

PUBLIC COMMENT–BOARD MEETINGS OF THE WHOLE- 9-24-20

Please click this link to view the entire presentation

**The following questions were answered, or the topic was covered at the 9-24-2020 Kindergarten and Elementary School Parent Informational meetings.**

**Questions/Comments:**

When we have to go back to an all remote situation, will students who choose the new remote plan have to remain in this plan with the same alternative schedule? Or will they get to rejoin the in-person students in what will presumably be the current remote set-up?

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Will students and staff be required to quarantine for 14 days if they have traveled to a “hot spot”?

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How are pull out services (i.e. Speech, social work, instructional classes) going to be delivered to special needs students who are serviced in both the Gen Ed and Instruction environments?

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Will student / teacher assignments change only for students that elect to remain remote, or potentially all students?

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We have recently moved and changed schools. My son was very sad to leave his school and all his friends. He is currently in third grade with Mr. Pritchard and could not be more happy. I am concerned that if I select in person learning Mr. Pritchard may no longer be his teacher which would devastate my son.

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I understand the need for student schedule adjustments. If our schedules are flexible, is there a way to ensure that our child’s teacher remains the same?

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Who will be doing the covid testing if that is required? my kids tend to get allergies, hence their runny noses. so, assuming they have it one day, and they get sent home, who will do the testing to determine positive or negative?

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1. On the schedule it looks like Alps will be different for remote learners (20 min) and in person (30 min). Why would remote learners only get 20 minutes of Alps? Will the Alps students from the same grade level all be learning together in their usual cohort?

2. How will the extra 40 minutes of math enrichment be implemented? Will the students need to still do the regular grade level math, or will they be able to instead move at a faster pace? When I read “math enrichment” it sounds like it will be additional work and students will still be required to do the classroom math. Which means more homework/busywork for our kids. Is this a good model for our fourth and fifth graders?

3. With only 30 minutes for tide time, which I assume will be taken by Alps, where will extra interventions come in? For example, if my son is in Alps and also needs speech services, what will be done about these scheduling conflicts?

4. Where will speech services take place in the building? Well all students be going into the speech teachers’ small room?

5. If not enough students choose the remote option for a specific grade, will you possibly combine grades together? How will you deal with staffing if only a handful of students choose remote and you need all teachers in the building for a particular grade?

6. Can you please consider adding an electronic self-certification form on skyward? Stagg is doing this for when they go in person next week and it makes a lot of environmental sense. Seems like a waste of paper and money to print all of these forms out and keep track of them.

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Will the remote learning for the elementary students be live streamed with the in person students? Or will the remote be live zoom only for remote learners?

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1. The sample elementary remote plan indicates students will participate in Art (synchronous and asynchronous). Does this mean that PE, Music, and Media will also be offered, on a rotating basis? Specific to PE, aren't there legal mandates that requires a minimum number of minutes to be provided (typically 3 days/week)? What will be done to ensure these mandates be met?

2. What about teachers live casting their classes to remote learners? I heard Dr Cozza say last night that it will be better for remote students if they have a dedicated teacher for themselves. In general, I understand and agree with this, but couldn't live casting some classes help resolve some of the discrepancies between in-person and remote learner offerings?

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Thank you for your efforts to serve our students, we trust you.  
My question or concern is are kids going to be using that much technology this year, are there going to keep their devices at home?

I have to 2 boys and as soon as they finish their zoom meeting , they play for long time without letting me know they are done with School, I would like to limit the use of devices at school and at home .

My second question is : my son Is in kindergarten , he is wearing glasses For school , last time he went to school for meet and greet with glasses and mask On , his glasses got foggy and he couldn't see, I am planning to send him school without glasses, Can I request for him to sit at the front?

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I understand the need to keep kids home when they have symptoms. What is the plan to ensure they do not fall behind when they are forced to be home for 10 or 14 days due to having symptoms?

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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

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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.

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

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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.

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1. “Part- time hybrid was considered but not recommended because it cannot provide the level of support for all students that our community demands.”

a. The new plan provides for significantly less support for remote students. This is the opposite of “support” for all students. Please explain how the new plan will provide the same level of support for all students (if remote students will have less synchronous instruction, will have reduced TIDE time compared to in-person students, will have their teachers changed, how are they being equitably served by this new plan? – this feels like punishment for students and families who cannot immediately return to in-person).

2. “68% of parents surveyed supported or strongly supported a full return compared to 56% for a hybrid.”

a. These numbers obviously do not add up to 100%. The survey did not ask an either/or question. And, responses were not mutually exclusive. It was possible to support all options strongly. And, this survey was administered many weeks ago in a different context.

b. What is the combined percent of survey respondents who replied support or strongly supported hybrid or remote?

c. What was the response rate for the survey? How many families are there in the district and how many families responded?

d. What percent of families in the district indicated that when given the choice between the original hybrid option – and – 5 day/5 hour full return – indicated that they preferred the 5 day/5 hour full return (for all questions 4 hours 55 minutes is rounded to 5 hours)?

e. When were families notified that hybrid was no longer an option?

3. “80% of staff were pleased with the safety plan implementation during the September 8th and 9th in person days.”

a. When staff were asked about the plan were they told that it would be for full return, 5 hours, 5 days a week, without the guarantee of 6 foot social distancing?

b. When were staff informed of the 5 hour/5 day full return plan?

c. When were staff informed that hybrid was no longer an option?

d. What percent of staff indicated they were pleased with the full return plan (including safety) prior to the last board meeting?

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Please provide LINK(S) to the specific SOURCE(S) for the COVID-19 positivity rates cited at board meetings - both for the communities within Palos 118's borders, as well as our adjacent communities.

Please also provide same for hospitalization/recovery rates, which I believe Dr. Cantorna mentioned at least one board meeting.

Please also continue to publish statistics for the number of, "... south suburban school districts have decided against in-person instruction".

Will ALL students, even those that return to school, continue to have access to their school-owned tablet/laptop?

Regardless of COVID-19, what is the district plan for student access to school-owned devices in 2021-22, and beyond?

Please provide instruction as to how district families can submit additional questions, and review answers, after this series of presentations.

Where can families find the list of questions and answers? How often will the list be updated?

Are there any known/suspected or otherwise reported cases of COVID-19 among Palos 118 students, their families, or staff?

How will school families be notified when COVID-19 cases occur?

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Before the school year began, there was lots of communication with parents and we were asked what would work for us, that was very much appreciated. However, this time, we received no opportunity to submit our concerns about returning all students to in-person school. It is important for the district to not only consider what parents, who quite frankly don't believe that Covid is a real threat, want. We have arranged work schedules at the beginning to allow the hybrid option. Then we re-arranged work schedules to accommodate 100% remote. Now many of us have to go back to our employer and once again re-arrange our work schedules to remote but later in the day. I understand that the parents' employment situation is not the districts concern, but please understand that these changes, without feedback from the families of students, affect our ability to support our children. And that should be the districts concern as it limits our ability to support our children, in turn their ability to succeed in their academics. This has been extremely disappointing.

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I have middle and elementary school children so participated in last night's and will participate in tonight's informational meetings. I very much appreciated you reading and answering all questions during last night's meeting. For your convenience, I am re-submitting my questions that were not addressed during last night's \*presentation\* (for the benefit of parents who will join tonight but did not join last night), as well as new questions stemming from what I learned

during last night's meeting.

Questions to be addressed during tonight's (9/24) meeting:

1. What is the rationale for this extremely sudden move to full, in-person return when to date the only plans that have been discussed with families 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.
- 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?
- I have heard responses like "you knew we were moving towards returning all students to in-person learning," but I reject any assertions that this was planned all along – clearly not if you're now having to do things like cancel scheduled district curriculum nights. Why the sudden change?

2. What is being done to understand what ALL parents in the district want or need during this challenging time? Unfortunately, it seems that your decision-making is being guided by a small but loud group of parents, rather than looking at our school community as a whole.

- I am a scientist with training in survey research. Your summer parent survey was not set up in a way to provide the type of data you are currently reporting. The survey asked parents to respond, without context, to three different possible methods of instruction: 1. full in-person, 2. hybrid, 3. remote only. When completing the survey, I indicated support/strongly support to all three, and then clarified at the end of the survey that I would be supportive of each depending on the current COVID-19 situation and public health guidance. You have since proceeded to misrepresent the data that were collected, as if folks were electing one over the other. Again, this was not the way your survey was set up.
- There should be another assessment of parents to understand the needs of the community. In this modern age of technology, periodic surveys would not be arduous or cumbersome for the district to be conducting. Why hasn't the district been reaching out to parents for their input, and instead relying only on those parents who have the ability to reach out to you with complaints? What will be done to rectify this in the future?

3. 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.
- Please note this is not about it being an inconvenience for parents (this is how this question was addressed during last night's middle school informational meeting). This is about detrimental effects of these unexpected transitions on child development, wellness, and well-being. What will be done to support all students through these transitions?

4. How will the district be addressing the incredible disparity in instructional time being provided to students who must select the new remote learning plan as compared to their in-building learning peers?

- For those in the district with family members vulnerable to complications of COVID-19, there is no "choice" here: we are being forced to choose remote because the full return plan is not safe for us.
- The amount of live instructional time being provided to learners under the new remote learning

plan is approximately 100 minutes/day less than that being provided to students who will be attending every day, in person.

- I appreciate Dr Cozza's efforts, but the district clearly cannot offer an equitable instructional plan for remote learners. This is at worst illegal and at best unethical. The district is financially healthy and has cash reserves – isn't now the time to use those reserves? What will be done to modify the remote plan to address this disparity?

5. The food portion of this new in-person plan poses grave health and safety concerns for students.

- Under this new in-person plan, elementary school children will be in school 9am-2pm without a lunch. Last night during the middle school informational meeting you suggested parents feed children a big breakfast and send them with a healthy snack that can, for example, be a sandwich (which approximates a lunch).

- I have grave concerns about students whose families are experiencing financial hardships, particularly as our national and local economies have been greatly affected by COVID-19. We may now have students who are not able to eat breakfast at home, and these students will now be at school until 2pm without any food. This is unacceptable and needs to be addressed before all students return on October 7th.

- How will the district be modifying its plan to address these concerns?

Comment:

6. 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 into the building at a time, not \*all\* students. This is an inappropriate comparison.

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Do you have the endorsement of any scientists, epidemiologists, or anyone in the medical community who believes returning to school is a good idea in the long run?

The data cited to support school re-opening suffers from a short-term bias. In cases where school has resumed, maybe there wasn't an increase in transmission rates within the first few days, but when you extend the timeline, it is clear that schools cannot keep staff, faculty, and families safe. Teachers have died all over the country because of decisions based on this biased way of looking at the data. If the data supported no transmission over multiple months, then honest discussion of resuming in-person classes would make sense. It's great if no one gets sick in week 1, but what happens in weeks 5, 6, 10, etc.?

Furthermore, making decisions based on the survey data is a flawed methodology. The questions were flawed, as there were too many ways to interpret possible responses. Additionally, that data is over a month old, and there has been a large influx of new information since then.

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A parent addressed the board in person regarding the remote learning plan.

## Question/Comment

The link to the election form located in the presentation we saw in the meeting does not work:

**Answer:** Thank you. You can access the election form by clicking this link

<https://www.palos118.org/studentelectionform>.

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