

Public Comments for School Board Meetings

#341

I would like to provide: *

Written Public Comments

Select the meeting date:* *

My public comments are related to: *

COVID-19

Topic *

Outdoor Lunch Policy

Full Name *

Heather Ashburn

What is your relationship to ACPS? *

Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

Enter your comments here OR upload
below:

The attached document contains is the three-minute statement I made at the school board meeting on September 9 requesting the ACPS school board issue an outdoor lunch policy to take effect immediately.

Upload a copy of your public
comments or other supporting
documents:



[acps_board_meeting_heather_ashburn_outdoor_lunch_policy_09082021.pdf](#)

64.34 KB .PDF

See attached comments from September 9th School Board Meeting on next page.

Heather Ashburn

September 9, 2021

Alexandria City Public Schools
1340 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Outside Lunch Policy

Dear ACPS School Board,

The following is the three-minute statement I made at the school board meeting on September 9:

Hello, my name is Heather Ashburn. I want to thank you for your commitments to educational excellence, diversity, equity and inclusion in Alexandria City public schools where my son is a student.

I applaud the progress you've made with DEI and with the educational gains they deliver for all students. I understand that any resources removed from these critical programs will delay their benefits. Here's where I'm going to ask you to do that, to take a << small amount >> of your limited resources and time, to focus immediately on additional COVID prevention for our young children who are not eligible for the vaccine.

Our request is not about sustainability. This is about right here, right now, the next few weeks. This is the time period during which the data tells us this variant will peak. We will have COVID in our schools. COVID impacts could wipe out the amazing gains you, our leadership, have set in motion. Think of the impacts COVID will have on educational equity:

- Learning loss for a sick child
- Learning loss if a school or classroom is forced to go virtual
- (And mind boggling is) a child's months and years of learning loss due to long COVID whose symptoms include as memory loss, reduced attention, and an inability to think straight

We ask that you set new guidance for Alexandria City Public schools within the week: Join the surrounding counties and adopt one of the easiest ways to cheaply and effectively reduce the risk of transmission: Outdoor lunches.

Enable your principals to open the doors and let the kids out. It won't be perfect, some days will work, and some days won't. Some schools will have an easier time of it than others. Many of our schools are capable of simply opening the doors and letting the children out on clear days. The kids go out, they sit on blankets, towels, grass, and they love it.

We hope you can immediately help our amazing, empowered principals to set plans for outdoor lunch. This rapid policy shift will take a surge in resources, both for planning and execution. Alexandria has already hired more lunchtime monitors but could potentially need more assistance. This short-term risk-mitigation investment will be worth it to help all our young children.

Thank you for your time and dedication.
Sincerely yours,

Heather Ashburn, ACPS Parent