

## **Public Comments for August 6, 2020**

### **District 54 School Board Meeting**

*Received Monday, August 3*

1. I understand these are trying times and that the job of a School Board member is not easy. I would like you to show more willingness to allow your teachers and school staff to voice their own concerns regarding your school safety and opening plans. It has been suggested that teachers are being disciplined for respectfully voicing their concerns. I can tell you as a parent, I'm upset I was never told what the teachers' feelings were to begin with. I ask that you not discipline any teacher who voiced his or her opinion, as these are extremely stressful, trying times. I ask that you consider that the teacher who spoke out was not trying to do harm to the district, but was trying to advocate for the safety of staff and students. I want those types of people teaching my kids. It's alarming whenever any organization tries to silence any of its members for speaking their truths. What are you trying to hide? Please undo any disciplinary actions that were taken against teachers. They are the ones who spend all day with our children and I wanted to hear their voices to begin with. I've always supported D54 and spread the word about its quality, but if teachers are being disciplined for sharing concerns about safety, I'm hesitant to do so, ever again. Thank you.

Kristen Gates-McChristian

2. Please advise what will be done for special education students? There is NO mention about these students and how is the district going to offer them an APPROPRIATE education? These kids consistently feel like an afterthought.

Nichole Visconti

3. Thank you for the time and consideration you have put into making the decisions amongst this global pandemic. I simply want to say that I appreciate our district's administration and teachers so much. In too much of the commentary surrounding school re-openings, teachers and staff are often discussed as expendable. I value the health of our teachers/staff and their families. I know they desperately want to return to teach our children, but they should not have to risk their lives doing so. I applaud your decision and I hope this community will continue to embrace a togetherness to make this work for our educators and our children. We can do this by showing grace, kindness, and innovation with each other.

Tara Tate Carr

4. How do you recommend protecting kids' eyes each day from using monitors 2.5-5 hours? And how will you control and answer so many kids' questions during the day? Or we have to answer them by ourselves? Thank you so much for taking care of this difficult situation.

Lilja Kuduk

5. I am a parent of a disabled child with severe autism who is educated within a self-contained classroom within School District 54. Over the years I have come to rely on the laws and regulations that have been put in place to protect his rights as an individual and provide him with the support he needs including the agreements put in place with the District through the development of an IEP.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) ensures that all qualifying children with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education. Special consideration is typically given to these students through additional support (eg. Extended School Year) due to the known negative impact to a special needs student when they do not have access to a classroom and therapies for an extended period of time.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protects the rights of people with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance (including Public school districts). Section 504 helps children with disabilities to access school services by requiring schools to provide accommodations and modifications.

While School District 54 is offering virtual learning opportunities, many special needs students cannot participate because they are not able to learn independently. In addition, caregivers are not qualified special need educators or therapists and therefore, the special needs student is at a high risk for the critical loss of education and therapeutic services.

Please explain how restricting access to the in-person classroom environment is not violating these laws that have been put in place to protect these students and how the District intends to comply with IEPs.

Ray and Karin Fashingbauer

6. I just received an email in regards to school starting remotely. I find it heavily disappointing that the district does not listen to the voice of parents. I understand I don't know the opinion of every parent in the district, but I know quite a big group of people from district 54 and not one of them is supporting in home schooling. I think the fair way of making a decision would be having an actual referendum with each school household having one vote.

I think elearning is an easy way out for the district with no regards to the parents. I do not question the virus itself, however I do question the media overblowing the subject. I know you remember well the outbreaks in the last decade, whether SARS or H5N1. No one closed businesses or schools then. I am trying to understand the fears of some people, and those people should have the right to keep their children at home. On the flip side, people who use logic and common sense, like myself, should be able to decide what's best for their children. My child just graduated (with honors) from Campanelli school's magnet program. She was denied receiving her Presidential medal on stage because of illogical (and pending court appeal, possibly illegal decision by Mr Pritzker). Now, she is denied full access to her school resources, denied ability to socialize with her peers (which is very important for adolescent people) and forced to stay alone at home for long hours.

I trust my daughter, but not every child is raised properly. Who will be responsible for accidents due to children being unattended at home. I have worked around many people every day since March. I didn't hide in my basement. I run a place with 150 employees and with hundreds of customers coming in and out and no one from my employees got sick. If you are a mathematician, please tell me what is the probability of that. In addition, statistically, there is more probability of dying while crossing the street than from this illness.

I am lucky enough to have a child who is excelling in school, but the district's decision puts her in disadvantage against people from other Districts and countries when applying for the job in the future. E learning so far was a joke, because no district was prepared for the closure in March. If it continues this way, the children will be further denied proper education.

Thank you for your attention, and I hope the district will listen to people, who pay really high taxes to have their children properly educated.

Lucas Bujak

7. I find it very funny how I called earlier today to question and was told this wasn't happening and now all of a sudden it is. How can you justify this to parents who can't afford daycare, some don't have internet. Who work during the day. Where school was the only safe place for kids. Your subjecting kids to hard places and nothing is being done to worry about that. Also how can you tell a parent who was already scheduling a testing to be done for a learning disability. Is my child supposed to suffer because of this. I've had all respect for this district but now you guys need a good reason for this.

Tara Sheridan

8. As a parent of two children at Nerge Elementary, I am upset with the decision to start this school year remotely. The damage inflicted on children will be years in the making and irreversible. This betrayal will not be forgotten, I feel this decision was not made with families in mind. Finding child care will be impossible for most parents as most households have two working parents to afford the expensive cost of living in District 54.

I understand that the virtual learning model will be improved from the Spring 2020 model, but significant improvement to the lousy Spring 2020 virtual model will still be inadequate. Virtual learning is no valid replacement for in person learning.

Directions from Illinois State Board of Education have repeatedly proven to be consistently wrong on many issues in the past. The Illinois State Board of Education should be ignored for achieving best student outcomes. District 54 should seek expert input from the medical community ... pediatric and pandemic. Today I find this announcement to be spineless and uncharacteristic of those who say they put education first.

Matt Massar

9. The decision made today is truly pathetic. All teachers and the district are looking at is themselves. They have finally shown their true colors and the parents who work hard to make ends meet are being ignored.

For families that have both parents that work full time and have to send their children to daycare during, this will not work at all. Do you really expect day care to provide each child with a device to complete school work?

For families that cannot afford daycare, does one of the parents have to quit their job to teach their child during the day? For those fortunate enough to be able to work remotely, are you really expecting parents to work full time, teach their children the full day of school and still conduct the day to day activities at home? What if the parent only has one computer and that is being used for work? How is the child supposed to do virtual learning then?

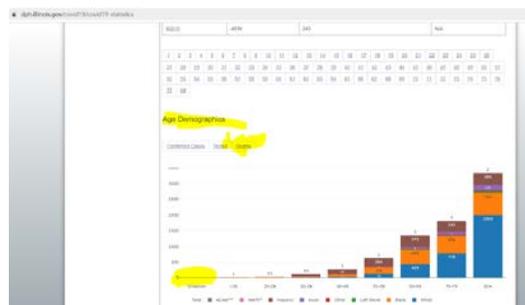
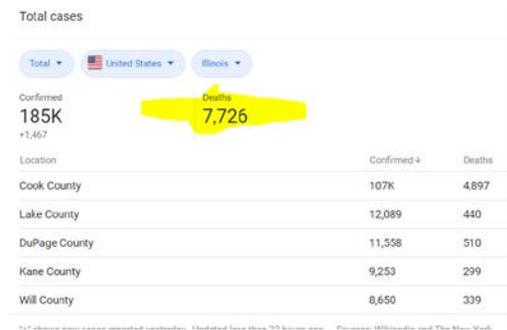
What about children with special education needs? How will that education be conducted? Has anyone even considered any of this? From what I understand the parents are getting the short end of the stick. The District should completely rethink this and actually think about the parents and children instead of just themselves.

Piotr Madej

10. This decision is OUTRAGEOUS!! You said that ONLY IF Gov. PRITZKER changes PHASES this will happen. You lied! I am very upset as you are playing with my family financial situation and my kid's education and their mental well being! And changing this last minute just because you want to out of fear, not because the Governor says so, it's really rude!

OTHER Districts are still having at least a few days in person (even CITY OF CHICAGO! ) or every other week. You are just scared not to be sued! Not caring about the wellbeing of kids with this virus. Masks and shields are only protecting medical workers, not teachers??

The cases are rising but DEATH toll is going DOWN in ILLINOIS! LOOK at this , do the math , in IL it's 0.04% death in total from the very beginning , now is so much less and look at the ages of the dead on the IDPH website. 50% of deaths were over 80 years old. How many 80 year old teachers do we have?



Amelia Buciuman

11. I'm a parent of a Dirksen incoming 3<sup>rd</sup> grader and, like many, have struggled with the decision to send or keep home our child in the Fall. With the recent rise of Coronavirus cases in our state, I do agree with the decision to go 100% virtually for the first trimester.

One great concern we have is the necessity to maintain a full school day for our child. Core subjects such as math, reading, and social studies make perfect sense, however the

expectation to hold a 5 hour school day at home is unrealistic and assumes an oversimplification of the responsibilities and emotional fortitude of families during a pandemic crisis, not to mention professional and community responsibilities of said parent to oversee and facilitate in addition to outside responsibilities (e.g., work).

Our son has been taking weekly piano lessons since kindergarten, is highly physically active and athletic, but struggles with focus in an isolated setting, turning our crisis schooling in the Spring from a 2 ½ hour expectation into an all-day battle of the will. Expecting a child (and facilitating parent) to be available and able to commit to several additional hours PER CHILD each day is *a failure to accept circumstances and apply reason*. I strongly question the necessity of curriculum outside of core competencies during what I consider a continuation of crisis schooling. Coursework for classes such as P.E., music, and art among others can be paused without long term repercussions.

We can educate our children to common core standards sans fine arts and special classes (temporarily); and given the magnitude of teaching responsibility shift from trained educator to parent, should trim concepts and workload in the interim and it's a certainty the students will barely skip a beat by the end of the school year, and will likely be in a healthier mental and emotional state as well.

Continuation with a 5 hour school day remote for elementary students is unrealistic and completely unnecessary to cover core curriculum. If a variety homeschool curriculum producing top-performing college students and geared to be instructed by untrained parents covers beyond state standards in 3-4 hours per day for 4 days per week, surely the certified, resourced, and talented educators and curriculum planners of district 54 can do better than swap a bell for a (note)book.

Nathan Wiens

12. Thank you so much, District 54, for making health and safety a top priority. I applaud your decision to go virtual for the first trimester. I know it is not an easy decision, and there will be many families who will voice their discontent. There are pros and cons to every decision, but I believe this is the correct one.

As a family with young children and as a high school educator, we have been very anxious about the start of the upcoming year. We understand the immense benefits that come from in-person instruction. We understand how much students and staff members miss each other and crave that interaction. I, myself, have been grieving for the past few months with the loss of in-person teaching. However, with the given trends and research information that is being released, in-person instruction is a nearly impossible feat without someone contracting COVID-19. For a child, family, or staff member to get sick and/or potentially die is devastating. One person is one too many, and we are glad that

you are being preventative. We are relieved that our community will collectively be working towards reducing infections. We need to get rid of this virus as soon as we can, and the virtual route will assist in doing so. We are with you, District 54, in this decision. We support the decision. If there is a community need to support families and the district at this time, we will be available if you need us. I am a high school math educator and my husband is a software developer.

Gibel Cushing

13. Please advise when should I expect a computer and WiFi for my child so she can do virtual learning. Also when should I expect a refund for my taxes? When can I expect a child sitter from the district to contact me regarding the schedule when and what time they can start watching my child so I can go to work to buy food? How much of the school staff salaries will be cut and provided to parents from the district?

Joanna Rzeszutek

14. We are truly disheartened with flip-flop decisions of District 54. Despite numerous studies supporting in-person learning, as well as recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC, you have chosen to not listen to science and are now pivoting away from what the experts are recommending. You have instead chosen to capitulate to the politics surrounding this virus ... and yes, both sides are truly disgusting.

Why would you choose to shut down the school for 3 months when the cases of COVID are already leveling off? Yes, total positive tests increased from the low point following a full shutdown of our State ... but so have the total number of tests administered. Did everyone honestly think that the cases wouldn't increase after opening up the State?

So much can change in a month and it's unfair to the children to close the door on in-person learning for 1/3 of the school year.

We are sad, frustrated, and angry that the option you previously presented us was never really an option all along. The teachers union needs to be reminded that they are essential workers - like so many of us who have had to work each and every day since this whole thing started. This was a chance to bring some level of normalcy back to our children. A chance at social interactions with friends they haven't been able to see for nearly 5 months. An opportunity for structure, and real education. So many children will suffer in many ways worse than the possibility of catching COVID.

The kids need to come first, not second. If the teachers don't want to teach, so be it. They should find a new career path with minimal contact with people. I don't know

what world you live in to think that a 5, 6, 7, or 8 year old can reasonably sit in-front of an iPad or laptop 5 hours a day, stay engaged, and actually receive a quality education.

We strongly believe the school should open before November, and as parents who pay our fair share in property tax we will expect that. It's wrong that teachers are posting about their trips to Disney world and vacations to Florida, and yet our children can't get a real education for fear of teachers being infected by a virus...they didn't seem to care too much when they were traveling and having fun. The in-person learning option should still be available. As parents dedicated to ensuring our children receive a proper education so that they can succeed in life, they will be ready come November - we hope you guys will be prepared properly for their return.

Renee & Matthew Roan

15. I wanted to bring up a very pertinent concern for several of the parents in our district. Many of us are a 2 parent working household. We finally got to a stage where we no longer need childcare for our children. Now with 3 weeks to go before school, all our kids will be home full time. Are there going to be any financial assistance programs to assist these parents in need ...for example I am an essential worker and can't work from home and neither can my spouse.

Hiba Almadadha

16. Hi my name is Dina, and my 2 kids are in District 54. I want my kids to attend school physically because I'm working and our family needs this money to pay our bills. Keeping kids at home will put me at risk of losing my job and we won't be able to pay our bills. Please consider our family and all the families who are in the same situation like us.

Dina Sand

17. As a physician who has treated COVID-19 in the ICU, hospital and clinic for the past 4.5 months I applaud your decision. You are doing what is safe for our kids and teachers and ultimately our community as a whole. Thank you for making this decision. You can never make everyone happy but health and safety should be the guiding principle.

Achal Garbharran

18. As a concerned parent, I am very disappointed with the dangerous decisions made by yourself and District 54 officials today. The district has not considered the will of the parents or the hardships and harm this will cause parents and the children. The survey produced by District 54 overwhelmingly proved that the parents of students in our

district know the risks involved and the actual science being produced by the CDC. They spoke and you should have listened.

Current CDC guidelines prove it is safe for children to return to in person learning with precautions in place. Please see the attached CDC recommendations listed in this link. You can go to the CDC website yourself. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>

Based on actual CDC science and doctors recommendations, the parents of district 54 would like to know where you and the district is obtaining your medical guidance from. Historically, the CDC has provided national guidance on these matters. Current CDC and national medical evidence has proven that children are at very low risk. The risk to children is even less than that of the last 3 influenza seasons. This is based on actual science. Not political agendas being pushed at the state level and by local unions.

We demand that you immediately provide medical evidence from your medical sources stating the risks to children and provide actual medical proof that Covid 19 is more dangerous to children than influenza. The CDC sure doesn't think so.

We also demand to know who is sitting on your self nominated Pandemic Medical Advisory Team. Who are these people and what medical experience do they have? Are they made up of epidemiologists and actual medical doctors who deal with infectious diseases? Are there pediatricians who specialize in infectious diseases on your advisory panel? Who are the people on this panel deciding what's best for our children?

The damage that's going to be inflicted on the families and especially the children of your district will go beyond anything that any of you could have conceived. Mentally and emotionally. Parents deserve a choice. Those who are afraid, should be able to choose remote learning. Those of us who want in person learning for our children, should also be given that choice. The overall toll that will be taken out on our children will last forever. Anything that happens to our children mentally, physically or emotionally based on your misinformed decisions will fall on you and the leadership of this district. We will hold you responsible, Mr. DuRoss. We will not let this go and the parents of our community will make it known to you very soon.

Christopher Jurkowski

19. Since schools aren't reopening this fall I would like to know if teachers are actually going back to school and teaching remotely from school. Since there will not be any students at school, "there will be no danger to the teachers', I feel there is no reason for teachers not to work from school and be available to the students and parents during school hours!

Joanna Iller

20. I have 2 students in District 54, one entering 6th grade and the other entering kindergarten (previously attended the early learning center). Both my kids have 504 Plans and require additional attention and support in school. I am a single parent with zero help from anyone, there is no support system from family or my boys dads. I work a full time job, a part time job and attend school myself. My biggest concern is that my children will not be supported the way they need to be supported in order to succeed in school as they would in an in person environment. My older son has ADHD, which makes it hard enough to stay on track. My younger son is just starting kindergarten, which is a big change and will likely come with new challenges.

What is being put in place to give kids with a 504 the extra support they need? Will students that meet with the school social worker still be meeting with them? Do they have to reach out or will the social worker be reaching out? What kind of checks and balances are being put into place to ensure school work is being completed? The Google classroom is confusing and I couldn't tell what my kid had to do, if it was completed or not. Are teachers going to be reaching out to parents with status updates?

What is District 54 going to do to ensure students are still positively interacting with classmates? I'm sure all parents can attest to the level of stir crazy all the kids are from this very extended break from in person learning. Kids need to be able to enjoy gym class and recess and joke with friends, talk to each other. How is that going to be addressed?

I understand the health and safety of the students and staff is of the highest importance, but education, home environments and mental health need to be addressed as well.

Jen James

21. My two girls go to Adolph Link. One starting kindergarten and the other 4th grade. What was the point of the survey if we are all virtual? I may have to quit my job because of this horrible decision made. While I continue to pay YOUR salary (which is a nice one) I'm struggling to pay my property taxes to support you! Now I have to do the District 54 teachers' job, quit my job, and continue to pay every one salaries!! Doesn't sound right does it?!? I would love a refund on my taxes or get the teachers' salary since I'm doing their job!

It's not a very wise decision to make a decision for all families based off what YOU think is best for my children. My children don't do well with virtual learning and I'm not sure how my kindergartener will even learn?!?! I'm sure you could give two craps of

what I think but you really should as I pay your salary and now I'm doing a teachers job!

Renee Yass

*Received Tuesday, August 4*

22. In my opinion the decision to keep schools closed is not a rational one, but a political one. Of all of my research on this, the science points to the fact that Covid19 is less of a risk than the regular flu. I have posted links confirming this from the CDC, American Academy Of Pediatrics, and The London Times. And Dr. Scott Atlas whose credentials speak for themselves.

In our case with Corey who has Autism, he has regressed since this lockdown was put in place, and the thought of him doing online learning for 5 hours per day ... well , that is not going to happen. It looks as if he will now regress even further. The negative effect of keeping a special needs child from going to school is referenced in the American Pediatric article.

They say follow the science. Well the CDC (the supposed gold standard) IS the science. From what I am reading is that the whole world is sending their kids back to school. And even some states in the US are doing the same. I don't know how District 54 came to their decision, but as far as I am concerned it is not in the best interests of the children, and I find that very disappointing.

Randy Harris

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>
- <https://www.today.com/parents/american-academy-pediatrics-president-push-schools-reopen-t185806>
- <https://video.foxnews.com/v/6171365781001#sp=show-clips>
- <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/no-known-case-of-teacher-catching-coronavirus-from-pupils-says-scientist-3zk5g2x6z>

23. As a parent of 2 kids I am very disappointed with the district approach and my heart is broken seeing my kids meltdown after information they cannot go to school and Chromebook being their only "peer."

Thousands of people passing by one Walmart location every day, not to mention all other stores, parking full at Woodfield Mall. Nobody says about anybody getting

infected there. It is all about the money. More people being shot in Chicago percentage wise more than people dying from COVID. South Dakota - they have all schools open, no masks.

We pay a lot, a lot of money on schools in our real estate taxes and now many of us need to quit our job to be able to help our kids learn. These younger kids are not able to be successful in v-learning. In spring semester during v-learning neither music or art teacher showed up and talked to kids, same with PE. They learn from interaction with teachers, peers, listening to others, not from reading instructions on SeeSaw.

Slowly the world is trying to adjust kids to new normality and I really hope and beg that you do not let that happen. Transforming kids into bio-robots, who will be afraid of any contact with brother, sister. They will be eating alone, isolated, and over time deprived of feelings like friendship. This is depriving people of humanity. "Keep distance, do not touch." Kids learn the world from experiencing the world with all their senses, including touching, interacting with peers, which plays a key role. Where are the opposing voices of psychologists and pediatricians?

Here is some supporting data. <https://wirepoints.org/the-facts-support-in-person-learning-for-most-illinois-schools-case-study-new-trier-high-school-district-203-wirepoints>. Please do all you can to have the school open.

Agnes Stankiewicz

24. What were the results of the survey sent to parents mid-summer regarding Dist 54 Fall Semester?

Why hasn't District 54 published the results prior to this decision being made as have other suburban school districts?

If survey results indicate that the vast majority of the public wishes to have in person education this fall, why aren't their wishes being accepted?

Why can't teachers wear necessary PPE to ensure their safety and the safety of others while teaching in person?

If teachers are unable to perform their full time duties through "remote learning" will they be furloughed?

Mike Perri

25. I have a question about working parents? What are we supposed to do? Both me and my husband work. We do not have an option to work from home. Our children are 8 and 10 years old and especially the younger one needs help during v-learning. Also, my kids are quite shy people and remote learning would not help them open up. In terms of emotional and social skills e-learning is not a good choice for my children.

Aneta Bruszewski

26. As a parent to a two year old and an incoming seventh grader at Keller, and as someone with immunocompromised family members, I strongly support D54's decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year remotely. It must be said, however, that this agreement comes with a caveat.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc in the lives of families, and particularly the families of blue-collar and other essential workers. Some of us are incredibly privileged in that we have family nearby who can assist with childcare and v-learning. However, many parents - particularly parents of children with Section 504 plans or IEPs - continue to fall through the cracks as they attempt to juggle their children's education with the provision of their family's basic needs, whether this is because they are disallowed by their employers to work from home, because they are unable to perform their job duties remotely, or because working from home has presented unforeseen challenges. Regardless of the reason, parents within our district and across the country are being forced to make impossible decisions, or in the cases of furloughed or laid off employees, having these impossible decisions made for them.

I anticipate the Board of Education is receiving significant backlash for the difficult decision (however sound the reasoning) to prioritize the physical welfare of students and staff over the benefits of in-person instruction. The Board must consider while the issues of education and income disparity do not stem from the COVID-19 pandemic, they are aggravated by it to such a degree as to emphasize a glaring lack of necessary social support structures both locally and nationally. Families are suffering financially, emotionally, and physically because of a situation that is entirely out of our control, which often necessitates exposing ourselves and our children to situations that put us at risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19. Accordingly, I implore the Board to collaborate with other local and federal government bodies to explore methods of addressing the difficulties faced by families scrambling to secure both their income and supervisory support for V-learning. If meaningful action is not taken to mitigate our community's damages now, it will translate to a decline in educational outcomes and an inability to flatten the curve and return to a state of normalcy.

Stephanie Bertels

27. Very disappointing to see that SD54 is moving toward virtual learning only. Both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly urged in person education.

What is the specific concern inside the classroom's that SD54 is worried about? Does SD54 believe elementary school staff are at higher risk than other essential workers such as nurses, meat packers, grocery workers, etc?

The SD54 announcement doesn't address this. It only talks about case numbers and some possible liability concerns. Looks like minimal CoVid-19 risk to young children and the adults they interact with has been well established for many weeks.

Al Baumgartner

28. If it is the mission of District 54 to ensure student success, why are you not allowing in person instructions? (Please do not respond with the same excuse given in the email from the District on 8/3/20, because rising cases in IL are not relevant to school re-opening discussion). There is no scientific debate why schools should not be re-opened. The CDC came out recently with the following: "It is critically important for our public health to open schools this fall," said CDC Director Dr. Robert R. Redfield. " More from CDC on why schools must reopen is here <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html>.

Please act in a responsible fashion and allow the children to return to in person instructions.

What are the results of the July survey the District received from parents? How many families chose in person instructions this school year?

Agnes Musial

29. The board has had since March to prepare for safely reopening schools. The benefits to in-person learning are enormous and well published and the risk of this virus to children is very low compared to the rest of the population.

If my understanding is correct that this decision was based primarily on the input of the teachers, then those unwilling to work should be let go or offered medical retirement. Schools are an "essential business" and the expectation is that all essential employees will come to work. My wife and I are both employees for an "essential business" and have been expected to continue coming to work in-person. We didn't get a vote, why are you giving this power to your teachers? There are millions of unemployed in America because of this virus. Any teacher who doesn't want to work should be easy to replace.

Therefore, please explain to us why your organization is going against the CDC which recommends in-person schooling and the survey of the parents in this district which voted for in-person schooling. We demand that you publish the results of the parents survey.

Finally, explain the specific reasons why you feel you are unable to mitigate the risks of COVID and continue with in-person school

Make the necessary accommodations to open. You owe it to the community and to the children that you pretend to care about.

David Bernstein

30. Shocking, devastating, disappointing. The families and students of District 54 have been let down. The Superintendent presented a different picture in July. The families of District 54 have been misled and are very confused.

As the Superintendent stated in July:

"Please keep in mind, that should Illinois move from Phase 4 back to Phase 1, 2 or 3 due to a resurgence of the virus, it is possible that the governor will direct all Illinois schools to move to remote learning for all students for a period of time. It is also possible that new restrictions could be instituted on classroom capacity limits, which could require a combination of on-campus and remote attendance days. Some states have delayed the start of the school year, due to the number of COVID-19 cases in their state. As a district, we are preparing for a variety of scenarios and, as always, we are committed to keeping you informed every step of the way."

None of the above has taken place. The parents were NOT informed and Illinois has not moved from Phase 4. Two week notice is not adequate. Parents deserve an explanation! An effective leader would at least have facts to back up his change in tune.

One would hope an effective leader would at least give the parents a better explanation than

"However, the COVID-19 positivity rates have continued to rise at the national and state level since flattening in June. On August 2, Illinois announced its 12th straight day of more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases and a rising positivity rate, bringing the state's total to 181,943 cases."

"As the numbers continue to grow, we feel the only safe option is for all of our students to start the school year virtually. We understand this presents a hardship for some

families and we worked diligently to find a way to host in-person instruction. Ultimately, we have to put health and safety first.”

It is confusing how more than 1,000 positive cases daily in a population of >11 million is a safety issue from the IDPH or that this data is deemed a safety issue for in-person instruction. The Governor has not moved Illinois from phase 4 back to phase 3 or 2.

As per the ISBE guidelines, “All reopening guidance will continue to rely on what IDPH experts tell us is best for the safety and well-being of our students and will be developed in partnership with IDPH. We strongly encourage prioritizing in-person learning for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), English Learners (ELs), and students under the age of 13.”

No valid explanation or data from the IDPH was given. Simply a blanket explanation. Please offer the families answers. It seems that now the focus is on virtual learning and several students will be left behind. Please look at the Illinois State Board of Education guidelines and reevaluate or at least give the “community” a better sense of your plan.

How about some ANSWERS:

1) If a parent is an essential worker and/or cannot take off work, can a student(s) attend class after hours? How are the students able to attend virtual learning if they are at day care? Can the elementary classes be done after hours or on the weekends? Virtual learning for elementary students is not simply logging in with a teacher. It requires heavy one on one instruction with a parent or caregiver.

PA 101-0643 requires that “The district superintendent shall periodically review and amend its Remote and Blended Remote Learning Day Plan, as needed, to ensure the plan meets the needs of all students.”

It is a little naïve to think that elementary students will receive an effective education virtually. Also, to think that socializing via zoom will provide any sort of communication or development is also naïve.

2) What are the criteria for returning to in-person schooling? The parents at least deserve some explanation rather than a blanket statement that the “numbers of positivity rate have increased”. WHAT WILL BE THE CRITERIA OR DATA METRIC that will ALLOW the DISTRICT to go back to in-person school instruction?

Will it be an every 2 week evaluation? daily? every month? The parents will have to find child care. Some guidance would be helpful.

3) What about a child with an IEP? Now the parent will be doing the therapies? or a zoom meeting with a therapist will be considered an effective method for a child with special needs?

4) If District 54 does not have a “plan” as to when and if to move into in-person instruction the families and students at least deserve to hear a timeline or guidelines. Will District 54 advise families with any guidelines? Will District 54 be remote learning for the entire semester? We at least deserve to know something more, so we can make alternative education arrangements if needed.

Please give the families some sort of communication that District 54 is working diligently to return to in-person instruction.

5) Please provide a more clear explanation to the families as to why virtual learning is deemed necessary? Especially for those students under 13 and those with an IEP. A blanket statement will NOT suffice. Your 15,000+ students in the district deserve better.

Lastly, ISBE recommends clear communication with students, families, and staff about expectations and protocols for all schools. ISBE also recommends collecting information from students and families via an intake survey/needs assessment to help guide school and district planning and to connect students and families with resources in advance of the start of the school year. None of this has been done since the sudden switch to all remote learning on 8.3.20.

As per ISBE general recommendations for Early Childhood Educators Collaboration between home and school is key whether children participate in in-person, blended, or remote learning. Building relationships should be the priority to support early learning students. Learning environments may fluctuate between in-person, blended, and remote learning during this pandemic, but districts must keep in the forefront that, whenever possible, the youngest learners (along with English Learners and students with IEPs) should be the first priority for in-person learning, when possible.

Will District 54 provide the families an explanation? Will any of the ISBE recommendations be considered?

Moving to a remote learning environment especially for elementary students and students with IEP's without adequate notice or any clear data is disappointing for all families of District 54.

We were led to believe District 54 would be following state guidelines as per the Governor and IDPH.

What happened to the guidance as per your last email?

"Option 1: In-Person Instruction

Governor Pritzker announced on June 23 that Illinois schools can return to on-campus learning with enhanced safety protocols. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics is recommending students physically return to school. The Reopening District 54 plan outlines the protocols we are putting in place to resume instruction at school based on guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Illinois Department of Public Health and Board of Education and the Centers for Disease Control."

Benjamin Pfeffer

31. Hello my name is Julian Jablonski I am a 5th grader at Lincoln Prairie School. I was just wondering why schools are closed. I think that schools should be open because kids don't die from COVID-19. Also I learn better in school than home. Another reason why schools should be open is because I would rather see my friends in person than virtually - I miss them and I miss my teachers.
32. We were really excited for our children, ages 7 and 8, to return to school this fall, and were really ecstatic, as were they, to see their friends and teachers that they sorely missed. What we do not understand is why the school is closed and the camps at the park districts are open and able to educate our children safely, but at a cost.

With our children not returning to school creates an unnecessary burden on us. To expect us to have to pay for camp to watch our children and help with virtually learning classes is absurd! If you are volunteering to pay for that then I would be more than happy to send them to camp, but as I recall our tax dollars go to the school to provide the education for our children. To expect children to sit and educate themselves for 5 hours, grading them like they were still in school, and MAP testing can not be an expectation for any student not attending in-person. I am telling you now my children will NOT be MAP testing without the necessary environment for them to concentrate.

We have worked throughout this whole pandemic as I am a nurse as well as my husband who is a truck driver, and we have followed the necessary guidelines to protect myself and my children and cannot understand why the teachers can not. If I were not able to work because of the fear of catching COVID, then I would be put on medical leave or short term disability, and our teachers should be expected to do the same. I am sure I am not the only one who is frustrated, angry, or revolted by our school district actions. Our children are the ones most affected.

What was not said in the email, was when we can expect them to open the schools, reminder we are still in phase 4 and previous emails said if we had to move back to previous phases would go virtually, which has not happened. If the school is able to have temperature checks, have the children wear masks, and distance there is no need for the schools not to open. I will be attending the live school board meeting this Thursday and hopefully you will be able to provide a lot more answers than those in any of the previous emails and reconsider your decision about the school closings.

Amy Cope

33. Thank you District 54 for making the best decision for our children and all staff members.

To the teachers: The community has placed the blame solely at your feet for this decision. You have seen the comments and you'll hear more tonight. Many will question your character. For every comment that tears at your heart tonight, please remind yourselves of the amazing teachers you all are and the many things you have done for our kids. You, along with all staff members in a building, have comforted our children, cried with them, celebrated their personal and academic successes, and loved them as much as we do. You are all such amazing beautiful generous people. Thank you for loving, teaching, and guiding my children when I cannot be there. I am proud of and so thankful for every teacher and staff member who has made an impact on my children's lives. To the parents- Shame on you. Your behavior is deplorable. Please know your children are watching and learning from YOU now. Is this what you want to teach them?

Samantha Richardson, Campanelli Parent

34. Beginning the school year 100% virtually is the safest option given the positivity rates in the SD54 community. No reasonable infectious disease mitigation plan could control infection rates while simultaneously providing a setting where children can effectively learn. In-person instruction is untenable at this time- the attention of teachers, students, and support staff would be diverted from educating and redirected to contact tracing, answering health and safety questions, and constantly defending that which is beyond their control. Schedules would become reactionary, resulting in a stressful, confusing, and unpredictable environment. Thank you in advance to the board for maintaining your role as a responsible leadership body in this community.

Tiffany Johnson, MS, MPA

*Received Wednesday, August 5*

35. My name is Margaret Jablonski, and I am a mother to 3 kids, 2 of whom are going to be attending Lincoln Prairie School this year. I am a nurse and my husband is a firefighter/paramedic. We have been at the frontlines of this insanity since the start of it all. I am reaching out to you again to let you know how utterly disappointed, not to say "angry", I am with the district's decision to begin this school year remotely. I don't understand what prompted the change in plans. I have been following the "Covid19 numbers" and nothing I see supports this reversal. The positivity rate for the state of Illinois is less than 4% (with 8% being the number where we would see the return of "phase 3") - true, the number oscillates, but to claim a "consistent climb" is false. The severe and complicated form of COVID-19 is spectacular - and I say it as an ICU nurse. It does, however, affect a very small percentage of those infected. I have seen a significant decrease in COVID-19 patients in the 3 hospitals I work in over the last 2-3 months. (Yes, some of us still HAVE to work in the areas we CHOSE despite the danger). Those who have gotten very sick and died are mostly elderly or those who have not been able to take care of themselves and their health and have developed co-morbidities (teaching moment?!). The number of cases worldwide, in the US and in our state WILL keep increasing. The majority of us who catch it, WILL be fine. This virus is not going away and we need to learn to live with it. Our "new normal" CANNOT consist of kids locked up in their homes, looking at their friends and teachers through a screen. We need to let them back into school. We need to figure out what works and what doesn't. We need to look at other countries and use their experiences - Finland, Sweden, France, Germany, etc. Research shows that transmission within the household is much more likely than transmission in school, where, it seems, every move kids make will be monitored, scheduled and sanitized. American Academy of Pediatrics, CDC, Dr. Fauci, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, all advocate for opening schools for in person learning. Let's do right by our kids. Let's not deprive them of formative experiences that the school provides. My kids can handle remote learning. I am, however, just horrified of the lasting impact that this social isolation and culture of fear will have on them. They NEED to be with other children. They NEED to learn to make human connections and to live in a society. They NEED to be brave and smart and safe with how they go about it, but they will not learn it locked up at home. If we truly are "all in this together" then we need to do what is best for the kids (and it is NOT remote learning).

I would appreciate an explanation - something to convince me that there really is no other option but to "play school" remotely.

Margaret Jablonski

36. I would like to thank the leaders of District 54 for making the tough decision to start this school year remotely. My 4 grandchildren attend District 54 schools. Their health and safety is my family's number one concern. You have done the right thing!

Katherine Hansen

37. I was just informed that Mandeline/Itasca school district decided to open up schools and kids are returning to class this Fall. How are some school districts allowing kids to come back, and some are not. District 54 did a survey and from what I heard most parents picked back to school option. How is it fair to kids to continue with e-learning, where it's proven that they do not learn the same as in class, especially kids up to 7th or 8th grade, or special needs kids. For the most part, if anyone has any family health concerns they had an option to do e-Learning, how is it that kids that choose to go back to school are not allowed to do that. Most parents work and are not able to stay home. How are you gonna provide for the families that will have to quit their jobs to stay with kids. Please consider changing it back to school, if there is anything that we need to do to change that let me know. Thank you for your consideration and I'll be looking forward to the back to school email .

Wojciech Porebski

38. I am an 8th grade student at LP and I am sending this email regarding the district's decision to close down the SD54 schools amid the "rising" Covid cases in Illinois. I personally learn better when I am around other students and in person learning is better for me. And starting off my last year at LP remotely is not what i wanted at all. I would much rather want to be physically in school even if I have to wear a mask for 6 hours. I think your decision is wrong because of a couple reasons. My mom is a nurse and my dad is a firefighter/paramedic and they have been helping Covid patients a lot, and I believe my mom also sent you an email, saying that the amount of people coming in to her hospital with Covid has lowered since the beginning of the pandemic, and most people who have died because of the Virus were elderly people and people with health issues. Us kids are less at risk, therefore making it safer for us to go out, with safety precautions of course.

My younger brother, who is going into 5th grade, also sent you an email about the closing of the schools. My mom told me that a lot of the teachers at District 54 want students to come back to school because it is a better environment for them, and I completely agree. Another reason why schools should be open is this: In the email you sent out said that schools are closing because Covid cases in Illinois have been increasing a lot, but if you search up anywhere, the graph is decreasing. It was wrong to say that you aren't letting kids in schools because of the rise in cases. I know that a majority of

Lincoln Prairie families wanted to send their kids back to school, so I hope you change your mind and let my family and the other families come back to school.

Zosia Jablonski

39. Students need schools more now than ever before. Society is so much better because of the education that you used to provide. There is no way anyone could convince me that schools are not essential. Nobody is asking teachers to show up to class unprotected. So many businesses have adapted to this pandemic. PPE is widely available and you have had since March to get ready for a return to class.

Abandoning society now and leaving us without your valuable service is unforgivable. Your closure of school will cause immense harm to society. You have forever lost my respect and support. I hope to see you all unemployed.

David Bernstein

40. I have a son, Haruki who will be in sixth grade this coming school year at Nerge Elementary School and he needs support in his English Languages. We came to the US from Japan last November and joined Nerge Elementary School. My question is; "What kind of EL support could we get during remote learning?" I would like to know how EL classes will take place via remote learning. Before March, my son had EL classes during the school almost everyday, but after the school turned to v-learning, there was very limited time for EL lessons. I understand it is a difficult time, but EL support is very important for my son in order to communicate with teachers and classmates, which I believe is more difficult via online compared to communicating in person. Thank you for your support.

Mari Watanabe

41. Could there be a revision to the virtual learning duration per day for elementary students to more than 2.5 hrs? If the above is not a possibility then, based on student's need and proficiency levels could the teacher send enrichment and additional virtual learning activities?

Maitreyee Ghosh

42. I'm a mother of three children (7Y old twins & 9 year old), all with behavioral problems, no attention span for zoom and will not work on homework willingly or independently. I work from home 8-5:30 and my job requires me to be on virtual conferences throughout the day. [which means I have to be on video and have silence] My husband

is an essential worker and is gone the entire day. I signed up for in-person + after care -- now I'm stuck with V-learning and no care.

Here is the problem: I'm alone; I have to fight with them to get on to their devices. I have to fight with them to do homework. I have to make a choice between working and their schooling. I need to work to provide for the family and have insurance.

Here is my ask: Reduce the number of clock hours from 5 to 2 or 3. Reduce the ask for independent tasks and homework assignments. Keep teaching what is absolutely necessary like Reading, Math. Remove ART, PE, MUSIC, virtual field trips. Provide smaller group sessions for in person learning.

Sarah Bruce

*Received Thursday, August 6*

43. As an employee of Loyola University Chicago, I can say I admire their transparency in decision-making based on what's "LAMA )" (legally allowed and medically advisable). My 5 year old is starting kindergarten this year. We moved to Schaumburg because of this school district. I am very thankful for your dedication to student, faculty and staff safety. I am pregnant and considered high-risk. My husband has asthma. We spend time with elderly Grandparents. We desperately wanted a "normal" kindergarten experience but quickly realized this kid hasn't experienced normal since the beginning of March. I just want to say thank you for all that you do. Take care and stay safe,

Elizabeth Reynolds

44. My name is Jillian Bernas and my husband Angel Garcia and I own a home within the Nerge/Mead boundaries where we live with our daughter. She may be Mead class of 2034 one day. As she grows, we will be weighing the benefits and challenges between public, private and homeschooling options. I work full time. We are considered essential, so our office never closed, and the expectation is that I am at the office every day. I am lucky to have a good job. My husband works and we share household responsibilities. My parents live five minutes away and his mom helps us twice a week. My family is in a very good situation and we can choose our schooling options, so my voice might not really matter to you, but I would like to speak for families that do not have choices. As I have been reading the news of the Superintendent and Board of Education making the decision to go completely remote 20 days before the first day of school, I have been thinking What would I do? Then I think What in the world would a woman do that doesn't have the support of her parents, her husband, and a good job that can cover the added expenses of the childcare necessary now that her child cannot attend school? I am writing because I want to know what support you are providing to

households where parents are required to work, especially those families of the 22% of children that qualify for the federal free lunch program. Caring for a healthy child dismissed from school is not covered under new Covid-19 FMLA guidelines. I hope you will discuss this at tonight's meeting. I also would like to propose an actionable item the Board of Education can take for the next budget cycle. I would ask that you pass a resolution directing the Treasurer to abate tax dollars back to taxpayers. Obviously, this is not an immediate solution to childcare needs, but it returns dollars to the community that will have to bear the burden of unanticipated childcare. The Schaumburg Township District Library has passed an abatement and I would be happy to share our experience with you. Thank you for your service.

Jillian Bernas

45. We fully support the decision to start school remotely. We trust that a lot of thought went into making this very difficult decision and that it was made weighing the potential consequences on both sides of this no win situation. We understand and respect that school districts and staff are not responsible for the pandemic we are facing, our rising local cases, or the ever changing guidelines that schools are mandated to implement. School districts cannot ignore the safety guidelines or commit to implementing safe working and learning conditions simply because the parents voted for in person instruction. The way that schools would be forced to open is not conducive to learning and would only further harm our youngest learners socially and emotionally. The opening and then the threat or reality of having to close again would be harder for families than having one consistent plan. There are a lot of unanswered questions about COVID-19 and we can't conclude that any age student is not at risk and that they can't transmit it. We can't compare our situation to other countries who opened schools with little to no positive new cases being reported. We can't assess the risk to our children when we haven't put them together inside of a building for an extended period of time. Thank you for putting the overall health and wellbeing of our students and D54 staff first. Thank you for making the tough decision and standing by it until we have more information and until we have a steady decline in new cases over time. While this is not ideal for any student or teacher, we have faith that D54 will rise to the challenge of doing the best they can under the circumstances. This is not forever, this is just for right now. We look forward to partnering with Ender-Salk staff to make this a positive school year, despite the challenges outside of our control. We know that teachers would much rather be teaching students in person. We appreciate their willingness to work harder than they ever have before to make this school year as positive and effective as possible. As parents, we value the partnership with our teachers and realize that this partnership will determine the success of this school year for our kids.

Eric and Michelle Walsh

46. What percentage of families responding to the D54 Reopening Plan chose to have their child to return to school in person?

Other neighboring districts are giving parents a set date to reassess returning to school in person. When will a reassessment occur at SD54 to allow children to return to in person school?

Per Phase 4 of Reopening Illinois plan, P-12 schools should reopen with IDPH safety guidance. Was IDPH safety guidance requested? Was it given? What were those measures for returning to in person school? Since we had a Reopening Plan what caused the mitigation measures to all the sudden be insufficient causing the need for e-learning?

Josh Roberts

47. I would just like to request that if we are going 100% virtual that the teachers need to be in the building while teaching. This would allow that they could give our children 100% of their time during the day just like normal school days. Working from home can cause distractions and I feel this would eliminate the distractions.

Marie Winiarczyk

48. I have several questions regarding the virtual learning. Will teachers be available between 8am and 8pm? I'm worried that some students may need help in the afternoon or evening after their parents are back from work. It would be easier if the school day would be divided into two or three segments, ex 8am to 12pm, 12pm to 4pm, and 4pm to 8pm. Each session would consist of exactly the same schedule. This way, at any given day, a child could attend any one of the three sessions or all three if for whatever reason they did not understand what they were supposed to do.

Will parents receive partial reimbursement of school state funds? Some parents will become "teacher helpers" by simple virtue that they will be the first person the child goes to if they don't understand something. Some parents will need to find child care for their children while they're at work.

Will every child receive a passing grade? I'm afraid some children may get penalized if their parents are not available to help them out or if their internet is not reliable, etc.

Can the teachers be available for zoom or any type of video session in a similar manner that they are in school? For example, if it's math, the math teacher is on zoom with students for that entire time. Instead of switching classes, students would be switching Zoom meetings.

Have you looked into Microsoft Teams as an alternative to Zoom or Google Meets?

Kinga Konkkel

49. First, thank you for your attention to the kids and the schools in this community over the years. I'm writing to express my concerns about the district's decision to go to full

remote learning communicated on August 3. I don't feel that Superintendent DuRoss's email fully and accurately explained why the decision to go full remote as opposed to Hybrid, which was originally communicated? Is it simply because of the media communication about new cases? Several school districts are providing a hybrid model with safety measures put in place to prevent the spread of the virus. Why are we different? Politics, the election, opinions of teachers, parents, and unions aside, this decision will have a negative impact on our children and their future.

We preach about the need for children to have grit and perseverance in the face of obstacles, and this decision teaches the opposite. This pandemic has hit everyone hard. Safety is important. Social emotional learning is important, teacher/student interaction is important, sports and extracurricular activities are important. For many children in our communities, school is a safe haven. Teachers and peer interaction provide structure, guidance and normalcy for children that don't always have another way out.

If you could please explain the reasons for the decision and the plan going forward, I would appreciate it. Thanks for your time.

Cindy Kirchner

50. Schools are supposed to open in phase 4, you totally disregarded that. You also disregarded parents' wishes for in person learning. What was the main reason for closing schools, besides safety which we all know is bunch of bs. What measures we have to meet in order for kids to go back?

Elizabeth Serafin

51. My name is Ishmael Robinson and I have three (3) children in the district and a university age child that progressed through the district. My house has historically taken great pride in being a part of one of the most intelligent districts in the state. Given all the trusted facts available at general populations fingertips, I am compelled to say that I found great disappointment with the timeliness in making what should have been the obvious scientific decision, to implement virtual learning for the children of our community at this time. This choice should not have ever been a political choice, yet it seemed over the past few months that this district and board members have allowed politics and self-serving individuals to impact such an obvious scientific and humane choice. Our expectations are that this trusted entity (the school board) does what is in the best of the community at large first. Like our law enforcement and healthcare institutions, we expect choices to be made based on the greater community impact first. Moving forward it is expected that the elected members of the board understand this expectation and make all choices after general community impact has been considered.

As a seasoned Technical Program Manager and Degreed Engineer, that has experience in every technical arena from Aerospace to industrial manufacturing, there are some key points that this board needs to understand.

This virus is airborne due to the fact that it attaches itself to particles that are already suspended in the air (this has been proven). Due to the airborne nature of this virus, a certain key factor has to be taken into consideration. This factor is called "Air Concentration." There is a reason outdoor activities, marches, protest etc. have not been directly linked to an increase in cases. The reason for this is in an open environment (with social distancing). Air Concentration levels of the virus are very low, due to the constant circulation of air. Most enclosed spaces do not offer similar circulation, thus the Air Concentration of the virus increases over time within an enclosed structure. Think of this in the same vein of how we think of carbon monoxide emissions from cars. In an open environment no much danger, but if one was to sit in a garage with their automobile running the Air Concentration would reach a dangerous and deadly level. Placing children or staff inside of enclosed spaces at this point in time provides the same risk. An overwhelming majority of enclosed school spaces do not have the ventilation required to protect inhabitants. Each room needs to be smoke tested and evaluated to responsibly place human lives within it at this point in time.

All it takes is one asymptomatic person to devastate our community using the district facilities as a mode of hyper-transmission. People say this virus is like the flu - but for this virus (at this time) we have no over the counter, prescription or therapeutic remedies or treatments for this virus.

This should be a responsibility considered moving forward. I would be happy to provide solutions and references to the district in this regard.

Ishmael Robinson, EE, MBA, MPM, PMP, CSM, ITiL

52. I am a 20 year resident of district 54 and have three children who have attended D54. I would like to say thank you to the administration for developing a plan which met the CDC, IDPH and ISBE guidelines. Thank you for the enormous effort you put into developing a plan and working diligently to insure it could be implemented in time for the beginning of the school year. I am both impressed and disappointed the plan is not being implemented. I see it as a GOLDEN opportunity to significantly reduce the impact of learning loss from the spring and shrink the gap in education and opportunities for low income and minority families. I don't know any parent, educator or administrator who wouldn't love the opportunity to teach k-6 in person with a class size of 15 or less or a junior high class size of 18 or less. The fact the district offered all teachers the opportunity to teach in a classroom or virtually and not a single teacher was denied the opportunity to teach a virtual class is just amazing. Obviously, this wouldn't be possible without the decision of 38% of the families who felt they could properly support their children at home and the district's commitment to improve the remote learning environment.

Unfortunately, instead of coming together to support the 17.7% low income and 21% ELL students in our district, the teachers union for a district with 86.5% white teachers with an average salary of \$70,079 which allowed EVERY teacher the opportunity to teach virtually has said it's not safe. The essential workers who worked in warehouses to fulfill your AMAZON order, sold you groceries, delivered your curbside order, cared for

the most vulnerable in long term care facilities and completed the deep cleaning of businesses which had COVID outbreaks did so without PPE, social distancing when the daily hospitalizations were over 100 and daily cases were over 600. They didn't have the opportunity to work remotely. Many of them are choosing to send their children to school because they are confident their child can safely go to school because their family has safely weathered the storm. They know their children will receive a much higher quality education and more quickly make up the learning loss due to the remote learning in a classroom of 15 students. These parents work hard to live in a district with such an amazing staff and administration in an effort to provide the best future for their children.

At a time where the disparity for minorities and low income families has become a national crisis and people are changing their social media profiles black and speaking of black privilege, please take this once in a lifetime opportunity to shrink the gap instead of increasing it. As a group of white administrators, board members and over 80% white teachers, please take the time during the closed session to come together with a plan which will improve situations for disadvantaged families. The plan presented to parents earlier this month had class sizes of 18 or less for junior high, 15 or less for k-6, what a HUGE benefit for ALL parties. Instead you now have teachers teaching remotely to an average class size of 23. I'm sorry, but I don't see how the latest option is an improvement.

With the revised 100% remote learning plan, the financially able parents are considering private schools and programs which cost up to \$250 per week per child, while those without the financial means are considering having their children go to a stranger's house or stay home alone. One of the most frequent comments on social media is so I pay taxes for schools, schools aren't safe, so now I pay a park district or daycare because they ARE safe? I guess the daycare and park district workers' lives matter less than the teachers? Another obvious increase in the already wide gap between the middle and low class.

I know like most things these days, this is a very divisive subject. I am concerned the damage to the trust and relationships between parents and teachers will be irreparable. Working parents now have to find childcare and support for their children. This will be an impossible task for some. First graders will once again be left at home alone (as happened in the spring) and it will happen more frequently because the state is not shut down and more parents are working. As mandated reporters, staff members will have no choice but to report the situation to the authorities. So parents who are already struggling to care for their families will now have to fight for the right to keep their children. Criminals will take this opportunity to rob homes or abduct children. The Village of Hoffman Estates recently issued a public notice regarding RUSE robberies with people claiming to be from the water department. I foresee fake Census workers as the next opportunity for criminals to get children to open the door. Victims of these crimes will blame the teachers. Parents witness the hypocrisy of some teachers and union representatives pushing for 100% remote learning because it is unsafe. Yet they believe it is safe enough to travel to hot spots like Florida, Texas, Arizona, have their children attend summer camps, play sports, and promote "safe" events where there are people NOT wearing masks or social distancing while singing and playing an

instrument. Why would someone who doesn't feel safe in a classroom of 15 think it's safe to attend an outdoor event with random people from the general public?

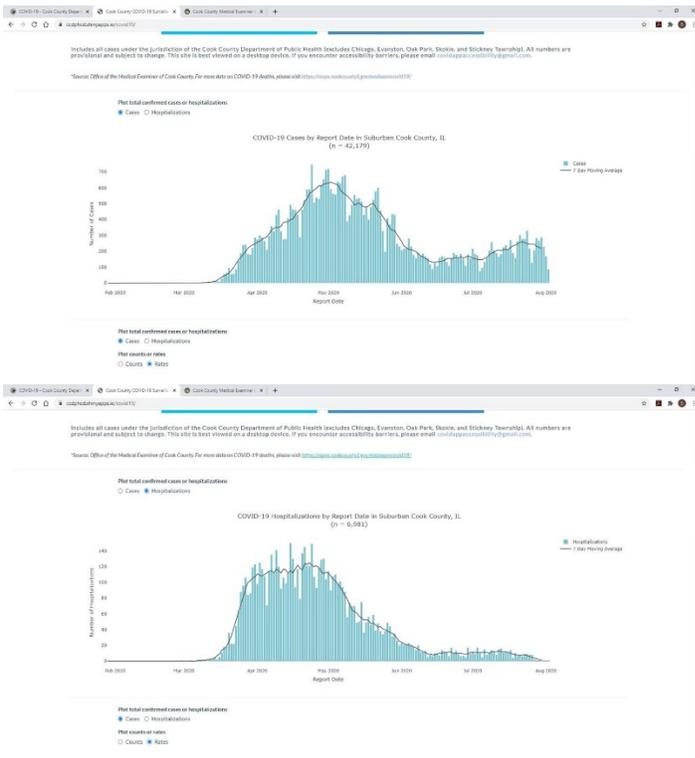
The average positivity rate in the zip codes serving D54 is under 5%. There have been TWO deaths in our communities for residents under the age of 50 and both had multiple comorbidities. The 7 day moving average for hospitalizations in ALL of suburban Cook County is 1. Please let that sink in, the 7 day moving average for ALL of suburban Cook County is 1 and currently there is only ONE patient hospitalized! If you allow the case rate to drive your decision, students will never go back to school. Case rates are going to continue to increase because testing is increasing. As college students go back and universities are frequently testing, the case rates will go up. We should be celebrating the FACT that despite the rise in cases, HOSPITALIZATIONS and DEATHS are decreasing. Yes, people are contracting the virus, but fewer are being hospitalized and fewer are dying. However, depression, suicide, abuse, neglect is increasing. As a district of highly educated administrators, teachers and board members, why are you allowing a single health aspect drive your decision? The CDC and AAP both recommended in person learning except for areas experiencing a surge. WE ARE NOT EXPERIENCING A SURGE! Exactly what statistics are you using to determine when it is safe to return? I think Dr Jen Ashton from Good Morning America said it well this morning "There is no such thing as dropping the risk to zero. Not only in the setting of this pandemic, but in life. It's about lowering the risk as much as possible." This is SO TRUE and resonated with me and I hope it does with you. As much as we want to protect our children, it is important they learn they are strong and with proper precautions they can be safe.

I realize the administration and board will not want to point fingers at the teachers or teachers union, but when an August 4 CBS 2 news report says "Teachers unions have formed medical panels of pediatricians to determine whether districts are creating safe environments for the teachers being asked to go into the classroom this fall – even on a limited basis. If the answer is no, it is not safe, then the word "strike" might become a regular part of our vocabulary again." So, the teachers unions are finding their OWN pediatricians instead of following the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations? THE UNIONS are the ones to determine if it is safe? AND they are NOT working with local administrators or health departments? Interesting. Private schools are opening, park districts, daycares and the YMCA have been running programs this entire time, universities are opening. The health departments aren't closing daycares or park districts or the YMCA and I'm sure given the children they have cared for all along have been from essential workers that there have been COVID cases. This is about the white privileged Teachers' Unions deciding THEY have the power, authority and expertise to determine when it is safe for children to go back to school.

I've included some information from the Suburban Cook County department of health in an effort to show things are IMPROVING despite case increases. I've also included the recent public bulletin so you know the threat to children's well being at home is real.

In closing, I hope the board, administration and union representatives will take the opportunity during the closed session to come together to work out any kinks in the previous plan. Don't just turn your social media profile black, take ACTION to shrink the gap, don't WIDEN it. Seize the opportunity to significantly shrink the learning loss for those less fortunate than you and provide your teachers with this once in a lifetime opportunity to teach small classes. As one of the largest districts in the state, please use this opportunity to set an example for others as you have done so many times before. If you continue with your revised plan for 100% remote learning, how will you insure student engagement will improve over the 80% in the spring? How will you insure DAILY engagement? How will you even begin to make up the 30% learning loss in reading and 50% learning loss in math for the average student, let alone an even WIDER gap for minorities and low income?

Stacy Gale





53. We are a family with multiple children at both the elementary and high school levels. One of our elementary-aged children has an IEP. Here is a list of questions and concerns we have for the district. Although I feel this only scratches the surface, it's a start.

#### Limited hands-on instructional support

- Both parents (in our home) work outside of the home.
- Our high school student has consistently helped to support our elementary student with IEP. We were blessed to have this type of consistent support from the end of the 2019/20 school year through CSY but now our high school student has a full schedule, as well, and will not be able to consistently help.

Instructional times happening simultaneously with ALL students for ALL schools (again, this poses issues with at-home, 1-on-1 supports).

We, as working parents, have to be outside-of-the-home. Now we may be forced to seek alternative temporary, physical locations for our children during scheduled Remote Learning. Alternatives that will not only put our kids in the same health risk as if they were in their own schools, but now we will have to pay out-of-pocket for it!

We recently moved to this district to align with our core values and standards. We know the districts (54/211) are taking action based on the well-being for all students. We, as a family, will address more questions and concerns as they surface.

Victor Akinola