



EMPOWERING ALL STUDENTS

Learners Today - Leaders Tomorrow

March 3, 2021

Allison Mueller
52 Talcott Ave.
Crystal Lake, IL. 60014

Ms. Mueller:

On February 17, 2021, you sent an email request pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) seeking records from Crystal Lake Elementary District 47 ("District"). In your FOIA you requested:

- All correspondence between D47 staff and Board and unions relating to Special Education services and programs and the decision to enact an adaptive pause on 11/2/20. through the decision to return to in-person services and learning.

Due to your request being broad and considered unduly burdensome per FOIA guidelines, on February 18, 2021, you narrowed your request seeking emails from 10/12/2020 through 10/30/2020 between BOE members, Dr. Hinz and Dr. Buchanan relating to special education services and programs and the decision to enact an adaptive pause on November 2, 2020

Please find the attached document which fulfills our obligation to your request. Pursuant to FOIA 5 ILCS 140/2(c-5), items have been redacted as information is private and exempt from FOIA.

To the extent you consider this response a denial to your request; you have the right to have the denial reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). You can file your Request for Review with the PAC by writing to: Public Access Counselor, Office of the Attorney General, 500 South 2nd Street Springfield, Illinois 62706, Fax: 217-782-1396 or email publicaccess@atg.state.il.us. If you choose to file a Request for Review with the PAC, you must do so within 60 calendar days after the date of the denial letter. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a) and include your original request.

The information provided fulfills our obligation to your FOIA request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me 815-788-5000.

Sincerely,

Clare F. Bourne
Freedom of Information Officer
Crystal Lake School District 47

300 Commerce Dr. Crystal Lake, IL 60014 815.788.5000

www.d47.org D47schools [crystallakesd47](https://twitter.com/crystallakesd47)

**REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS
PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (5ILCS 140)**

Date of Request: 2-17-2021

FOIA Record # _____

Name: Allison Mueller

Organization: _____

Address: 52 Talcott Ave

Phone Number: 847-309-7724

Crystal Lake, IL 60014

I HEREBY REQUEST ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING RECORDS:

All correspondence between D47 staff and Board and unions relating to Special Education services and programs and the decision to enact an adaptive pause on 11/2/20 through the decision to return to in-person services and learning.

Within 5 business days of the District receiving your request, you are entitled to a response, or notice that the district is in need of additional processing time (not to exceed an additional 5 business days). When our response is complete, we will contact you.

The District's response, including all supporting documents, and FOIA request with all submitted information, will be posted online under "Freedom of Information" on the District 47 website. District 47 provides this service as a public courtesy for no fee. Documents will be posted within 10 business days from our response to your request.

Fees will apply after the initial limited amount of black and white copies are provided. Actual cost of color or abnormal size copies will apply.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

The District's response and records were accessed by: In House Inspection Pick-up Mail Fax Email

Date: _____ Time: _____

AMT REC'D: _____ Check# _____ Cash _____

FOIA Officer: _____

Witness: _____



Crystal Lake Community Consolidated School District 47
300 Commerce Drive, Crystal Lake, IL. 60014
Phone: 815-459-6070 Fax: 815-479-8566





EMPOWERING ALL STUDENTS

Learners Today - Leaders Tomorrow

February 24, 2021

Ms Allison Mueller
52 Talcott Ave
Crystal Lake, IL. 60014

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Ms. Mueller:

Crystal Lake School District 47 received your request for records pursuant to the *Illinois Freedom of Information Act* on February 17, 2021. The request was deemed to be unduly burdensome and you were requested to narrow your request. On February 18, 2021, you narrowed your request seeking emails from 10/12/2020 through 10/30/2020 between BOE members, Dr. Hinz and Dr. Buchanan relating to special education services and programs and the decision to enact an adaptive pause on November 2, 2020.

Pursuant to Section 3(e) of the *Act* (5 ILCS 140/3(e)), the School District is extending the time for response for the following reasons:

- the request requires the collection of a substantial number of specified records [5 ILCS 140/3(e)(ii)];
- the requested records require examination and evaluation by personnel having the necessary competence and discretion to determine if they are exempt from disclosure under Section 7 of the *Act* or should be revealed only with appropriate deletions [5 ILCS 140/3(e)(v)]; and
- the request for records cannot be complied with by the public body within the time limits prescribed by Section 3(c) of the *Act* without unduly burdening or interfering with the operations of the School District [5 ILCS 140/3(e)(vi)].

The School District anticipates that the response to your request will be ready by March 3, 2021.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me 815-788-5000.

Sincerely,

Clare F. Bourne
Freedom of Information Officer
Crystal Lake School District 47

300 Commerce Dr. Crystal Lake, IL 60014 815.788.5000

www.d47.org D47schools [crystallakesd47](https://twitter.com/crystallakesd47)

Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

to Amy Schwab

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on my response in order to keep them in the loop of communication yet not violate the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for emailing the board and me and sharing your feedback and concerns. I appreciate you sharing your thoughts as a parent and educator and understanding that the decisions in front of us all are complex and difficult ones. I'd like to clarify that no one believes that remote learning is better than hybrid or in any way better than in-person. I appreciate everything that you and the rest of the staff are doing during the pandemic to connect with, support, and teach our students. We all understand that the learning that can occur during the pandemic isn't what we can typically do during a normal school year. I also understand the emotional and mental health impact that this is having on adults and children. It is unfortunate that the community spread numbers have grown to the rate that they have, which impacts our ability remain in hybrid currently. My hope is that people in the community begin to and/or continue following the health guidelines so that we can resume our hybrid model and continue working toward in-person for all. Again, thank you for emailing and I hope you had a great Halloween celebration with your students today.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

On Thu, Oct 29, 2020 at 3:32 PM Schwab, Amy <arschwab@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Board Members,

I'm not sure that I have the words right now to fully express how I'm feeling both as a teacher and a mom. In my 21 years of teaching I never thought I would be writing a letter like this trying to advocate for our kids to stay in school.

As a teacher, I can assure you that our kids are not okay going back and forth between remote and in person instruction. I can't tell you how great it has been to see my students in person over the course of the past few weeks. Did I make connections with my 20 little zoom squares at the beginning of the year? Yes. Have I made connections with the 6 new students I gained when moving to in person instruction after losing 10 of my remote kids? Yes. Will I continue to nurture that bond and trust I have with my now 16 students going back to remote? Yes. Will my students continue to learn and grow at the same pace that they have been for the past few weeks? No. I'm sorry to tell you, but remote instruction does not work for the majority of kids. Especially those kids in elementary school. As much as we can try to set boundaries and expectations for our students while in remote

learning, I can tell you from experience that many students (and parents for that matter) are not taking instruction seriously, which is why they need to stay in person if that is what their choice is.

As a mom, I can assure you that many kids are now struggling with anxiety and even depression because they are being deprived of part of their childhood. I know this because I see it in my own children. I have an [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and while she is usually a very happy and charismatic girl, she has changed over the course of the past several months, becoming more withdrawn. She misses her friends. She misses participating in sports and clubs at school. Holding zoom meetings for NJHS or Student Council is not the same by any stretch of the imagination. The same holds true for my [REDACTED] who attend [REDACTED], so I can assure you that older kids really aren't any more resilient to this than younger kids.

I not only fear for the long lasting effects and well being of my own 3 children, but I also fear for my 16 kids at school. Everything is being ripped away from our children, and it's not okay!

While I'm sure the decision to "pause" our in person instruction was not an easy one, I fully believe that it was also the wrong one. It is not in the best interest of our children to now make them go back home and learn through a screen. They are not ping-pong balls going back and forth between remote and in person, or teacher to teacher, and treating them as such will only have detrimental effects.

Our community is losing faith in District 47 and their leadership. Teachers are exhausted and trying to find any way possible to get out of education. You have the power to change that. Let our kids be IN school.

Respectfully,
Amy Schwab
4th grade- WC

Katherine Krallitsch [REDACTED]

to jtpellikan, esmith, jpowell, cwadlington, RFetzner,

BALes, RPFarrell, Kathy Hinz

Please listen to other educators in our area and major studies. Schools are NOT super spreaders. Private schools are open and okay.

Give us the choice to send our children or not.

Please open our schools.

See article from the NW Herald.

https://www.nwherald.com/2020/10/20/mchenry-county-private-school-leaders-say-in-person-learning-is-working-no-reason-to-go-remote/a3oqpbd/?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=NWHFacebook&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR10vCEl2bbdT4UgIRkuCV1y79AGvbDWpfodCeKSMDM9A4fy2j3wYb7-iexk#Echobox=1604056036

On Fri, Oct 30, 2020, 9:46 AM Katherine Krallitsch <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I am one voice of many. I want our schools OPEN. I do not feel it is right for our children and their mental health for us to close all schools. These kids are giving up so much and are respecting the new restrictions in school. They should NOT be punished for this. IF a school gets a high number of cases and/or quarantined kids then I agree with closing that school for cleaning and reopen in 2 weeks. D47 has done this with success. Our kids' lives depend on it! Do NOT close them all.

KEEP OUR SCHOOLS OPEN!

Kate Krallitsch

to Scott Mueller

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on this response so that they are kept in the loop of communication yet not violate the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you so much for reaching out and sharing your concerns, thoughts, and experience with Husmann this fall. I tried to call a few moments ago and got your voicemail. I appreciate the willingness to discuss your feedback. If you would let me know a time or times that work best for you, I'd be happy to reach out again when you are available.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

CORE Center

On Thu, Oct 29, 2020 at 10:42 AM Scott Mueller <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear School Board Members,

With the news yesterday, informing parents of D47 the district will be transitioning back to a fully remote learning model, I feel it's my obligation to speak up on behalf of my children (1st grade and 2nd grade), as well as countless other families who were upset, saddened, and angered by the district's decision.

The decision to go back to school in early October (I felt) was a trial to see how successful the district could handle the disease with the kids in school. The hybrid model proved to be highly successful. Those individuals who did not feel comfortable sending their kids back were given the option to stay fully remote. Parents who felt it was safe enough (and better for their kids) to learn in person were given the hybrid option. Hence, everybody was given an option to suit their own comfort level. It's my understanding the elementary schools have had minimal cases (and my kids' school, Husmann, had zero). So what is the purpose of going back to a fully remote model when the schools proved they could handle the disease? There hasn't been an outbreak in any of the schools in D47 (to my knowledge). Is the district bending to the pressure from politicians and government agencies who are throttling schools and businesses with draconian measures/rules? Just last week (and earlier this week) I was bragging to friends and clients about our school. I was proud of our district for having the courage to do what's right for the kids. I no longer have that pride.

When my daughter had a sore throat (for one day) last week, I had to keep both my kids home until we received her negative COVID test results. Though it wasn't convenient for a single father to stay home the entire work week, I didn't moan and wine and yell and complain. I understand why the school and district have safeguards in place. The overwhelming majority of the time we get a sore throat or stuffy nose is from allergies, the common cold, not getting enough sleep, etc. But the policy to be 100% certain that those symptoms are not from COVID is understandable. I can agree with that. I cannot and will not agree with the decision to lock our children in the house and have them sit in front of a computer screen for 5 hours because the county saw a spike. The number of cases in the county increased, but why does that have to negatively affect the families who are doing everything right so their kids can be in school. Again, what kind of "spikes" have we seen in our D47 schools? Why are we crushing our grade school kids because teenagers and young adults are going out in large gatherings, being careless, and contracting the disease?

In my opinion, the grade school kids are at a very vulnerable age in their educational development, and they need the best tutelage/education possible for the fundamentals (reading, writing, arithmetic). Sitting on a Chrombook having their dad or mom constantly remind them to sit up straight and pay attention is not what's best for the kids. Not to mention the social benefits of learning in a classroom environment (in person), as well as the detriment of staring at a screen 10 inches from their face for 5 hours per day. When we did remote learning in September, my

kids would frequently complain about headaches. When they went back to school, it immediately went away. Correlation is not always causation but the timing made it pretty clear where the headaches were coming from. Remote learning is better than nothing, but our kids are being robbed of their education at a very young and precious age. I'm extremely sad and disappointed with the district's decision, and my heart is breaking for the children.

Lastly, I can't speak highly enough for Principal Sromek and the entire Husmann staff. They did a remarkable job making sure kids were spaced apart properly, wearing face masks, not mingling, etc. I have been very happy with the job of the Husmann team and don't have a single complaint about the school. I went to Husmann, as did my brothers, K thru 5th grade. The school and staff is as good as it's ever been.

I appreciate you taking the time to read my email and am willing to discuss any time.

Sincerely,

Scott Mueller

773-484-3142

to Laurie Swihart

Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on this email to keep them in the loop of communication yet not violate the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for emailing and sharing your thoughts regarding the most recent decision for the adaptive pause. I want you to know that I hear you and I know that you are not alone in your feelings and perspective. There are many factors that are involved with these decisions and I appreciate you sharing your thoughts and perspective.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

CORE Center

On Thu, Oct 29, 2020 at 1:09 PM Swihart, Laurie <[REDACTED]> wrote:

To Our School Board and Kathy Hinz,

I cannot express how sad and disappointed I am with your decision to put our in-person students back to remote instruction.

We need a school board that can stay strong when a minority of parents send nasty-grams and attempt to set their own agenda for our school district. If these parents are unhappy with in-person instruction, they have every right to choose remote instruction for their students. Unfortunately, you have allowed those parents to make a choice for ALL of our students!! What about the more than 4,000 students in our schools?? Why are THEY being stripped of their choice?

I understand your difficult decision, however, we must always choose what is best for the MAJORITY of our students, and you have not done that. You have caved in to a minority of parents who are complaining. The number of covid cases in our county still allows us to have a CHOICE about whether to open or close our schools, and you have taken that choice away from the families of District 47.

Poorly done, board. These students will suffer academically and emotionally if left at home. Please bring them BACK TO SCHOOL!

Sincerely,

Laurie Swihart

Fifth Grade Teacher

Sauck, Jennifer <jsauck@d47.org>

to Powell, Jonathan

Thank you for continuing to lobby for the safety of our D47 community. The sense of relief that I felt when I heard we were going remote for now was tremendous. As the health care liaison in the building, I take great comfort in knowing that we are doing what is necessary to hopefully "stop the bleed". The amount of kids being isolated and quarantined for various reasons rose sharply as this week progressed, and the reasoning I heard from those in favor of hybrid was disheartening.

Thank you for caring.....

Jenn Sauck

School Nurse, RN, BSN

Thu, Oct 29, 2020,
11:02 AM

VeronicaAndy Doherty

to esmith, jtpellikan, jpowell, cwardlington, RFetzner,
BALes, RPFarrell

Good afternoon,

I just wanted to voice my disgust with what's happening for the special ed community. My daughter has been flip flopped around this year and it's shameful. Her year was abruptly cut short in March - the virtual learning that was implemented in Apr-May was an absolute joke (no other nice words about it). She started the year "eLearning" which is nearly impossible for us special need kids and their parents (some working parents - like me who have zero time to dedicate to this method - even though I have zero time for this I have made an effort - and that means me fighting with my poor kid for 2 hours trying to get her to participate in class - no kind words to say here). It's just mind blowing that anyone thinks this is possible for OUR kids. Every single special needs parent I know has voiced their displeasure and how unproductive eLearning is. I have not met a single special needs parent who thinks their kid is benefitting from eLearning. And NOW you are telling me my daughter is supposed to return to this awful "learning" method after being in person with the people she loves (her teacher & staff) for 6 weeks. Meanwhile, her younger brother has been going to [redacted private preschool] since the first week of September (everyone's masked - NO COVID positives there either). My daughter is in [redacted] and there's 5-7 kids in her class. My friend's child is in [redacted] kindergarten - FOUR kids in his class. You can not logically explain why these SMALL classes cannot attend in person. I understand the logistics of every elementary school and why that needs to go remote - fine - those neurotypical children can withstand some hours of elearning and they can comprehend why there is a change in learning - there is NO EXPLAINING THIS TO MY 4YO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD. Now her brother will be going to school and she will not. This will crush her and I couldn't be more infuriated. We just moved a month ago and STAYED in D47 because this was the district to be in - now I couldn't regret it more.

Thank you for your time,

Veronica Doherty

Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 7:33
PM

Kelly Horist <[redacted]>

to esmith, rfetzner, jtpellikan, jpowell, cwadlington,

RPFarrell, bales

Dear Board of Education,

I want to start by saying thank you for the countless hours you have all put into this voluntary position over the past several months. I am quite sure that none of you envisioned being in this position when you decided to run for our school board. My husband and I both grew up in Crystal Lake attending District 47 and 155 schools. We absolutely loved our experience growing up in this community. We loved it so much that a few years ago we decided to uproot our three daughters and move to Crystal Lake so that they could benefit from the same education that we had received. It honestly was the best decision we have ever made. Our daughters have thrived in school and one of them is finally getting evaluated for an [REDACTED] (something we have been advocating for for quite some time). I have nothing but the utmost respect for my fellow educators and our amazing administrative teams and I know that without their daily support and exemplary efforts my children would not be making both the academic and social-emotional growth that has been observed over the past three years.

As a teacher in the district, I was so incredibly proud of our district for allowing our schools to stay open last week when others around us were closing. The past three weeks of in-person instruction has reignited my passion for this career. After 19 years of teaching, one can easily become “burnt out” with the increasing demands of education. However, the second those students walked through the doors into my classroom after seven months of our schools being closed, my heart burst with pride for the role I have chosen for my career. The past three weeks I have cherished the smiles (yes, it is very apparent that those smiles are under those masks), chatter, laughter, comradery and discussions that we have been able to have face-to-face. I have finally been able to make progress with my most struggling learners and ensure that my gifted learners are adequately challenged rather than sitting idly awaiting the next task. Meeting the needs of both of these populations is extremely difficult teaching remotely.

I understand that some members of the board think that this is the best decision in order to keep our community healthy; however, I must say many of us parents and teachers strongly disagree. The mental health and social-emotional learning of our students must be a top priority for you as well. When I shared the news with my daughters they cried. They cried real tears. When would they see their friends again? When would they get to go back to school? Not only did I have to console my daughters, but I also received emails from a few of my students already sad and nervous about having to go back to remote learning. If the data proved that our children and us teachers were at risk I would fully support your decision. Not once over the past three weeks have I felt unsafe sending my children to school, nor have I felt unsafe going into my classroom to teach. As parents we made the decision to send our children TO school and as a teacher I made the decision to go willingly and freely back TO my classroom with my students. We belong together and I hope that moving forward you will continue to do what is best for our children and this community and allow us to keep our schools open.

Sincerely,
Kelly Horist

Good evening,

I have blind copied the board on my response in order to ensure that they are kept in the loop of communication while not violating the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for emailing us. I hear and understand the concerns that you have explained. I realize that the circumstances of having your children quarantined is not ideal. We have talked at board meetings about families who choose in-person needing to be the most flexible and fluid in order to deal with the in-person requirements as well as be ready for potential rolling quarantines. I understand that you disagree with the asynchronous method that we provide for students to receive work from the core teacher(s) during a quarantine period with synchronous work available for encores and the 2-3 pm hour. While nothing is ideal during this pandemic, we are doing our best to meet as many situations and needs as possible. As we continue to review and discuss tweaks to our plan, I will ask the group to reconsider a video stream into the classroom. In the summer, our team had discussed live streaming in combination with in-person instruction as an option or model and decided that for students the ages that we teach that would not be effective for either the in-person or remote students.

Again, I'd like to thank you for your email.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

On Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 9:04 PM Katie Koch <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear D47 Board of Education, Dr. Hinz and Mrs. Boro,

First of all, thank you for all of your time and your service during the pandemic. There are lots of difficult and complex decisions to be made. This email, unfortunately, is to express a concern and a disappointment.

On Tuesday the 27th, we were informed that our son **Connor (HBMS 7th grade)** and our daughter **Callie (Husmann 5th grade)** were a close contact to a student on their bus route who had tested positive for COVID. As we both work in D155, we knew what to expect in terms of the resulting quarantine.

However, what we did not realize was that neither of our children would have any access to direct instruction from their core teachers for the duration of the quarantine, and would instead have to log on to their virtual classrooms and direct their own learning for the next two weeks. Was this communicated to parents when the choice between in-person and remote was offered? Had we known, we without a doubt would have chosen the remote option to ensure consistent access to their teacher and eliminate any risk of having to learn on their own. We struggle to understand how a backup plan was not in place, when the quarantining of some students would be a near certainty, and we worry for students in this situation who have IEPs or more significant needs than our own children have.

Is there some reason why simply deploying cameras in classrooms is not an option? If there is a reason for not utilizing this technology (which many area schools are using), then we would suggest a switch to full remote in order to provide some modicum of active instruction for the population of quarantined students.

We were initially supportive of D47's decision to stay in school so that our children could continue to have live access to their teachers, and we fully understand that this was a difficult decision. Looking ahead, should you continue in-person learning, or return to it should you need to shut down, we strongly request that you develop a support plan for students who have to quarantine. The current lack of plan is simply unacceptable.

Thanks for listening, and again for your service.

Katie and Steve Koch

Katie Koch, NBCT

Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 5:57
PM

to Board Of Education, Hinz, Kathy

Dear Board,

Over the weekend I wrote to thank you for keeping our kids in school. Today I am writing to share how disappointed I am in your recent decision to move us back to remote learning. Being in person with my students the last four weeks has been so important for them socially and academically. I have been able to make connections with them that I could not make over Zoom. I can hold my students accountable when they do not do their work in class. I cannot do that over Zoom. Some of my students did absolutely NOTHING the first six weeks of school and that is out of my control when I am not physically with them. There have been minimal cases of Covid in our district and keeping kids out of school is going to do more damage to their mental health than you think.

You are definitely NOT doing what's best for kids and in my opinion you should be ashamed of your decision. If you supported this, please know you do not have my vote in the next election.

Mrs. Julie Fox

Fifth Grade

Wed, Oct 28, 2020,
4:55 PM

Eric [REDACTED]

to boe

D47 BOE:

Thank you for enacting the adaptive pause. Albeit a tough decision, I truly believe this is the right course of action and believe you are doing what's most right for the situation at hand to protect our educational as well as greater community as we navigate these uncertain times together.

Respectfully,

Eric LeBlanc

[REDACTED]
901 Broadway Avenue

Wed, Oct 28, 2020,
4:00 PM

Scott Smith [REDACTED]

to esmith, rpfarrell, bales, jtpellikan, Robert Fetzner,
cwadlington, jpowell

D47 Board,

Regarding the closure of D47 schools: Thank you. I know this decision is hard, and I am sure it will be unpopular and you will get quite a bit of criticism from district parents in the days and weeks to come. However, I believe the guidance of our health care experts and the writing is on the wall that things are going to get a lot worse before they get better.

You'll get a lot of feedback that students' education is suffering because of this change. I 100% believe that is true. However, lost days in the classroom can be made up and each student's education can still be completed successfully. On the other hand, we don't fully understand how devastating and long-lasting the after-effects of COVID-19 infection can be. We have to consider public health as our top priority not only to save our community from those effects, but also to bring the swiftest possible end to this pandemic so we can return to in-person learning (and the rest of normal life) on a permanent basis.

Thank you again, you are doing the right thing. Please do not be swayed by the backlash of parents who understandably want the best possible learning experience for their children, in a year where that experience simply is not safe for students, families, faculty, and community.

Thank you.

Scott W Smith

Wed, Oct 28, 2020,
3:43 PM

Stewart McVicar [REDACTED]

to esmith@d47.org, jtpellikan@d47.org, jpowell@d47.org,
cwadlington@d47.org, RFetzner@d47.org,

BALes@d47.org, RPFarrell@d47.org

Hey Guys,

I was so proud of you guys. I really was.....

Then today happened..

You guys were trailblazers!!! I loved it.....

You were leading the way. I was so Thankful for this crew!

Shutting down the school again is just plain stupid and against common sense.

The social distancing plan and masks at the school are enough!

Amy (Woodscreeks principle) and her team have done an outstanding job at keeping our kids safe.

My daughter is 7 years old and a single child who is suffering from this pandemic.

Today, I had to tell her Friday will be her last day. She started sobbing....

First thing out of her mouth was NOT E-LEARNING DAD!!!!!!

E-Learning is ok for older students not for the younger students.

IT SUCKS AND DOES NOT WORK.....

I understand that these times are challenging and you all did not sign up for this.....

However, in my humble opinion this decision is harming kids more than keeping them safe..

I said back in July...wrote it on my board. We will get shut down again right before the Elections....

I'm really hoping that you guys did not let one person turn the tide.....

I know it only takes one...

We should of stayed the course.....it was all working great....

Trailblazers no more...

Respectfully,

Stewart McVicar

Father of [REDACTED]

Dear District 47 Board Members –

We were told by the superintendent that the school board votes/decides on when the district moves between learning models.

First and foremost, we want our children in school. We have chosen the in person option for all 3 of our children. From the start of this pandemic, we have said school is #1 – and we, as a family, will do what it takes to ensure the kids can be in the school building. We have gone as far to pull our kids back from sports that have moved indoors to limit the spread (believe me this is a big deal for our family of 3 active boys!), and do our part to ensure metrics remain at a level where school is deemed safe for not only the children, but the teachers and community as a whole.

We had been, for the most part, pleased with the district's response to COVID and school reopening. However, last week when the district decided to ignore the MCDH's guidance and data supporting a decline in community metrics, we were left confused and concerned. D47's reopening plan has all along referenced data from MCDH's guidance for schools. The district posts these metrics as the main source of information in the COVID section on the district site. The board even reviews the data in the board meetings. We had been pleased to see data driven metrics in the reopening plan and having it available as a source to objectively ensure the district is making decisions that positively impact not just the children, but the ~45k community members in Crystal Lake/Lakewood and our local economy (not to mention all the communities our teachers commute to/from).

If the board is not going to consider MCDH's COVID data metrics/thresholds or heed MCDH's guidance, what criteria are being used to determine what learning model we are in? We feel very misled and uninformed. Our hope is that you are not choosing to make reactive decisions based on the past week's school counts, but instead being proactive and considering data trends in the community. In the week since your decision, the county's metrics continue to decline and further restrictions are about to be placed on our towns. Your decisions will inevitably impact the safety our children and teachers and contribute to declining metrics that ultimately impact our economy.

We also hope you have considered the district's ability to contact trace effectively and efficiently. Per the board meeting, one gentleman and school nurses were working around the clock with just 15 documented cases. If we cannot effectively contact trace when cases rise, there is a direct impact to our children, teachers and community. It's ok to pause, go remote for a few weeks at a time until things trend in the right direction. After all, you have been saying this might be the case all along - it shouldn't be a surprise to anyone.

We really would like our kids in school, but we trusted the district would follow county guidance and thresholds set in place by experts (as so many of our surrounding communities of similar size have done). We need to understand how decisions are being made.

We have also heard that if we choose for our children to go remote that they will not be guaranteed a spot in a remote classroom. Is this accurate? How is this ok when we have been told all along that we can go remote anytime?

Sincerely,

Michael and Rebecca Zuehlke

NOTE: The following message will also go out to D47 parents today at 1:30pm.

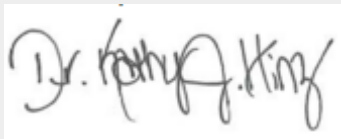
Dear staff:

Since we announced last Friday that we would remain in our current hybrid learning model, we have continued to monitor COVID-19 health metrics for our county and region, as well as the specific zip codes (60012, 60014, and 60156) of families living within District 47 boundaries. Unfortunately, the county numbers continue to remain above the threshold for hybrid learning and Region 9, which includes Lake and McHenry Counties, has had its third consecutive day with a positivity rate above 8 percent which could warrant additional mitigation measures by the state. As a result, we have decided to implement what the IDPH calls an “adaptive pause” on hybrid learning. **Beginning Monday, November 2, District 47 will move to a remote learning model.** *For more information about what an adaptive pause means according to the IDPH, please refer to page 3 of the following [document](#).*

It has been important to our Board of Education to be able to provide families with a choice in learning model for their child(ren) throughout this pandemic. We are all in agreement that face-to-face teaching and learning is what’s best for our students and we are all disappointed to have to temporarily suspend in-person instruction. It is our hope that we’ll be able to resume our hybrid model for the second trimester. However, as we continue to prioritize the health and safety of our staff, students and families, an adaptive pause is what is currently appropriate.

As we prepare for the transition to remote learning on Monday, please see below for some important information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Kathy J. Hinz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and "K".

Dr. Kathy J. Hinz

Superintendent

How long will we be in an “adaptive pause” and remote learning?

Per [MCDH guidelines](#), schools are advised to consider being in a learning model for at least 14 days before transitioning to the next phase of reopening. We will continue to monitor the metrics and keep the community informed as we progress through this period together.

What does this mean for students and families?

Remote learning will continue without change or disruption for those students currently in the remote learning model. Students in the in-person learning model will be expected to engage daily in remote instruction starting Monday (11/2) and teachers will be reaching out about this transition. The daily schedule (see below) will remain the same for both in-person and remote students and all students will stay with their current teacher(s).

- 8am-noon and 2pm-3pm for K-8 students
- AM/PM classes for Wehde

How will we get books/supplies from school?

Materials will be sent home with students attending in-person instruction on Fri., Oct. 30. Wehde families can drive up to the school to get supplies when picking up their student(s). Any additional distribution days will be communicated by the school. Families of students not in attendance on Friday will be able to contact the school to arrange an alternative date/time for picking up materials.

What if there are issues with my child’s Chromebook or iPad?

Tech support will be available at each school. Please check school websites for office hours.

How will food distribution be handled?

Due to the election on Tues., Nov. 3, food distribution will occur next week on Mon., Nov. 2 from 3pm to 6pm at Hannah Beardsley Middle School. If/when additional distribution dates/times and locations are determined, this will be communicated to all families.

Wed, Oct 28, 2020,
12:00 PM

Olson, Stephanie <slolson@d47.org>

to Powell, Jonathan

Thank you very much for your response, advocacy, and work on the board. I am in agreement with your opinion and believe that many others who work in the district feel the same.

Stephanie Olson

Occupational Therapist

On Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 4:02 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Stephanie-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 9:30 PM Olson, Stephanie <slolson@d47.org> wrote:

I am wondering if there is public access regarding the decision for District 47 to remain in the hybrid model. Was there a vote taken? Is it possible to request results of the vote if there was one? Just trying to stay up to date on the facts in the district.

Thank you for your service,

Stephanie Olson

Occupational Therapist

Wed, Oct 28, 2020,

10:33 AM

Elisabeth Gau <[REDACTED]>

to esmith@d47.org, jtpellikan@d47.org,
jpowell@d47.org, cwadlington@d47.org,
RFetzner@d47.org, BALes@d47.org,
RPFarrell@d47.org, Kathy Hinz

Dear District 47 Board members and Dr. Hinz,

I am very concerned with your decision to remain open when 3 out of the 4 metrics and criteria, that you said you'd be following at every board meeting before school began, are not being met. I have to say that as a parent and member of our community, I am very disappointed and misled. It was my understanding that the board would use the McHenry County Health Department metrics to make decisions. This did not happen as the health department recommended remote learning. So, I guess my question is, what will you use now to determine if schools are safe to be open for students and staff? Basing decisions ONLY on positive counts at school does not seem to make much sense considering children could be asymptomatic carriers and therefore possibly spreading disease. Community numbers should be taken in account as children are often with parents at stores and restaurants around town (which our county seems to be very close, 1 more day over the 8% to be exact, from receiving more restrictions). My daughter has also had children come to her class sick and leave by 8:30 in the morning which makes me think that not all parents are truly health checking their children. I understand that you have no control over that, but maybe temperature checks will now need to be taken at the door like the High Schools do.

It was also stated at the beginning of the school year that students that choose the in person model can go remote at any time. However, my understanding is, now, that is not a realistic option. They will have to work asynchronously from home and can log on for encores. Again, this goes completely against what was told to parents at the beginning of the school year. It is also my understanding that according to the Illinois Board of Education, students must receive 2.5 hours of synchronous work a day. This is not following state rules. I chose in person for my children because as an educator, I believe in person learning is best. With that said, I trusted that the district would

follow the health department closely and make safe decisions for both students and staff. We started the school year remotely when numbers were low, weather was warm, and students could be outdoors. Now that cases are rising considerably and the children have to remain indoors, schools remain open. This makes zero sense. I really am trying to wrap my head around this logic. Again, I chose in person because kids need that structure and I really don't want my kids changing teachers AGAIN. I also want the opportunity to have them back in school when numbers are at a safe level. However, with flu and cold season upon us, and Covid cases on the rise, more and more kids are going to be sick. The model you have for those that need to stay home is not okay. They are basically having to teach themselves with zero guidance. This overwhelms the students and creates unnecessary anxiety. I have a child in D155 and they have cameras so that kids can log into class remotely and still receive their education. Why is this not being done in the elementary and middle schools?

Please let me know what guidelines are now being used? How can you guarantee safety for children and staff when experts opinions are not being considered or even discussed. Also, please advise on how the remote option will be solved? Please reconsider the way students who are home for illness or quarantined are being taught or lack thereof in this case.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Gau

Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 9:09
AM

to Board Of Education, Kathy Hinz

Thank you for your time. Have those of you in favor of hybrid learning reached out to your health offices to see how many kids we are having to isolate/quarantine each day/week? It is Wednesday, and as of this moment, I have 25 kids who have been placed in isolation or quarantine JUST since Monday, 10/26. 25 kids - in 2 days, (because this day is just beginning), so I may have more by the time I leave. My total who have been through this protocol since we started 10/5 is about 50. Many as a result of being identified as close contacts to a confirmed positive on a bus. This COULD be potentially spreading on the buses, which some of you have brushed aside as a mode of transmission in order to support your hybrid vote.

Please reach out to your D47 buildings to see how many kids are out. This is an important piece of hybrid-vs-remote. When do you plan on implementing mitigation measures as a result of the county metrics as opposed to just "watching them"? What numbers are you holding out for?

Jenn Sauck

School Nurse, RN, BSN

Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 8:44

AM

Layla Tichy <[REDACTED]>

to Fetzner, Robert, jpowell

I just wanted to say, to the two of you....THANK YOU. And regarding your fellow BOE members, I look forward to reelection races.

Layla

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 10:27 AM Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Layla,

Thank you for your email. As you know we are a board that speaks with one voice. However, each board member has their own beliefs, opinions and feelings. If you have been attending our meetings virtually you know that I have said we would follow the metrics and recommendations of the MCHD. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Please know I will continue to advocate for our students and teachers safety.

Thanks

Rob Fetzner

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 8:19 AM Layla Tichy <laylatichy@gmail.com> wrote:

District 47 BOE,

As suggested by Dr. Hinz, I am directing my questions regarding Covid metrics to you. Thank you, in advance, for your time and response.

On what are you basing the decision not to comply with the suggestion of health experts who set the standards to ensure the safety of our community? Please understand, I'm not arguing with your decision. I'd just like to know what the metrics are that D47 is setting for themselves? Is there a threshold of some sort? I think parents are looking for a little more transparency from the board. If you've decided to keep schools open, great! But, tell us why. And, under what circumstances will the learning models change if we are not heeding the advice of the health department?

Thank you for all you are doing.

Best,
Layla Tichy

Erin Wagner <[REDACTED]>

to: esmith@d47.org,
RPFarrell@d47.org,
BALes@d47.org,
jtpellikan@d47.org,
RFetzner@d47.org,
cwardlington@d47.org,
jpowell@d47.org

date: 10/28/20

Dear District 47 Board Members,

I am reaching out today to express my concerns with some of the recent pandemic related decisions. It came to my attention on Friday that it is the board who is deciding whether schools should remain open or not. It is my understanding that Dr Hinz is referring parent questions to the board as to not misrepresent your decision.

Given that the McHenry County Department of Health has suggested that schools switch to a virtual model of learning and as of Friday we were meeting 3 out of the 4 metrics to switch to a remote learning model, I would like to know why board members voted against what the metrics are showing and against what local epidemiologists are saying should be done.

I would also like to know if any of the board members attend the meetings that occur between local superintendents and the McHenry County Department of Health. It is my understanding that it is the superintendents of other local districts who have the decision-making power when it comes to opening or closing schools. If that is not the case for our district, then shouldn't a board representative be involved in those meetings?

My husband and I made the excruciating decision last week to sign our son up to return to school in person. As I know some of you are parents yourselves, you can empathize that this was not an easy decision or one that was made lightly. As a parent, I need to have confidence in the decision that the board is making and future decisions that will be made going forward. There should be transparency. I need to be confident that your decisions are based on the metrics and data. I've heard you all say during the last few board meetings that safety needs to come first. When the metrics aren't saying it's safe, why are you keeping kids in school? What is the point of having these metrics if they are not going to be followed? We have a community spread right now in our region, our county and our zip codes. That will inevitably trickle into the schools. Dr Hinz stated during the last board meeting that contact tracing revealed cases linked to a bus. Buses are part of schools and a place where social distancing and mask wearing is not taking place.

From watching the last few board meetings it is evident who is most eager for our children to return to in-person learning. I beg you not to let that eagerness cloud what the data and metrics are saying right now.

Thank you

Erin Wagner

Wiest, Brooke <[REDACTED]>

Board Of Education "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

date: 10/27/20

So how does the Board decide things like this? Majority rules?
Disappointing because Board meetings lead families to believe they will follow the health department.

Well I really appreciate your constant support and I always know you have the best interest of all families and staff. I wish the decisions were made by people with health care background.

Thank you for all you are doing!
Brooke

On Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 4:01 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:
Brooke-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 4:16 PM Wiest, Brooke <bwiest@d47.org> wrote:

Hi!
Can You please tell me which board members were For and Against moving D47 to Remote right now?
I assume that's Ok to be public knowledge.
Thanks!
Brooke

--

Brooke Wiest, MSPT
Physical Therapist

Thank you for your response
Have a great evening
Patricia

On Oct 27, 2020, at 4:01 PM, Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Patricia Polanco

<[REDACTED]>

to:Board Of Education

"Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

10/27/20

Patricia-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 11:07 AM Patricia Polanco <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good morning District 47 Board of Education.

First, I would like to start by thanking you for all you are doing for the kids of D47 during this difficult time. I have participated in all the board meetings and I can see your genuine willingness to try to do what is best and that you understand the importance and impact of your decisions. I also know that this is new territory for all of you, just like it is for all of us parents. I apologize on behalf of all the parents for all the harsh criticisms you have received, I know that we all are concerned and we are in unfamiliar grounds so we should grant each other some grace. I recognize you have granted grace to all of us that have expressed our frustrations, sometimes not in the best way, for that I sincerely feel that we all owe you all an apology.

I have decided to send my kids back to school and they have been extremely happy but looking at the news and at our county numbers, I'm wondering how many more cases do we need to see for the board to make the difficult decision to close the schools. I have friends in other districts that have not had the number of cases we have had and they are closed until further notice. I listened to what the Chicago Mayor and the Illinois Governor have been saying, and our number of cases are not looking good. I wanted to reach out to understand the following:

1. How many more kids and faculty members need to contract this virus for District 47 to go a remote model for everyone?
2. What are we doing differently? What cleaning and sanitation procedures have been put in place to ensure no more spread of the virus? I have a daughter at Lundahl Middle School and she has to change classrooms during the day, what are we doing to sanitize and disinfect when that happens?
3. Why is District 47 not changing the approach and having less kids attend in person by splitting the groups into an A and B model and having a day of deep cleaning?
4. How can we parents help? We are already following guidelines but we are still concerned.

I know this is a hard decision and I know we have no precedent for the type of circumstance we are all facing. I also know you are all doing an amazing job and I want to continue trusting in your

leadership. I just want to understand what we are doing, even when recommendations from the McHenry County Health Department is very clear (thanks for sending that press release I have read it 3 times to ensure my understanding was clear that they are recommending schools move to remote learning).

Please do not read this message out loud during the board meeting. I am more interested on a personal response than on a public acknowledgement.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any concerns.

Thanks.

Have a great day!

Patricia Polanco

Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

to: "Hesik, Beth" <bhesik@d47.org>

cc: Nancy Boro <njboro@d47.org>

bcc: boe@d47.org

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on my response to keep them in the loop of communication without violating the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for your email and question. You have read the data and metrics from MCHD correctly.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

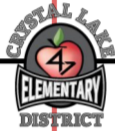
On Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 7:19 AM Hesik, Beth <bhesik@d47.org> wrote:

Thank you to those of you who responded to my email.

I have watched every Board meeting this year and am still confused about the metrics. The following has been presented at the last board meeting:

MCDH SCHOOL INTERIM GUIDANCE

Captured directly from the MCHD website (title is linked)



Metric	Virtual	Hybrid	In-Person
	All learning is remote for all learners	Some learning can occur in-person based on prioritized risk	All learning can occur in person
Incidence Rate	> 14 per 100,000 Population per day	7 – 14 per 100,000 Population per day	< 7 per 100,000 Population per day
Test Positivity	> 8%	5 – 8%	< 5%
COVID-19-Like Illness Hospital Admissions	Virtual to Hybrid: Stable/Decreasing ⁴	Hybrid to In-Person: Stable/Decreasing ⁴ ; Hybrid to Virtual: Increasing ⁵	In-Person to Hybrid: Increasing ⁵
Weekly Count of New Cases Increase ³	Virtual to Hybrid: Stable/Decreasing ⁶	Hybrid to In-Person: Stable/Decreasing ⁶ ; Hybrid to Virtual: Increasing ⁷	In-Person to Hybrid: Increasing ⁷

The Decision Matrix represents one of many sets of factors school leaders will use in considering if and when to transition between learning models. A return to full in-person learning will vary by school and district and will not be based solely upon meeting the health metrics. School district leaders must also consider other State of Illinois requirements, including capacity and distancing guidelines.

Looking at McHenry County data this morning, I see the following:

McHenry

Date	Positive Tests	Total Tested	Daily Test Positivity	Test Positivity 7-Day Rolling Avg
10/13/2020	91	712	12.8	8.8
10/14/2020	81	802	10.1	9
10/15/2020	123	1,031	11.9	9.5
10/16/2020	130	965	13.5	10.2
10/17/2020	186	952	19.5	11.8
10/18/2020	91	932	9.8	12.5
10/19/2020	104	940	11.1	12.7
10/20/2020	103	993	10.4	12.4
10/21/2020	122	1,071	11.4	12.5
10/22/2020	150	1,199	12.5	12.6
10/23/2020	154	1,055	14.6	12.7

This is well above the test positivity rate for "Virtual" learning. Am I reading this data incorrectly? I very well might be. I am sorry, I am just confused since this has been presented multiple times. Could you please explain what model/data we are using to determine the learning model? Thank you!

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 7:13 AM Hesik, Beth <bhesik@d47.org> wrote:

Hello D47 Board Members,

My name is Beth Hesik and I am a 7th-grade teacher at Hannah Beardsley. I first want to thank you for your work, effort, and time this year. I am sure it has been an extremely taxing job to be on the board in 2020. Up until this point, I have been extremely happy and supportive of the board's decisions. However, I am very disappointed with the most current decision to stay open in a Hybrid model. When I decided to be an in-person teacher, I had confidence that the board would follow Science and the Health Department suggestions. I now come to work this morning feeling very anxious and unsafe. If the McHenry County Health Department is suggesting remote learning, why would this be up for debate? They are saying the safest option for teachers, students, and McHenry County families is remote learning.

I have angry parents emailing me who are upset about this decision, which I had no say in. I understand their concerns and share them. We should be following the Science and McHenry County Health Department. The metrics are just too high in our county for in-person learning to be safe. I want to be in-person, but only if it is safe to do so.

Please reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Beth Hesik

7th Grade Language Arts Teacher

Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

to: Stephanie Kuligowski <[REDACTED]>

cc: "Alberth, Cathy" <CLAlberth@d47.org>

bcc: boe@d47.org

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on my response in order to keep them in the loop of communication without violating the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for contacting us. I understand that the timing of the preference window for trimester 2 and the decision to stay hybrid has caused concern for some. The response that you are referring to was from the beginning of the year FAQ document. As we opened to the hybrid model Oct 5th, staff and classes were split to either a remote or in-person setting. At board meetings and in the most recent parent communication for the trimester 2 preference window, it has been explained that we have an in-person seating capacity to keep health guidelines and remote classrooms have established class sizes we will not exceed. It was our mistake to keep the beginning of the year FAQ posted and it has been removed and replaced with FAQs for the hybrid model. I am aware that Mrs. Alberth was going to honor your request to change your preference for a learning model and add you to the list of families wanting remote for trimester 2. Please know that right now we are not making those changes until trimester 2 so that we can ensure that all pieces of the transition are completed successfully. If you are not comfortable sending your student to school, we can work on getting asynchronous work for those classes that don't have a synchronous element. Thank you for contacting us.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

On Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 1:12 PM Stephanie Kuligowski <skkuli@comcast.net> wrote:

Mrs. Alberth, Dr. Hinz, and members of the school board,

We refuse to accept this course of action. According to the district's own documents on the D47 website, students can switch to remote learning "at any time."

"Can I change my learning model preference for the first trimester after July 30th?"

Families will be able to switch from in-person instruction to remote learning at any time."

I see that you have now removed that Parent FAQ, but it was posted there as recently as 10/26/20.

The information does not say at the trimester, after a survey, or at the whim of the district. The information given to parents said "at any time." We implore the district to uphold at least this one promise.

We truly feel that the district broke our trust by not following MCDH guidelines. Are you going to also break the trust that we had as parents who believed we could remove our child from a situation we (and public health officials) deem risky? This is really the stand you want to take? That parents cannot choose to have their child switch to remote learning as this fluid situation changes around us?

I would also point out that the return-to-learn policy states that students who do not follow mask guidelines or other social distancing expectations will be transferred to remote learning after one warning. If you can transfer students who are not following guidelines at any moment, why can't you change a student by parent request at any moment? That too seems to be a contradictory and not well-thought-out policy.

We want [REDACTED] moved to remote learning. He should not have to wait 3 weeks for the trimester to change. He should not have to wait 3 days even. This is unacceptable.

Stephanie Kuligowski

JoAnn and Ken Larsen <[REDACTED]>

to: "esmith@d47.org" <esmith@d47.org>,
"jtpellikan@d47.org" <jtpellikan@d47.org>,
"jpowell@d47.org" <jpowell@d47.org>,
"cwadlington@d47.org" <cwadlington@d47.org>,
"rfetzner@d47.org" <rfetzner@d47.org>,
"bales@d47.org" <bales@d47.org>,
"rpfarrell@d47.org" <rpfarrell@d47.org>

Good Morning -

I have received responses from some of you. I would appreciate responses from all of the BOE.

I am looking for the information on how and what metrics you are now utilizing for the schools as it is no longer the MCHD metrics that were presented to you.

I am asking for clarity in this situation. As a parent we were given a choice for in person vs remote, and I as many other parents choose in person ONLY BECAUSE there were metrics being monitored that would allow the board to move back to remote learning when needed.

JoAnn Larsen

On Friday, October 23, 2020, 01:48:57 PM CDT, JoAnn and Ken Larsen <kjlarsen@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

Good Afternoon -

I agree completely that children learn best while in class, however I am deeply concerned with the recent email stating the BOE is ignoring the McHenry Health Department's recommendations to revert back to remote learning.

Can you please provide the guidance/metrics you are using to reach this decision?

JoAnn Larsen

Green, Kristina <kgreen@d47.org>

to: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>
date: 10/26/20

As a teacher and parent in District 47, I want to thank the board and Dr. Hinz for continuing to provide the opportunity for in-person learning. I know this decision was not made lightly.

As a first grade teacher, remote learning was the most difficult and heartbreaking time for me as an educator. I watched frustrated parents yell at their children, students completely breakdown, and students refuse to participate in learning. It broke my heart. In just the first few days in-person, I saw those students flourish and engage in learning. For so many children, school is their safe place. Keeping in-person learning provides a safe and positive environment for those students to learn and grow.

I know that sending our children to school has risks, but I also know that keeping them home also has risks. Thank you for striving to keep our children safe and giving families the choice in their child's learning.

My daughters also wanted to say thank you!

Kristina Green

Sauck, Jennifer <jsauck@d47.org>

to: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>,
Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>

I feel the need to bring to your attention that now that D155 is all remote, it is not as likely that parents will "call out" their student if they are ill. If the 155 kids aren't being called out sick, there is nobody to track and make sure their siblings (our D47 in-person kiddos) are appropriately placed in quarantine. This is a potentially serious problem. Thank you for your time.

--

Jenn Sauck

School Nurse, RN, BSN

Kerry Muszynski <[REDACTED]>

to: BOE@d47.org,
Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>

I am requesting that my child be moved to remote learning effective immediately for the remainder of the first trimester and the second trimester.

I chose the in-person learning model for my student based on the belief that this board would be using the school metric guidelines and Health Department recommendations to move between models.

As that is not the case, I want my child moved into a remote classroom going forward.

I spoke with the principal at Bernotas this morning and she said that she is not allowed to make those changes, that the board and superintendent are not allowing principals to move children between models based on parent requests.

The FAQ on the district website clearly states that parents would be able to move their children to a remote learning model at any point in the first trimester.

I expect this change to be completed as quickly as possible to lessen any negative impact on my child's education.

Kerry Muszynski

From: **Kerry Muszynski** <kerry.mski@gmail.com>

Kerry Muszynski <[REDACTED]>

to: BOE@d47.org,
Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>
date: 10/26/20

Good afternoon,

As I was not given the opportunity to make an informed decision regarding my child's current and future learning models, I will be amending my decision now.

The school board and superintendent of this district have not been forthcoming about their methodology being used for moving between learning models.

I, like many parents, chose my child's learning model based on the belief and trust that the school board and district would be using the school metric guidelines and McHenry County Health Department recommendations to make decisions about movement between models.

As I can no longer trust the board to make proactive decisions for students and staff, I will be changing my child's learning model effective immediately. My child will be moving to a remote learning model for the remainder of the first trimester and for the second trimester.

Please understand my desire to change my child to a remote learning model is in no way a reflection of the in-person learning he's currently receiving from his teachers. His teachers have been amazing through all of this, and deserve many accolades for all they are doing for their in-person and remote students. My student struggled with remote learning and has had a much better learning experience in person. I want my child to be in school with his teachers and peers but not when the metrics set forth by experts at the health department are way over the limits for any kind of in-person learning.

Some parents may feel comfortable having their child be a part of the board's experiment to push the boundaries during a pandemic, but I am not one of them.

I would expect minimal disruption to my student's schedule as his teachers are already teaching some remote classes along with in-person.

Thank you,

Kerry Muszynski

Parent of [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Rob Zschernitz <[REDACTED]>

Board Of Education "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

date: 10/26/20

Thanks, Jonathan. Thanks for all you do.

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 8:04 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Rob-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 3:35 PM Rob Zschernitz <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hello District 47 Board,

First, I want to thank you, the staff and everyone in the district for helping our children learn through this unprecedented time. My daughter, [REDACTED].

Second, I'm looking for clarification on the district's stance on the learning model.

I'm not being critical, in fact I'm glad that at least for now [REDACTED] will be able to continue in school. As long as it is safe. Increasingly, if you follow the science and guidelines being issued, they would indicate that it's risky, at best, for the kids to be in school.

If I recall correctly, in the board meeting before the kids were back in school (in person) there was a lot of discussion about MCDH, there was expression of disappointment with them not having data ready and available, etc. That the data they hadn't published was critical because the district would follow MCDH's guidance. Shortly after that meeting MCDH released their school metrics dashboard. The [MCDH's school metrics dashboard](#) states: "Schools are advised to consider transitioning to the previous learning model if any two measures meet the threshold criteria for the previous learning model." I realize that the keyword in that statement is "consider", but their [press release Thursday](#) also states: "Currently, three of the four metrics used to make a transition determination indicate a return to a previous learning model."

So MCDH guidance is to go back to remote. 3 of four metrics, of which the DH says if any TWO, meet threshold indicate going back a phase. It seems the Board has chosen to ignore this?

I would like to know specifically why? Why after saying the MCDH guidance would be followed is it not being followed?

Thank you,
Rob Zschernitz

Sauck, Jennifer <jsauck@d47.org>

to: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>

From: **Sauck, Jennifer** <jsauck@d47.org>

Date: Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 6:57 AM

Subject: Re: Extremely disappointed/frustrated.

To: Les, Betsy <bales@d47.org>

It should not be "polarizing". The fact that you even say that is proof that your understanding of COVID is minimal. This is a GLOBAL health crisis, in which you are flat out *choosing* to ignore the increasingly alarming metrics. D155 closed based on our METRICS as a county. The MCHD was recommending remote last *Tuesday* (were you on the call?), and the metrics have **worsened** since then. Not to mention that D47 and 155 are in the same communities and households! You're ignoring it because you can. To appease parents. By the way, these are the same parents who I see repeatedly posting pictures of themselves on social media in large group gatherings, cheek to cheek, with NO masks. These are the same parents who are lying about symptoms so they don't have to isolate their kids per protocol - that your nurses have to scramble to keep track of. The fact that you are not having us transition to remote based on metrics is as a result of 2 things. 1 - You do not understand COVID, its incubation period or transmission. 2 - Because you flat out *can* ignore the metrics. It is a reckless decision stemming from pride and defiance.

Metrics are not "for viewing purposes only". They should guide you to make a smart decision for the safety of your D47 family. Anyone who voted for hybrid does not "deeply care for" our staff/families. That's a rote, trite, and rather empty claim. You want to be the "hero" who "stayed open" - when EVERY surrounding district has done what is necessary to mitigate the spread of COVID. We haven't even been in person long enough to determine how

much is spreading through the schools. And let's not ignore that we had to shut Lundahl down after ONE week. How do you look away from this?

Ask your nurses how it's going. Ask your teachers how they feel about the new definition of "close contact" and what it means for their teaching. You are making a mistake. It's clear that you don't take this seriously because you think "kids need to be in school". No they don't....not during a pandemic that is spiraling out of control. We ALL want them back - when it's safe for those whom you claim to "care deeply for". SHOW that you care, because as it stands, you are not.

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 4:51 PM Les, Betsy <bales@d47.org> wrote:

Jennifer,

Thank you for sharing your concerns. We will continue to monitor our COVID cases and the metrics of our community very carefully and make changes if needed. We care deeply for our staff and students and want them ALL to be in a safe environment. We have learned this is a very polarizing situation and there is no possible way for us to please everyone.

Again, thanks for your email.

Betsy Les, D47 Board of Education member

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 12:28 PM Sauck, Jennifer <jsauck@d47.org> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sauck, Jennifer** <jsauck@d47.org>

Date: Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 11:36 AM

Subject: Extremely disappointed/frustrated.

To: Kathy Hinz <khinz@d47.org>

Please hear me out, as I need to express my concern as a nurse.

I was shocked to see the email about 47 today. How do we justify remaining hybrid when our very own HS district has opted to put the safety of their staff and community as first priority? How do we explain to families who may have children in both districts that we want our HS kids/staff safe, but we don't feel the same about the younger kids/staff - who are coming home to the very same families?

Per the MCDH, our current metrics warrant full remote. I was on the call on Tuesday. How is this not taken into account? Why is the board, which has no medical background, deciding this because "we want our kids in school"? We ALL want them back.....safely.

This is a mistake that I hope nobody has to pay for with a grave illness or their life. It makes absolutely no sense to have 155 remote, but 47 hybrid.

As a healthcare professional, I'm deeply disheartened by this brazen disregard for the greater good of our health as a community. We are in the midst of a pandemic that is spiraling out of control again, yet we are choosing to ignore it. What message is this sending to our staff? That they don't matter. That we are not concerned about them getting sick.

Children show VERY mild symptoms of the virus, yet have the capacity to spread it very easily. Does the board know this? Help me understand this careless decision, because to me, there is no good reason. "The board said" isn't sufficient given our #s in McHenry County.

Thank you for listening and allowing me to express my concerns.

Jenn Sauck

School Nurse, RN, BSN

Ashlee Tominey <[REDACTED]>

to: khinz@d47.org
cc: esmith@d47.org,
jtpellikan@d47.org,
jpowell@d47.org,
cwadlington@d47.org,
RFetzner@d47.org,
BALes@d47.org,
RPFarrell@d47.org,
dcbarr@d47.org

Dear Dr. Hinz,

I just had to write to say thank you to you and your staff and the District 47 Board members for your transparency and for updating the families in the district of the learning model decision on Friday. I would have supported your decision either way as I have felt this entire time you have taken the health and safety of our children, families, and our wonderful teachers and staff very seriously. Having communication and a clear direction is critical for the questions and anxieties that pop up in the minds of students and families. You have put our minds at ease.

I have watched many of the Board meetings and read many of the online comments. The constant scrutiny you are facing is not fair. Your jobs are not easy, yet they are incredibly important. We truly appreciate you. Thank you again for all that you do.

Sincerely,
Ashlee Tominey

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Kerry Muszynski <[REDACTED]>

Board Of Education "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

Thank you so much for your response. I appreciate your support of the staff and students in this district. As I stated, I, like many parents, made decisions for my student and family based on the belief and trust that the board would be following the school metric guidelines and recommendations of the MCHD.

I want parents to have the opportunity to revisit learning model choices for the first and second trimester based on the new methodology of the majority of the board.

I choose not to have my child be a part of the board's experiment to push safety boundaries during a pandemic.

Thank you for your time, your honesty and support.

Kerry Muszynski

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020, 8:03 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Kerry-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 2:54 PM Kerry Muszynski <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Good morning,

I'm seeking more information regarding the decision-making process of this board in regards to the continuation of a hybrid in person learning model. This board has falsely led parents to believe that they would be following the recommendations of the McHenry County Health Department and school metric guidelines by referencing this information during board meetings and posting MCHD data on the district website.

I, like many parents, chose an in-person learning model for my child based on the belief that this board would be using the school metric guidelines and the health department to inform their decisions.

Why were parents of this district not informed that the board of education would be disregarding these recommendations?

Why were parents in the district asked to make a decision on a learning model for their child last week without being informed of this board's intent to ignore school metrics that are well over the threshold for hybrid learning and recommendations of the County Health Department?

Whatever factors this board is using to make their determination on movement between learning models should be made known to the public so parents can make informed decisions regarding the health of their children and their families. The fact that the board has not been upfront with this information is deceptive.

The district needs to reopen the second trimester selection so parents can now make a decision for the health of their family based on the board's disregard for Health Department recommendations.

In addition, the board needs to allow parents to make an immediate switch for their child for the remainder of the first trimester in light of the trust that has been broken between this school board and district families.

Thank you,

Kerry Muszynski

Stacie Morimoto <[REDACTED]>

Board Of Education "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

to:

Hi Jonathan-

Thank you for taking the time to reach out to us. We are happy to hear at least a few board members are paying attention to the statistical data. These statistics don't lie. It is very concerning that certain board members are okay with 'just a few cases'. If these board members actually looked at the data, they would see these cases are just the tip of the iceberg and will have serious consequences to our community.

Thank you for serving our community-

Erik and Stacie Morimoto

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 8:02 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Erik and Stacie-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 2:17 PM Stacie Morimoto <[REDACTED].com> wrote:

Hello-

Good afternoon! We wanted to reach out to the school board members today to let you know our concern with the direction the school district appears to be heading. We have two daughters, one in 3rd grade at North Elementary and one in 8th grade at Hannah Beardsley. We made the decision to keep them in the hybrid model, assuming that the board would continue to follow the recommendations of the McHenry County Health Department, the IDPH, and the CDC.

Throughout this pandemic, the united message of the D47 School Board was that the board would continue to follow these agency guidelines when deciding policies regarding school modeling. The school board has made some very tough decisions, but they were very clear with the message they were making these decisions based upon current public health recommendations and scientific data.

We were confident in our decision to keep our daughters in the hybrid model, with the understanding that the board would transition to a fully remote model if the recommendations and scientific data supported that decision. We absolutely feel the best place for our children to be is in school. However, we were completely

shocked when the board went against the McHenry County Health Department recommendations and chose to keep D47 schools in the hybrid model. This decision was also very poorly timed with the school's deadline for the second trimester.

If the school board is not going to follow scientific data, which shows alarming COVID-19 infection rates, increasing hospitalizations, and increasing deaths among ALL age groups, we would like to understand what information the board will be using to form their decisions. If these statistics are not enough for the school district to decide to go fully remote, what is it going to take? What will the school board use as a metric to decide when to switch between these models, and how will this data be collected and evaluated?

The rates of COVID infections in the D47 schools have dramatically increased in the last three weeks, and with colder weather coming, what does the school board think will be happening to the numbers? And lastly, with these alarming infection rates, what about the safety of the teachers?

We have always been very proud of the fact that our children attend D47. The educational experience they have received has been outstanding. We know these are very difficult decisions to make, and pandemics don't come with instruction manuals. We hope that the board will not solely base their decisions upon the loud vocal minority, but what is safest for the students and faculty.

Sincerely,

Erik and Stacie Morimoto

Wiest, Brooke <bwiest@d47.org>

to:Board Of Education jpowell@d47.org

cc: brookewiest@yahoo.com

Hi!

I am [REDACTED] mom and I also work in D47. I am asking as a parent and staff member for the Board Members to read the MCHD website and read their press release today 10/23 and their recommendations for returning to Remote Learning.

I know most districts around us have moved to Remote, including our own D155 in Crystal Lake. The schools are doing an amazing job keeping students and staff safe while AT SCHOOL, but my concerns are what students, staff and families are doing OUTSIDE of school and how this can and most likely will affect the Covid numbers going up in our county. This will most likely increase our cases at school and affect the safety and health of students and staff.

I ask that the board consider returning to Remote Learning to protect both students and staff while our numbers in McHenry county are so high and continuing to rise so quickly.

Thank you so much,

Brooke

Brooke Wiest, MSPT

Silva, Nicole <nsilva@d47.org>

to: Board of Education <boardofed@d47.org>,
Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>,
Greg Buchanan <gsbuchanan@d47.org>

Hello,

I am writing this email to voice my concerns with the district following the metric system that was put in place for schools to follow. I am not confident that we are aligned with the 4 metrics to remain open. Can you please let me know what the metrics state and where our county is currently? It is my understanding that 4 other districts (at minimum) in McHenry County have sent home notification of returning to remote learning starting October 26th. I am writing this email to gather information that our district's decision to stay in-person is in the best safety interest of students and staff.

Kindly,
Nicole

--

Nicole Silva
Special Education Teacher

Hyde, Brittany <bhyde@d47.org>

to: boe@d47.org
date: 10/18/20

Note: I know that many letters are written to the Board and read before the official board meeting. I just wanted to throw this out there. You do not need to read this publicly, but if you do please read it anonymously. I just want this perspective to be considered by the Board of Education.

I had no intention to write a letter. I'm a team player. But the experiment of allowing students to go back to school is spiraling out of control.

Do students tend to comply? Yes.

Are we able to serve our students in-person? Sure.

Days before our return to learn plan came into play, my job switched from a support teacher to a classroom teacher. I said "Ok, I'll make it work".

I go up and down stairs in between classes with little time to use the bathroom and having to shift from the in-person to remote classroom (some classes with over 30 students virtually), "Ok, I'll figure it out and get used to it".

But now, here we are 9 school days in, and the positivity rate is rising. The cases in our District are rising. The cases in my building are rising. I have to quarantine, along with many children because of close contact with a positive case. So these students aren't allowed to be back, and teachers are spread even thinner than they were before because

they're either subbing during their breaks or creating sub plans for their in-person students while also teaching remotely from home if quarantined.

Will we figure it out? Absolutely.

But what will be the cost? Our mental health? Our physical health?

What about the students who have to quarantine? How is that experience acceptable for those kids? Asynchronous learning is not remote learning. Forget about best practice - is that okay practice? I hope that you take the time to think about these things - about the families that are affected by your choice to send us all back to school.

I appreciate that this was a tough choice. I appreciate that you wanted to try it out. But now is the time to think about reversing course. Really think about it. Is it worth it to stay back in person now, when the positivity rate is so close to the threshold? How bad does it really have to get?

By nature I am a solution seeker. I feel as though we are trading convenience for the health of our students and staff. We are creating problems that don't have to exist in the first place. Please consider a shift to all remote learning until the cases in McHenry county subside. It's the responsible thing to do, and it's the right thing to do for the health, safety and education of our students and staff.

--

Brittany Hyde

Middle School Interventionist

Deidre Dobbels <[REDACTED]>

to: esmith@d47.org,
jtpellikan@d47.org,
jpowell@d47.org,
cwadlington@d47.org,
RFetzner@d47.org,
BALes@d47.org,
RPFarrell@d47.org

Dear Board of Education,

I would like to take a moment to thank you and all the D47 staff for the outstanding job they have been doing with remote learning. My [REDACTED] who attend West and Bernotas have had a wonderful experience, and have been met each morning by enthusiastic, gifted educators who continue to challenge and inspire them.

As an educator working in a neighboring school district myself, I understand the complexities and logistics that go into decision making about re-opening schools. I have been told that at the next board meeting a discussion topic is should families need to choose their style of school (in-person or remote) for the remainder of the school year. I implore you to not make families make this difficult decision at this time. I feel that trimester by trimester is more appropriate.

My students are taught to rely on facts and data to help them form opinions and make decisions. We simply do not have the data or experience to determine what this novel virus will look like in March 2021. My husband and I hope to have our sons return to the buildings this year, but do not feel that the current upward trend in cases our county is experiencing provides the safest environment for our children to return to at the moment. We hope that this trend starts decreasing. By asking families to choose for the rest of the year now, you are asking them to conjure up a crystal ball and make a guess, rather than rely on facts and data.

Again, I thank you and the wonderful faculty and staff throughout D47 for not only rising to the challenge of remote learning, but hitting it out of the park. I request that you consider asking families to commit to learning location by the trimester, not for the remainder of the school year.

Deidre R. Dobbels, M.S. CCC-SLP/L

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

boe@d47.orgto: "MacNally, Patricia" <pjmacnally@d47.org>

date: 10/25/20

Patty-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 1:27 PM MacNally, Patricia <pjmacnally@d47.org> wrote:

Good afternoon. I hope each of you is doing well. I wanted to voice my concerns in regards to D47 staying in person right now. Honestly, I didn't know if I had the right to voice my concern and questions, as I am already teaching remotely, but I am concerned about my grandchildren I have in the district as well as dear friends and colleagues, and of course, the students I had the first six weeks of school. While I realize that having every student in person is the best scenario, but at what, or should I say whose, expense? In August, we were told that the district would adhere to the metrics, but now, we are not meeting three out of the four. In addition to that, D155 has gone to remote. Prairie Ridge will likely be identified as having an outbreak, and Hannah Beardsley primarily feeds into Prairie Ridge. This means that many of our students could be considered close contacts. We also have realized that we have families who have sick children, but they don't have the means to get them tested. While I know that there are places that occasionally offer free testing, these families don't have transportation to

get there. There are several students who are staying home for ten days with symptoms, but they aren't getting testing. I am not sure what this will be mean for our school, and district, over the next week. I understand the complexity of your decision, and I realize that you will never please everyone, but shouldn't we be erring on the side of caution? I got a text today from a person who was admitted to the hospital this morning with Covid Pneumonia. Her daughter, son-in-law, and four grandchildren have all tested positive. This was a reminder to me of the seriousness of the virus as well as how easily it can be passed from student to student. I am truly confused by your decision to keep the kids face to face in light of the numbers. Please reconsider. At a union meeting Friday afternoon, there were some teachers who started crying because they are so fearful about going to school and worried that they will subject their own family to this virus. Morale is low, and teachers are worried about their students and their own family's health. With the McHenry County Health Dept. asking schools to consider remote teaching, I find it concerning that we aren't heeding that suggestion. One could argue verbiage, but the bottom line is keeping the kids safe. Again, I agree 100% that the best thing is for students to be in person, but that is an ideal thought in light of this pandemic and statistics. Please reconsider. Thank you for your time. Respectfully,

Patricia MacNally, NBCT

Wolverines 7th grade ELA/SS

Betsy,

Thank you very much for the detailed response. I certainly agree with you that the girls' school has done a fantastic job implementing safety measures and providing an environment conducive to both learning and fun in these crazy times. I was blown away by how well remote learning went at the beginning of the year and I'm even more impressed at how well staff and students have adapted to this new normal in the classroom.

To clarify, I'm less concerned specifically with my kids getting sick since children tend to be asymptomatic or very mildly ill. I am slightly concerned about them bringing Covid home to my husband or me. More than either of those, my concern is that students may be spreading the virus invisibly and fueling spread in our community as a whole. Absent some kind of random testing policy (which I'm definitely not suggesting should happen), children without symptoms or even with mild symptoms would never be tested and therefore not represented in the numbers you're monitoring. The true evidence of spread among children in schools might just BE those community infection metrics that you're choosing to ignore. My argument is that if children don't get very sick, they don't get tested. Instead, they spread the virus to their families who spread to coworkers, who spread to their families, and so on. This is why I feel the board's decision is irresponsible.

I am glad to hear you've reached out to local physicians, though I'm curious why they've come to such a different conclusion than the county health department in terms of which metrics are important for schools to consider (MCDH saying any 2 of the 4 metrics from their school dashboard; your consulted doctors saying only hospitalization rate).

I'm not suggesting it's an easy call to make. I know you're under immense pressure from the community to keep these kids in school. To be perfectly honest, I want my kids in school, too. But not at the cost of making our community unsafe for everyone but the kids.

Thanks,

Melissa Raabe

Missy Raabe <missyraabe@gmail.com>

to: "Les, Betsy" <bales@d47.org>

cc: "boe@d47.org" <boe@d47.org>

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 1:55 PM Les, Betsy <bales@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Missy,

I understand you do not agree with our decision to continue with in-person learning at this time. I wanted to explain our reasoning and thinking in order to clarify why the majority of our Board of Education made that decision.

The McHenry County Health Dept provides metrics for schools to consider when making decisions. Their exact wording is "schools are advised to consider...". They do not tell school districts what to do. For the past month or so, there has been a discrepancy in the metrics calculations between McHenry County Health Dept and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Our positivity rate jumped a couple of points in one day. McHenry County explained that they were now adopting the State's numbers rather than their own local data so there would be no discrepancy in the future. They went on to explain that at times people who test positive for COVID have a second test. The Illinois Department of Public Health counts a person's second test as another new COVID case rather than the same person having two tests. McHenry County Health Dept was comparing names of positive cases so no person was counted twice. When they stopped doing that last week and announced they were just going to use the IDPH's data, our local numbers jumped.

I spoke with multiple physicians who said the most important metric to be watching is hospitalization rates. In McHenry County last week that metric was considered stable or decreasing which was very good news and we hope continues.

We also looked at the local data we had for District 47 specifically. Our District 47 website contains a dashboard with our information. Last week we had approximately 7,824 people involved in our District considering both remote and in person students, teachers, and staff. (Approximately 800 staff and 7,024 students) We had 12 positive COVID cases among 7,824 people. This means significantly less than 1% (.0015) of our students, teachers, and staff contracted COVID last week. Some of our schools had 0 cases last week and some had 1 or 2. There were no significant outbreaks. Please note however, the previous week there were 6 cases in one middle school in a short period of time. Our Superintendent contacted the BOE and indicated she was planning to close that building for 14 days in order to mitigate any potential spread. It was closed immediately. Fortunately this has not happened in any of our other school buildings. This continues to be being closely monitored and appropriate action will be taken if necessary.

I personally visited 4 of our elementary buildings a week ago and two of our middle schools this past week. Without exception I witnessed students socially distanced, all students and staff wearing masks, and clearly defined paths for student movement with socially distanced markers on the floor for students to follow. I was also able to see excellent instruction, active student engagement and kids thrilled to be back in school. I think our administration and teachers have done a commendable job creating a safe learning environment for our students. I also believe our current D47 data supports this safe environment.

During July, August and September, the BOE received many emails from parents. Many requested in-person learning to resume and many parents preferred remote. As a Board we knew there was no possible way we were going to please everyone. We gave parents the option to select for their students. The administration and staff in our District created both plans for our families. Our administration and BOE have continued to monitor the County data as well as our own data. While the McHenry County data is not as favorable as we would like, our D47 data continues to show our schools are doing an excellent job keeping our students and staff safe. I feel it would be unjustified to completely close schools that have had 0 or just a couple of cases in the past month and no significant outbreaks.

Please know our Superintendent continues to monitor this situation daily. Please also know that due to HIPAA regulations, it is against the law for our District to reveal any specific health information about students or staff. Our District does follow all of the contract tracing and COVID procedures recommended by the McHenry County Health Dept and will continue to do so.

Thank you for your email.

My best,
Betsy Les, D47 Board of Education member

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 12:47 PM Missy Raabe <missyraabe@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Board of Education members,

Can you please inform the parents of this district of EXACTLY what is required to trigger a move back from hybrid to remote learning? We were under the impression that movement between models would be guided by the county's metrics and recommendations. Yet my children just came home for the weekend with no supplies or notification of upcoming changes despite the county's new recommendation for remote learning only and the fact that the Covid situation is on fire in our area right now.

My daughters are only 6 and are old enough to see what's happening in the world around them. They were very nervous about going back to school, with weeks of bedtime tears over fear of bringing the virus into our home and making their parents sick. But we assured them that there would only be in-person learning if the schools knew it was safe for the kids and their teachers and families. So please tell me, is the board going to make the right call for the safety of our community, or is it going to let politics win out over the recommendations of health experts? I want my kids in school when it is safe and responsible for them to be there, but that is no longer the case. With all due respect, what makes any of you more qualified than the county health experts to decide what is safest for the children, teachers and families of this community?

In choosing to send our children for in-person learning, we placed our trust in you to keep our children and family safe. If the district is going to ignore the recommendations of local health experts, we will have to pull our children to remote learning and upend their lives once again as they lose the teachers and friends they've just become comfortable with. During the board meeting where hybrid learning models were discussed, you made it clear that safety would be the first priority. The thought of having to pull my kids due to the board's failure to keep that promise is infuriating. We are counting on the district to do the right thing and do it quickly. Please do right by the children of District 47.

Sincerely,

Melissa Raabe
224-772-9408

Miller (RBM), Jolene <jmiller@d47.org>

boe@d47.org" <boe@d47.org>to: "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

Mr. Powell,

I appreciate your response more than I can even explain. I am grateful to you for advocating for the safety of the students and staff of D47.

Thank you for your time,
Jolene Miller

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 8:28 AM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:
Jolene-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 7:03 PM Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Jolene,

Thank you for your email. As you know we are a board that speaks with one voice. However, each board member has their own beliefs, opinions and feelings. If you have been attending our meetings virtually you know that I have said we would follow the metrics and recommendations of the MCHD. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Please know I will continue to advocate for our students and teachers safety.

Thanks
Rob Fetzner

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 4:21 PM Miller (RBM), Jolene <jmiller@d47.org> wrote:
Crystal Lake Elementary District 47 Board Members,

I am writing this letter to ask for your reconsideration of our district returning to the Remote Learning mode per the recommendation of the McHenry County Department of Health. This is my fourth year in District 47 and my 8th year as a middle school teacher, who also holds a MA in Educational Leadership. This year has, of course, been unlike any other, as we all learn to navigate life through a global pandemic. I ask you to consider the stress and anxiety teachers are facing during this time. I felt it was fitting to title the subject of this email with the quote by Jarrett Krosoczka. While our mental health may mean little to you, this is a problem that is quickly

going to impact this school district. There are teachers who currently feel unsafe and uncomfortable in their buildings, being in close proximity to upwards of 75 people a day. There are teachers, who after only 3 weeks of in-person learning, are already at their breaking point knowing they are putting themselves at risk each and every day. Are you aware of the amount of teachers who have been exposed to COVID-19, but cannot afford to spend \$150 on a test to see if they have in fact been infected? The contact tracing document that is to be used to note exposure is a great idea, however there has not been no communication explaining where to locate this document and how to fill it out. This document, in my opinion, is not being utilized to appropriately document and trace those who may have been exposed to this virus.

As a current resident of Crystal Lake, and a District 47 and 155 product, I am incredibly disappointed in the decision that has been made to continue our instruction, in-person. This year has proven that our voice means little to this school board. In the last ten days, I have become a first time aunt, and my sister and family don't feel comfortable with me seeing my niece as I have explained what a teacher's days look like to them. Desks not distanced six feet away from each other, hallways open without directional arrows, no indication for students to know which side of the hall to travel on, desks and countertops not being thoroughly disinfected each evening, sadly, the list goes on. I understand that I am a teacher, but at what cost? Classroom and Special Education teachers are already working in excess of 100 minutes more a day than our PE and Encore counterparts, who have also been given the opportunity to teach remotely. This example alone shows the inequity and unfairness teachers are facing this year. Our planning time has been interrupted by supervising students as they run in place or participate in one of the potentially six Encore classes that are in session at one time. Finally, and most importantly, not being able to see my family, in person, because they do not feel the proper precautions are being taken to keep me safe, certainly does not put me in the greatest headspace to come to school each day and give my all to my students.

As shared at the October 19th school board meeting, comments were made about *how well* everything is going at school for in-person learning. As a board that consists of mostly educators, I was shocked. Students sitting in one seat for four hours a day in a mask is evidence of things going *well*? Students not being able to speak to the person next to them or work in a collaborative group is evidence of things going *well*? Students not being able to engage in hands-on learning activities to make for memorable school experiences is evidence of things going *well*? This is not the kind of *well* I would wish on any student, especially my students, and neither should you. Returning to our Remote Learning model could also allow for a full day learning schedule, from home, allowing for more quality instruction and time for students to practice and demonstrate creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

Finally, and perhaps this may provide insight as to why my passion runs so deeply, is that I am the granddaughter of a former, 17 year school board member and president of Township High School District 211. My grandfather's role on the 211 board brought both tribulation and triumph, and because of this, I understand the difficult position each of you are facing.

He was once asked about what his legacy would be after his time as board president would come to an end, and I wish to share this with you. My grandfather explained that, "I am a common man, trying to make a difference." He then indicated how making that difference would be achieved.

To make a difference, one must live by:

1. Life is best lived in service to others.
2. Consider others' interests as important as your own.
3. Love your neighbor, even if you don't like them.
4. Maintain integrity at all costs.
5. You must risk in order to gain.
6. You reap what you sow.
7. Hard work is never a waste of time.
8. Don't give up when you fail.
9. Don't ever stop in pursuit of a legacy.
10. What will your legacy be?

With that, I ask you, board members of this district, *what will your legacy be?* Will you be remembered for putting the lives of the students, paraprofessionals, lunchroom workers, faculty, office workers, and administrators at risk by continuing to push the limits during this unprecedented time, or will you be remembered as the leaders of this community that stood behind those who make Crystal Lake Elementary District 47 what it is, and do what is not only safest, but what's right?

I appreciate your consideration,
Jolene Miller

Jolene Miller
6th Grade Social Studies Teacher

Elizabeth Sitkie <esitkie4@gmail.com>

to:boe@d47.org "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

Thank you for responding. It's nice to know that someone cares. Do you happen to know the rationale behind why others feel our district should remain hybrid? I would like to know why the guidelines and recommendations of the health department are being ignored. So far, the only response I have received was from you and I thank you for that.

Elizabeth Sitkie

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 24, 2020, at 12:24 PM, Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Elizabeth-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 6:12 PM Elizabeth Sitkie <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Good Evening

I'm writing to you as a very concerned and disappointed parent. Both of my children are students at [REDACTED]. I would like to know the rationale behind the decision to continue with the hybrid model. I would also like to know why the guidelines and recommendations of the health department are not being followed given the surge in COVID cases in our county. Per Dr Hinz's PowerPoint presentation at the last board meeting, we should be returning to the previous learning model given the current numbers and percentages. Why is that not happening?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Thank you
Elizabeth Sitkie

Stephanie Kuligowski <[REDACTED]>

to: khinz@d47.org,
clalberth@d47.org,
amknoth@d47.org,
slheckman@d47.org,
Ryan Farrell <rfarrell@zrfmlaw.com>,
rfetzner@d47.org,
bales@d47.org,
cwadlington@d47.org,
jpowell@d47.org,
jpellikan@d47.org,
esmith@d47.org

My husband and I insist that you move our [REDACTED], to remote learning immediately. We trusted the district leaders to make data-driven, expert-informed decisions about learning models during this pandemic. The MCDH metrics were noted in every board presentation and are even linked on the district website, which indicated to us that decisions would be based on those metrics. By choosing not to follow the MCDH guidelines, the district broke our trust. Since we cannot trust D47 to keep our child safe, we insist that his learning model be changed to remote.

You should re-open the learning model survey for all parents so that they can make choices with the new understanding that the district ignores county health guidelines. If you choose not to do that, we insist that you switch our child to remote learning.

Thank you,
Kevin and Stephanie Kuligowski

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

to:boe@d47.org Robert Fetzner <rfetzner@d47.org>

I have replied to her as you can see. If anyone replies back I'm not replying again, like in this case. However, I thought that this was one that I needed to forward to you as this person is seeking more information.

Thanks,
Jp

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Nicole O'Dea** <[REDACTED]>
Date: Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 8:38 AM
Subject: Re: Metrics
To: Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

Hi Jonathan,

I truly appreciate you getting back to me and your thoughts. I'm sure all educators, administrators and board members are overwhelmed. However, I'm still left asking what exactly is guiding decisions regarding learning models. I need to hear that it's more than non-health professions' preferences. Otherwise, I will be pulling my child from in person learning.

Thanks,
Nicole

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 8:29 AM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Nicole-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 2:11 PM Nicole O'Dea <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hello,

As a parent of a D47 student, I'm contacting the board to ask what is/will be guiding decisions regarding whether or not to move back to remote learning. The email sent out by the district yesterday made it seem like the county metrics aren't being used to make this determination at the current moment, nor are the local health department's recent recommendations. I'm also wondering what types of scenarios would cause the board to make the determination to go back to remote learning. I feel transparency is key for parents to determine what option is best for their children moving forward. The timing of yesterday's email was less than ideal as parents had to decide the day prior which learning option they preferred for their children. I know when I recently chose the learning preference for my child I was making the assumption, based on what has been put out on the district website, that the district would be making determinations using the metrics and the health department's guidance and recommendations. If you're not following the IDPH county metrics, how are you basing decisions? I believe this would be valuable information for all parents to have.

Thank you for your time,

Nicole O'Dea

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

to::boe@d47.org "Atkinson, Hannah" <hatkinson@d47.org

Hannah-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 7:21 PM Atkinson, Hannah <hatkinson@d47.org> wrote:

Good evening,

Let me first say thank you for your efforts and consideration of all factors in the decisions you have made for the district thus far. In light of the most recent decision to stay in our current hybrid model, I wanted to share a classroom perspective of what I have seen for the past 3 weeks in a middle school math classroom.

My students have been excited to return in person, see friends, socialize, and meet their teachers. I feel like I have been able to support them better in person as I can see their work, trace back their mistakes, and create learning moments for each of them. We have collaborated and bonded in each of my classes in a way nearly impossible through a computer screen. The support I have been able to provide my students has led to increased confidence in their math skills and the start of finding out that math really isn't as bad as some people say!

However, in the last three weeks, I have been met with challenges that I wouldn't have had to overcome in remote learning. I have felt safe in my classroom and feel comfortable with all precautions taken in ensuring students and

staff are in safe and clean environments. This is not my concern. My current concerns lie in providing the best possible education to all of my students. Something that, despite being in person helping a great deal, has not been made possible for some of my students.

Currently, I teach three in-person sections of math (regular, accelerated, and EC) and one section of remote math (EC). During our first week of in-person instruction, I already had one student who needed to finish a week of quarantine due to a family member testing positive. This student did a great job of keeping up with his accelerated math class on his own and at the time was my only absent student to manage and follow up with during the afternoon session.

However, by the end of the second week, I had three students out in my first-period class (a total of 14 students) due to a symptom of covid and needing test results. I also had 2 students in my other class of 19 students out, one due to symptoms of their own and the other awaiting a family member's test results. Five of my students would miss 3 days of instruction and be left to teach themselves on their own in the second week. I say left on their own as we are splitting up the 30 minutes available to zoom with them in the afternoon between each of their core subject areas in addition to PE and Encores. Being that these students covered two different math levels, I hope you can understand my instructional time with them was spread thin.

Moving into our third week, these 5 students missed another 2-4 days awaiting test results or doctor appointments. Many of these students' pediatricians are overloaded with appointments and couldn't get one scheduled for 4 days. In addition to these 5 students missing an amount of school this week, 2 more of my students exhibited symptoms and were out for the last three days of the week. Another student missed 4 days awaiting a family member's test results. Another 2 of my students have also entered a two-week quarantine due to a family member's positive test. They will be out all of this week and next and will return at the beginning of November.

This brings my total number of students missing a period of time in the last three weeks to twelve. The shortest absence of these 12 students was 4 days. I take this time to remind you that we have only been in school for 14 days. At least two of these students will continue on to miss another five days of teacher instruction next week. This is 25% of my in-person students (49 total) that have missed a *minimum* of 28% of the instructional time with them just in the short three weeks we have had in-person instruction. Some have missed up to 38% of instructional time with their teachers.

Yes, our schools are safe and to my knowledge, HBMS has not had a positive test result among students or staff members. On the surface, this looks like no issue and we can remain open. However, our positivity rate in the county is rising and there are more and more cases identified. These cases are in our families within the district. Our students are not getting it at school but our families are getting it in the community. This is resulting in family-scale quarantines, taking our students out of our classrooms. They are missing out on essential instructional time with their teachers. It is impossible to provide the breadth and depth of instruction our students are receiving in the classroom in a 30-minute zoom session every day while also sharing this time with LA, SS, Science, PE, and Encore. Math is a unique class where concepts are constantly building on top of the previous. I cannot provide the best possible instruction to students when I can only have a possible total of 30 minutes with them in an entire week.

I have been indifferent about going back in person or staying remote up to this point. After watching the cases in our county rise and the number of students that are affected in the "trickle-down" effect quarantines, I feel as though I am failing as a teacher. I cannot keep up with the constant revolving door in the classroom amongst my three different levels in math providing the equity in instruction I provided to my students sitting in the desks in each of my classrooms. Not to mention keeping the student emotionally well throughout the process and the stress of being left to figure it out on their own for two weeks.

The only solution I can think of to help these students and ensure they receive the best instructional support at this time, minimize their absences, ensure I support them emotionally, and alleviate my own stress is to move to remote learning until positivity rates go down. I want to iterate again, Covid is not affecting our kids but it is affecting our families. In turn, we cannot provide the best possible education for our students. If we were in a remote model 25% of my kids that have missed instructional time in the last three weeks would have missed nothing.

I hope you take my small classroom experiences from the last three weeks into consideration while reviewing our current learning models. I also want to thank you for the time you spend doing so.

Hannah Atkinson
Hannah Atkinson
7th grade Math Teacher

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

:boe@d47to: Dawn Borg <dx2borg@att.net>

Dawn-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 1:27 PM Dawn Borg <[REDACTED]> wrote:

October 24, 2020

Good afternoon,

It has come to my attention that Crystal Lake Dist 47 will not be returning to remote learning even after McHenry County Health Department's recommendation to do so. I really do appreciate the difficult decisions each of you on the board has had to make this year. However, going against the advice of the health department is something that I can't wrap my brain around. This does not seem like a difficult decision and I can only say that I am disappointed.

The health department said there is a heightened level of danger being in the school and recommends remote learning. How did each of you come to the decision to not listen to experts in the health profession? I was under the impression that the school district would be looking out for the best interest of everyone at the school,

students, and staff alike. I thought you said we would be following the advice of the health department regarding the metrics. I feel bamboozled.

It seems to me that you have an obligation to the community to do your part to slow the spread of this virus. It's counterproductive to the goal of mitigating the spread when you are willing to allow students and staff to continue to attend school in person. I am trying to understand why you are choosing to ignore the warning given.

We all have a role in slowing the spread of this virus. Why are you choosing to ignore yours in a global pandemic? I look forward to hearing back from each of you as to your thought process behind this decision.

Thank you for your time,
Dawn Borg

Swihart, Laurie <laswihart@d47.org>

to: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>

To the Members of our School Board,

I am writing to sincerely thank you for making the difficult decision to allow the students of D47 to remain in school. As a teacher at Woods Creek for the last 17 years, I can assure you that you are making the right choice. Six weeks of remote learning, along with the closure of last spring, has been very difficult for many of our students. They need and want to be in school, and the majority of our parents have told us that they want that, as well. Despite our hard work and best efforts, the remote learning experience cannot come close to what teachers and paraprofessionals do in person, and the gains my students have made, just in the last two weeks, support that. Remote learning does not, even in the best of circumstances, meet their needs.

I urge you to continue to allow our students to remain in school. Every family should make the choice to do what's right for their situation, but for those families who need and want us to be there for their kids, it is our duty to keep schools open. I believe that those of us who are healthy are professionally obligated to teach these students in person, so that we can meet their needs, both academically and socially. Thank you for keeping them in school!

Most Sincerely,
Laurie Swihart

Hyde, Brittany <bhyde@d47.org>

Board Of Education "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>
<boe@d47.org>to:

Thank you for your response. I hope that your voice can be heard over the others. Or at least that you have a meeting to discuss it.

From: Hyde, Brittany on behalf of Hyde, Brittany <bhyde@d47.org>

To: Fetzner, Robert

Subject: Re: Hybrid vs. Remote Learning

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2020 7:58:21 PM

Thank you so much! Have a great night!

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 7:36 PM Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Brittany,

I am sorry that you are nervous to return to the place that is probably one of the places you love the most. I am fighting hard as you can see emailing over 30 teachers, parents etc on a Sunday night. This is only half of the effort you the teachers/interventionist/reading specialists etc are exhibiting during this pandemic. Please understand I appreciate you and all of the teachers. My wife is a teacher and I see how hard she is working for her kids. We are not planning on meeting weekly. If there is a significant spike in the metrics and or numbers it is possible to call a special meeting. Have a great night.

Thanks

Rob

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 7:04 PM Hyde, Brittany <bhyde@d47.org> wrote:

Thank you for your response. Are you planning to meet to discuss this again before the next scheduled meeting?

I could be wrong but did they say at one of the board meetings that you would meet weekly as a board to review the metrics and recommendations?

I really appreciate your effort to keep us all safe. I'm very nervous about returning back to the building on November 4th. I hope that your voice is heard.

Sincerely,

Brittany

On Sun, Oct 25, 2020 at 6:54 PM Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Brittany,

Thank you for your email. As you know we are a board that speaks with one voice.

However, each board member has their own beliefs, opinions and feelings. If you have been attending our meetings virtually you know that I have said we would follow the metrics and recommendations of the MCHD. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Please know I will continue to advocate for our students and teachers safety.

Thanks

Rob Fetzner

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 12:26 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Brittany-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 7:41 PM Hyde, Brittany <bhyde@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Board of Education,

I'd like to respectfully explain why I personally do not feel ready to return to learn in McHenry county.

I work at LMS. I honestly, wasn't ready to return to learn when you decided it for October 5th. But I went forward with a positive outlook, and the utmost respect for the challenging decision it was to return.

I was in the building for **9 days**. On the 9th day I found out that I had made close contact with a positive Covid case. While cancelling the outdoor socially distanced birthday party for my 2 year old wasn't ideal, and working half day remote days wasn't my first option, I understood that this was what was necessary.

Now as you all know the building is closed, and we are remote learning. It's going well - but here's the catch....we are being pulled in all sorts of directions, working crazy hours and doing anything we can to cover for the positive staff cases who aren't well enough to teach yet.

Let me repeat that. ***They aren't well enough to teach yet.*** They're not going to die (hopefully) but it's been almost **2 weeks**, and they aren't well enough to teach yet. Not even for 4 hours from their own home.

Not even to make sub plans for all of their classes.

I'm picking up the slack. We're making it work...barely. I'm happy to help them, because they didn't ask for this either. I've put in 14 hour days the last week and a half to make sure that everything is good to go for my classes and for my colleague. I'm doing it "for the kids" ...but at what cost? Burnout? Lack of sleep?

I've been there. I experienced burnout at the highest level as a teacher. I quit. I went to work in an office for 3 years analyzing data. I came back to work and chose ***Crystal Lake*** because of their reputation in the community. The ***positive*** reputation it had in the community....this decision had made me question whether or not this District is ready to live up to the expectation to keep *everyone* safe in this community.

In my heart of hearts, I just know that the risk isn't worth having students back in the buildings.

My husband works for a National banking institution, and they made the call to keep everyone ***safe*** through January at the earliest. Why is it that an office building where everyone is naturally distanced, circulation is excellent and the risk is low isn't allowing employees back, but we think it's a great idea to have kids back in the classroom in a middle school that's 60 years old with virtually no ventilation?

I tested negative for Covid, but in the moments where I'm not working, the last few nights have brought me to tears. From the pressure, stress, and uncertainty of the situation at hand. Had we been remote, these feelings wouldn't have been here in the same way. I would've had complete control over how many people I come into contact with, as opposed to being exposed to nearly 60 students and staff daily.

Please consider moving us to a remote model and following the considerations of the McHenry county health department. Not only for the actual physical health of the teachers, staff and students, but for all of our mental health as well.

Respectfully,
Brittany Hyde
Middle School Interventionist

from: **Fox, Julie** <jafox@d47.org>
to: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>

Dear Board Members,

I just wanted to say thank you for making what must have been a very difficult decision to keep our kids in school. Speaking as a teacher who has taught for 22 years & as a mom, I truly think you made the right choice. Remote learning is not effective for all students. There are too many distractions & many students have fallen behind. In my opinion, keeping them in person as long as possible has many more advantages than disadvantages. Students are not stuck behind a screen for 4 hours straight, they get to be with their friends (socially distant), they get to make a connection with their teachers, their mental health won't suffer, and I'm sure there are many others. My husband, Tom, & I grew up in Crystal Lake & moved back here to raise our daughter, Sydney, who is at Bernotas. She is a strong student, but remote learning was difficult for her. She & many other students need the social aspect of school & to be able to make a connection with their teachers. That is very hard to do over a screen. Yes, they could possibly get sick, but there is that risk every year. And if parents aren't comfortable sending their kids to school, they always have the option to switch them to remote learning.

In person learning is hard & weird right now, don't get me wrong. If that means I have to wipe down desks before & after snack, I will. If I have to remind my kids to stay socially distant from each other, I will. If I have to take time away from instruction to have them wash their hands, I will. I will do everything I can to keep my kids healthy & safe.

Kids are flexible & resilient. Yesterday was picture day at Woods Creek. Waiting on an X was strange for them, but we made it fun & not one person complained. Underneath those masks they were all smiling!

So, thank you for keeping our kids in school as long as possible. In a time where I'm sure you are getting a lot of negative feedback, I wanted you to know how grateful I am for your decision. I teach my students to always find a silver lining even when they go through a rough time. My silver lining is being able to come to school with my kids every day, no matter how difficult it is.

Respectfully,
Julie Fox

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

Board Of Education <boe@d47.org> "OsbornStupak, Teresa" <tosbornstupak@d47.org>
to:

Teresa-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 11:39 AM OsbornStupak, Teresa <tosbornstupak@d47.org> wrote:

Good Afternoon,

I am a teacher and parent in D47.

I was hired to be an interventionist but am currently teaching 8th grade science, both remotely and in person.

I am writing to share with you my concerns about the board decision to keep our buildings open.

First, as someone who is scientifically minded, what we do not know about the virus worries me.

When I was a kid, it was normal to have the chicken pox. It was thought that everyone would have it once and then they would be fine.

Time and science have shown us that the virus lives on in our bodies for decades, causing painful shingles in late adulthood. We now have a vaccine for chickenpox--hopefully sparing the next generation the pain and suffering of shingles.

My point in bringing this up is that we don't know the long term effects of Covid 19. We don't know if this terrible virus will rear its ugly head decades later. While we don't have solid evidence of outbreaks in schools other than LMS, the county data suggests that the virus is spreading in our community rapidly. We know that asymptomatic people can spread the virus.

What are we waiting for? Why are we waiting for something terrible to happen? Why aren't we using the data and science that is available to us to protect our children?

The guidance given explicitly gives 8% as a threshold for test positivity. We are currently at 12.4%. Teams of experienced scientists and health professionals set forth parameters based on historical data and other metrics that I cannot even begin to understand. Why aren't we trusting their expertise and following their advice?

I have elected to keep my son at home in remote learning. He was born early and spent time in the NICU with underdeveloped lungs. I am grateful that I have the option of keeping him home to limit his risk. I did not have the choice to teach in person or not. In fact, I didn't even get the choice to be in a job that I was hired to do. But, as teachers so often do, I have been flexible beyond the edge of my comfort. I teach in person every day with the fear that I might bring home this terrible virus and ultimately kill my son. That may seem dramatic, but it is honestly the thought that goes through my mind every single day when I kiss my kids goodbye in the morning. I have discussed alternative living arrangements with my husband--where I could stay to mitigate risk.

I think that the board owes everyone an explanation. How was this decision reached? Why are we going against the recommendations of the health department?

What is it going to take for us to take a step back and think about the future health of our students? Why aren't we considering the health of the families they go home to?

I honestly have enjoyed being back in the classroom, but I think that if we don't get this right, the opportunity cost of hybrid learning is going to prove much too high.

I thank you for serving on the board. I know it must be a challenging role to fill. I know that you must have unsavory interactions with unruly people.

We are all in a strange and difficult time with moving targets and too many unknowns.

Please, increase transparency so that we can gain some sort of confidence in this decision that will so greatly impact all of our lives.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

--

Teresa Osborn Stupak

8th Grade Science

Shapiro, Carey <clshapiro@d47.org>

Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>: "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>

Mr. Powell, thank you for your response. I so appreciate you advocating for us all!

Sincerely,

Carey

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 12:25 PM Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org> wrote:

Carey-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCDH and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,

Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 6:48 PM Shapiro, Carey <clshapiro@d47.org> wrote:

I am concerned about the district's decision to remain open. As an employee, parent, and community member, I have been watching the MCDH's metrics closely and have watched the numbers climbing. The district has prided itself on being in communication with the MCDH and in listening to the recommendations made by the MCDH in regards to safely offering hybrid instruction. My understanding is that the metrics are in place to warn us about potential impact that increased cases will likely cause so that we can mitigate the spread safely. By staying open with in-person instruction despite the suggestions of the MCDH, we are not listening and are in fact ignoring the warnings. I implore you to reconsider this decision for the safety of all in our community.

Respectfully,

Carey Shapiro

Speech-Language Pathologist

From: Fetzner, Robert on behalf of Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org>

To: Biermeier, Maureen

Subject: Re: Learning Model and SPED Students

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2020 7:11:05 PM

Dear Maureen,

Thanks for your email. I appreciate your thoughts and concerns. I am worried that if we tell a majority of our students it is not safe to be in the buildings, how the adjusted learning parents would react to staying in school. Its just a thought. I hope you are well.

Thanks

Rob

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 7:58 AM Biermeier, Maureen <mjbiermeier@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the School Board,

I am a teacher in the Adjusted Learning Program at Glacier Ridge. I love my job! I love seeing my students' faces whether they arrive in Zoom or through my classroom door. I especially love teaching them in-person, but this is not about me. This is about what is best for my students. These young special learners have a variety of dedicated home teachers, parents, grandparents, and babysitters, yet they learn best at school, in person. They are not able to engage and progress as well on Zoom. In addition to a special teacher, they require OTs, Speech Therapists, PTs, Vision specialists, and Social Workers. As you consider the learning models, I urge you to allow our students in self-contained special education classrooms to remain with an in-person model. At the last Board meeting Dr. Hinz said that the primary cause of the spread of Covid 19 at Lundahl was likely due to bussing. Students in self-contained programs typically have specialized busing with fewer students onboard, allowing for better distancing.

Thank you for considering that the learning model, like much of education, is not a one size fits all decision.

Maureen Biermeier

Teacher, Adjusted Learning Grades K-1

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

Board Of Education Amy Taege [REDACTED] >
<boe@d47.org>

Amy-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 6:27 PM Amy Taege <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Good evening,

Thank you for being a member of the District 47 School Board and working hard with teachers to keep our schools some of the most desired in the state. I appreciate the many hours that go into this "job".

I was very surprised and disappointed when I got the email today saying that you were choosing to go against the McHenry County Health Department's recommendation to move to remote learning. I'm looking for some insight into your decision. What made you feel confident that the health professionals should be ignored and kids should continue in-person learning? As a voting member of this community, I would love for each of you to let me know your personal perspective as to why ignoring a health department's recommendations during a pandemic is the right thing to do.

I realize there is a remote option for my daughter. I also recognize the immense amount of work that has gone into providing two different modes of learning for our kids. Thank you for that. I proudly chose to register my daughter for in-person learning as we felt it was safe to do so. But as you know our local metrics alarmingly indicate that's no longer the case and the MCDH suggests a return to remote learning for all students. That should not be ignored. Furthermore, I believe that schools have a role in modeling appropriate behaviors. What role do you believe the school has in slowing the spread that is currently happening in our community? Children are often asymptomatic. This doesn't mean they aren't carrying and spreading Covid-19. Allowing school to move forward considering the metrics seems counterproductive to helping our community be a safe, healthy place to live.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing back from each of you.

Thanks,
Amy Taege

Conrad Z <[REDACTED]>

to: "Farrell, Ryan" <rpfarrell@d47.org>

cc: "Powell, Jonathan" <jpowell@d47.org>,
"esmith@d47.org" <esmith@d47.org>,
"BALes@d47.org" <BALes@d47.org>,
"jtpellikan@d47.org" <jtpellikan@d47.org>,
"RFetzner@d47.org" <RFetzner@d47.org>,
"cwadlington@d47.org" <cwadlington@d47.org>,
"khinz@d47.org" <khinz@d47.org>

Hi Ryan,

Thank you for your response. I appreciate your line of thinking and do not necessarily disagree.

My daughter's school only had one case reported and we would love to keep her in person. The problem I still have is transparency. Parents have been told repeatedly that D47's decisions would be made based on MCDH metrics. There is no metric for what you bring up below in your response and the current MCDH metrics are very clear that the District should transition to remote learning for the time being (<https://insight.livestories.com/s/v2/mchenry-county-il-school-metrics-dashboard/649688f8-4d1b-4924-b492-ec339d5c6ab>). I completely understand the situation is not ideal and many people are frustrated, but is it not the Board's and Superintendent Hinz's responsibility to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community as the County is experiencing substantial local transmission? How can this Board's line of thinking be so different than the surrounding Districts that have decided to revert back to remote learning? Is the virus more present near Crystal Lake South versus Indian Prairie Elementary, which are only two miles apart? I think not. Why take the unnecessary risk to bring in kids and staff from a community with high transmission to school and onto buses?

If the Board can justify their decision to keep schools open, then great; if so, that justification needs to be shared with the parents. But I am not confident a decision has been made based on sound, defensible information when the MCDH's current data shows otherwise. COVID-19 is a virus that can easily spread and the decision on whether or not to keep a school in-person or remote should only be based on data and facts, not a vote or anyone's non-expert opinion.

I acknowledge the pandemic situation is difficult and no one will be 100% pleased, but not following MCDH's data is illogical, especially when other Districts in Crystal Lake are following the Department's recommendation.

Good luck! Have a great weekend and be safe!

Best,
Conrad S. Zack

Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>

From: Farrell, Ryan <rpfarrell@d47.org>

Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 2:31 PM

To: Conrad Z <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Re: Fw: Fw: District 47 learning model status; Estado del modelo de aprendizaje del distrito 47

Hi Conrad,

I completely understand your concern. To answer your question, my reasoning for choosing to stay with the hybrid model for now is that we have no evidence of any spread occurring within the schools or buses in the district. While there have been positive cases, none appear to have been contracted in the schools or buses. We are not ignoring the community or district data whatsoever, and the health and safety of the staff and students is of the utmost importance. I believe that the safeguards and spread mitigation strategies and procedures that we have in place are working to keep people safe. In accordance with the recommendation of the McHenry County Department of Health, however, we are monitoring what is going on in the district and will continue to consider a switch to a virtual model if the facts change and the data suggests that the spread is occurring in school (again, or on the buses).

Thanks for reaching out,
Ryan

Ryan Farrell
Board of Education

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 2:03 PM Conrad Z <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Per Dr. Hinz's suggestion, I would appreciate a response from the Board to my email below.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Conrad S. Zack

From: Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>
Sent: Friday, October 23, 2020 1:52 PM
To: Conrad Z <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Sarah Zack <[REDACTED]>; jlmoss@d47.org <jlmoss@d47.org>
Subject: Re: Fw: District 47 learning model status; Estado del modelo de aprendizaje del distrito 47

Good afternoon,

Thank you for contacting me. I appreciate your email, feedback, and questions. I don't want to misrepresent the board's thoughts and process on the decision so I would respectfully ask that you contact them directly. If you email boe@d47.org, all seven members will get your email individually. Thank you for supporting our schools and being a partner with us.

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.
Superintendent

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 1:20 PM Conrad Z <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi Dr. Hinz,

Our daughter is attending in-person and we want it to stay that way, but I think it is important to know how the District is making their decision. I don't think we have to blindly follow other school districts, however, 3 of 4 MCDH metrics are trending poorly. I appreciate the email sent but it is not informative or comforting since

according to the MCDH press release you linked to below "testing positivity has exceeded the threshold for hybrid learning." The press release also states that "we have substantial community transmission." They have clearly advised schools to consider transitioning back to remote. If you are not basing your decision on health department guidance, then what is the decision based on?

I appreciate the situation is a difficult one, but parents need more transparency about how this decision was made.

Respectfully,

Conrad S. Zack

Eric <[REDACTED]>

to: jpowell@d47.org

Jonathan,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. We agree the best approach in uncertain times is one of caution. Defense wins championships remember the 85 Bears. Crystal Lake does not have to be the tip of the spear in leading kids back to school. Hopefully ego can be set aside for the greater good like my elderly parents who also live here and we worry about our kids getting something at school they can't fight off. There are so many layers and I am willing to talk to anyone who needs to hear what a lot of people are thinking and saying.

Best Regards,

Eric

To: [REDACTED]
Sent: 2020-10-23 4:44:21 PM
Subject: Re: Hybrid versus Remote

Eric-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 4:35 PM Eric <[REDACTED]> wrote:
To: district 47 Board of Education,

I think remaining hybrid is the wrong decision. In talking with my neighbors, I know I'm not alone in saying this. Look at where the data is going. You can't tell me for a minute this is going down. I have to speak up. It is unfortunate the support staff may have to be laid off. Remaining hybrid is just not worth getting people sick. It's also negligent when the health department, who are the professionals in epidemiology, are advising the schools to be remote. With no tort limit in Illinois this decision adds considerable liability dollars that should be used in classroom instead of fighting lawsuits in courtrooms. If the rationale for staying hybrid to support those who are economically challenged, free and reduced etc. Is the motive I have an alternative view for you to consider. A hospital stay even for a few days can financially destroy these vulnerable people who may not have health care or are highly under insured. It's the wrong decision for so many reasons. Are your air handlers in our facilities equipped with filters MERV 10 or better filtration? These are recommended by the CDV to capture viruses installed in all facilities? The younger kids may not be at risk, may be another perspective, but they are hosts that carry it to the larger community. Let's not play politics because we don't like the data. I urge the Board to take the right and prudent action and to listen and the professionals and revert to remote.

Respectfully,

Eric LeBlanc
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Fetzner, Robert on behalf of Fetzner, Robert <rfetzner@d47.org>

To: Eric

Subject: Re: Thank you

Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 8:59:55 PM

Dear Eric,

Thank you for your email. It was, has been and will continue to be difficult to make these decisions. Pausing for 14 days is only one step. We need the community to help as well.

Thanks

Rob

On Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 4:55 PM Eric <leblanceric@comcast.net> wrote:

D47 BOE:

Thank you for enacting the adaptive pause. Albeit a tough decision, I truly believe this is the right course of action and believe you are doing what's most right for the situation at hand to protect our educational as well as greater community as we navigate these uncertain times together.

Respectfully,

Eric LeBlanc
[REDACTED]

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>to: "Hartman, Julia" <jhartman@d47.org>

Julia-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan Powell

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 12:26 PM Hartman, Julia <jhartman@d47.org> wrote:
Hello all,

My name is Julia Hartman. I am an ELL teacher at Indian prairie. I grew up in Crystal Lake and graduated from Prairie Ridge in 2015. I was happy to see familiar faces on the BOE. I felt confident that you would fight for what's right for the staff.

I am not one to complain but I am truly beside myself. I feel that the well-being of the community has not been in mind when making decisions. It is unsafe to continue to have in-person school as McHenry county continues to spike with Covid cases. If the McHenry county health department suggests that schools should return to remote, why can the board decide otherwise? I would like to know what the rationale was to make this decision. I feel unsafe in our building and I fear that the spike in cases is about to get out of hand. I have been quarantined all week due to exposure to a positive case. I do not wish this stress and anxiety on anyone. I am terrified to return to the building next week and I am devastated that teachers have had no say in these reopening plans. Any info or guidance is appreciated. I admire all that you have done so far to keep us updated. But I wish to know why you believe this is a sound decision at the moment.

Thank you
Julia Hartman
ELL Teacher

Powell, Jonathan <jpowell@d47.org>

Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>to: Scott Smith <swsmith0@gmail.com>
Smiths-

I truly appreciate you taking the time to reach out to the board. I personally have been saying we should follow the recommendation of the MCHD and unfortunately, others did not agree with that. I will continue to advocate personally for decisions in which I feel are best for our district.

Thanks,
Jonathan

On Fri, Oct 23, 2020 at 3:03 PM Scott Smith <swsmith0@gmail.com> wrote:
Members of the District 47 Board of Education,

We are parents of one D47 child, as well as another who will be joining D47 as a Kindergartener in the 2021-2022 year. We are writing in response to today's announcement made via email that District 47 will not comply with the MCDH's recommendation to cease in-person learning. We would like to request transparency from the Board regarding this decision, and to implore you to reconsider.

To date, we have enjoyed having access to the Board's Zoom broadcasts, and it has helped us have a sense of stability in regards to our child's education during these trying times. The discussions about the county and district's metrics have been very helpful in understanding the current COVID impact in our schools and community. Dr Hinz's presentations about these numbers, how they are being used, and their impact on our current learning model have been particularly useful.

So it came as a shock today to learn that those metrics do not actually seem to be taken into consideration by the board when determining the safety of our current model. We say "seem" because no information regarding why the Board decided to go against the metrics and the MDCH's recommendation has been made available to D47 parents, so it remains a mystery.

We believe the Board has only one responsibility that is greater than implementing a successful program of learning for your students, and that is the safety of your students and faculty. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, that responsibility also extends to minimizing the spread of the virus from your schools to the Crystal Lake community, and surrounding communities.

So, with the assumption that the Board agrees with that sentiment, we are writing to ask that the Board provide transparency to parents, faculty, and community regarding how you intend to ensure that continuing the current hybrid model is, in fact, safe, if not by utilizing the data and recommendations provided by our health experts.

No parent in this district disagrees that in-person is the best learning model. Every working parent feels the stress of restructuring life around a child that no longer leaves home. Everyone just wants life to go back to how it used to be. But it is a costly mistake to ignore how life currently IS. That cost during this pandemic is the health and maybe even the lives of children, faculty, family, and community.

The MCDH does not believe continued in-person operations are safe. Districts in surrounding communities agree. District 155 within our own Crystal Lake community also agrees. The D47 BOE must provide transparency on how you came to disagree and how you intend to keep your schools safe.

With respect and concern,
The Smiths

From: VeronicaAndy Doherty on behalf of [REDACTED] >
To: esmith@d47.org; jtpellikan@d47.org; jpowell@d47.org; cwadlington@d47.org; RFetzner@d47.org; BALes@d47.org; RPFarrell@d47.org
Subject: Failing special ed children
Date: Thursday, October 29, 2020 11:02:17 AM

Good afternoon,

I just wanted to voice my disgust with what's happening for the special ed community. My daughter has been flip flopped around this year and it's shameful. Her year was abruptly cut short in March - the virtual learning that was implemented in Apr-May was an absolute joke (no other nice words about it). She started the year "eLearning" which is nearly impossible for us special need kids and their parents (some working parents - like me who have zero time to dedicate to this method - even though I have zero time for this I have made an effort - and that

means me fighting with my poor kid for 2 hours trying to get her to participate in class - no kind words to say here). It's just mind blowing that anyone thinks this is possible for OUR kids. Every single special needs parent I know has voiced their displeasure and how unproductive eLearning is. I have not met a single special needs parent who thinks their kid is benefitting from eLearning. And NOW you are telling me my daughter is supposed to return to this awful "learning" method after being in person with the people she loves (her teacher & staff) for 6 weeks. Meanwhile, her younger brother has been going to private preschool since the first week of September (everyone's masked - NO COVID positives there either). My daughter is in ECC and there's 5-7 kids in her class. My friend's child is in self-contained kindergarten - FOUR kids in his class. You can not logically explain why these SMALL classes cannot attend in person. I understand the logistics of every elementary school and why that needs to go remote - fine - those neurotypical children can withstand some hours of elearning and they can comprehend why there is a change in learning - there is NO EXPLAINING THIS TO MY 4YO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD. Now her brother will be going to school and she will not. This will crush her and I couldn't be more infuriated. We just moved a month ago and STAYED in D47 because this was the district to be in - now I couldn't regret it more.

Thank you for your time,
Veronica Doherty

From: Hinz, Kathy on behalf of Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

To: Biermeier, Maureen

Cc: John Jacobsen; Anthony (Tony) Brooks

Bcc: boe@d47.org

Subject: Re: Learning Model and SPED Students

Date: Sunday, October 25, 2020 1:10:10 PM

Good afternoon,

I have blind copied the board on this email in order to keep them in the loop of communication but also not violate the Open Meetings Act (OMA). Thank you for reaching out to the board, Tony, John, and me. We appreciate your feedback and thank you for sharing your experiences thus far in the school year. Please know that we are in constant communication with CLETA and CLASS about our learning model and how it is going. I would appreciate if you would also share your experiences and preference with CLETA if you don't mind. Thank you!

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.
Superintendent

On Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 7:58 AM Biermeier, Maureen <mjbiermeier@d47.org> wrote:

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the School Board,

I am a teacher in the Adjusted Learning Program at Glacier Ridge. I love my job! I love seeing my students' faces whether they arrive in Zoom or through my classroom door. I especially love teaching them in-person, but this is not about me. This is about what is best for my students. These young special learners have a variety of dedicated home teachers, parents, grandparents, and babysitters, yet they learn best at school, in person. They are not able to engage and progress as well on Zoom. In addition to a special teacher, they require OTs, Speech Therapists, PTs, Vision specialists, and Social Workers. As you consider the learning models, I urge you to allow our students in self-contained special education classrooms to remain with an in-person model. At

the last Board meeting Dr. Hinz said that the primary cause of the spread of Covid 19 at Lundahl was likely due to bussing. Students in self-contained programs typically have specialized busing with fewer students onboard, allowing for better distancing.

Thank you for considering that the learning model, like much of education, is not a one size fits all decision.

Maureen Biermeier

Teacher, Adjusted Learning Grades K-1

From: Smith, Emily on behalf of Smith, Emily <esmith@d47.org>

To: Fetzner, Robert; Hinz, Kathy

Subject: School closing

Date: Thursday, October 22, 2020 1:30:28 PM

Rob and Kathy,

I share the same sentiments and concerns as Ryan and Betsy. I want the opportunity to understand the numbers Ryan requested and a chance to meet as a board prior to the district making such a drastic decision. Based on the information I have gathered, I am against the entire district going remote at this time. It is especially important to me that we continue to offer in person options for special services and the primary grades.

Thanks,

Emily

Allison Mueller <[REDACTED]>

to: Anthony Brooks <abrooks@d47.org>,
Kathy Hinz <KHinz@d47.org>,
Robert Fetzner <rfetzner@d47.org>,
bales@d47.org

Good evening,

I'm looking for an explanation on why drop-in services for kids with IEPs are on "adaptive pause" starting next week? My daughter attends Husmann where there are no reported cases of COVID-19. Remote learning does not provide an appropriate education for my daughter who has Down syndrome.

Sent from my iPhone

Fri, Oct 30, 2020, 7:41 PM

Hi Tony,

I'm honestly trying to wrap my head around the district pausing all in person SpEd programs and drop-ins. This decision speaks a lot to me as to how the board & administration must view SN kids and is truly heartbreaking to me. I need to figure out the best way to move forward for my daughter, Hope. Honestly, I don't know where to turn as it appears the best for her will not be provided through D47.

Allison Mueller

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 29, 2020, at 6:41 PM, Brooks, Anthony (Tony) <abrooks@d47.org> wrote:

Hi Allison,

Thank you for sharing your feedback regarding the District's decision to implement an "adaptive pause" on in-person instruction. We share your frustration as we navigate this difficult, unprecedented time. The District will move forward with an "adaptive pause" on in-person instruction in light of the alarming increase in COVID-19 cases in McHenry County. On October 22nd, the McHenry County Health Department issued a statement indicating that the school metrics support a return to virtual learning. The District's top priority is student and staff safety. In consideration of this recommendation as well as feedback from staff and the community, the District determined that all in-person instruction, including that for students in special education, will pause, with the hope that the number of cases in McHenry County will begin to level out or drop.

If you would like to schedule an IEP meeting to discuss your student's Individual Academic Learning Plan (IALP), please let me know and we can schedule a meeting with the team to discuss support during this "adaptive pause".

Thank you for your patience and continued partnership,

Anthony O. Brooks, Ed.S.

Director of Special Education

Timeline

1 message

Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org> Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 8:46 AM

To: Board Of Education <boe@d47.org>

Good morning,

I wanted to outline for the board the timeline for today and provide the parent letter, which has been updated with the feedback

provided from you. Thank you. In order to communicate it out in an appropriate roll-out, my timeline would be:

12:30 admin zoom call

12:45 release of the letter to staff

1:30 release of the letter to parents

This gives families the rest of today and two business days to make arrangements above and beyond the weekend for Monday.

I want to acknowledge that I know this decision is viewed from different perspectives and I have heard and respect the various

positions. I want you all to know that my decision is made from the standpoint of how we keep our hybrid model and return to full in-

person learning on track. At the current time, a combination of the state, regional, and local metrics in combination with the staffing

challenge to keep in-person instruction seamless and at the quality we expect warrants an adaptive pause.

I have been working on a new COVID dashboard per board request so that more information is available on the website for the public.

You may click here to view it in draft form. My goal would be to make this public on Friday and continue to communicate with the public weekly on where we are at regarding the adaptive pause and a return to hybrid. I recognize that everyone may not be in full agreement with the decision. I am hopeful that the board would support me in the decision. Thank you!

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.
Superintendent

Pellikan, John
<jtpellikan@d47.org>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 9:44 AM

To: "Hinz, Kathy" <khinz@d47.org>

well done. Sorry you had to navigate this mayhem

Hinz, Kathy
<khinz@d47.org>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 11:54 AM

To: "Pellikan, John" <jtpellikan@d47.org>

thank you

Farrell, Ryan
<rpfarrell@d47.org>

Wed, Oct 28, 2020 at 9:47 AM

To: "Hinz, Kathy" <khinz@d47.org>

Thanks, Kathy. We should make sure the data on the dashboard includes all of the MCDH School Dashboard metrics. We describe the four metrics, but then the dashboard below it doesn't use the same (e.g. youth cases instead of hospital admissions). Also, let's just make sure the data is accurate (e.g. the incidence rate is not 159). I know this is a draft, just making sure that it is ready to go when we roll it out.

Ryan Farrell
Board of Education

From: Hinz, Kathy on behalf of Hinz, Kathy <khinz@d47.org>

To: Board Of Education

Subject: Timeline

Date: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 8:46:40 AM

Good morning,

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I have been working on a new COVID dashboard per board request so that more information is available on the website for the public. You may [click here](#) to view it in draft form. My goal would be to make this public on Friday and continue to communicate with the public weekly on where we are at regarding the adaptive pause and a return to hybrid. I recognize that everyone may not be in full agreement with the decision. I am hopeful that the board would support me in the decision. Thank you!

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.
Superintendent

From: Les, Betsy on behalf of Les, Betsy <bales@d47.org>
To: Hinz, Kathy; Robert Fetzner
Subject: Sorry to disagree
Date: Tuesday, October 27, 2020 9:18:05 PM
Wed, Oct 28, 2020, 6:50 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for your email and I appreciate hearing your points about my recommendation. I do not take your statements or points personally and appreciate the opportunity to discuss the situation as it is a multi-layered and complex one. Over the past eight months, I have been on the front lines with staff, families, and the community as we pivoted to remote learning for the first time over a weekend, prepared for a school year with an unknown start (remote or in-person), rolled with the change of the 3 to 6 week remote start and implemented the hybrid model Oct 5th. I am extremely proud of what we as a district have been able to accomplish over the past 8 months, look forward to what we will continue to accomplish, and am grateful for the support of the board throughout this process.

Our board is reflective of the community and both are split along strong lines regarding COVID. Having talked with and supported staff throughout the past 8 months, I would also say that our staff is equally divided on the topic as well. In my role, I am focusing not on a position about COVID but on how we can operate within a pandemic safely for our students and staff in a manner that is responsible to our broader community. I have participated alongside my superintendent colleagues in discussions amongst ourselves and with the health department weekly since May. During those conversations, we have discussed numerous topics including what are the best metrics to watch, how to operate in this pandemic through the ups and downs, the pros and cons of various hybrid models, and how do we keep a model going with positive cases, quarantines, a lack of subs and a variety of other operational factors just to name a few. I believe that a misconception from some is that if I talk about returning to remote I am not interested in or prioritizing having the kids in school. That could not be further from the truth. I want the students in school and everything that I am doing is working toward that goal. I need to make sure that it can be done in a safe manner that does not compromise their or the staff's health and safety nor the community as a whole.

While I know people are debating metrics and parsing words and terms, three of the four school metrics provided in the county health department framework are above the threshold for returning to remote learning. Even if we set aside the positivity rate for the disagreement between the county and state on the methodology, two of the four metrics are above the threshold which still triggers the discussion for districts to consider a return to their previous

learning model. If we want to look beyond the county to state metrics, there are two different ways we can look at them. As a county, three of the four metrics for schools in determining the risk of community spread have been deemed red for the risk of substantial spread. In addition 5 of the 8 metrics reported at the county level are at the warning status, which has placed our county on the warning list (orange on the IDPH map). As a region, Lake and McHenry counties (region 9) is one day away from entering potential mitigation restrictions by the state due to already having two days above the 8% positivity threshold. While we can debate the merits of the metrics, I am not a health professional but instead need to rely on our health professionals to provide me a dashboard and framework within which to make educational decisions, which they have done. At the state, county, and local zip code level for our boundaries, several metrics now exceed the threshold for our current hybrid model to be recommended and support returning to the previous learning model for the health and safety of our staff and students and to help mitigate the community spread.

Metrics aside for a moment, what the board and public can not see and it's difficult to quantify is the human capital and toll it is taking to keep the hybrid model going while positive tests are confirmed and students and staff are isolated and quarantined on a rolling basis. I know that some have been very interested in knowing the connections of the positive cases that have been identified and whether or not the cases were transmitted at school or outside of school. The bottom line is that when people are isolated or quarantined it is a disruption to the teaching and learning because students miss instruction and/or staff is unavailable to teach. A teacher from HBMS attempted to quantify and explained the disruption to the learning for students very well in an email in the past couple of days to us. I hope the board understands that we have been working day and night and through weekends trying to problem solve, think outside the box, and be creative to keep things going for the hybrid model. It is a struggle each day and the administrative team is working overtime to pull it off wondering each morning if today will be the day that we don't have enough staff to supervise the in-person classrooms. As we have seen the quarantines roll and the unfilled positions occur daily, I have seen the team struggle. What we are asking people to do is more than we should and it is wearing people down physically, mentally, and emotionally. If we keep asking this of people eventually they will break and that will have a long-term effect on the district.

I know that the board has expressed an interest in keeping primary and special education services up and running. I share that interest. We have talked to the unions and with the level of the current metrics, CLASS and CLETA do not support having some people in-person and others remote as they can't justify with the metrics why it would be a safer/healthy work and learning environment for some and not others. Greg and I will continue to talk with the unions about when and how to bring back services and programs to our neediest learners as the metrics start to decline and return to levels that support lower levels of community spread and a hybrid model.

While I know that everyone may not agree, the combination of staffing complexities and metrics at this time make an adaptive pause appropriate. I am not saying we are shutting down with no end date. I am saying we need to follow the health department framework and take a 14-day adaptive pause. The document shared with parents in my letter discusses how adaptive pauses may be necessary for short periods of time in order to keep a hybrid or in-person model sustainable for a longer duration. I am not asking for all seven board members to agree with the decision. I am asking for the board to support me in my decision. I would greatly appreciate that. Thank you!

Kathy J Hinz, Ed. D.

Superintendent

On Tue, Oct 27, 2020 at 9:18 PM Les, Betsy <bales@d47.org> wrote:

Rob and Kathy,

I'm sorry I just don't agree with the plan. I don't want this to be taken personal in any way, it's just the way I feel. We have gotten approximately 30 loudly complaining (and some quite nasty) emails from parents who want everyone to be remote. This number represents approximately 1-2% of our in-person learners. The letter Denise

created says “we have gotten emails” but doesn’t mention we have also gotten emails supporting the continuation of our current hybrid model. The second to last slide from the last BOE presentation clearly states we would continue to monitor IDPH, MCDH and ALSO our own D47 data. We have not violated trust or gone back on our word because Kathy’s presentation stated we would also include other factors. I understand subs are an issue. I understand quarantining is an issue and I thought going remote for the subbing issue at Coventry was a good idea. Last week .0015% of our staff and students contracted COVID. I think our D47 data has value too and is more relevant than the County or State. At the very least, let’s consider keeping the special ed self contained programs and our primary kids in school.

I know it was stated at a couple of our meetings that parents could always switch from in-person to remote and that was taken away. I completely understand why that had to stop. I agree that should have stopped this close to the end of the trimester. However, I also think if these complaining parents could have just moved to remote, most of our complaints would have gone away. I’m feeling this 1-2% of complaining parents is having a huge influence on this decision that will have a negative effect on a lot of our learners.

Betsy