

Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #193

I would like to provide: *	Written Public Comments
My public comments are related to: *	Virtual+ Plus Learning
Topic *	Special Needs & Virtual Learning
Full Name *	Kathryn Grassmeyer
What is your relationship to ACPS? *	Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student
Enter your comments here OR upload below:	See comments on next page.

Written Public Comments
November 12, 2020 School Board Meeting
Comments by Kathryn Grassmeyer

To the Members of the ACPS School Board,

I reach out to you as a concerned ACPS parent, medical professional, and special needs child advocate who has genuine concern with the lack of speed, creativity, and community engagement in your school re-opening plans. As a pediatric physical therapist, I can attest to the burden that has been given to our special needs community in virtual learning. Despite the very best efforts of our teachers, the virtual platform adds to the already overwhelming daily work required of special needs parents and caregivers.

Offering education through a computer screen to students who are non-verbal, who can't sit independently, who don't have neurotypical brains, who rely heavily on social cues from peers, or who have hearing or speech difficulties is not equitable, inspiring, or empowering. Offering virtual therapy for parents to guide and implement just becomes another overwhelming task, especially for working parents, parents with multiple children, or parents who don't speak English. And offering students who thrive on structure and familiarity an in-person option located in an unfamiliar place with an unknown teacher, is not an actual choice.

The extremely limited and often inappropriate options offered these families, as well as the lack of urgency in moving forward that comes across in viewing these board meetings, demonstrates a gross misunderstanding of what is happening in the homes of some of our most vulnerable students. This far into the pandemic, you have not provided a clear path forward on even our highest burdened populations, which gives me little faith there is a clear path for even the general population of children, even for September 2021.

As a parent and as a medical professional who serves these students, I strongly urge you to find a clearer, more creative, appropriate path forward.

Thank you for your time,

Kathryn Grassmeyer, PT, DPT
Pediatric Physical Therapist, Mom of 3, ACPS Parents