

3-16-21 Written Public Comment-rev1

Timestamp	First and Last Name	Please enter your comment
3/15/2021 18:45:09	Courtney Waltz	I am the parent of a 9th grader at York. I am commenting on the 3/15/21 communication that the board is expected to approve at this meeting a plan to return all schools to full in person learning at all grade levels beginning 4/12/21. While I don't know what the plan is to have a fully informed comment, I do have many concerns. I have been quiet through this entire pandemic because I felt that the plans were appropriate in light of the public health crisis and I was comfortable with the options being provided. My first concern was the recently implemented plan of 3 feet distancing and all in person student 4 days/week. Masks, no lunch and staggered start/end gave me comfort to proceed with that. That just started today 3/15/21. We have no idea what the saliva screenings will show, if there will be increase in positive cases and quarantines with this change. I don't understand how the board members can possibly vote in the affirmative on new plan increasing in person time without that data. How can students possibly be spaced out enough to have lunch in the buildings? How can they all safely enter/exit the building if they are all coming/going at the same time. Does this plan involve thresholds of numbers of students/staff quarantined or local positivity rates that would trigger a decision to not proceed to full time/full days or possibly even go back to hybrid? This feels incredibly rushed and risky, especially for the final 6-7 weeks of school? It makes far more sense to me to leave the current schedule/plan in place for the final weeks of school rather than making this giant pivot for staff and students? Why not err on the side of health and safety and give parents an opportunity to get vaccinated before this is done? Let's focus on '21-22 school year planning rather than moving too fast.
3/15/2021 19:21:27	Chris Waltz	Full Day of School - Please wait until Fall 2021 for York. I support the recent hybrid approach. The current 4 day approach successes are TBD depending upon outbreaks after Spring Break and Easter. Approving full day school at this point would be both foolish and reckless Board actions. Please don't approve this action until York parents vaccinated. We've worked hard to remain COVID free. Approving the Full Day of school at York jeopardizes community safety, health and well being.
3/15/2021 19:50:06	Alice Rudenga	In regards to Conrad Fischer becoming a magnet school for only dual language and enriched, it is not fair to the families in the Conrad Fischer area. I think dual language is great, but that is a choice and shouldn't been the only option. Every other area in Elmhurst will have a community school except the north side. This is unfair to families in the area who prefer to not have dual language education. It isn't for everyone, and we shouldn't lose the option to have a neighborhood community school. My kids went to Conrad Fischer, and they went to CCD together with other kids from our neighborhood, they went to scout meetings together with others from our neighborhood, we car-pooled with others from our neighborhood. Losing a community school is unfair to the people in the Conrad Fischer neighborhood. If people choose to come to Conrad Fischer for dual language, they have the choice and option to venture out of their community, they are not forced. Don't force families out of our community. They deserve the right to have a community school right here in our own neighborhood.
3/15/2021 20:42:18	A very concerned District	I understand and agree with the importance of kids being in person for school. The communication which went out from the District announcing full days starting April 12 is just alarming!!! How will the schools especially the middle schools and York be able to keep unmasked students six feet apart in the lunch setting ? The latest ISBE guidelines clearly state 6 feet distance must be maintained when masks are taken off for lunch. To make matters worse, there are parents in this district who are refusing to follow the District's safety protocols! There are parents who are refusing to have their kids submit saliva screenings. There have been statements made by parents they will submit water or their dog's saliva instead. There have been statements they will opt out of the saliva screenings for so called "religious reasons". There are parents who do not feel their kids should be quarantined when exposed to COVID. And now we are supposed to send our kids to school full days with lunch and take that kind of risk?!! There are kids, parents and teachers and staff in our community who are high risk. Not many parents in our community have been vaccinated. And there is no vaccine for kids under age 16. Please reconsider your decision to do full days this school year! Please do not force families to choose remote when they want and need to be in school but are now afraid for their health and safety!! This is putting the whole community at risk! This is just wrong!!!
3/15/2021 21:50:16	Beth Zimmer	Now that all of the teachers have vaccines, there really is no reason to have anything less than full time, in person school and all extra curricular activities taking place. These children need more from you. It's time to get them back to regular lives, like so many other kids are doing across the nation and even right here in Elmhurst. Why wait another month? Please give these kids every in-person day possible and start next week.

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3/15/2021 22:00:50	Devin Bloden	<p>We would like to hear more about the option for a programming change at Conrad Fischer (REACH/Charter school/Gifted Program).</p> <p>It makes perfect sense to make the school focus more specific versus trying to operate as a dual language school and have one random monolingual class year after year. If that means making it dual language, along with some other focused purpose like REACH/Gifted Program, we are on board for a change.</p> <p>As parents of students in the monolingual classroom, we feel disconnected from the overall mission and focus at Conrad Fischer (being the dual language program). Our kids will go through their years at CF with the same group of kids in the monolingual program and are somewhat of an outlier on the main mission at CF.</p> <p>We would prefer to be in a different Elmhurst district school where we have more options. The choice to switch up students and meet new kids year after year, have a school wide direction on other areas elementary growth, learning, socialization and core curriculum education topics. We should have the option to have a similar experience in D205 just like every other monolingual elementary student in the district if we are opting out of the dual language program.</p>
3/15/2021 23:19:51	Marianne Boyke	<p>As you all know, from the science, from the experts, from our kids that are being continuously hurt by not being in person and getting the education they deserve, and from we, the parents, now is the time is to bring our kids back, full days, five days a week. No more excuses. No more fear mongering, no more "yeah but what if". You want to saliva test, get these kids back in school full time as promised. If not, you have no right no matter how much you want to create your own narrative to support this action contrary to what ISBE has stated should not be mandatory. Do what you have been elected to the board to do. Act on behalf of the majority of our parents and kids. For the minority parents that still want remote or hybrid, let them stay remote. That's their choice. But they don't get to hold up the majority because of their fear. They have a choice. We don't. Now it's our turn. It's our kids right to an in person, quality education. Full day, in person five days a week with lunch and sports. It's the only choice. You also need to stop adding in obstacle after obstacle of ways to push kids into quarantine. It's overkill. There is no reason to quarantine healthy kids. Stop the overkill. Our teachers and staff have been vaccinated. Give these kids a chance to remain in person. Covid isn't going away. We need to learn to live with it. And we do that by returning these kids to the education they deserve first and foremost. And come the fall, those that still want remote can enroll in an online school. York is not an online school. Let them make that choice. But those of us that believe in the education provided when in person, you need to make it happen. Please act on behalf of the majority of parents and kids. Please approve full day, in person 5 days a week for EVERY GRADE LEVEL! Grade school is not enough. Middle and High school kids need this just as much if not more!! We are counting on you. Please don't let our kids down again. Thank you.</p>
3/16/2021 0:10:12	Rita Dianati	<p>Dear Board of Education Members,</p> <p>As a parent of 2 children in the Elmhurst 205 school district and an internal medicine physician, I am concerned about the physical distancing plans that have been proposed for in person learning. Having the desks 12 inches apart goes against the CDC guidelines of physical distancing. Children will not be able to stay completely still in their desks at all times, especially at the elementary level, to achieve the proposed 3 feet from nose to nose. This is simply unrealistic and I am, quite honestly, surprised that this was a serious consideration. I am asking that you keep the desks at an appropriate distance apart and think of other ways to return the students to school in a safer manner.</p> <p>I am concerned that there is a faction of parents that have pushed for students to return to school full time in an unreasonable fashion. We all want our children to go back to school, but we want it done in a safe manner for student, teachers, and staff alike. This has been an inconvenience to us all, but we understand that we are still in a pandemic and our children will not be able to be vaccinated yet, unlike the teachers and staff.</p> <p>We are asking that you keep the safety of our students as the number one priority while making plans for return to school.</p> <p>In addition, the saliva testing is an unhelpful and wasteful procedure at this time. Done at home, only once a week, in a non-clinical setting makes this test less reliable or useful. Students will still be able transmit COVID to their fellow students at school after submitting the test. It is serving to cause more stress for students and parents. Please consider discontinuing the saliva testing for these reasons.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration!</p>
3/16/2021 6:48:09	Rose Giovannelli	<p>It's time to get all schools, elementary, middle and high school back to in person with full days. Our kids have suffered enough. At what point will the board see that these kids mental health should take precedence over the teachers unions needs and wants. Enough is enough. Get these kids back. They deserve more!!!</p>

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3/16/2021 7:28:47	Kathy Camp	<p>I have great concern over the idea of returning our elementary children to having lunch at school. Have you asked the principals how they plan on staffing the many lunch & recess periods they will have to have to in order to accommodate lunch at school? I have spoken to several principals that have stated they won't be able to have lunch at school without a massive parent volunteer effort to staff lunch & recess periods. Plus, they said lunch will have to run from 10-2pm!</p> <p>What about families that don't feel comfortable with lunch at school? Many people still don't eat at restaurants; how can you make these people comfortable with lunch at school?</p> <p>Finally, we have about 7 weeks left of school (after spring break)-why the push for this now? What benefit will this provide the elementary students? They have had to make so many changes/adjustments this year, why make them have another?</p>
3/16/2021 7:38:04	Katie Larsen	<p>Enough is enough. Our kids deserve full time 5 days a week school NOW. Why wait until 4/12 another full month away? Our elementary school kids have been successful in a shortened day, why not immediately allow the same for Bryan and Sandburg? There is more than enough data out there to support school opening. Our kids are suffering at the hands of an indecisive Board of Ed, a superintendent who lacks real leadership skills and an overpaid administration. Please stop treating our kids this way.</p>
3/16/2021 8:04:32	Jackie Bojesen	<p>These kids need to be in person in school 5 days a week with 8 hour periods each day. This has gone on way too long and other schools and states are making it happen, why can't D205? We had to pull our son out of York in the fall and send him to school in WI because he told me he hasn't learned anything since last March. The school in WI was in person, 4 full days a week and yes with lunch. They figured it out. They had a plan and it worked. He needed to get his grades up and apply to colleges and he was able to there. He's now back at York because he wants to graduate and be with his friends. Can you please give them some normalcy back now?? Normal school. To see each other. Interact with teachers and fellow classmates? Why are you doing this to our kids? He feels he's not ready for college because of you, D205!!! Not all kids can handle remote and he has ADHD and cannot. Please do the right thing for our kids. Think of our kids and get them back in full time!</p>
3/16/2021 8:18:32	Mari Saenz	<p>The BOE NEEDS to do the right thing regarding getting our kids back into school - 5 days a week for a full day. There aren't any more reasons nor excuses for keeping hybrid in place. If the Board does choose to remain with this schedule - they will have the mental, educational & social deterioration of our children on their hands. Yes, you will be held accountable for all the anxiety, stress, depression and educational issues our children will need years to undo.</p>
3/16/2021 8:41:08	Nicole Kaleta	<p>I am very happy that the board is finally getting our kids back in school, full time. This should be the default position and not something that we have to fight so hard for. I sincerely hope that the board and administration can take to heart that this is what is best for our kids and will not be swayed by a very vocal minority of parents who are afraid to send their kids back. These parents have other options for educating their kids; online schools have been around for a least a decade. But, for those of us who want our kids to get an education in person, we do not have other options. All the local private schools are full, and that assumes we can even afford an additional \$10k per child in tuition, which many families cannot.</p> <p>Please continue to do what is right for our kids. I hope you will continue to review the data out there, especially with regard to masks. The World Health Organization does not recommend masking kids 5 and under. Many schools in Europe have operated for the last year without masking kids. This is the next step in getting normalcy back for our students. They have lost so much over this last year and they deserve for us to really review all of the available data with an open mind.</p>
3/16/2021 8:54:45	Tricia Buhrfiend	<p>First, I wish to advocate for a full, and immediate, return to school for all children. Put children first.</p> <p>Second, I understand that the REACH program is under review. While it is good to review any and every program, any proposed changes seriously need to be reviewed and considered. Before voting and approving any such proposal, I hope that the REACH Parent Group and parents of REACH students are heavily involved and have an opportunity to review the proposal and give comment (not simply filling out a simple survey). Such parent comment should be thoughtfully considered. I have two current REACH students and a first grader in D205. The current REACH program has had the single most important influence on my two older children. I am an advocate for the program. I would hate to see huge changes in the program, without serious and deep consideration from all stakeholders. Please request significant parent review and involvement before any proposal goes forward. Thank you.</p>
3/16/2021 9:00:02	Jaime Schwager	<p>Bryan and Sandburg need to be in school all day every day especially now that they are covid screening. It is not right that they are the only two schools in the district not back everyday. Covid screening was supposed to get our kids back full time and also was supposed to be voluntary. Yet it's now mandatory AND Bryan and Sandburg kids are not back every day. All kids should be back to full time every day (until 3/30) especially with mandatory covid screening. Thank you!</p>

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3/16/2021 9:08:40	Lisa Kloet	<p>Hello-</p> <p>I saw the email today regarding the board's upcoming vote to return all students to full time in-person learning effective April 12 and I wanted to express my 110% support of this plan. Our kids have lost so much learning this year, both academically and socially. Getting an opportunity to re-establish relationships before summer could do so much to help ease their anxiety before the fall return to school date. Similarly, giving the kids a chance to re-immense themselves in the regular school routine before summer could really calm their nerves about what 'regular' school will feel like come fall.</p> <p>Most importantly, the science and public health experts support a return to full time in person learning while adhering to the guidelines that D205 has proposed. Our parents and students have been asking for this for months and more districts are announcing similar plans everyday. Please see this effort through and get our kids back in school. Thank you!</p> <p>Lisa Kloet parent of Field, Sandburg and York students</p>
3/16/2021 9:21:52	Amy Wellman	<p>ALL of our children need full time in person education immediately. Advocate for our students. You have the data. You know it's safe for them to be in school. Act on it.</p>
3/16/2021 9:56:36	Amy Nelson	<p>The BOE should strongly consider extending the school year to June 4 or beyond.</p> <p>From my quick review and calculation of our calendar and bell schedules, it shows 176 open school days (minimum allowed) x current 5 hour days (again, minimum allowed) for 880 "instructional" hours this year. This is a generous calculation of true instructional time, includes passing time and recess (which technically should not be included to meet a legal 5 hour school day), and is 350 HOURS - 50 FULL SCHOOL DAYS! - LESS than a typical school year.</p> <p>In my read, COVID-19 could fall under the definition for the use of emergency days, and should be used as such to extend the calendar.</p> <p>I like summer break as much as anyone and am also ready to move on from this tumultuous year, but it seems quite dismissive to not tack on lost instructional time at the end of the year, especially now that most kids are finally back on campus learning more effectively. It is not the appropriate mentality from our district leadership to treat this school year as a 'throw away'. Even when exhausted, the expectation is for leadership to offer and engage our children AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE (socially, academically and mentally) rather than simply meet the minimum thresholds at every turn. Every hour that our children can have on their campuses this year will mend some of the social damage caused by the school closures and assist in a stronger start to the 2021-2022 school year.</p> <p>We cannot control the fact that Covid-19 came and disrupted our lives in many ways, but after a year of defeat it is time to take control of the path forward. You, the BOE and administration, have this power... please use it.</p>

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3/16/2021 11:26:05	Christine Bischof	<p>Dear D205 School Board,</p> <p>Thank you for your continued efforts to maintain a safe and healthy school environment for our students. We are so close to getting our most vulnerable populations fully vaccinated, and as a physician working in Emergency Medicine, I am happy to say, I can truly see the light at the end of this pandemic tunnel. That being said, we must continue to exercise caution and maintain our physical distancing practices among our young unvaccinated students. A lot of people have been throwing around statistics about how 3 feet of distancing may be safe enough to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and that schools can be safely kept open during high rates of community transmission. I know no one wants to hear it, but I'd like to point out that the data from Wisconsin was collected from RURAL Wisconsin classrooms with between 11-20 students. Sadly, I don't see too many classes of less than 20 students in our district. Students were in cohorts, i.e. not changing classes, and discouraged from mixing outside the classroom. They wore masks at all times when within 6 feet of each other and were at least 6 feet apart while eating. In North Carolina, the data was collected during 9 weeks of HYBRID only teaching. An astonishing 3000 students and staff were quarantined during the study period. These were observational studies and relied on surveys, and the data are not necessarily generalizable to any and all schools.</p> <p>Can we get away with 3 feet? Maybe. Are we going to have more quarantines? Probably. I can't tell from the dashboard what grade levels are affected, but the most recent update reflects we have 345 students on quarantine, up from 217 the week before. That's the most since September. We have 21 COVID-19 positive students, up from 6 the week before, and our middle school and high school kids haven't even gone back full time yet. We're going to need every family to commit to following physical distancing rules inside and outside the classroom. We're going to need to continue to contact trace and quarantine.</p> <p>Now, our community numbers are really looking good, and I would like nothing more than for my kids to be able to attend in-person class safely. As soon as the at risk loved ones in my family are fully vaccinated, we will consider it. Until then, I would appreciate the community respecting the choice of some parents to keep their children home. We cannot know the individual circumstances of those families and those children should not be penalized for that choice. I have heard many say they want computers out of the classroom and for fully remote children to be grouped together with a different teacher. How do you expect the quarantined children to be educated? Are they going to float into a random remote classroom and disrupt those children's education? Are they going to skip 10-14 days of class? Or are we going to let all the children stay with the teachers they know and continue with some semblance of normalcy?</p> <p>So, what is our plan? When 20+ children are packed in a classroom separated by only 3 feet, who is going to be considered a close contact at risk for infection and what are we going to do to ensure the continuity of education for those students?</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sincerely, Christine P. Bischof, MD, MPH, FACEP Vice-Speaker, Illinois State Medical Society Chair of the Council, Chicago Medical Society</p>
3/16/2021 11:28:46	Erin Danielson	<p>I am very glad to hear of the plans for a vote tonight behind a full day, full week in person return to learning starting 4/12. Many, many households in the community have been asking for this for a very long time, and are anxious to give our children this opportunity as soon as possible.</p>
3/16/2021 12:48:25	Jean Hogan	<p>Please allow Bryan and Sandburg students to attend in person 5 days until 1:30 since saliva screening was implemented. Bryan/Sandburg should have an equitable schedule to Churchville. Also, please implement full time in person school sooner than 4/12. There is no reason to delay any longer.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
3/16/2021 12:59:56	Rachel Mikula	<p>To Dr. Moyer and Administration and Members of the BOE,</p> <p>Thank you for finally working to get our children back in school full day (8-3 with lunch) 5 days a week. I certainly appreciate this push. However, the fact that we as parents and taxpayers in this community have been fighting tooth and nail since fall to get our children back in the classroom 5 days a week from 8-3 is unconscionable. ALL children in this community have the right to an equal education under the law. The hybrid, remote, rollercoaster ride has gone too far. It is time to return to 5 days from 8-3 immediately. Please, stop pushing the goalposts. There has been science since Fall of 2020 indicating that it is safe to return to school, yet you continue to find ways around this science, wasting precious time and taxpayers' dollars to delay a return to Full Day in person 5 days a week for every school in the district. As a community we have lost faith in the direction you are steering education and the future of the children of this community. It is increasingly alarming at the lack of focus you are giving Sandburg and Bryan students as they remain in a hybrid situation. Please explain the logic here : you will spend over \$600,000 on saliva testing but you can't buy trailers or rent space elsewhere to make sure ALL middle school kids in the district have equal in person instruction time? Or, now that we have testing in place, why can't you send ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL students back 4 or 5 days a week like elementary or high school? Please, I urge you to employ logic and look out for the best interests of the children you were hired and elected to serve. Thank you.</p>

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3/16/2021 13:24:24	Katie Feodoroff	<p data-bbox="606 180 1957 228">Thank you to the D205 Board for your service and considering my comments. My name is Katie Feodoroff, and I am sorry to say that I do not have any kids at D205 schools. I should have a 1st and 3rd grader at Lincoln and a 7th grader at Bryan.</p> <p data-bbox="606 250 1957 367">In August, when D205 pushed out the start date of school we made what seemed like a drastic decision to put our 2 youngest kids in school at our other residence in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin. We discovered the school district at our lake house had a few key differences from Elmhurst. First of all, it is much smaller and therefore easier to manage the numbers. But the most impactful difference has been the "CAN-DO" approach. They spent last summer installing air filtration systems and making the necessary spacial adjustments to house a significant increase in student population. We were not the only ones who moved their full-time residence seeking in-person schooling.</p> <p data-bbox="606 391 1957 440">I feel so fortunate that 2 of my children have thrived in full-time, in person public school since August. Everyone wears masks and they learn, play, eat lunch, have clubs and have enjoyed a very enriched year in Wisconsin.</p> <p data-bbox="606 464 1957 529">Having 2 happy children in school also magnified the tremendous academic and social-emotional stress that my 7th grader was experiencing with remote school via Bryan. She watched her brother and sister return every day from school at 3:00 and by winter break, she made the very difficult decision to switch to our Wisconsin school. In her words, "Going to any school is so much better than looking at a screen all day alone in my room."</p> <p data-bbox="606 553 1957 602">All three of my kids have safely been in full-time school since January and I am thrilled to hear that Elmhurst is planning a return to full time school on April 12th. We want nothing more than to return to our true home and rejoin D205.</p> <p data-bbox="606 626 1957 716">After spending much of the school year in 2 school districts, the key to success in our Wisconsin school has been common sense and a Can-do attitude from our amazing Superintendent, Dr. Samantha Polek. No ridiculous saliva testing, just common sense precautions. She has found effective, creative ways to make sure everyone seeking an education in her district is provided one, in person! D205 has far more resources to make this happen, but they didn't have the proper leadership and willingness to pivot and make the necessary decisions.</p> <p data-bbox="606 740 1957 789">I am hopeful that the Board will vote tonight for a full-time return to in person school. We are a first hand account that it CAN be done safely! Thank you!</p>

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3/16/2021 14:32:00	Sarah Garcia	<p>I am including my comment here in case my comment isn't heard at the Board meeting.</p> <p>Good evening, My name is Sarah Garcia. My son currently goes to Churchville and my daughter is in 2nd grade dual language program at Fischer. When my husband and I got married, we chose to live in the unincorporated North side of Elmhurst. One very important reason we chose this area was our neighborhood school, Conrad Fischer. I knew how good school Fischer was because I did all of my pre-service hours for my teaching degree at Fischer. I have always been amazed with their hard-working, caring staff. I have always loved the diversity of our neighborhood.</p> <p>When the dual language program was being proposed a few years back, I thought it would be great for our students. I was excited because I knew that my daughter would be one of the first students to get to experience a dual program – as it would be implemented in her Kindergarten year. However, my neighbors and I were also nervous. We went to the presentations armed with questions – the most important being “What will happen if this program grows too big for Fischer? Will we lose our neighborhood school?” And we were promised time and time again that that would not happen. That our children, and future children who lived in this neighborhood, would continue to have a neighborhood school. That if the program outgrew our school – we would keep our 2 sections of dual, while the program expanded to other schools. Perhaps even other languages.</p> <p>Instead of the program staying at 2 sections of dual and 2 sections of monolingual, which would have been sustainable for our school, we are at 3 sections of dual and 1 section of monolingual. There is an issue with having only one section of monolingual in K, 1, and 2. This creates a cohort of students that that do not get to mix or interact with other students because they have to remain with that one group of monolingual students. As a parent and educator, I am concerned about the social well-being of the children that do not get to see a change of classroom culture. In addition – this current model is not sustainable for our school – we are already out of room, with no real solution in sight to expand the school, even after the referendum.</p> <p>The fears of parents in our neighborhood seem to be unfolding, after we recently learned that you are planning on taking our neighborhood school to make Fischer a Dual Language/Gifted school. We are concerned that the District has not contacted the families that live in our neighborhood. Consulting, or at least informing, the families of the Fischer attendance area did not seem to be on your list of important things to do before making these life-altering decisions for us.</p> <p>The Board and District are always talking about equity and ensuring things are equitable throughout the district. How is this equitable to Fischer families – to be the only neighborhood in Elmhurst to not have a neighborhood school. The Board and District state that they make decisions in the best interests of the children. How is this in the best interests of Fischer families? I urge the Board to speak with the Fischer families and Fischer neighborhood before making this decision, and to be transparent about major decisions like this going forward. It's not fair or right to find out about a decision that may impact your family the night before it is being proposed to the Board.</p>
3/16/2021 14:54:10	Liz Heywood RN MSN	<p>Please continue your path towards every day, full day school for every child in the district as soon as possible so that all kids in our community have full access to their education. Please also reconsider your mask recommendations, starting with those receiving interventions at Madison. Masks can greatly impair a young child's ability to make progress, particularly in speech therapy, as I am witnessing with my youngest child.</p> <p>Thank you for your work and time this year.</p>

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3/16/2021 14:55:04	Sarah Schmutde	<p>Thank you for your hard work this year. I am a parent of three Jefferson students, and I am also an essential worker who has gone to work throughout the entire pandemic. Unfortunately, I am a lung patient who suffers from a serious rare lung disease. I had one quarter of my lungs removed in 2019 and contracting Covid would be significant for me.</p> <p>I have been able to continue my essential work, in the safest manner possible, because of strict social distancing measures, mask usage, and quarantine procedures at my place of employment. I have done my job and though it is scary for me to work in public, I rely on safety measures to stay safe. These same measures are the appropriate measures that I ask the board to uphold until the CDC and ISBE's recommendations change.</p> <p>Please follow the CDC and ISBE recommendations for the upcoming school year. I believe that we must trust our scientists. Let our scientists do their job and let us use their expertise to guide our decisions for the upcoming school year. Please ensure that masking, social distancing, and quarantining stay in place for the upcoming year.</p> <p>I have three children who have been remote most of the year. They have not suffered academically, and they have never told me they were bored or sad once. I attribute this to a strong and supportive family. As a parent, I have stepped up to provide the additional attention required during this time. I signed up to be a parent, and I am happy to do my job. I believe that it is all parents duty to help their children understand the needs of the community and give their children the support they need.</p> <p>Please follow the CDC guidelines so my family will stay as safe as possible. Please keep masking, social distancing, and quarantining measures in place until the CDC and ISBE amend their recommendations.</p> <p>Thanks so much! Sarah Schmutde</p>
3/16/2021 15:56:18	Jennifer Sommer-Witruk	<p>We've flattened the curve, hospitals are not overwhelmed, teachers are vaccinated, Saliva screening is forced onto us, education is ESSENTIAL, there are not any reasons these kids can't go to school full time if that is what the parents want for their child. Bryan and Sandburg should be 5 days immediately!! Why are our children being treated the worst during this time when they are the least affected by this virus. They are suffering by poor decisions made by adults and it needs to stop. Majority of parents are comfortable with their children in the classroom full time and our administration and BOE have an obligation to provide a proper education to these families. It has been a year and we are failing our children. Get them in school 5 days a week, full days with lunch!!! Stop the insanity!!!</p>

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3/16/2021 16:36:30	Andrea Tepfenhart	<p>To our Board of Education and administrators:</p> <p>First, I will let you know about my family – my husband and I moved here 3 years ago and chose Elmhurst for the amazing schools and location. We have 2 boys, 1 is in preschool at Immaculate Conception, and we have a 1st grader in the district. Our extended family is in Ohio with children ranging from Preschool age to Junior High.</p> <p>Next, let me say I don't envy you. You are all in a position where you have to appease multiple parties, and ultimately someone is never going to be happy. We have teachers and school staff that want to make sure that their work environment is safe, we have parents that want their children back in school full time 5 days a week, parents who want their kids to be home and for schooling to remain remote, parents think the best option lies in the middle, and our kids who are being forced to do whatever the adults decide. Our kids, especially the younger ones, are looking to us to figure out how to react to the ever-changing pandemic world, and I think a lot of the time, we forget them and the amount of adaptation and flexibility they have shown this past year.</p> <p>Our kids have been asked to take on tremendous changes this year – an abrupt ending to the 2019/2020 school year, a summer where pools and parks where closed, a summer where they couldn't see their friends and if they did it was a wave from the end of the driveway, but they had hope that in the fall they would be able to head back to school and see their friends. Unfortunately, we started the school year in full remote, and the excitement of the 1st day of school and getting to see your friends, just wasn't the same. We went to hybrid and most kids were ecstatic to be able to finally meet their teacher and put a person to the face on the computer screen and to see some of their friends, even masked. Then we went back to remote and the kids were again asked to sit and look at a computer screen for 5 hours a day. We switched their schedules again, and we went back to hybrid and finally 5 days a week (for most of our kids). Look at all those changes our kids had to endure, and they have handled it with more grace and flexibility than most adults, myself included.</p> <p>I am asking that going forward (immediately) we return to full in person schooling for all of our students. We need to provide them with a schedule that is not ever changing, we need to provide them with stability, we need to show them leadership and creativity. Science has shown that schools are not high transmission areas, let us follow the science. Let us help our children thrive!</p> <p>I am also asking that for next school year we recognize the difficulty that teachers face with teaching to both in class students and remote students. It is not fair to our teaching staff nor our students to have to navigate both the in-person and remote learning environment. Both environments require vastly different skills for teaching and learning. Please consider splitting classes up based on in-person and remote options, so that our teachers can help our students excel regardless of their choice of schooling. Please put all our students (in person and remote) first.</p> <p>I know that schools are safe as the science says so, and I have seen it at IC in our community and I have seen it within my family in Ohio whose children are attending public school full time since August 2020.</p> <p>The goal shouldn't be to get our kids back to school 100%, that is our duty as a community and your duty as the board and administration. Our goal should be how can we allow our kids to thrive while in school.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>

Timestamp	First and Last Name	Please enter your comment
3/16/2021 16:45:20	Lisa	<p data-bbox="606 180 1440 204">Submitted by: Lisa Gerhold, Elmhurst resident and parent of two students at York High School</p> <p data-bbox="606 228 1927 272">My comments concern the safe reopening of D205 schools, and, in-particular, indoor air quality and ventilation. I have noticed this topic missing from most of the school opening discussions in our community. I realize it's a behind-the-scenes thing, but vitally important to healthy reopening plans.</p> <p data-bbox="606 297 1944 367">Regarding the COVID update document being reviewed at tonight's meeting, I do not see anything listed about indoor air quality or HVAC system functioning in the list of safety measures you are implementing at D205 schools. This is concerning to me because COVID is airborne and to-date, has not been proven to spread via fomites on surfaces as much as via aerosol particles.</p> <p data-bbox="606 391 1906 461">I understand that masks will still be required, but not everyone wears high-filtration masks, which are more effective at blocking aerosols than cloth masks. Of particular concern with going to full school days is the safety of the lunch areas when masks will need to be removed while students are eating.</p> <p data-bbox="606 485 1755 509">I've heard several D205 teachers and staff say that many or most windows do not open to allow fresh air to enter the classrooms.</p> <p data-bbox="606 534 1948 621">What upgrades will D205 be implementing before the re-opening to address indoor air quality, and how will these upgrades be assessed in each classroom? Will you be able to achieve the recommended 4-6 air changes/per hour per classroom? Same question for the eating areas? Will you be using portable HEPA filters in classrooms to increase clean air? Will you be using CO2 monitors in classrooms and lunch areas to gauge air quality and COVID transmission risk, as aerosol experts have recommended?</p> <p data-bbox="606 646 1860 690">The CDC's K-12 Schools COVID-19 Mitigation Toolkit HVAC checklist includes the following questions. How many of these actions has D205 completed and where can this information be found?</p> <ol data-bbox="606 714 1944 1109" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="606 714 1944 784">1.Has the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system(s) and/or unit ventilation equipment in all buildings (both permanent and temporary) been assessed and controls calibrated per manufacturer specification? Note: For detailed checklists for Janitors and Maintenance Staff and HVAC and School Facilities Staff see Appendix A. <li data-bbox="606 808 1833 833">2.Has an HVAC maintenance technician or HVAC professional changed building air ventilation according to CDC and ASHRAE guidance? <li data-bbox="606 857 1440 881">3.Has local exhaust ventilation in restrooms and other high occupancy areas been assessed? <li data-bbox="606 906 1871 950">4.Was ventilation through other means considered when HVAC adjustments were not possible? Portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning can be considered in areas of higher risk such as the nurse's office and isolation rooms <li data-bbox="606 974 1927 1018">5.Has ultraviolet germicidal radiation (UVGI) been considered as a supplement to help kill SARS-CoV-2, especially when increasing room ventilation options are limited? <li data-bbox="606 1042 1881 1109">6.Is there a plan to leave windows and doors open to increase air flow from outside? Note: Ensure opening windows and doors does not create safety or health hazards (e.g., exacerbating asthma symptoms or other symptoms of respiratory illness). Have bus operators been instructed to leave windows open, when doing so does not create a safety or health hazard? <p data-bbox="606 1133 1717 1157">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/FINAL-0321420_B_K-12_Mitigation_Toolkit508.pdf</p> <p data-bbox="606 1182 1881 1226">Additional, recommendations are provided by Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Schools for Health guide: https://schools.forhealth.org/risk-reduction-strategies-for-reopening-schools/healthy-buildings/#verify-ventilation-and-filtration-performance</p> <p data-bbox="606 1250 1367 1274">I encourage D205 to focus on indoor air quality before opening full time, 5-days/week.</p> <p data-bbox="606 1299 705 1323">Thank you.</p>

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3/16/2021 16:56:54	Ioana Fernandez	<p>Dear Mrs. Caforio, Dr. Moyer and Board members,</p> <p>We are representing a group of Jefferson Elementary parents with similar views on schools and Covid safety. Our families have 7 kids at Jefferson Elementary.</p> <p>We are fortunate that our kids get to be educated in such an amazing school district. Even during a pandemic, our teachers and administrators went above and beyond to make sure that our kids received and continue to receive a fantastic education.</p> <p>Years of smart decision-making, at the district level, paid off during the pandemic. All students in the district have access to devices, internet, food and a phenomenal education. There are numerous resources available for students and parents whether they struggle with anxiety or have learning needs.</p> <p>Our kids have been learning remotely since March 2020 and they came back to school in person starting on March 1st, 2021. We felt that we were forced to send our kids to school or they would be isolated for the rest of the school year. There was no clear answer for remote families before we had to make a decision. The District, until now, has always asked for the input of the community in the form of a questionnaire but that didn't happen this time for reasons unknown to us. So now, we are anxious every day to send our kids to school because this is the highest risk we have taken for the past year.</p> <p>We have been paying attention to all board meetings but especially since March 2020. Public schools should be for all kids and they should be safe for all kids not just for the parents who yell the loudest. Getting rid of masks, social distancing and testing would put all our kids at risk. Kids get Covid and they can infect adults. Look at what is happening now in Europe. One by one, countries in Europe are, once again, locking up because the numbers of Covid cases are rising and fast. Look at all the warnings from scientists and the CDC that we're not out of the woods yet and stress the importance to continue all safety protocols.</p> <p>Yes, people are vaccinated, but so far only 11% of the US population is fully vaccinated. Another 10% has had Covid in the past year. That leaves another 80% at risk for a disease that is extremely dangerous. We may not die from Covid but what about the long-term side effects?</p> <p>We should not have to choose between education and health especially in a public school system.</p> <p>You may say that we have the option to keep our kids remote if we are worried. While this may be an option, what does it mean for our kids' education? We too would love for our kids to be in school every day with all the resources offered to them in a school environment. We all want that. We only want it if everyone can do it safely with all the right safety measures in place and followed.</p> <p>We are thankful for everything you have done so far and we ask that District 205 continues to follow science and facts when making decisions and not a group of people that scream and shout until they are heard. We are asking that you keep social distancing, mandatory testing, enforce quarantine procedures, and masking in schools as long as the CDC and ISBE recommend them. We ask District 205 to make sure that our public schools remain safe for EVERY STUDENT AND FACULTY MEMBER.</p> <p>The pandemic is still raging, over 50,000 people get sick every single day in the US and thousands are dying. There is not a "normal" until the disease is under control and loosening up on safety measures does not get us there. Doing the right thing is not always the easiest. Isn't this what we tell our kids? We're asking you to do the right thing for all of us.</p> <p>Thank you for listening.</p> <p>Phil & Ioana Fernandez (parents of Leopoldo, 5th grade and Rafaelo, 3rd grade) Bob & Sarah Schmudde (parents of Lucy, 5th grade, Elaine and Quinn, 3rd grade) Brian & Janet Taylor (parents of Meara, 5th grade and Grady, kindergarten)</p>
3/16/2021 17:44:05	Nicole Stanton	<p>I am very interested to hear your plan regarding "lunch risk mitigation" at York high school. That is my main question and concern going forward with reopening more in April. Unfortunately we have not reached herd immunity in our community just yet. I read on the county website only slightly more than 10% of Dupage residents are fully vaccinated now, but more have at least one dose. It's a great start.</p> <p>With some flexibility and ingenuity I'm confident our district can figure out a way to follow the science guidelines while also allowing the kids to eat their lunch relatively safely during a full day at York. I look forward to hearing the details. Thank you for your time and effort.</p>

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3/16/2021 18:18:12	Kirsten Powers	<p>The schools have just transitioned to 4 days back in-person (with remote option and remote Wednesdays). Why is the District looking to add change again in a few weeks by going 5 full days for the last 6 weeks? Teachers, administrators, families, caregivers just developed a plan to handle the current schedule, and then have to make further changes for the last few weeks of school. The schools are 80% Reopen and 20% Virtual – with saliva testing - that's a huge transition already from 2 weeks ago. 1 more day in person will not add to the academic rigor over 6 weeks, so why is the District ONLY listening to the few parents demanding "full reopen" despite the facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1)With the introduction of saliva testing, Sandburg middle school's first week results revealed much higher numbers of asymptomatic cases of Covid infection- and I suspect the other schools showed the same. 2)Teachers are not yet fully vaccinated and the District should assure that they are before pushing further interaction and increases in infection 3)CDC guidance says distance of 6 ft. distance yet the District has gone to 3 ft. – increasing exposure—why increase time exposure as well? 4)There is no good plan for kids to eat lunch indoors at this time. Why introduce this extra variable as well at this time? 5)Community case rates have declined, for now. But we are very far from herd immunity, we have spring break exposures coming up, new variants that are far more contagious and the communities who never really shut down such as Elmhurst are the source of these variants. 6)Increased rates of infection allows the virus to mutate and we will NEVER get rid of it if our public institutions like the School Board, the City, the County, etc. don't stand up for science and public health. <p>The District should plan for 5 full day/return to school for the Fall when everyone is vaccinated and when a better plan for return can be finalized and implemented, not rushed. For now, let the kids go 4 days a week, keep the remote option, and 1 day a week everyone might still learn a bit about resiliency, self-sufficiency, and the social contract.</p>
3/16/2021 18:35:44	Cynthia Neri	<p>Thank you for your time in reading our comments and your effort to get our students back in school. I want to ask for minute to think about everyone who is going to be affected by your decision tonight. We have adopted to a "new way" of education this past year. It has not ideal, I understand, but we adapted to the situation we were given. Since then, we have been in a routine. Our kids have been in a routine. The teachers and administrators have been in a routine. And we're tired. We're tired of the ever changing decisions made by you that haven't been effectively communicated to us. We are tired of constantly adapting and being told one thing by you, and then changing it without the thought of its ramifications on us. We are tired of being stretched to our limits. We are about to break. So let me ask you, the decision that will be made tonight, will it help all parties involved? Will your decision be in support of the students, parents, faculty, and all other workers of D205? Will your decision break us? Will your decision bring peace as we head into work every day? Will your decision make us feel safe? Will your decision provide routine that everyone would be able to effectively adapt to? I may be the only one feeling this way or not; but I do not feel peace. I am scared. I am anxious. I am worried that the decision that will be made tonight will create more long term harm than good. And given that everything that I have given to this community, this school district, this profession, I want to make sure that the people deciding tonight understands that you are responsible for all of the lives that you are affecting and not only the families that voice their opinions on social media. Thank you.</p>
3/16/2021 18:50:04	Tim Finley	<p>While I appreciate the need to move to full time in person classroom teaching, I believe it is prudent to evaluate the most recent change to 4 day a week in-person learning at the high school before moving ahead with 5 day teaching. Given that this only started this week, I don't see how an informed decision can be made to moving to 5 day a week in person class with no time to evaluate the impact of the recent change. I would recommend waiting for a few weeks before making a decision.</p>