was “a bit of a stretch.” Many others and I believe that a return to full time, in-person learning can be done safely, based on science and facts. We elected you to keep the education and best interests of our children first and foremost in all decisions, regardless of pressures from politicians and unions. I’d like to reiterate some of the data that supports children returning physically to school.

- Susceptibility in children to COVID-19 infection is estimated to be approximately half of that of adults³
- Dr. Russell Viner, of the UK’s Royal College of Pediatrics states “The evidence from many countries around the world is that COVID-19 transmission in school is very low.”
- School closures create larger socioeconomic gaps and disproportionately impacts low income families, even within smaller communities.⁴
- Psychological, mental, and emotional damage to children can occur as a direct result of being denied the social opportunities that school provides.⁵
- Pediatric deaths from COVID-19 are so low they are statistically insignificant.⁶

On a more personal note, our children are suffering. Multiple recent child suicides; so many children now requiring medication and therapy due to increased anxiety. Older students left with inadequate college preparation and lacking admissions components and missing out on life milestones that many of us can still fondly remember. Please don’t make our children continue to suffer. It’s plain to see the cure is worse than the virus.

The bottom line: children have a legal right to quality education, and the government a legal obligation to provide that quality education. From what I can find, no employer has a legal obligation to certify a virus free workplace. All jobs carry with them various levels of risk and danger. To continue to keep children out of school and inflict potentially life-long social, economic, developmental, emotional, and educational harm on them is unacceptable. To do it just to instill a sense of false comfort that virus exposure has been minimized is beneath contempt.

References:

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2 COVID-19 Transmission and Children: The Child Is Not to Blame, Benjamin Lee and William V. Raszka *Pediatrics* July 2020, e2020004879; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-004879>

3 Davies, N.G., Klepac, P., Liu, Y. *et al.* Age-dependent effects in the transmission and control of COVID-19 epidemics. *Nat Med* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0962-9>

4 Brookings Institute, Reopening the World, How to Save Lives and Livelihoods, Emiliana Vargas, June 2020

5 Masonbrink AR, Hurley E. Advocating for children during the COVID-19 school closures. *Pediatrics*. 2020; doi: 10.1542/peds.2020-1440

6 Maryland Dept. of Health. <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/> accessed 7/14/2020

Carol Healy

First, thank you all for your service to our system, especially during these unprecedented times. Next, I wish to express my very strong feeling—as a parent, teacher, and citizen of Carroll County—that this school year should begin in an all online setting. According to Saturday’s Carroll County Times, the number of reported COVID-19 infections is rising among members of the general community (especially as compared to those in nursing homes), a trend which is new in the last few days. The numbers are also rising among younger people, including children. As you know, this is a novel virus, very different from the flus that we deal with each year, and there is very little data about how it affects (and is

transmitted by) school-age children. We do know that there have been wide-ranging and long-term effects (from mild to severe to death) among patients in all age groups. With our county's numbers rising, it seems to me that we should be taking MORE precautions—not fewer—to control the virus in our community. As a teacher, I experienced first-hand our emergency switch to online learning in March. While it was definitely a learning experience for all involved, I feel that my school community (administrators, teachers, parents, students, support staff) worked cooperatively and tirelessly to make the best of the situation. I am proud of the fact that my students did participate and showed progress; in fact, I feel that I got to know some of them better through Google Classroom interactions than I might have in the 34-student classrooms that some were in. Administrators and support staff helped teachers reach those students who were not easily connected; I was frankly amazed at the tenacity with which all involved kept up efforts to communicate with every family. We are prepared to take those efforts to the next level this fall. Many of us teachers have been using the summer to upgrade our online skills by way of the many useful tools provided online through CCPS. We are also perusing the new online curriculum materials provided by supervisors and preparing to teach them in September. These efforts, along with the increase in rigor and reinstatement of grades and attendance data in your draft plan, will go a long way in helping students progress. They will also allow us to concentrate on teaching and learning rather than on getting back into buses and school buildings under the many restrictions imposed by the hybrid plan. Overcoming the logistics (and the expense) of sending students and staff back amidst a rise in pandemic numbers seems ill-advised and frankly impossible. If we were to go back—with our masks and social-distancing and sanitizing—I cannot imagine how my students would actually learn. As a teacher (and a mom whose children attended CCPS) I feel that my number one priority is to keep my students safe; we all need to feel safe in order to learn. But I will not feel safe (my husband and I are over 60; he has other underlying conditions), and I will not be able to lie to students and tell them that they are safe. Crippled by this fearful mindset, our best efforts to teach and learn will be undermined from the start. Finally, I am aware that some citizens of the county feel very differently and are making their case quite loudly. I just hope that you are listening to ALL parties involved, as well as looking in an unbiased way at the facts, which include decisions of our neighboring counties. There is no perfect solution to this horrible situation, but we should all be working together to creatively make the best of it. I urge you to choose an online start to allow that to happen and avoid putting all involved unnecessarily in danger. Thank you for your attention, Carol Healy Mount Airy Middle School, 8th grade ELA Resident of Westminster

Gordon Lyons

I am a resident of Carroll County and have family in schools, both as students and as teachers. I was just made aware of your plan to open schools with a staggered A-day/B-day schedule. This is unacceptable, you are putting not only your students but all of your employees at risk. I understand that COVID-19 has a lower rate of infection with children, but it is still transmissible. Of my loved ones in your school system, more than one has an underlying condition that contracting COVID-19 could have deadly consequence. I have a plethora of questions as to how, with your current plan, you intend to keep everyone safe: If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered/paid? If that teacher has 5 classes a day with X-number of students, do each of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days? Do all of those students now have to get tested? What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to quarantine for 14 days? Is that time covered/paid? Where is CCPS going to find substitute teachers who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students? Substitutes teach in multiple schools, what if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all of the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? What if a student in your child's class tests positive? What if your child tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been in contact with now need to quarantine? Do all parents and all staff get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations will there just be mysterious "may have been in contact" emails? What is the stress going to do to our teachers? How will it affect their health and wellbeing? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to the students? What are their long-term effects of consistently being stressed out? How will it affect students and faculty if, or when a teacher dies from this? I am writing to you in hopes that you will re-evaluate your proposed fall schooling and opt for virtual schooling to ensure the spread of this disease is not worsened. I am not willing to put children and teachers at risk, why are you?

July 26, 2020

Kristy D.

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to you as a CCPS teacher and a parent of two CCPS students. I would like to have my comments added to public record. I have been a teacher for nearly 20 years, and am preparing to enter my 10th year as a Special Education Resource Teacher with Carroll County. I wanted to take the time to reach out and urge you to vote for virtual reopening of schools this fall. I realize that this is a difficult decision to make and goodness knows, no one envies the position you are in having to make this decision. However, the power does rest in your vote. We need to reopen schools, but only when it is safe. A virtual first semester, while not ideal for many reasons, is the only way to assure the health and wellbeing of our students and staff, in keeping with CCPS's environmental pillar.

I appreciate the amount of energy and planning that went into creating a hybrid model for the return to school. However, teachers, who are in classrooms every day, have a valuable perspective on the challenges of this plan. Masking, social distancing, providing individual supplies, creating cohorts to limit class size, scheduling of special areas, eliminating recess, social/emotional learning and momentum of learning are all need to be addressed from a practical classroom standpoint. I value your time, so I will not drag on about all of these concerns; I will address only a few of the most critical.

In the spring, elementary schools have grouping meetings to plan for the next year's classroom cohorts. Teachers provide input and work collaboratively with math and reading resource teachers to create balanced groups which are carefully measured to optimize a teachers planning and instructional efforts so that every student benefits from such groupings. These grouping meetings took place remotely this year, in anticipation of a full regular return. While limiting the number of students in a classroom through a hybrid model is a great idea and small classes are welcomed by many teachers, this cannot be an arbitrary grouping. Creating A day/B day cohorts will certainly disrupt the balance of these groupings and be little more than arbitrary as we try to accommodate bus routes, family requests and other unforeseen challenges. The time alone to develop and plan for A Day/B Day cohorts could delay the start of the school year. This model poses a logistical nightmare for school staff, transportation and many behind the scene supports. The hybrid model will not solve the inherent daycare issue that many families have cited as a cause to reopen schools.

Social distancing and masking are good health precautions for the general public and have impact on slowing the spread of COVID. In a classroom setting, however, the expectation of 6 year olds to wear a mask for 7 hours and stay away from their peers, is difficult at best. The sheer disruption to instruction as teachers have to police mask-wearing and distancing should be consideration enough to know that this is a bad idea. In my Title I school community, it is likely that many students have not worn a mask since we have been out of school. Sending them to school with this new expectation is cruel. Likewise, many of these same families are not likely to be able to provide a stock of masks for their children. There's the additional challenge posed by families who do not believe they should wear a mask. These children will come to school, even if they wear a mask, with the same mindset and take every opportunity to remove their mask when they can.

When we are able to be in school, teachers build a momentum of learning in their classrooms. It's sort of a teaching and learning groove. It takes some time to build this momentum. Snow days, school closures and illness related absences all disrupt the momentum of learning. Jumping from in person to online learning will pose the same disruption to learning as it will require a cognitive shift for our students. Instructional design for online and in person programming are vastly different. Expecting our students to constantly shift between the two models will cause a significant disruption to learning. Additionally, the amount of time teachers will need to plan instruction daily for both online and in person learning is yet another unfair burden placed on our already overworked teachers.

A consideration of great importance to me as a teacher of young children and a parent as well, is the social emotional learning component. We know as a school community that anxiety has been on the rise in our student population. This pandemic has done nothing to help resolve this issue for many students, only exacerbate it in many instances. The hybrid model calls for us to send kids to school without their peers having removed the ability to socialize work collaboratively or build any kind of classroom community. They may not play together for a recess period, they may not sit together and chat at lunch, they won't even have the opportunity to talk with other students on their bus. These all seem like insignificant missed opportunities to some. Teachers and other educators understand that these opportunities are a way for kids to process and cope with the typical stressors of their day. This is going to be a taxing situation for many children. Layer on to that situation the anxiety and worry about getting sick, or having a classmate or teacher get sick. What about when a child or teacher is hospitalized or dies? We are creating a traumatic situation for our students

and school staff. This is in direct contradiction to CCPS's promise to provide a safe, healthy and secure learning environment for students and staff.

There are so many more arguments that I'm sure you've heard in support of reopening our buildings, either in full or in hybrid. The last one I'll address is the stated "fact" that "children aren't as affected, they don't die if they do get it, anyway." On March 13th, when Maryland shut down schools we had recorded less than 20 positive cases of COVID-19 statewide. On Friday, Maryland recorded over 900 new cases of COVID. The recited statistic is less than 1% of kids will get it and die. The truth is we do not really know how this affects our children. Since March, we have had our kids in hiding, away from school, away from their peers and large gatherings. We kept our kids safe by limiting their potential exposure to the virus. As summer has worn on, camps have opened, groups have gathered, safety precautions have been abandoned and the number of cases among children has been on the rise. To date, Maryland has recorded +7500 cases in children 0-19 according to the MD Health Dept. The health implications for COVID in children are widely unknown. Putting them back in a classroom situation is a dangerous experiment.

I thank you for your time in considering my concerns. This is not an easy decision for you as a Board. However, I believe it is incumbent on you to make a choice that takes into account the health, security and wellbeing of students and staff. The only option to uphold that pillar, the promise to the CCPS community, is to elect for a full virtual opening for the fall semester. Best wishes to you and the committee in this decision.

Respectfully,
Kristina D.

July 25, 2020

Lor True

Dear Board of Education, 34 8th grade students huddled in the corner of my room with their arms wrapped around their knees. I stood to the left of the door with a pair of scissors in my hand. Several years ago at our Welcome Back to School meeting teachers were told by a state safety officer that in the event of an active shooter, we should grab whatever we could use as a weapon because we "might as well go down swinging" should an armed perpetrator enter our room. After hearing that I seriously considered if I wanted to keep teaching. Statistically it is very unlikely that I would ever be put into this position. But it wasn't about me. It was about my students, and I would place myself between them and danger. Now, there is a new danger to be faced. And again, statistically, it is unlikely that I would be affected. At the age of 52, having spent 28 years as a teacher in Carroll County, I am not in an extremely high-risk population. But it's not about me. My parents, however, who are retired Carroll County teachers, are in a high-risk group, and I visit them regularly. But it's not about me. Other teachers, staff, and administration or family members are in high-risk groups. But it's not about me. Related Arts teachers will see half of the school population each day using shared materials. But it's not about me. I could go back on a hybrid model and not have to worry about myself. But it's not about me. Yes, I am worried about my students falling behind, but falling behind whom? The students in surrounding counties who are going back virtually? The students in Florida and Texas who are at even greater risk due to the sky-rocketing cases in their states? I am worried about my student's social-emotional development. I see it in my home: our youngest starts 9th grade with the possibility of missing the excitement of being with her friends, extra-curricular activities, and new teachers, and our oldest just missed her final drama production, prom, and class graduation. I am living it on both ends. But it's not about me. We can take this as an opportunity to build resilience and create new solutions. A virtual start is just that – a start until we can open safely and confidently. The leadership you provide could be teaching students how to think beyond themselves as we model that approach to this latest threat to safety. It is better than Carroll County citizens having to decide between their teaching career, or sending their children back to school, and their own as well as other people's lives. It's better than wielding a pair of scissors. Thank you for your time, Lori True Mt. Airy Middle School Life-long Carroll County Resident

July 16, 2020

Krysti Knauth

After watching the BOE meeting in its entirety yesterday, I am left with many questions/points to make, but here are a few of the most important/most pressing:

1. Why are citizens not permitted to attend the Board meeting live in the BOE conference hall? Why were adult participants required to wait outside the hall? Why are we discussing bringing 15 or more CHILDREN back into a classroom, when 15 mask-wearing adults were not permitted to sit, socially distanced in a room at least twice as large as the average classroom? Why are we asking teachers to return to a classroom with 15 children in it when some BOE members were not comfortable returning to a conference hall with 10 or fewer ADULTS in the room?

2. My biggest concern with the hybrid plan as detailed in the draft document for Phase II Reopening: To have the 100% virtual option be offered in such a way that the only synchronous instruction those students will be receiving is 1 day per week, it will be limited to 20% of the instructional time, AND it will be shared with the synchronous teaching of students from Cohort A, who will have had 2 days of in-person instruction prior to the virtual synchronous instruction is absolutely unacceptable. In fact, just the logistics of sharing the virtual day among Cohort A, who have received 2 days of in-person instruction, and Cohort B, who have not yet received any in person instruction is problematic to designing effective instruction for all, let alone adding the demand of simultaneously working with students whose ONLY synchronous instruction will be at that time. This will provide a significantly inequitable experience for these students, whether they're 100% virtual due to parent choice or due to medical reasons. As planned, the 100% virtual learning is not a virtual learning option at all, it is a virtual band aid, an afterthought meant to appease parents who don't agree with the hybrid model and don't feel safe sending their children to school. If we are providing a 100% virtual education option, we absolutely cannot provide an inferior education to these students. Under the current plan, students' with health issues whose doctors recommend against in-person school and students whose parents are not willing to put their child's or elderly household members' lives at risk by sending them into the building will be marginalized.

I would like to offer a thought about a possible solution for this, though expensive. During the spring distance learning, my 2nd grader at Manchester Elementary received an excellent virtual education. Granted, it required a significant amount of parental/caregiver support, but the materials and videos were, for the most part, phenomenal. It showed in the quality of these materials, however, that they undoubtedly took a significant amount of time and planning to put together, which is time teachers would not have if focused on providing in-person instruction. IF we had 1-to-1 devices in the schools, such as Chromebooks, teachers could put the majority of their planning efforts into designing quality virtual education that could serve as the basis for their classroom lessons. In this case, all-virtual students and students on their virtual days or students who are absent on their in-person days, would have quality virtual materials to work from, and students in the classroom would have the added benefit of direct teacher instruction (based on those materials) without teachers having to create 2 different sets of educational materials. This would also be beneficial in streamlining the transition should the need to close all or part of a school to prevent an outbreak, due to nurse or custodial shortage, due to a teacher's exposure, or due to a regression in the state's mandates (back to Phase I, for example). It would also allow teachers to help students with technology issues by demonstrating in person WHILE STUDENTS FOLLOW ALONG on their devices how to use the technology to complete the online material during their asynchronous virtual time. Having these devices would streamline the education for all - students could be working on an assignment in class and just pick up with that same assignment at home on their virtual days. Even a 1-to-2 ratio of devices would be helpful if we had an AA - clean - BB hybrid schedule because devices could be sanitized between cohorts.

3. Another major concern for me is the use of masks in the younger/elementary grades. I would say they are certainly necessary - I'm not advocating that we do not mandate them. Actually, I'm advocating that this challenge is one reason to do an all virtual option to begin the school year. Kindergarteners will NOT keep their masks on. They will play with them, twirl them, put them on their heads. Many grown adults cannot (or do not) even wear their masks correctly. I've seen Walmart grocery pick-up clerks AND even the phlebotomist at my doctor's office who were not properly wearing masks. Who will be responsible for enforcing the fact that all these students are wearing their masks all the time? Will it be the certified classroom teacher? If so, there is no way this will be possible while delivering quality instruction to these very young children. What will happen when a student refuses to put his or her mask on? During an incident such as this, all children in this child's vicinity will be exposed to his or her germs. And we all know the masks are meant to protect others, so all the students who are able to wear their masks will be exposed to harm when others do not - it will not be the child who refuses to wear the mask who will be put at risk by their own behavior. I'm certain that a teacher will not be permitted to force the mask on the child. How will this situation be handled?

Have you thought about what would happen if a child gets a naughty streak and decides it would be funny to go around with their mask off and breathe on or fake cough on other students? I could 100% see this happening in a

middle school, or even a high school, especially since we have a large population of parents in the county who are downplaying the severity of the virus at home, protesting mask-wearing requirements, and claiming the virus to be a hoax at home. Schools had students with serious behavior problems prior to the pandemic - let's not fool ourselves into thinking that when students return they will all be on their best behavior, all those behavior issues will have magically disappeared, and all will choose to follow all the rules, including all the new rules we try to put into place as safety protocols. Children are immature, the little ones especially don't, I mean they CAN'T (developmentally), understand this virus and how it works. What if a child's mask falls down or they can't get it back up themselves after lunch? Will a staff member need to help them? The staff member won't be able to do that from 6' or 3' away. This need to be physically close to assist the child will place both the teacher/staff member and the student needing assistance at risk. At the meeting, it was also suggested that the younger children wear face shields instead of cloth face coverings. Very few, if any, young children would leave a face shield on for more than about a minute. The masking requirement at the lower elementary level should be a SERIOUS concern for all when deciding how to proceed with reopening. In fact, in-person instruction at the elementary level in general should be a leading factor in the decision making. I know there were many mentions of starting with high school as the main concerns, but if you know anything about elementary education, at least in CCPS, you would know that it is very small-group based. Elementary teachers will need to completely rethink their entire teaching pedagogy if we're brought back into the building while required to be socially distant.

4. Regarding the time spent on education at home during virtual learning, I question the numbers. Perhaps there is something to be said for limiting the amount of screen time, but I can't figure out why, if students would normally be working on schoolwork for let's say 6 hours per day if they were in school (discounting a Flex period and transition time between classes), they can only be asked to work on schoolwork for 2 - 4 hours (elementary & middle school) during virtual learning. Perhaps for younger grades requiring parent assistance from working parents, the time needs to be reduced, but for most middle and high school students, they will be home all day and, if synchronous instruction and access to faculty for questions is made a focus of virtual learning, there will be no reason why most students cannot be doing more. We're limiting their educational time when they could/should be spending much more time on their schoolwork. Furthermore, regarding the restrictions on device use, although I know there is no way to get accurate results, I'd love to see a survey telling us how much time students in middle and high school spend on their devices or video game systems for noneducational purposes. Perhaps you can incorporate that into the student survey that you send out, as they would probably self-report at a relatively accurate rate. I think we'd find that students are already having significantly more than the recommended amount of screen time for noneducational purposes, in many cases without parents' knowledge or with full parent permission. A student who was at the top of my class in the building fell behind and missed a special meeting I had scheduled to help him/her catch up because he/she slept until noon due to being up until the early hours of the morning playing video games. This behavior or behaviors like this, I think, were more prevalent than we know and had a major impact on middle and high school students' abilities to thrive during distance learning.

5. Some notes about preparations for continuing virtual learning either 100% or in a hybrid model: Training for parents and students is necessary to help them understand the importance of maintaining a schedule and routine when learning at home, whether in a hybrid or all-virtual model. CCPS should look into what the different residential Internet service providers offer in terms of parental controls, so that parents can filter, or at least observe, content their children are viewing online during what is supposed to be virtual learning time and then offer training for parents on how to set up these features. When in the building prior to the pandemic, teachers would often catch students using devices inappropriately - so what is happening when they're at home on their devices unsupervised? I agree with some of the Board members who suggested somehow taking daily attendance of ALL students, not just the in-person cohort, as it would require some increased accountability. Although I did not offer daily live instruction during spring distance learning, I did offer a daily live hour for the duration of distance learning to help students work through their assignments, answer questions, and help with technology issues. Most days, I rarely had 7 out of 27 (or more) students take advantage of that time, yet I was receiving completed assignments from much fewer than 27 students, suggesting that many of those 20 who did not attend needed some assistance and chose not to attend. I did find that when I held live instruction during the hour and e-mailed both parents and students in advance, attendance was much higher, maybe 15/27 students would attend, but that is still far below what it needs to be and, even with the larger attendance, participation was abysmal, with only 1-2 students interacting, and even when a random name selector was used to encourage wider participation, students would still refuse to respond or interact. I have no idea why this is, and I'm sure there's something else I could've done as the teacher to encourage more participation during the lessons. Staff needs

training on how to handle this situation and students and parents need clear expectations for participation in synchronous virtual instruction.

July 15, 2020

Christy Spacek

I wanted to submit a comment in preparation for the board meeting this evening. I have a rising 1st grader in the school system. I have concerns specifically related to social distancing among the younger age groups and how wearing masks will be enforced throughout the school day. The recent rise in numbers of COVID are concerning and I realize this is such a difficult decision to navigate. I trust that the school board will do everything in their power to protect students and staff to the best of their ability.

Debra W. Kiley

Dear Board of Education Members:

I have read the CCPS reopening draft plan. As a 30 year veteran CCPS teacher, I have many questions that I do not see answers to or solutions for in the plan. These questions are for the citizen participation portion of the Board of Education meeting on July 15, 2020.

With the hybrid schedule, you still have students completing distance learning, but what has been done to close the gap of available and reliable internet access from homes? Spend the time and money to bridge this gap for our neediest students so that teachers and support staff can teach and engage these students more frequently. Will the school system assist the employees with poor internet connectivity?

With the hybrid schedule, parents and staff still have major issues of childcare that is very disjointed. Where can they find day care for students that a) have room and b) are willing to take children on a part-time basis? Work with community leaders to help mitigate this situation, especially for staff.

What reasonable accommodations are going to be made (or you're willing to make) for employees in high risk categories or who have high risk family members? Based on the plan, I see no way that I would not potentially be compromising my health and the health of elderly family members to return to the classroom.

Teachers have a very defined curriculum for in person teaching. We were given very little assistance in developing lessons plans for virtual teaching. What are the specifics for teachers to complete the in-person teaching as well as the virtual teaching at the same time? I truly do not grasp how that works within the normal work day. In person lessons would be very different from virtual lessons. How do teachers complete two very different jobs at the same time?

There needs to be a decision now and not wait until the middle of August. Teachers and staff did a miraculous job of learning and implementing online learning in the spring in a matter of days. We expended significant effort in learning new platforms, ways to engage students, and revising our entire way of teaching. In order to do better for our students, we need the time now to learn how to improve our distance teaching without having to learn and teach at the same time. How is the professional development going to be provided? When will it be provided?

In our Master Agreement, Article XXI Teaching conditions states that we are to have well-maintained, properly lighted and ventilated, safe and healthful classroom. (p. 29) I do not feel my classroom and building is ventilated enough or would be safe and healthful to return. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) through 29 CFR Part 1910 requires that employers protect you from workplace hazards that can cause injury or illness. Controlling a hazard at its source is the best way to protect workers. However, when engineering, work practice and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to you and ensure its use. The CCPS back to school plan states that cloth face masks will be provided to school personnel if they do not provide their own. There is no data that provides a cloth mask are protective for work place exposures to the COVID 19 virus that school employees may be presented with. The school system and the CDC cannot provide any data that the engineering, work practices, or administrative controls are in anyway protective to the school employee in the work place setting. The only scientific data that exists provides that a N95 type respirator is the appropriate PPE for teachers and other school employees who come in contact with multiple students to be using. As such, it is the school system's legal responsibility to provide this PPE to teachers and employees they expect to be in contact with multiple children for an extended period of time. This is especially critical for those employees who fall into the CDC categories of

people who are increased risk for severe illness from the COVID-19 virus. The recommended practice of using cloth face mask is appropriate for a non-workplace setting and going about one's personal business. The CCPS as an employer has a legal responsibility to provide PPE above and beyond what people use in their personal life. The CDC guidelines for reopening school are just guidelines that have not been proven out by actual in-school experience at this point. The OSHA requirements are statutory, and if they are not met, they open the school system to liability if school employees are negatively impacted by the COVID 19 virus from workplace exposure.

How would substitutes work for a virtual classroom? They would not have access to the technology and my google classroom. If I have to be quarantined and do not have symptoms that impact my ability to work from home, would I still have to take a sick day? If I am expected to continue the virtual teaching, then I should not be charged a sick day. What COVID 19 precaution training would the substitutes receive to go into the classrooms?

Per Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), it states that the employer would provide sick leave for any quarantine period. Those specific details need to be clearly explained for employees and personal sick leave should not be taken. I do not see that in the plan. The FFCRA poster that is on the CCPS website should be referenced in your reopening document such that everyone knows their rights.

How would "Meet the Teacher" nights and parent/teacher conferences work now? Do we have a virtual events? I would not feel am not required to conduct multiple nights which would have to happen as we must maintain social distancing in classrooms.

If students are in a cohort and are not supposed to move around the building, what do specials look like for elementary students? What happens when a special area teacher has to be quarantined? They see the entire student body throughout a week and how would they be able to complete their curriculums when the students are in school half the time?

For your sample hybrid model for elementary students, it does not make sense to alternate A and B cohorts. This requires double the amount of cleaning and puts the B cohort more at risk as the A group is taught in person at disinfecting days. If we have to return, an AA BB schedule for make more sense for sanitation. It may also be easier for families, busses, etc. to remember that schedule.

You have stated that you will have all students to take returning assessments (Comprehensive Assessments) in math and ELA. How long are these tests? Who created these assessments? What will the results give us beyond what we already know? Students will need support and scaffolding to return to learning. Will the assessments be paper/pencil or online? It states that these assessments will give us timely data and then can diagnose and prescribe appropriate personalized instruction, etc. How and when will this be done when we are already teaching in person and virtually? You have to stop assuming that teachers will just get this done on their own time. It must be built into the schedule to be done correctly and to do what is best for the students.

Also, I have a concern about grading papers that have been touched by the students. Will they be quarantined for several days before teachers have to touch them, take them home, etc.? Books returned to the public library are quarantined for several days for protection of library staff.

How will the bus drivers be protected if they must clean between bus runs? Many bus drivers are older and are therefore in the higher risk category. What are the procedures when a bus driver is quarantined? Will the classes with students that ride that bus have to be quarantined as well? Bus drivers should be provided PPE beyond a simple cloth face covering for safety. What protocols (beyond a website with updates) will be established to help families that depend on bus transportation because bus route is missed due to contamination or bus driver illness? Are there enough substitute bus drivers?

Hand washing is the best practice to stay healthy. Our building has very few sinks for students to wash their hands (One per class, one for boys and one for girls in the bathrooms for a hallway of 8+ classrooms) . Will there be portable sinks brought in?

How do we get the materials, such as math manipulative or reading books, for each student? If students are not supposed to share, how does that happen when we do not have enough for a class as it is. For example, I could teach 56 students in math and therefore would need 56 sets of Cuisenaire rods to work on math concepts. How would I conduct science experiments that are designed for groups of students if I now have to provide materials for each individual student? If I use a set of 25 social studies books for multiple classes, do I now need to have a copy per student?

How do we get tested if we develop symptoms or need to after an exposure at work? Do we see our regular physician or go to the health department or the urgent care facilities? How long does it take to schedule a test appointment – hours, days or are there walk up facilities? How soon will we get results? If we do not get results quickly and we need to

quarantine until such time, will the county still cover the sick days? What protocols will be established to help the families get students tested quickly?

How do we safely conduct the numerous emergency drills we are required to do each year? How do you conduct a lockdown drill that included social distancing?

Teachers want only the best for their students. I have real heart ache over seeing our at risk and neediest students missing their safe and stable environment to come to everyday. We need feasible plans to specifically help these students with learning opportunities and the support they need. Two days a week in class is not enough for them. There may not be a good answer to any of the issues but we have enough information to know that reopening schools will facilitate massive community spread of the COVID 19 virus. We must err on the side of caution that is the safest for everyone. As I do not see how you can adequately answer these questions and the numerous other questions you are receiving, I would respectfully suggest that the time, money and effort spent on developing back to the class room processes be spent on developing an improved virtual learning environment that works for all.

P.S. As of noon on July 15th, several Maryland counties have announced that their school system will begin the year with virtual teaching and learning.

Michelle Nutt

Board Members, I am writing to ask you to please consider implementing virtual learning for at least the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year. As a parent who originally "voted" for a hybrid option, I now realize that any version of in-person learning would be a disaster. The virus is not going away. Our numbers may have improved, but why take the chance with our children, teachers, and support staff. The children's numbers are lowest because the schools closed early. Virtual learning is not the easy option, but it is the safest. Virtual learning may not be the most effective option, but we can work with our kids after the threat is passed. I would love for everything to go back to normal immediately, but it is not going to happen. I do not believe that will happen until some sort of vaccine is widely available and until then, I am not willing to risk further exposure. I have the choice and ability to take advantage of virtual learning and I want the staff to feel safe as well. I see adults in stores not able to wear a mask properly and know that our children will be unable to make it through an entire day with a mask or maintaining distancing. With the anticipated safeguards of handwashing, distancing, the distraction of masks, varied scheduling, I see virtual learning as the safest and most stable option. One thing I have noticed since the lockdown is that my children have not been sick. Not one cold. You know illness spreads like wildfire among children and I see this will be no different. People will send their children to school ill for varied reasons, regardless of the rules and restrictions. The numbers in children have remained low because we took them out of the equation and closed schools. I do not want my children to be a statistic. I know you face a difficult decision. These are unprecedented times, and everyone has an opinion. Not everyone will be happy with the decision, but safety takes priority in this case, for children and staff alike. The inconveniences of the virtual option pales in comparison to the trauma and fatalities that this virus WILL wage on our community if we attempt in person schooling.

Heather Miller

Good evening all!

I know you have many tough decisions ahead. I am in full support of returning to school as a teacher and a parent. However on the hybrid plan, I don't think it make sense to have half the kids go on Monday then the other half on Tuesday THEN clean. Cohort A should go Monday and Tuesday. Clean on Wednesday. Cohort B should report to school on Thursday and Friday.

This makes sense for two reasons:

1. Cohort A and Cohort B are never cross-contaminated.
2. As a teacher, I can teach the same set of kids two days in a row instead of three days apart. My workload is going to double with any model you choose. I feel that this will help a little with that. It allows me to see progress from one day to the next and really prepare them for the virtual learning they will do for the next three days.

Thank you for your time and good luck!!

July 14, 2020

Marissa McNally

I am writing to you as a CCPS Middle School Teacher and Tax-Paying Citizen of Carroll County. After reading the Draft Reopening Plan for CCPS I wanted to voice my concerns to the Board.

If schools were to reopen in September under the current draft plan phase 2, I would be 8 months pregnant. Pregnant women are more prone to infectious diseases due to a weakened immune system. I also have a genetic heart condition which makes my pregnancy even more high risk. No where in the plan does it talk about high risk staff members. I am not willing to go back with Phase 2 while pregnant if there is no clear vaccine. My doctor will vouch that it is unsafe for pregnant and high risk teachers to go back based on the current pandemic situation in particular states/regions. The mock schedule for middle school puts me and others at risk by being exposed to over 150 students at least a day when the instruction can be delivered online until there is a vaccine. It is completely unfair to put a pregnant teacher in an indoor, closed classroom where students could have no mask on because their parents had a note provided. It is a situation I am not putting myself in. If students can have a choice of doing completely virtual learning if uncomfortable, do teachers have the same option? The plan needs to consider the health of teachers who are high risk/pregnant.

Melissa Gibson

I'm writing to ask that you please consider implementing virtual learning for the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.

As a parent who originally "voted" for a hybrid option, I now realize that any version of in-person learning is a recipe for disaster. We are still in a pandemic. The virus is just as dangerous as it was when we began quarantine in March. Sure, Maryland's statistics are much better than some other states; but the risk is still there.

Virtual learning will not be easy and it may not be as effective as traditional schooling. However, the inconveniences of virtual learning pale in comparison to the trauma and fatalities that this virus WILL wage on our community if we attempt in-person schooling.

Krysti Knauth

I would also like to add to my previously submitted notes on the Phase II hybrid plan for reopening schools. Has anyone looked into the quality of custodial services within CCPS. While I know that we have many hardworking custodial staff members, we were frequently short on staff prior to the pandemic, requiring the use of a floating staff. I doubt that the pay is enticing enough to add to our already undersized staff, and I wouldn't be surprised if we lose many custodial staff members due to their increased risk of infection and the increased workload and pressure on them to do their work in thorough manner. Schools across the county were frequently poorly maintained in terms of cleanliness and sanitization, which is likely due to staff being spread so thin and, in some cases, the inability to attract quality workers to the profession. Is the Board prepared to deal with loss of custodial staff who will leave the profession, as well as the inevitable absences of our custodial staff due to illness (likely extended absences due to COVID precautions)?

Krysti Knauth

I would also like to call into question the use of the AB - CLEAN - AB schedule. If we're looking at safety and the need to reduce exposure, would it not make more sense to have cohort A attend successive days (Mon-Tues), deep clean the school, and then have cohort B attend successive days (Th-Fri), which would then be followed by 2 days (a weekend, which could include another deep clean on Saturday) of the building being empty before bringing cohort A back in? This would not only reduce exposure by preventing cohort A from being exposed to the viruses potentially carried by cohort B, but it would also allow for a better continuity of in-person instruction. Anyone who knows the model for effective teaching knows that the parts of a lesson build, one upon the other, and in most cases, particularly in middle school where periods are only 45 minutes or less, all the pieces of a lesson can rarely be covered in a single day. For example, as a teacher of English, teaching writing concepts and tackling writing assignments is a challenge to do virtually, and I would much prefer to have two consecutive days to work with the same students on an assignment than seeing them on Monday, and not again until Thursday. Please consider this possibility as you move forward with the plan.

Krystal Knauth

I know my family is not the only one with this unique set of circumstances, but I find it necessary to explain that I am a CCPS parent of an upcoming 3rd grader and a kindergartener, I also have a 2-year-old at home, my elderly parents with underlying health conditions live in our home with us and provide our childcare, while my husband and I both work full-time as teachers for CCPS. My husband and I teach at different schools, and my husband teaches a related arts discipline, through which he will be exposed to essentially the entire student body on a weekly basis with the current draft plan for Maryland in Phase II of recovery. With the current plan, my parents - my elderly mother who has diabetes and heart disease, among other underlying health issues - by nature of living with us, will be exposed to potential COVID-19 being brought home from 3 different schools. I never thought that I would have to choose between protecting my parents' lives and keeping my teaching job, but that is precisely what this plan will cause me to do. They moved in with us 2 years ago so that we could help look after their health as they age, and so that they could look after our children while we work.

I never imagined the irony that living with us would someday be what puts their health at risk.

This plan will also expose grandparents of students who are caregivers or who live in the home with students to potential contact with COVID-19, which could be catastrophic. Is the county prepared to handle the weight of lives that may be lost to COVID-19 as a direct result of schools reopening in this manner? Is the county prepared for potential lawsuits that may arise from deaths or long-term COVID-induced health complications of students, teachers, and/or family members as a result of schools reopening - deaths and health issues that are 100% preventable by making the choice to open in a fully virtual environment. As a note on COVID-19, everyone has been focusing on examining the death rate or risk of death as a result of COVID, but I question the district to dig deeper and find reliable statistics on the rate and scope of ongoing, debilitating health issues experienced by people who are listed in the "recovered" numbers of COVID counts, as we are putting our students and teachers and their families at risk for these health issues as well. I noticed in particular that an option was given for parents who are uncomfortable sending their children to school to keep students home for a 100% virtual learning environment. As a parent, this is quite a relief to protect my children. I know my upcoming third grader constantly fiddles with her mask when she wears it - she does it subconsciously, which causes her to touch her face and ultimately puts her more at risk, and I'm sure she's not alone in that behavior. I know no matter how many times I teach both my third grader and kindergartener how to wash their hands for 20 seconds, they still consistently wash for about 5 seconds, and that's when I'm home, listening in the other room and able to send them back to the sink for a redo. I know there is not enough time in the school day to schedule as many socially distanced trips to wash their hands as often as they need to in order to be safe. I know my kindergartener has sensory issues and will likely not be able to wear a mask at all because getting her to wear any clothing is a struggle that causes tears and screaming on her part on almost a daily basis. I'm sure my choice will be 100% virtual for my own children - to keep them safe, but, even more so, to keep my parents safe from potential exposure.

My question as a parent is, who will be providing the instruction for the 100% virtual students. Who will be enforcing the same rigor and quality of learning for these students whose parents choose to have their students attending 100% virtual? As a teacher, I can't imagine planning for hybrid teaching, let alone planning for hybrid teaching AND trying to meet the needs of the 100% virtual students.

As a teacher, it is disturbing that the Board of Education is more concerned for the safety of its students than of its staff. Allowing the option for ALL parents to keep their children home for 100% virtual learning (not just students who are immunocompromised) acknowledges that attending school in the building according to this current plan is indeed a health risk. Otherwise, this would not be an option for parents. I wonder why, as a parent, I have the ability to keep my children safe, but as a teacher, I do not have the option to teach 100% virtual, thus keeping myself, my children, and my parents safe. The health benefits of my decision to keep my children on 100% virtual learning will be negated by myself and my husband still being required to report for in-person instruction, and it will also impact my ability to oversee the 100% virtual option for my school-aged children.

I'm disappointed that CCPS did not attempt a more creative approach that would take into account some of the special circumstances of its staff, such as our situation of having members of the vulnerable population living in our home with us or our teachers whose age and/or health issues put them at risk. I believe there are many teachers who are happy to return to the building, I'm sure most or all of whom do not have at-risk people in their home or their own underlying health issues to deal with. Is there no way to go with a full virtual reopening that also has a small-group in-person tutoring component run by teachers who volunteer to be school-based to provide support for these students' virtual learning? Is it possible for students who are identified as special circumstances, such as having connectivity issues, needing emotional support, needing in-person special education services, etcetera, to be provided with socially-distant,

small-group instruction and assistance with their distance learning curriculum delivered by such teachers in the building?

Even if I weren't a parent of CCPS students or having my elderly parents living in my home, I would still have major concerns about the biggest flaw of the current plan: It seems like a lot of work for school to prepare for this complex hybrid plan and for teachers to prepare a completely new format of teaching (the hybrid model) to bring everyone back for only 2 days of in-person instruction that will be socially distanced (thus, minimal social interaction), but with no feasible plan for dealing with the amount of student and staff absences that are certain to occur. Prior to the pandemic, it was sometimes difficult to find substitute teachers, with jobs often going unfilled and requiring creative approaches and the puzzling together staff to cover staff absences. Everyone's immune systems are "out-of-practice" due to the closure of schools in March and the subsequent stay-at-home orders. All teachers will be like first-year teachers again, and all students will be like kindergarteners again in terms of easily catching whatever germ is floating around. Most illnesses will likely not be COVID, but it is certain that some will. COVID has a long list of symptoms that mimic almost any illness that regularly circulates around school, including cough and fever, and even gastrointestinal symptoms. I imagine any symptoms that match COVID will have to be treated like COVID until COVID can be ruled out, triggering extended absences of students and staff. Has the board considered the contact tracing process and mandatory quarantines at the high school level, with students traveling throughout the building in unconnected schedule patterns, exposing, at minimum, 4 different groups of students and 4 different staff members in 1 day? At the middle school level, if a student shows symptoms of COVID, he or she will expose at least 4 academic teachers, which will "wipe out" an entire academic team of teachers. It is not feasible to replace these teachers with substitutes. Not to mention, it will be impossible for teachers to keep up with extended student absences, and it's likely that at the height of cold and flu season (if not before that) half of the instructional time will be spent catching students up. Is it really worth all of the efforts to reorganize schedules, create cohorts, modify the building, and redesign instruction for a 2-day-per week schedule that is very unlikely to be sustainable throughout the semester due to these absences? I also saw that teachers may be required to continue teaching in a distance-learning format while quarantined. How will teachers who are ill be handled? Will they have to teach virtually while ill? Will they have to write 5-10 days of substitute plans while ill? Will they have to continue with "business-as-usual" while under the emotional stress of knowing they've been exposed and waiting for the onset of symptoms or waiting to see if the exposure is confirmed as COVID?

Another question I have is the ease of integration of virtual and in-person instruction. There is not enough technology in the school buildings to have a 1-to-1 access to technology, so nearly all the work assigned will need to be provided in both virtual and paper formats, creating additional workload for teachers. Students will not be able to work on projects or assignments on Google Classroom while in the classroom due to the lack of devices available at the schools.

Furthermore, any assessment or assignments completed in-person will have to be submitted on paper, which poses an additional exposure risk for teachers as they score and provide feedback on the paper work. Furthermore, any use of technology in the school building will add an exposure risk as technology is shared among students in different classes. I noticed in the plan that the 6' of social distancing that has been all we've heard from scientists and the medical community from the beginning of the pandemic is frequently reduced to an option of only 3'. What medical or scientific evidence was used to deem this reduction in social distancing space safe? I also see "when feasible" mentioned many times. What about the times that it is not feasible? Will the plan simply ignore the scientifically-recommended safety practices for preventing the spread of COVID?

Currently, CCPS has very strict regulations on the use of sanitizing products - only a very few products are allowed and only staff are allowed to use them. Students are only permitted to use hand sanitizer that they provide themselves. Is there a plan for desks to be sanitized between students/classes? If so, what is that procedure? Will there be ample product available? If there will be sanitizing between students, how much instructional time will that take? Will it further whittle down the small amount of instructional time on the 2 days per week students will be in the classroom? If teachers will be spending time sanitizing/cleaning their own areas, will additional time be provided to do so, or will this cut into the teacher's planning time? Will teachers earn additional pay for requiring this non-teaching task?

Another concern is the mental health of students. How will students with anxiety fare when faced with potential exposure? With sitting in a classroom with a mask on reminding them of their fears? Are we prepared for the potential demand on our school counselors? For proper sanitation of the counselor's office in between student visits?

These are just a few of my concerns. Please consider them carefully before making a final decision.

July 13, 2020

Robert Meekins

School Re-Opening Discussion – A School Bus Driver’s Perspective

As County administrators and educators develop plans for school re-openings this Fall amid the pandemic crisis, input is being sought from stakeholders on how best to safely accomplish this objective. As a school bus driver, I’d like to offer my input.

Many school bus drivers are in the “at-risk” category for serious complications if infected with COVID-19. As a rule, we’re older and may have one or more of the underlying health conditions that can increase the severity of the disease. Therefore, I hope that our concerns are strongly considered and addressed as plans are finalized.

In a recent employee survey, we were asked a few general questions about our willingness to return to work. It’s difficult to answer these questions until we know what the job will look like going forward. A school bus driver’s highest priority is always to ensure the safety of students riding the bus. That safety takes on a new dimension in the era of COVID-19. Additionally, we have to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to safeguard our own health as well. Social distancing is nearly impossible on a school bus by virtue of the manner in which students enter and exit the vehicle. Unlike transit buses that have rear doors, all passengers entering and exiting a school bus do so through the front door which brings them face-to-face with the driver. To feel safer in the cockpit of the bus, I’d like to see a plexiglass barrier behind the driver’s seat and a clear plastic curtain that hangs between the driver and stairwell aisle. Students should not be seated in either of the front seats of the bus.

I firmly believe that masks help prevent the spread of the disease but a downside of wearing them is that they cause eyeglasses to fog which in turn, creates impaired vision. This problem will worsen as temperatures drop later in the Fall and Winter creating a hazardous driving condition. Even drivers who don’t wear prescription eyeglasses frequently wear sunglasses to reduce glare. As an option, protective shields in lieu of masks should be considered for bus drivers. Experts are still assessing how the virus is transmitted and airborne droplets appear to be the primary source of infection. Therefore, I’m concerned about the circulation of air through school bus heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Bus HVAC filters should be inspected and appropriate actions taken to ensure that these systems do not increase the risk of infection.

Since school bus drivers work for private contractors and are not County employees, the health benefits afforded other Board of Education employees do not apply. Due to the extraordinary circumstances and potential health risks brought on by COVID-19, County officials should provide some form of health insurance for school bus drivers. I’m already covered by health insurance in retirement from a former career but others will greatly benefit by having this option. Additionally, because contractors handle payroll differently, sick leave benefits may not always be available. The County should ensure that paid sick leave is available for all bus drivers if illness requiring leave is related to COVID-19. To make an informed decision on returning to work, bus drivers also need to know how the job will change. Various re-opening options under consideration include alternating days/weeks, modified schedules, etc. In all cases, nearly every bus run will include fewer passengers which will likely result in more runs and lengthening the work day. If morning and afternoon runs extend beyond the typical 3-hour window, we’ll need time built in for restroom breaks at appropriate locations.

Bus drivers have always been required to maintain a clean vehicle. However, the level of cleaning suggested by the CDC for public transit is far greater than what drivers had been doing. We need to know what level of cleaning will be expected, what type of chemicals will be used, the frequency of required cleanings, the availability of appropriate supplies and clothing and, if drivers are required to do this enhanced cleaning, what amount of time/compensation will be applied to the workday.

Heretofore, bus drivers were instructed to not use or even store cleaning chemicals on the bus because of potential allergic reactions. In the era of COVID-19, enhanced cleaning of public transportation is being done routinely by professional cleaning services using electrostatic sprayers and/or ultraviolet lights. The County should consider using professional cleaning services and/or school janitorial staffs for bus deep cleaning. Depending on the level and frequency of required cleaning, asking drivers to perform this task may be a “bridge too far” for many.

Some jurisdictions are considering having bus drivers perform student temperature checks outside the vehicle prior to boarding. This would be overly burdensome for the driver and create potential roadside hazards for all involved. If this action is necessary, the County should assign an Assistant to every bus to perform this duty. This activity will also significantly increase the time required for each morning bus run.

Bus drivers will need guidance on what to do if they observe a student who presents with COVID-19 symptoms either at the bus stop in the morning or at any other time while on board. Without a parent or guardian present at the bus stop

in the morning, the driver would, under normal circumstances, allow the student to board and then advise the appropriate school officials upon arrival at school. Given the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, this policy must be clarified.

What policy will be implemented when someone on the bus has been diagnosed positive? Will the driver and all passengers be quarantined for two weeks? Will drivers continue being paid during that period? The County needs to carefully consider driver availability. Prior to the pandemic, school bus drivers were already in short supply across the nation including in Carroll County.

Finally, I believe that routine COVID-19 testing should be required and provided for all bus drivers. Since infection can occur at any time, testing should be performed weekly.

The considerations and decisions before the County relating to school re-openings are daunting. I applaud all involved for their careful and deliberative approach. I hope the information I've shared in this message is helpful as final plans are developed. Should you have questions or wish to discuss anything further, please give me a call.

July 8, 2020

Kemuel Halasz

My son attends Freedom Elementary School in Eldersburg, MD. During the FY 2019-2020 school year he was in the first grade. He had 28 kids in his classroom. Freedom is over capacity and it is impacting kids ability learn. While there was a curve call with COVID this year, that does not change the need to address over capacity. This is particularly relevant for the medium and long term. This is something redistricting alone can not solve. These kids will eventually move on to Oklahoma Middle School and Liberty High School. What is the 3 and 5 year plan for building elementary, middle school, and high schools?

Andrew Tucker

I do not feel comfortable, as some Board Members feel, in attending meetings in person; therefore, I'd like to pose the following questions for tomorrow's meeting: 1. What if a child dies of COVID? What if a teacher or staff member does? Where are the mental health resources for that? 2. If a teacher gets COVID, do all their students have to quarantine for 2 weeks? The whole school? If a student gets it do all their teachers and classmates stay home? Administration? 3. There weren't enough subs before the pandemic. Where will they come from now, especially if people are getting sick? And if a teacher gets sick and there is no sub, where do their students go? You can't split them up with other teachers like we've been doing in elementary schools because of distancing and de-densifying the spaces 4. Many carriers of COVID are asymptomatic. No fever, no cough, nothing. So how do we know when to stay home? Who to let into the school building every day? 5. Are we requiring students and staff to wear masks (like many states have down for public gatherings)? It has always been hard to enforce compliance with cell phones, earbuds, dress code, noise level in the cafeteria, teens making out behind the vending machine, vaping in the bathroom, not washing hands, etc...how are we going to pretend that wearing masks is going to be enforceable? Or that hand washing is enforceable? And what do we do about the cafeteria where kids have to take off masks to, you know, eat? 6. I see healthcare professionals crowdfunding for PPE...will school employees have to do that? 7. Where is the training for teachers to learn how to properly sanitize their areas multiple times a day while also teaching in person and online, and keeping an eye on every single child in case they become symptomatic, while enforcing mask usage on top of all the other enforcements? 8. Are we asking teachers to choose between their job or ever seeing their elderly parent again at least until a vaccine is created? Or their medically vulnerable child? Or even putting themselves at risk if they are immunocompromised? 9. Will there be a least restrictive online environment for students who can't wear masks due to their disability or IEP? Thank you.

July 5, 2020

Charlie Ferguson

My name is Charlie Ferguson. I am a concerned citizen, graduate of Westminster High School, and a first time voter.

I am writing on behalf of students, teachers, parents, and other who have supported the petition linked below. We would like this acknowledged at the upcoming Board of Education meeting on June 10th. Please consider using your role in the school system to support these goals and continue this conversation on race and representation.

Sincerely,

Those impacted by the CCPS education

<http://chnng.it/Gmh2VZPT>

May 26, 2020

Olivia Mason

Please allow for funding to give Liberty High School air conditioning in the gymnasiums. It gets so hot in the summers with gym class and sports practices. Our school has very high-performing sports programs, yet still have completely uncomfortable and hot gyms. This has been an issue for a long time and the student body has spoken up about it for years but we just don't have the funding. Please consider us!

Anthony Mikalauskas

As our world has changed, so should our mindset in what type infrastructure CCPS needs to stay competitive as we move forward. Any and all master plans from this point on should address how the BOE will work with county commissioners to implement reliable and affordable internet access for ALL households throughout the county. The inequities regarding internet access have been thrust into the spotlight. We cannot accept the status quo and must make a strong case for addressing this issue not only in the CCPS facilities master plan, but also in the overall county budget.

May 13, 2020

Teresa McCulloh

Good evening Superintendent Lockard, Members of the Board of Education and Commissioner Frazier, I'm Teresa Basler McCulloh, President of the Carroll County Education Association who represents the dedicated, hard-working teachers, counselors, RNs, Speech and Language Providers, OTs, and PTs who are navigating uncharted territory with great effort, thought, time and energy.

It's a whole new world! We've certainly made history and our teachers took off out of the gate. Distance learning has been up and running for weeks. Our nurses are now working on the frontline at a Health Department Call Center. CCPS is ahead of the plan compared to other counties. Words cannot express how thankful and proud we are of our members! I'd like to extend gratitude to all those persons who thanked a teacher last week during "Teacher Appreciation Week". "National School Nurse Day" had a whole new meaning this year! Notes, gifts, signs and all other tokens of appreciation were valued. Our educators always go over and beyond educating students. However, during this pandemic, there's an area on which they are focused. This bargaining unit is displaying a genuine care and concern for their students' well-being, safety, and mental health in ways we could never imagine. Educators miss their students incredibly. They look forward to the day they will be back in classrooms filled with students. Nothing can replace personal interactions!

Educators are doing their BEST!

Thank you!