

2-9-21 Written Public Comment-rev1

Timestamp	First and Last Name	Please enter your comment
2/8/2021 11:32:50	D205Remote	<p>Dear Dr. Moyer and members of the D205 School Board,</p> <p>Thank you for your diligence, dedication and commitment to the children of our community. The past year has presented unprecedented challenges, and we greatly appreciate and value your continuous communication, thoughtfulness and transparency.</p> <p>We would like to bring to the School Board's attention the "silent" minority of children and parents who will be deleteriously impacted by proposed plans to return to in-person learning. While we understand and support parents' concerns to return to full-time in-person schooling, any decision by the board must take into account potential disruptions that full-time in-person schooling will have on those who are full-time remote students, especially with only a few months remaining in this academic school year.</p> <p>As adult and pediatric physicians ourselves, we have direct experience in seeing children and adults suffer from complications from COVID-19. The Board must agree that knowledge of this disease has continuously evolved over the past year. As a result, we have explicitly made the decision and requisite sacrifices to keep our children in remote learning throughout the year.</p> <p>With this abrupt change with only a few months remaining in the school year, we are now facing the decision of balancing the health of our children and family with the practical consequences of remaining in remote learning. Specifically: 1) Our child is the only or one of a few students in remote-learning in their classroom, or 2) Our child is assigned a new remote-only teacher with new remote-only classmates. Please do not underestimate the impact such an abrupt shift in the middle of the school year can have on our children. We hope the Board will agree that neither is optimal for a child's educational development.</p> <p>We have been informed that D205 has consulted with medical expert(s) and reviewed the relevant data regarding the approach to returning our children to full time in-person learning. Therefore, we kindly request your public responses (during tomorrow's School Board meeting) to the following questions pertaining to D205's plan to return our children to in-person learning.</p> <p>1) Could the Board please provide us with the name(s) of medical expert(s) and their pertinent qualifications in providing these recommendations? We assume the Board has consulted with physicians who have experience caring for adults and/or children with COVID-19 and have specialized expertise in infectious disease and/or public health.</p> <p>2) What clinical data have these medical expert(s) reviewed or provided that have driven the updated safety guidelines issued by the school. Specifically, we are interested in how these data accounted for the 3 feet or less social distancing in our children's classrooms, the absence of plexiglass barriers, and the emergence of highly contagious COVID-19 variants whose transmission risk do not mirror historical evidence to date.</p> <p>3) Would the Board consider awaiting guidelines and recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) on school reopening before making final plans on returning to in-person learning? As the Board may know, these CDC guidelines are expected to be communicated to the public as early as this Wednesday February 10th.</p> <p>We have been immensely grateful for the hard work and dedication provided by all of D205 during this difficult time. As concerned parents and physicians with over 30 years of combined medical experience in academic medicine, we are willing to help in whatever capacity needed to ensure the safety of our children.</p> <p>We understand that is a very sensitive topic, and therefore submit this letter anonymously for response.</p> <p>Thank you in advance for your kind consideration and public response to our questions and concerns.</p>
2/8/2021 14:58:38	Catherine D'Alessandro	<p>The information regarding COVID that the district and schools provide on their websites is helpful and appreciated. Unfortunately, I don't think that all families are taking the time to read the information provided. I would like the district and each individual school to send a separate reminder to parents that they need to keep their children home if they are showing any signs of illness. My two sons were each exposed to a classmate(in class for the entire class period) who had symptoms last week on two days. The child reported to my sons that he had symptoms on Monday, and he attended school on Monday and Thursday. This shouldn't happen. Parents need to be reminded that they are putting so many at risk by their actions.</p>
2/8/2021 20:49:27	Vanitha Lanoue	<p>Hello,</p> <p>First of all thank you to the board, district leadership and parents who have been dedicated to moving forward and getting our kids back to school. I have a few questions/concerns regarding the current proposed plan for K-5 returning to full in person.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the new guidance for 3ft distance between students (to the greatest extent possible) do we have plans and funds available to purchase and implement additional safety measures? Specifically, two things come to mind- Plexi partitions for each desk (neighboring districts and elmhurst private schools have) and a temperature scanner to check as students walk in the building. As a note, I was informed that the 3ft distance is measured from the center of a students desk which means there truly is only 1ft between the edge of a desk to the next. 2. Have we considered implementing a stricter quality of mask for students? Many students wear the very lightweight fabric mask that do not have a metal nose clip or have adjustable ear loops. My son says many of his classmates are fussing with and adjusting their masks throughout the day. If we cannot change the requirement, can we purchase disposable masks for students every day? These are sufficient/safe for hospitals and doctors offices. Also, we would not have to be concerned with compliance of washing the reusable masks as wearing daily adds much more pressure on the parents. 3. Do we have a surplus from less in person expenses to assist in purchasing the previously mentioned supplies? 4. Lastly, the current proposal seems like remote students will be at a huge disadvantage in learning vs the in person students. As an immune compromised person in the community I am quite concerned about sending my children to school without additional safety precautions. After speaking with our principal and son's teacher, I learned that remote students would have much more asynchronous learning time and not have much actual face to face learning time with their teacher on zoom. I completely understand why this would happen as the teacher will have 20+ students in person but it is really not a fair or equal experience to remote students. Please advise on if there are plans to ensure the remote students don't fall backwards in learning. <p>Thank you for listening</p>
2/8/2021 23:16:18	Anne-Marie Gustafson	<p>Good evening. I would like to thank the board for taking the time to listen to all of the public comments regarding the decision to return to full in person learning. I am a parent to three daughters, two attending Emerson and one at Churchville. Our family is eternally grateful for the dedicated teachers, staff and administration at our schools, and we are continually amazed by their commitment to demonstrate resilience and perseverance during this challenging year.</p> <p>We are concerned, however, that the shift from hybrid to full in person will put our children and their teachers at further (and unnecessary) risk. Our children are surviving a pandemic, and the expectations for academic development should be shifted accordingly. As a community, we need to be able to trust that everyone is following all of the CDC guidelines for sports/fine arts, travel and quarantine after exposure, as well as for school, and the plan to return to full, in person learning relies heavily upon that trust. I hope that our community remains committed to making the small sacrifices necessary to ensure our students' success.</p> <p>For some members of our community who are immunocompromised, it is imperative to choose the remote learning option. I am greatly concerned that the current plan for remote is mostly asynchronous, and therefore, will put these students at a great disadvantage. I trust that this team of administrative leaders can put together a more comprehensive plan that will work for all students.</p> <p>"Work collectively to support the greater good"</p> <p>Thank you!</p> <p>Anne-Marie Gustafson</p>

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2/9/2021 8:31:49	Franco Dicosola	The CDC is updating their guidelines tomorrow in person learning. I believe this should be taken into consideration prior to any decision. What should also be examined more closely is the increasing Variant threat. It has been stated that very soon the UK variant will be the dominant one in the U.S. The effect the vaccines will have on the new variants aren't exactly know and what also has become a problem is the variants seem to be putting children more at risk and causing more health problems and community spread problems. In person HYBRID learning as much as that is not what people want to hear should be considered moving forward until studies can provide with more clarity some better answered to these questions.
2/9/2021 11:17:59	Michael LoCicero	<p>Members of the Board of Education for District 205.</p> <p>As a 41 year Elmhurst resident, parent of 4 children, (all who attended District 205 schools), and a former member of the Board of Education of District 205, I have always supported the efforts of the Board and District.</p> <p>Despite having strong feelings about many Board decisions over the years, I have stayed silent in respect for and knowledge of your job and the obligations and responsibilities that you carry.</p> <p>However, I cannot stay silent regarding your decision to proceed forward with a Superintendent search at this time.</p> <p>Knowing that an election is in progress, with the very likely probability that there will be three (3) new members of the Board, hiring a search firm and conducting a search process with the intent to hire a new Superintendent before said election, is irresponsible, at best.</p> <p>All best practices, IASB guidelines, and common sense tell you that any search should be left for the new Board to undertake.</p> <p>If your intent is to find the best person available who will work in tandem with this new Board, you allow them the due respect to perform the hire.</p> <p>Your failure to do this and continue forward now, will likely doom the success of this new team, regardless of who is hired.</p> <p>If you have learned nothing from your prior experience, and the poor hires of the last 3 Superintendents, you are not being faithful to fulfilling your important function on behalf of this community.</p> <p>Michael LoCicero</p>
2/9/2021 14:32:21	Christine Bishof	<p>Dear Elmhurst 205 Board,</p> <p>I am writing to tell you that there are still parents who are very much against a return to full in-person learning. My children have been fully remote since the beginning of the pandemic. I am a board certified emergency medicine physician working on the frontline with COVID patients every day. I have seen first hand the terrible things this virus can do to people. I have avidly followed the research and still remain against the idea of [full] in-person learning, especially since you have decided to [decrease] the 6ft of distancing to 3ft. There is no scientific basis in fact for decreasing from 6ft to 3ft, and this kind of compromise was directly related to outbreaks in schools in Europe. There are new, more virulent strains circulating, and there is emerging good evidence that previous infection may not protect against infection with these new strains. Public health officials are recommending double masking and more vigilance. We are seeing more pediatric infections and hospitalizations, and rising numbers of a very scary complication called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, or MIS-C. We have barely scratched the surface of vaccinating those in category 1b. And yet, we are entertaining the idea of squeezing 25+ children and a teacher in a room together for 5 hours. I am also disturbed that we are being forced to make a decision on whether we would send our children back without ANY information, under threat of them being denied the opportunity to return for the rest of the year. We were supposed to submit our intentions by last Friday. Now it has been delayed until tomorrow. We still know NOTHING. My oldest son has 29 students in his class. How in the world are they going to be distanced? What will happen to my children if they remain remote? Will they be the only 2 kids at Edison on the computer? How will the teachers interact with them? Are you going to be placing entire classes on quarantine for positive cases (and their affected siblings)? Because you probably should without proper distancing.</p> <p>I have previously written to applaud you for following the Open D205 plan as originally written and following your medical experts' advice. Now, I am terribly disappointed that you seem to have been swayed by emotions to even consider reopening while violating all the guidelines that we know are best to prevent unnecessary infections and educationally disruptive quarantines. Over the last several meetings, I have listened to the passionate pleas of parents, begging you to fully reopen. Various reasons have been given, but by and large, they have been emotional arguments, and not based in scientific fact. There has been very little counterpoint to those arguments, perhaps because those who do not agree with opening, also do not feel comfortable having to give testimony in person. There have been some very well written comments against reopening found buried on the BoardDocs site, but maybe are not fully apparent to those who simply watch the YouTube video. I hope you will consider reading the written comments for all to hear in the future.</p> <p>In closing, our metrics barely support us using a hybrid model, so please do not compromise the health and safety of our children and teachers by compromising on safety protocols to fully reopen the schools. Also, please consider how those children of parents who do not feel safe with reopening will be affected by this choice. I do not anticipate sending my children to in-person class, especially under conditions where distancing has been inappropriately reduced, until at least all 4 of their grandparents have received the vaccine, which will not be until the end of next month.</p> <p>Sincerely, Christine P. Bishof, MD, MPH, FACEP Vice-Speaker - Illinois State Medical Society Chair of the Council - Chicago Medical Society</p>
2/9/2021 18:18:00	Robbi Ellis	Can you please follow the state, local, CDC, and American Assoc of Pediatrics guidelines and keep classes to half-size for ALL AGES for the remainder of the school year? We must adhere to 6 ft social distancing. Please! Hybrid classes are attended in person, which means schools are OPEN, and you could easily appease the bully groups and celebrate the success of open schools. It has been successful BECAUSE of social distancing. Thank you.
2/9/2021 19:14:18	Joseph Nagel	I'm a father of a 2nd grader at Emerson Elementary School. Both her mother and I are very disturbed with hearing about the possibility of students returning to Full Time classes without seeing any plans being sent out for parents to review prior to the board meeting where voting on plan is taking place. While reviewing your own COVID dashboard and the standards you put in place for e-learning, hybrid and return to full in person learning the latest metrics do not support those actions. Per your own plan you stated, "Return to full in-person learning as before COVID-19 will be based on broad access and uptake of a safe, effective vaccine to prevent additional spread of COVID-19 and/or when there are no new cases over a sustained period. This corresponds to Phase 5 of Restore Illinois Plan" The state nor Dupage County is close to accomplishing those metrics. What is more disturbing is the fact that you are looking at changing the 6ft social distancing to 3ft. I want nothing more for my daughter to back full time in school as it is beneficial for students both for learning and socially but it should not be done at the expense of kids health or family members. It feels like this plan is being pushed forward due to some parents in the community pushing for the return without the concern or care of COVID still being in the community.
2/9/2021 19:49:12	Kara Johnson	I would like to know if children continuing to choose remote only learning will be moved into a different classroom with a dedicated teacher to preserve both in person classes and remote classes so all children can maximize their learning. Specifically, it has been extremely challenging to manage kindergarten hybrid classes for both the teachers and the students.
2/9/2021 21:13:36	Chris Lameka	If the catholic schools can accommodate students in class full-time, why can't D205 schools? Why can't we fire any teachers who refuse to return to teaching students in-class? It's time to reopen.