

Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #190

I would like to provide: *	Written Public Comments
My public comments are related to:	Virtual+ Plus Learning
Topic *	Reopen ACPS for In-Person Learning
Full Name *	Andrew Cook
What is your relationship to ACPS? *	Community Member

Enter your comments here OR
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I'm writing to express my family's wish that ACPS reopen with in person learning immediately. As a father of three-- now former-- public school children, I have been forced to make the difficult decision to leave ACPS for private school to support my children's learning and developmental needs. I grew in on the West End, attended public school my entire life, and was a strong proponent of ACPS when my wife and I started our family here seven years ago. Sadly, it has been ACPS's response to the pandemic that has made me withdraw my support, and it is unlikely my family will return. Like you, I am aware of all the available science behind COVID-19, the CDC guidance, and what it takes to safely resume operations in a large occupancy building, as my federal agency has done for the last several months. Despite what has been communicated by ACPS and the superintendent, I have seen nothing to suggest that ACPS is actually following this guidance but rather is negligently (or falsely) interpreting the guidance to ensure schools remain closed. This is unacceptable and more to the point completely unnecessary. Where you have overly relied on "community input," listening committees, and outside consultants, you should have been listening to the wishes of the tax payers, the teachers, and the students, and replicating what countless private schools and public schools across the country have been doing. There are a host of creative solutions out there that are easily implemented and you have an army of parent volunteers at your disposal, yet you don't use them. This can only mean that you have already sealed the fate of the school system for the next year (or more) to keep it shuttered to in-person learning and are just focused on helping ease the pain for the parents now just coming to accept this reality. This is not good leadership and it is a poor example to be setting for the students and the next generation of leaders. And it is the reason that hundreds and hundreds of parents just like me have pulled their children from ACPS. I love public education and believe it is a fundamental cornerstone of our society at both the local and national level. I will continue to champion the opening of ACPS from the sidelines and hope the day comes when ACPS can realign itself with the needs and values of this community.