

Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #112

My public comments are related to: * General Public Comments

Topic * School reopening

Name * Ellen Clark

What is your relationship to ACPS? Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

To include your comments as part of the Public Comments agenda item at weekly Special Called School Board Meetings, enter your comments here:

Dear School Board,

I am a parent of a rising kindergartener. I completed the school reopening survey, and voted for hybrid. I regret it. As a former teacher, I wish I had known the following before voting-- how will ACPS protect teachers and staff? What sort of sick leave will they have in the event they contract covid-19? Are there enough substitutes available should there be a breakout amongst teachers and staff? What precautions will be taken for those substitutes-- will they have access to healthcare in the event they contract covid-19 in the classroom? What kind of contact tracing measures will be in place? Will teachers have reliable access to frequent tests for covid-19? What are teachers to do when children display the inevitable symptoms of the common cold in fall and winter and are sent to school? Will parents be encouraged to get their children tested when they are displaying such common symptoms that happen each fall and winter, and by whom? Where are teachers going to eat lunch? These are only a few of my questions which I wish I had taken a step back to consider before allowing my emotions surrounding my child's first year of schooling to cloud my decision-making. Like all parents, I was excited for my child to start school. It makes me tear up to think of her staying home with me to learn virtually-- and I have several years of experience as an educator. It is because of that experience that I know she will not receive the same education at home, just with me. Socialization is vital. But it is also because of that experience as an educator that I know that she will receive well-planned and thought out lessons. I know how hard teachers work and how much they care. I know that my child's teacher will put every effort into ensuring that every child in the classroom receives the best education possible on a virtual platform. I am putting aside my own personal heartbreak that my child's kindergarten year will not look like I imagined, and asking you to please ignore the vote I cast with my heart for in-person learning. Please instead use common sense and pay attention to the current data nationwide in regards to this pandemic. A rush to reopen schools will serve none of us well. No other country in the world has reopened schools with the numbers of positive cases that we have. Such an experiment is unfair to teachers and

students, regardless of our desires to get back to work and get back to normal. Please, leave emotions out of this decision, and give teachers what they need to guide us through educating our children safely at home.

Thank you.
