

# PUBLIC COMMENT–BOARD MEETING OF THE WHOLE- 9-23-20

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## **The following questions were answered at the 9-23-2020 Middle School Parent Informational meeting.**

### **Questions/Comments:**

- Hello. How will remote learning look once in person instruction resumes? Will the kids still follow a live zoom schedule?
- As the mother of a child with a significant and serious pre-existing condition, I must opt to join this informational meeting via the remote/zoom option. I am guessing there are others like me. I am extremely disappointed that the district has not provided a way for us to make comments and ask questions over zoom during this meeting as our voices and perspectives should be heard, the same as those who have the ability to attend in-person.

1. What is the rationale for this move to full, in-person return when to date the only plans that have been discussed are hybrid and remote?

-This new plan will require significant disruption for all children in 118 and should only be undertaken if there is sound, scientific rationale.

2. The hybrid and remote plans were publicly presented to the Palos 118 school community in the context of a School Board meeting over the summer. Why was this new full, in-person return presented to/discussed with the Board in a closed meeting?

3. How will outbreaks be handled under this new plan for full, in-person return? And what are the criteria for deciding when to switch District 118 back to a full remote learning plan?

4. How will all these transitions be managed for students?

-This new plan will once again be a major disruption to the routines that students have developed over these past weeks. As experts in child development, I'm sure you know that in the middle of a crisis, removing caring adults from children's lives is the last thing that should be done – yet this is exactly what you are proposing when you talk about them switching teachers one month into the school year.

- Should we plan for this to happen again once our COVID numbers start rising and everything gets moved back to remote? (which will inevitably happen if our schools move to a full return model)

5. What are the details of the plan for full, in-person return?

How will social distancing be maintained if all children will be attending school at the same time?

-How will transportation/bussing be handled if all children are attending school at the same time? How will social distancing be maintained?

6. What are the details of the remote learning plan?

-How does the amount of instructional time being provided to learners under the new remote learning plan compare to the students who will be attending every day, in person?

-Will ALPS and other time interventions be provided for students in the remote learning plan?

7. How will lunches be provided to students who need them, regardless of whether they are opting for the full in-person or remote option?

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- Are we able to commit to dropping children off at school and have them take the bus home?

If a family gets sent home due to quarantine, do they resume remote learning for the duration until they are cleared to return to in-person learning?

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- How are class sizes being reduced and ensuring social distancing with full return?

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- Concern regarding the length of the day. 5 hours seems like a long time to be in the classroom without a lunch, especially for our younger learners with shorter attention spans. How was 5 hours chosen and not a slightly shorter day? Is there an expectation for the kids to be completing independent activities when they get home? I think this time would be used for lunch and recess the students won't be engaging in while in school. We are all adjusting to these changing circumstances and trying to figure out this new normal. Thank you.

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- 1. Where are art + PE in the remote plan? Specifically for an 8th grader who chose art as their semester instead of Spanish.  
2. Will south teachers change? Especially if you choose remote?

3. Will math honors be taught by the same people that are currently teaching it?  
Specifically the 8th grade math honors course that is for a Stagg high school credit.
4. How will you keep students distant while on mask and snack breaks?
5. How will you change traffic flow to allow for extra car riders and not have families waiting for 20-30 minutes in carpool lines?

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- During flu season, how will the nurse determine if the symptoms identified are Covid related or flu related? (Since a fever is not always present with Covid.)

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- 1.) How will PE be worked into in school instruction/ PE uniform required/ changing?  
Time to order them?

2.) Will students have access to lockers?

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- When is band for students that return to school?

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- How is P.E. going to work? Will they be required to change into gym uniforms?

Will the students be moving every class period? Or will  
The teachers be moving?

Will they have lockers to store their belongings? Or will they have to carry all their  
belongings with them?

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- Is there a list or provide more information of what symptoms that would require my child to be sent home? A cough was mentioned tonight...what about a sneeze, allergies?  
My son is in middle school and my daughter is in East...if symptoms appear with either one will both be required to go home?

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- If a quarantine of a class and teacher happens, what happens if the teacher is unable to teach remotely due to illness. Who will teach the class for two weeks?

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- You are taking away so much from these kids who have already established a learning routine to accommodate parents who want their kids in school.

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- Will the students change classrooms at South, if attending in person?

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- How many children per class? Are they rotating classes or are the teachers rotating?

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- If the commitment is to the education of the students, why is the quality of instruction not equal and ensured for both remote and in person? Some kids are being punished for not having the option to be in person.

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- How are our children benefiting from in school learning if they are still remote learning while in school? I don't see how the risk will be worth the reward!

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- What is your recommendation for a split family? Meaning I have an in-person 8th grader to pick up at school at 1:10, but that's the exact time my remoter learner would start her day at home. How can I be in 2 places to accommodate both my daughters?

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- During the meet and greet day one of our daughters said there was a boy in class that kept pulling his mask off, how will masks on all the time be managed?

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- Sorry if I missed this answer...what are the start and end times for West/East, South, Kindergarten? I will pick up and drop off...but need staggered times to be able to pick them all up. Thank you!

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- My comment as to the quality of instruction has nothing to do with the time schedule. Just to confirm, remote sessions will be 100% synchronous for the entire time allotted for the period?

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- Our daughter has ALPS, where does that fall in the remote schedule on the screen? Would it be the 12:25-1:05 period?

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- What are you going to do in bad weather if you can't go outside for PE or mask breaks?

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- How did the IDPH requirements change between a few weeks ago and now so that the district thinks that it is more manageable now to deal with symptomatic students/staff. Thank you!

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- If a student is quarantined, do they switch to remote learning? How can it stay a constant learning program for them?

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- Will remote learners have the opportunity for “office hours” to meet with their teachers as they did during the full remote schedule?

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- I have reviewed the modified full return plan that was just posted on the 118 website and have three additional comments:

1) The disparity in instructional time between the full return in-person plan and the new remote plan is unacceptable.

2) In response to the point: "68% of parents surveyed supported or strongly supported a full return compared to 56% for a hybrid."

The design of the summer parent survey was flawed. The survey asked us to respond, without context, to three different possible methods of instruction: 1. full in-person, 2. hybrid, 3. remote only. My husband and I completed the survey together, and indicated support/strongly support to all three, and then clarified at the end of the survey that we would be supportive of each depending on the current COVID-19 situation and public health guidance. You have since proceeded to present these data in inappropriate ways - as if folks were electing one over the other. This was not the way your survey was set

up. Please think carefully before presenting these data in order to avoid misrepresenting what respondents actually said.

3) In response to the point: "80% of staff were pleased with the safety plan implementation during the September 8th and 9th in-person days."

I was also pleased with the safety plan, but let us remember that plan included bringing half of students in to the building at a time, not \*all\* students. This is an inappropriate comparison.

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**The following questions were not answered at the 9-23-2020 Middle School Parent Informational meeting. Please see questions and corresponding answers below.**

- How will AM/Pm be decided for those who were full day? Will AM consideration be given to those with older siblings in school? Will full day be an option upon full "normal" return to school?

- **Answer:**

**We will try to accommodate AM/PM assignments based on preferences but transportation routes and required special services schedules are the driving factors in section assignment. We have a limited number of spots in the AM and PM section, we ask that if you can make either work please select No Preference on the Student Election form so that there is flexibility in scheduling for another KDG family that absolutely needs an AM or PM slot.**

**There is no current plan to offer full day kindergarten this year. Offering a Full Day plan later in the year would require another teacher change for most students.**

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- How are students able to safely have a snack but not have lunch? If students are only able to have a snack while outside, what will happen when the weather is below freezing or inadvisable for children to be outside? How will children be provided snack time safely? If it is possible to have snack inside, why can't that plan occur for lunch? Can specials classrooms or the library be utilized to enable enough space for lunch? A plan to ensure full well-being for the children needs to be developed, including providing a space to eat lunch.

**Answer:**

**During inclement weather, snack time will be provided indoors with masks removed and a 6 ft. strict social distance in available spaces. Students will have the opportunity to bring a small sandwich as part of their snack. Snack breaks are much shorter in duration and pose less potential of transmission of COVID-19 than serving lunch in school.**

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- We were unable to attend the zoom and in person, will there be another time or a repeat so we know what was said! Thank you

**Answer**

**Please see the link above.**

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1. The remote plan appears to overburden these students by extending their homework completion start/end time much into the late evening. How will this be controlled so as not to overburden these students? Comment: The remote schedule plan is so designed to forcibly direct the choice to in school without genuinely seeking an equal balance for each student.

**Answer:**

**Remote students will have dedicated time on the following day beginning at 9:55 a.m. to complete their homework and asynchronous assignments from the previous day. This time occurs prior to their live synchronous instruction. Assignment completion will not be expected the same day.**

2. Why is it that the students previous registered choice to take Art/Tech instruction has to be changed to Spanish? A great deal of thought and decision making had gone into this path, which now would alter future plans for how the student planned educational development.

**Answer:**

**Running two identical schools simultaneously is not feasible at this time. Spanish is being offered to remote students in grades 7 & 8 as an option should you choose to have your child take it. This subject was selected because of the number of students enrolled and that it is considered a pre-requisite for success at the next grade level.**

3. Why is the remote only students current class schedule being changed? After all, it was developed, as you say, with much research and great consideration on your part (and, we trusted you to this regard)?

Comment- This is both unfair and unnecessary to the responsible students; a punishment to those of us whom understand the serious nature of the circumstances while hindering these students academically.

**Answer:**

**Using this remote learning model will allow for more synchronous instruction, and teachers will be able to focus on their learners, both during in-person and during remote learning. We understand that schedule changes are not ideal and that no plan will be perfect for all families until we can return to Phase 5.**

4.): How can remote learners trust you now with this plan?

**Answer:**

**See #3 -A great deal of thought and planning went into developing this plan to ensure that we meet the needs of all learners. The purpose of the parent informational meetings is to be as transparent as possible and provide parents with the details of the plan to make an informed decision.**

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- Will remote learners have the opportunity for “office hours” to meet with their teachers as they did during the full remote schedule?

**Answer:**

**Class periods were lengthened to 40 minutes to reduce the need for office hours; however, students can seek support from teachers outside of the 40 minute periods.**

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- **Question/Comment**

What is the difference in IDPH guidelines for in person learning between private schools and public schools? Catholic schools have been fully reopened in person for three weeks with little to no interruption.

**Answer:**

**We are unaware of the requirements for parochial schools. Information regarding safety requirements most likely will be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health website or the Archdiocese website.**

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- If I choose remote learning will my son still get his I.E.P. Services? Also, will his academic reinforcement and other teachers be the same. He is having a lot of anxiety over changing his teachers.

**Answer:**

**Your son will still be able to receive special education services per his IEP.**

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- My son (kindergarten) is currently attending in person classes as he was qualified for group C for EL. Will his schedule remain the same?

**Answer:**

**No, your child's schedule will not remain the same. KG EL students will either attend AM or PM session where they will receive their EL services through their TIDE time.**

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- You stated that only 80% of teachers felt the safety plan was adequate on the meet and greet days. Can you share with us what the rest of the 20% of teachers and staff felt that made those days not adequately safe? How are you working to support these teachers who did not feel comfortable?

**Answer:**

- **Building safety committees have already met to address outstanding teacher safety concerns.**

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