

COMMUNITY COMMENTS
MARCH 4, 2021

I'm writing to you today to express my concerns and disappointment as a parent of a kindergartner in D57. While I was glad to hear when the district announced the start of the hybrid model, I feel that too much focus was given to the return to school and not enough to the creation of asynchronous days. Having our child reduced from 5 days of teacher-led instruction to only 3 has led to increased stress for the entire family. Our child can now quickly compare a day at school, to a day of remote instruction, to an asynchronous day, and on asynchronous days our child feels like she's been left to learn on her own – without teachers' guidance. Our child already spends every day with us, and so to her, asynchronous days don't feel like school at all. Everything we read tells us that interaction with other children is critical at this stage of our child's development. I hope that the hybrid model started in January is only the first phase in opening the school further. As I look around, I see that Arlington Heights has been opened for months now with no major outbreaks. Schaumburg successfully has opened for 4 days in-person. District 59 is re-opening right now, and even Buffalo Grove is expanding their in-person program. I worry that our district is falling behind, and that my child is growing more frustrated by asynchronous days.

Dear School Board Members, Thank you for your hard work and commitment to our district. This is a simple message to communicate our desire for D57 students to have the option to return to full day school, assuming safety precautions currently in place remain the same. We accept the distance of 6 ft may not remain, but we are comfortable with a more realistic expectation of around 4ft. Our children have thrived while attending school for hybrid, and we are comfortable with them transitioning to full day. Thank you again for your service, we appreciate your efforts to ensure a safe environment for our children, as well as the school staff.

As you consider all options for the remainder of this school year, please do not make any more changes to remote learning. My input is, specifically, as a Lincoln Middle School parent. I fear that any move toward full in-person learning will only be possible at the expense of remote learners. Rumors abound that there would be a switch to live-streaming. Not only are more changes hard on students (haven't we tested their resilience enough?), but taking away dedicated remote teachers could be disastrous for our children. Remember, the more remote learners you have, the more space is made for those in person. Our children have sacrificed so much over the past year. Please don't further isolate them. Also, please keep in mind that many parents are in the back of the line for vaccines. As some people start to let their guard down just because they feel safe to do so, not all of us have that luxury. Thank you so much for your attention and consideration.

Good evening. Respectfully I ask that you please vote NO on any adaptive pause following spring break. Our children need every hour of in-person instruction that they can get at this point in the year. Our family is staying local over spring break (like so many others) and there is absolutely no reason to further punish our children with unnecessary "quarantine". Please let our children attend in-person instruction with NO pause following spring break. Thank you.

Brian, There are no words to describe how grateful many parents and kids were to hear you speak up during our last board meeting. You made sure a big part of our community was heard clearly. Thank you for that! I am sorry your colleagues made you feel like you couldn't speak up honestly, and as a result you were attacked. Many parents found it completely inappropriate. Its disappointing to see that our own board members cannot speak up honestly, thoughtfully, and refreshingly taking accountability for their actions or lack of. It seemed very controlling. It's ignorant to think ones actions are perfect, it leaves no room for growth. Unfortunately in only shows there is a lot of work ahead of us, before our district is united again progressing in the right direction. I was actually watching the board meeting from D25 last night and it is possible, it gave me hope. They as well went through a turmoil, but they listened, quickly

united, and things seem much better now. Brian, thank you again for standing up for so many of our kids! Every time one of my kids has a zoom meltdown it breaks my heart again and again and it makes me, just like other parents, feel helpless. We can do better as a district, we truly can offer better options! Please don't give up! Please also know your words mattered to many of us, and we will never forget this. Thank you!

Im very disappointed with District 57. Schools should be full time in person or full time remote. Please open school full time in person as soon as possible. Our kids should be back in school like all other districts.

We are really appreciating the half-day hybrid schedule. It seems to be a great balance between safety (with 6' distance) and in-person time with the teachers. We realize it's difficult for families who aren't able to have at least one parent working from home, but we would really like to have the option to continue with this format for the rest of the school year. Thank you.

Please consider a full time in person option for the remainder of the school year. I can't no longer explain to a kindergartner who asks about going back to school why he can't return to school. This is when all of his friends are back in school. Why is he still not? We understand that 6 feet distance is not feasible so please provide an option for us to decide if we are comfortable sending our kids back to school or keep them home. It has been a year since the pandemic started. We need to make a decision before one of the kids in the community takes their own live. When at the end of all this, the goal is to have kids in school and prevent any death (Covid and non Covid related!)

Dear Board Members - please let's work together and get it right this time. Things are changing rapidly...look at other districts, daily, more and more are making the right choice and offering in-person full day options. The data the task force presented is already outdated. Having 2 options - full in person and full remote is the best choice and meets the needs of the majority of our population. Our administration will get it done successfully and safely. Kids will follow the rules and parents will do their part. Let's hit the reset button and do what we should have done in the Fall. We can do this. Don't be afraid to try. PLEASE. Our youngest elementary kids are suffering the most. As a parent to a child with an IEP, I see it first hand. They thrive in the in-person setting. They need it. Let's do it this time. I have faith you will make the right choice.

I am writing to ask you please reopen the school that my daughter can go back to normal in person full day school no only the 2 hours. Its been to long and and seeing other Schools districts being reopen in person makes me really unhappy that we don't know a day when our district will have a date to send our kids were they belong to. I can see that Juliana has change being more scared of everything not wanting to go places. I worry that this will get worst. Please reopen our School to be in person for full day. Thank you.

As the number of schools around us going back to back FULL IN PERSON learning grows, I hope this makes your choice even clearer, the only option is full remote or full in-person. Our children should come first, and that is what is best for our children. I met with a teacher friend this past weekend who teaches at a Schaumburg district school and she is so grateful to have her kids back in the classroom full time. She feels safe (even though the kids are not quite 6 ft apart) and is back to being confident her students are getting the best education possible. Our kids DESERVE that too.

After watching the last board meeting, I noticed there were some comments both at the board meeting, and on social media discussing live streaming options, wherein those teachers who are in person could live stream their instruction remotely. Ostensibly this is being proposed as a way to increase the amount of students that could receive in person education. I recall that there were some board members that

expressed concern with the possibility of live streaming, and felt that while it may be appropriate for our middle school students, it may not be appropriate for our elementary students. I fear that if our district started a live streaming model for the 21-22 school year, that it would result in an inferior educational experience for those families that need to stay remote for health reasons.

It has been a year since our children have been out of the normal school routine. The academic and also social and emotional negative effects that our children have suffered have been tremendous and it may take many long months or even years until we get the kids "back on track." I urge District 57 Board of Education to seriously consider a tangible plan for a full-time return to school. Do it for the sake of our community. A 6-foot distance is a guidance, not a requirement. If this is the number one reason for not being able to open the schools, please reconsider it and weigh in what is really at stake here. Other school districts have opened with a distance of less than 6 feet between students while using other safety precautions. Our district can do the same. Mount Prospect students deserve equity. It's imperative our schools finally open their door. Don't cut the wings of our kids who need the full-time education at their schools in order soar!

As you are making yet another difficult decision during a very difficult time, please consider continuing to offer a full remote option. Live streaming will not meet the academic or social emotional needs of those students that cannot or will not attend school full time if the district chooses to bring students back at less than 6 feet physical distance. As both a parent and an elementary educator, I can guarantee that live streaming does not replace the necessary connections made through face to face interactions that students receive from either in-person or remote learning. I understand that 10 of the 14 surrounding districts are using live streaming for those families that choose to keep their students at home. However, 7 of those 10 districts also guarantee at least 6 feet of physical distance for those students that are attending school in person. The continued recommendation from the CDC and IDPH is to maintain 6 feet of distance between students as a mitigation measure to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19. Therefore, those 7 districts are following the mitigation strategies to the best of their abilities, which allows families to choose in-person learning for their children without compromising their academics and still decreasing their risk of exposure. We want nothing more than to have our son attend school full time as long as the district continues to guarantee 6 feet of distance between students and continues to follow all mitigation strategies. Since the district currently guarantees 6 feet of social distance between students, the only reason that we have chosen remote learning up until this point is because the asynchronous portion of the hybrid option does not fit our son's needs or our schedules. However, if you are choosing to no longer guarantee 6 feet of physical distance, then please continue to offer a full remote option for those families that cannot or will not expose their children to an increased level of risk. It would not be fair to ask parents to choose between their children's health and safety and the rigor of their children's academics by replacing the current full remote option with live streaming. Thank you for your consideration.

My question/comment pertains to the proposed adaptive pause after spring break. I understand that, in theory, this pause will allow for those who may travel for spring break to isolate for two weeks at home for everyone's safety. Does the board and administration suspect that families will take advantage of the adaptive pause to extend vacations? I've spoken to many families who are planning on taking two week spring break trips rather than the typical one week, therefore, negating the intended purpose of the adaptive pause. Please reconsider this and whether or not it really helps keep our community safer or if it just a disruption in the learning model for the staff and students. Thank you for your consideration.

I keep hearing talk of how so many families choose remote. The board is not taking in to consideration working families. We were FORCED to choose remote because we have no one to drive my children back and forth. We have to have family watch them. This district is denying my children their right to an appropriate education. This has gone on long enough. Our children are suffering because of the decisions the board is making. There are two options. Full in person and full remote.

Prior to the board making their decision tonight, I want to summarize where we stand as a community. We have heard from healthcare, parents, kids, teachers, community members, administration, and board members. Let's start with parents – they completed a survey. A survey where 42.5% of families chose full-day with less than 6 feet and 25.9% full-remote, equaling a majority of 68.4%. We know all kids want to be back in school but wanting something is different than needing something. After tonight and previous nights just like this, we must know that school attendance is a necessity. It provides structure, sanity, socialization, and most importantly an adequate education. There are adults in college that cannot handle the self-discipline and autonomy associated with an online education, how are our young children expected to handle it? How about the teachers – they have spoken. A majority surveyed voiced that they are okay returning to school with the proper mitigation. Luckily our task force created a full-time in-person plan where teachers will be able to stay 6 feet away from students. In addition, we have recently received the great news that those that did not get vaccinated in the community on their own, are finally able to be vaccinated with D214. This is just in time for the new CDC guidelines stating that vaccinated individuals no longer need to quarantine (3 weeks post booster) once they are exposed to a confirmed or potential COVID case. This means that whether a teacher is exposed to a child in a room where they are seated 4 or 6 feet apart, quarantine is no longer necessary. This also allows one to infer that although mask wearing and social distancing should still be the norm, there is a decreased rate of transmission to others once vaccinated. The vaccinations, masks, 6 feet of separation, screenings, and plexiglass should all provide enough swiss cheese mitigation layers to minimize the risk to our teachers and staff. What about our administration? Congratulations to Dr. Gorr on your new position as superintendent. Your thoughtful, patient responses during these meetings alone speak to why you were chosen for this. You were asked last week if full time in-person and full-time remote plans can co-exist and your response was that they could. The administration is not here to make the decisions, they are here to explore ideas and they themselves agreed that these majority options are indeed feasible. Finally, the board members – at this time you are all that stands between 42.5% of families in this district and getting the education that their children need and deserve. With the current plans as they stand, you are catering to a minority of remote and hybrid families. We know it is not because you are being malicious so what is it? Is it the 6 feet versus 4 feet? Well, I am here to tell you that this should not be an issue. My daughter is in hybrid right now and sits at a kidney shaped table. She is the middle person. With the dimensions of this table, there is no way she is 6 feet from the two people next to her. We made a mathematically correct diagram to prove this. If you are measuring oral cavity to oral cavity, she is actually only 37 inches apart and when measuring mid seat to mid seat, they are separated by 46 inches (not even 4 feet). Yes, some kids are 6 feet but she is not and it would be inaccurate for the administration to tell the board that this is the current standard when it is not. In addition, in Karl Anderson's video for return to school, children are advised to keep distance from each other by extending their arms out and making sure they do not touch. I am an adult and my arms extended with that of another person my size, would actually only provide 4 feet of space (which is much less for a first grader). A perfect example of this less than 6 feet of spacing can be found in the morning drop off and afternoon pick-up lines. Finally, my last example of reality versus expectation is from last week's meeting. President Kowalczyk and Dr. Aumiller moved mighty close to the people next to them during the meeting when they were watching the presentation, it was well within 6 feet and lasted greater than 15 minutes which goes against CDC recommendations. Now I'm not trying to point fingers but just trying to be realistic - none of us are honestly spacing 6 feet apart. The 6 feet is a guideline, a guideline to keep us vigilant and spaced. No one is walking around with a measuring tape and if you were, you would really realize how noncompliant you truly are. Is it because you want to protect our schools? Well, fortunately you have already done that. You made the right decision in going remote back in March 2020. You moved slowly with caution; you observed districts start and then stop with adaptive pauses and quarantines. But now the numbers are down, the stakeholders are ready, the teachers are vaccinated, and you no longer have to take the burden of this responsibility. You can give us the choice and we will be responsible for the decision to return or not. A full remote and full-day in-person plan is the best option for all. It will please 68% of families and the majority of teachers. It will uphold

safety measures of the most highly regarded medical institutions with masking, screening (at home and at school), and social distancing of at least 4 feet. In addition, transmission will be further mitigated by vaccination. I thank you for your courage to make the correct decision, the courage to reset the course of this district, and the courage to allow our students to receive the education they deserve. Please allow D57 students to make a choice for full-time remote or in-person schooling with a start date of March 29 (following Spring Break). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Good evening board members, First, thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of the entire District 57 community. I've watched these months as board meetings and learning model options have unfolded, and have appreciated the stance the board and administration has taken to stick closely to the guidance provided by the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE. My family has chosen full remote for our first grader this school year, and we knew that when we chose to remain remote over following her teacher, we risked a teacher change. We did have to transition to a new teacher this winter, and our daughter was devastated. We completely understand the need for the change, and braced ourselves for it, but it still took an emotional toll on our kiddo. I can get behind that change for the good of the whole learning community. What I cannot get behind is another change for our daughter with a third of the school year left. Any change that impacts the integrity of the remote learning option, which 25% of students are involved in, is unacceptable. If changes to the spring learning model would require remote students to live stream into an in-person classroom, I am telling you from lived experience it will not be possible to maintain the integrity of remote learning. Our 57 teachers are talented, patient, wonderful individuals, but they are not miracle workers. Live streaming is passable when both audiences switch back and forth between remote and in person, but kids who are always live streamed in will end up feeling left out, and it will not be their teachers' faults. With remote kids working in this model going on 8 months, it is not fair to change their instruction from a dedicated teacher to a teacher responsible for them on the screen and another group of kids who are always together in the classroom. If this becomes necessary for next school year, parents will understand what they are getting ahead of time, but to go backwards in the remote model this year is unfair to those of us in it now. Thank you for your ongoing work,

Our family has a student in hybrid at Lions Park and one in remote at Lincoln. Hybrid has been a big improvement for the younger one and we were comfortable sending her back since the medical recommendations were being followed. There have been some issues but it has been obvious that their teachers have been working extremely hard to deal with a difficult situation. We do want our kids back in school full time as soon as it is safe enough to do so, but we have concerns about doing it after spring break or potentially even sooner. Our biggest concern is safety, specifically if the district were to decide not to continue six feet social distancing as recommended by the CDC. Many medical experts have said it's safe to open schools IF all the precautions are taken - it seems like some want to ignore the IF part. Some medical organizations have talked about three foot social distancing, but those recommendations have also come along with other strong recommendations, for example Schools and the Path to Zero says three feet distancing but also ventilation or filtering that replaces all air in the room four to six times per hour, and testing school staff for covid on a regular basis, among other things. It should be pointed out that the APA recommends at least three feet between *desks* and "ideally 6 feet apart". When D57 is talking about three feet versus six feet distance, it's important to be clear if that is measured as actual space between students, or desks, or center of chair to center of chair. We have grave concern over maskless lunch, especially if social distancing of 6 feet is not maintained. Also we wonder how situations like younger kids needing help getting packaging of lunch items open could be handled without putting teachers and staff at risk. A related concern is specifically about Lincoln. While there is a medical consensus that younger kids are less likely to catch and spread the disease, that specifically applies to kids ten years old and younger. As kids get older than 10, their medical situation becomes similar to adults, and even for middle school many of the medical recommendations are stricter than for elementary school. Please recognize this fact in the discussion and decision, and consider the possibility that what may be a workable plan for Westbrook and potentially Lions/Fairview may not be viable for Lincoln. The age and

size of Lincoln school, and long term overcrowding are also factors that must be considered in keeping students and staff safe. If a full in person 5 day/week plan was put into place this school year, would students go back to moving from room to room or would they stay in one room all day? How can you maneuver so many students through the hall while maintaining social distance in Lincoln school? We are also concerned about the teachers and staff being and feeling safe under a new plan. Hopefully all teachers will be able to get both doses of the vaccine before any plan that reduced social distancing went into effect. Beyond that, will considerations be made for teachers with high risk conditions? What about teachers with family members who are high risk? Fully vaccinated teachers and staff lowers the risk of covid, but does not eliminate it, especially before parents, students, and family members are able to be vaccinated. If the district decides not to follow all medical recommendations for safety, they are putting the health of staff and students at risk. If there is a shift to a full time in school plan this spring we are also concerned about the possibility of our kids losing their teachers, which is a particularly disruptive change so close to the end of the year. Obviously neither hybrid nor remote is the optimal learning condition for kids, but safety is of utmost importance. We felt that we made the best of a difficult situation. Both kids are settled in and doing well in school. They like their teachers, and are comfortable with them. We don't want to see another switch happen where we are forced to choose between putting our kids' safety first or our kids losing their teachers that have built good relationships with them. We also hope that the district understands that live-streaming is not a viable option for remote students. Our remote students have just as much right as in person or hybrid students to have dedicated teachers. Our middle schooler's remote teachers are doing an excellent job in a tough situation. He is learning and growing. We fear that forcing remote students to switch to a live-stream classroom would be detrimental to our child's education. It would be unfair for the students and the teachers. It is not possible to teach an in-person group while also teaching live-streaming at the same time. One group of students is going to get less attention and assistance, and it would be the remote students because they are not physically present. Our hybrid learner had to stay home for a day due to a stuffy nose and had to zoom in for the day. Her teacher tried so hard to help her, but it was impossible for our child to truly participate in the class. She couldn't see the board, the streaming device was far from the teacher and she couldn't see when the zoom dropped our child because she was teaching the students in front of her. We do not fault the teacher; this was an impossible situation for her to manage on short notice and she did the best that was possible. We urge the district to avoid live streaming of classes for remote learners. Please continue to allow our remote learners to actually learn by having dedicated remote teachers. We implore the district to mandate two weeks of remote learning after spring break. This is a huge safety concern. In a perfect world, people would follow the medical recommendation not to travel, but this past winter break many families did travel, and not surprisingly we saw a spike in cases as a result. I have a lot of trust in my kids' teachers, but based on what we've seen here in our community, there are many people not taking the covid situation seriously and ignoring the advice of the CDC and medical experts. People say they want the schools to open full time but when they ignore the safety recommendations set by the CDC, such as not wearing masks in public and not social distancing, they are putting everyone at risk and making it unsafe for students to be in school. People say they care about teachers but their actions and blame send a different message. We really do want our kids in school as much as possible but please, please, PLEASE, make the two weeks after spring break be remote learning for all to keep everyone safe and minimize the spread of covid. We realize that this is an impossible situation that the district didn't create. We haven't agreed with all the decisions the district has made but we respectfully recognize the difficulty and the disagreement within the community. The fall will hopefully be a very different situation and many more options will be available. Thanks to school staff and all those who have been doing their best to help make things better in a tough time.

YOUR COMMUNITY CRAVES UNITY! ONE COMMON GOAL! ONE CLEAR ACTION PLAN! I am a mom of 2 kids in the district, 3rd grader in Lions Park and 6th Grader in Lincoln and they both would like to be in school full-time. Current Model of Hybrid is not acceptable! We know it, the board knows it, and even the administration expressed it during our last meeting Feb 18th. This cannot be our

only option for this year or next. MAKE THE DECISION, ALLOW US TO COLABORATE AND LETS OFFER 2 OPTIONS. OPTIONS THAT WILL SATISFY MORE THEN MAJORITY AND DO IT WELL! OUR ONLY GOALS GOING FORWARD SHOULD BE: OPTION 1: FULL REMOTE OPTION 2: FULL IN PERSON You, The Board were chosen to represent us, so please consider these points to make the best decisions going forward! 1. The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics in Physics states: Anyone that is put into isolation will degenerate, “the law of physics states that there is a natural tendency of any isolated system or object to degenerate into a more disordered state”. The ultimate form of punishment for a human being is prison and within prison solitary confinement, yes this is a harsh analogy, but you have parents explaining you time after time what is happening to their kids emotionally after almost 12 months of pandemic at this point, and you keep leaving them helpless meeting after meeting. Kids are more sensitive than adults, they don’t have the perspective we do, and therefore this analogy is their emotional reality! We have no idea what the long-terms effects of this year will be, or maybe we do we are just scared to face the truth. As human beings we are wired to have a sense of belonging in the community, if you take that away we have nothing. This ongoing isolation leads to a reported spike in suicides, self-harm, experts see a dramatic increase in depression, anxiety, and fear. To many this outweighs the damage of this virus. We as adults can’t handle it, so why keep putting our kids through this? Especially since there are other options, as we can see in surrounding districts. The issue of mental wellbeing of our kids comes up time after time, this is your chance to stand up for the most vulnerable ones! 2. Task Force recommendations and survey results are already outdated, due to fast changing pace of all the information available. The metrics have improved, guidelines have changed, more people have been vaccinated, and other districts being used for comparison have made changes since then as well (most of the 14 discussed districts have already returned or committed to full-time return this Spring, and others will follow, new information comes out daily). Our Return to School Metrics look better than ever, and the overall positivity rates in IL has dropped to 2.8% this week and is the lowest in months! Please draw new conclusions on the most recent information brought to you by everyone. 3. Please ask the administration about the most current (1st week of January 2021) results of standardized testing. Draw comparisons to our past results, and assess the damage the lack of in-person learning has created. Ask how many parents were forced to use tutoring services and other tools to minimize this gap. The current hybrid program created by D57 is hanging by a tread, you need to act fast! Education through chromebooks was a temporary strategy not a new norm. 4. Please understand how uneven the current options offered are. Our remote students get already reduced 5 hours of instructions with Teachers, and hybrid students get half of that, they are required to do some version of independent study for two and half hours each day, that for most averages out to 1hr per day. You left the youngest and most vulnerable kids in our district with the least support. This huge gap cannot continue! Hybrid was a good way to get kids in the door, but it cannot be a long term plan. It doesn’t meet even a minimum of educational goals we have for our kids and creates a huge gap within our own students. 5. The board has shown a huge concern about the small percentage of families that currently are Hybrid but wouldn’t commit to a full-day at reduced distance, you are concerned with getting them upset, but show disregard for families that cannot commit to a currently hybrid program at all. The schedule constrains and many other limitations of this option, don’t allow many to take advantage of our current options. Why does one group matter more than the other? 6. I urge you to reconsider following 6ft recommendation. Teachers can still feel safe with 6ft distance especially since in addition many will be vaccinated. As long as kids have masks and comply with all current regulations majority of our community will still happily take advantage of full-in person option. It can still turn out to be 6ft for some of the classrooms and 5ft to 4ft for others. If you are still concerned consider Plexiglas desk barriers, or small group pods of 2-3 kids where each pod would keep the distance of 6ft, but don’t sacrifice wellbeing of our kids and their education. 7. As a board how are you planning to reverse the damage of almost full year of remote Learning has caused? What is your plan for that? 8. Finally please be honest with us and allow families to plan accordingly for fall and next school year. Whether it’s time to sell the house or find other options we need transparency. We all understand that each and every one of you was called to do this and has nothing but good intentions. Your hard work is always appreciated, even though sometimes it doesn’t seem like it.

Many of you didn't sign up for being board members during a pandemic, but every day you choose to show up, you are responsible for this community in its entirety. Please make the right choice for our kids

To the Board of Education and the D57 Administration, In recent meetings we've been hearing a lot about how the district is trying to best accommodate all students during the remainder of this school year as well as begin to think about how to plan ahead for the following school year. I want to begin with thanking you for all the work you've done so far and for continuing to keep the remote option for students who need and want to safely learn from home available. I know this has been a trying year full of impossible decisions, and I am truly grateful for all you do for our community. After the last board meeting I wanted to write an email to remind all the board members that when community members go up to speak, often this is a group of parents seeking full return who are more than comfortable sitting in a large room of people and trusting none of them have been exposed to covid. Unfortunately many of us are not that comfortable or cannot afford to get sick in that room, so we watch from the safety of home. They do NOT represent every situation and certainly do Not represent how my family feels about remote learning and in person learning. For as many people that were there cheering at remarks made by board member Maye, there were just as many at home watching in shock and with disappointment as we realized not all voices were being heard BEFORE forming an opinion on how to move forward. Many of these parents are there to share how remote or partial remote is hindering their child's learning. How this model is not good for children and how their school work is suffering. While this might be true for some, this is not the case for all. In normal times I would love for my children to be in a social inclusive environment in school, but with everything going on now, this is not what we feel is right for our family currently. I personally would like to see that our community has had no new cases of covid 19 for at least 2 consecutive weeks and that everyone(both staff and students) has had an opportunity to be vaccinated before we return to any full in person days for all students. Because we choose remote, we have partnered with the school IEP teams to help create a remote learning environment that both my children with special needs can thrive in and do so successfully until we feel comfortable returning in person. My youngest child entered Westbrook(3yo as of July) this year with little language and what he had was very broken. He struggled with sustaining learning time and following the planned activity provided in class when it was non-preferred. He has only ever experienced school through a phone(we struggled with using a chrome book due to continued lag) up until he received his iPad recently. Because his older brother has significant special needs too, more often than not, the majority of attention to these specific issues are only addressed during those 2 dedicated hours of school time. That being said, my 3 yo now is consistently building his language skills month to month where he is much more intelligible to people outside our family unit. He is sitting and attending to almost all the sections of our school day. He is actively engaged in both preferred and non preferred activities and even asking for more activities after school is over. He is the main person interacting with his iPad screen and can mute and unmute himself and even changes the view so he can see the teacher for lessons and then all the students while doing group work, or independent work after the lesson is taught. Given the circumstances I feel like this has given him a way to be social and his class feels very inclusive which we love and really appreciate! I am beyond impressed with the growth and would be more than happy to continue with this type of remote learning structure for the remainder of the year and even into the following school year. My older son is a 6th grader at Lincoln who is participating in about 90% General Education and struggles with Autism, Sensory processing disorder, auditory processing disorder, executive functioning issues and has trouble with fine and gross motor skills like handwriting and motor planning. Obviously he has to work hard every day to just keep it together during school hours. We also have the added difficulty of volunteering to drop his resource class(strategies) run by his case manager, so that he is able to participate in his regular Gen Ed day AND also get to experience courses like Spanish and Art alongside his peers. Let me start by sharing this is not an easy task, especially not remotely. This is something we do because we strongly believe in him having all the same opportunities as his peers and we do it remotely because it's safer and it's POSSIBLE to do well with the right supports and team collaboration! Not only has he been able to get by during this unique year, he's shown emotional and academic growth each quarter. Even with dropping his strategies

class after the holiday break, he has been able to keep up with all his work, get support 1:1 as needed after school or through email/google classroom communications, work together to make accommodations and tools work in the remote environment AND has had his highest grades yet! He has A's in all his classes but 1 and that's only due to 1 assignment he didn't perform well on, so he's confident he can get that back to an A as well. We are not parents who pressure our kids to get all A's, so this is an even bigger triumph in my eyes. This to me is evidence on how empowering teachers, parents AND students to work together and advocate for each other can result in success even in a full remote environment. Your school teams should be PROUD of the staff they've hired because they really help to make this possible for kids like mine who need more support than is sometimes seen. If this model changed for Lincoln students and they were only to live stream in without a designated remote staff, I do not think this would be possible. If those changes were to occur during the remainder of this year, our family would have to seriously consider homeschooling until returning safely in person was an option we felt comfortable with in our district. Please continue to keep these students in your consideration as well when deciding how the remainder of this year will look and when planning for fall. There are some obvious reasons we choose remote: Limited exposure Strong curriculum supported with full remote staff Safer distancing for those who need or can't avoid in person for their families My husband works and we don't want to expose our community to his work community accidentally I also wanted to share the reasons that are not as obvious and are something I don't often share outside my circle of fellow special needs parents: Both my children seek oral input and tend to touch their mouths often in public. My older son struggles with anxiety and not knowing who might have covid makes being around people physically very difficult. And probably the one that has haunted my dreams since my oldest child was diagnosed with autism at 3yo, my death. I am a younger mom who is active and healthy despite my asthma, this fear has always just been a nightmare or a terrible intrusive thought. Now I have to live in a reality where my condition causes me to be more susceptible to covid, and the very real possibility of dying or developing long term disabling symptoms. The fact that 30% of people who get covid are living with long term symptoms that cause them to be winded after a normal activity like walking up a flight of stairs is terrifying to a parent like me. I used to have to literally drop everything and chase after my older son because he's a flight risk when upset and though he keeps it together it has happened as recently as 1.5 years ago. If I can't chase after my kid or hold on to him long enough to calm him down, how am I supposed to keep him safe from something like oncoming traffic when we're out. When I say I'm scared of dying young, it is not something I fear for myself. It's a heartbreaking fear that I will not be able to help my children overcome their struggles and that all the responsibility of raising our special needs children will fall solely on my husband who we already rely on to provide for our family. This is a real fear that is very common in the world of special needs parenting and one I have heard from several parents in our district before and during covid. Another parent and fellow PEPS ambassador shares this fear. My friend Zina is a cancer survivor who is still in treatment for a weakened immune system. Her immune system is compromised due to blood cancer, in addition to that, her lungs are only working at 60% capacity. She too has asthma, and knows her odds of surviving covid are not likely. For her family, remote learning is the only way they are able to get by. Having the support of her children's teachers and IEP team is how learning at home has been not only possible, but a successful experience. She wanted me to share what's been making remote learning a success for her children. Time has been a big factor for her family. They have plenty of time to concentrate on areas where they need to work the most on. For example, her son's reading. When he started eLearning his reading was not at its best. Zina shared how her family worked on it at their own pace. Not having the pressure of drop off and pick ups, and the hectic scheduling of time that comes with in person learning has freed up the time and stress that made working on this goal harder before. She shares that at this point in the year he is now way ahead in his reading abilities because of eLearning freeing up time and a good IEP team supporting her child. For spelling and writing, another area where her kids needed work, she found help through all our district online resources she was provided with this year. She worked together with her child's team and utilized the best resources available to improve their spelling and writing skills. She really feels if it wasn't for all the positives that came with e-learning they wouldn't be able to have improved their skills this much during the time we've been in remote learning

Since we are both happy with the current model and don't have a need to reach out often, we worry that our children's interest might not be represented in these discussions. We know you have probably gotten many letters, mostly filled with concerns. After watching the last meeting and knowing there are many families like ours who have also not been reaching out with concerns, but have a higher risk of getting covid, Zina and I felt compelled to share our positive feelings about remote learning. Thank you for taking the time to read the letters of families at home, knowing that we have a voice and can share our successful experiences can hopefully help others who might not be voicing their own positive experiences.

I attend Lincoln Middle School as an 8th grader. Today, I am speaking on behalf of all the students in this district who have been wrongfully denied their right to a sufficient education over the course of this past year. After viewing and hearing of the events that have transpired at prior board meetings, resulting in a favorance of remaining in a hybrid fashion, I have come to learn that the main argument in that favor is one of safety and compliance with CDC Covid-19 protocol. These guidelines, simplistically, invoke a mask mandate as well as a distance of at least six feet between students. Contradictory to this, however, the CDC guidelines are not the only set of circumstantial rules that are applicable. For example, the World Health Organization has reduced distance minimums to around 3 feet. Just this past week, President Biden said "It's time to treat in-person learning like the essential service that it is." Furthermore, despite some concerns about the risk of going back to school fully when it comes to widespread exposure, there have been two studies conducted around the world that both show no meaningful relationship between attending in-person school and Covid-19 outbreaks. In another study conducted in the United States, it was found that adults dealing with students in-person, at school, were also at no higher risk of contracting Covid-19. The debunking of these physical health concerns, I would hope, are compelling enough. However, there is a much more dangerous mental aspect that must be considered. In like scenarios from 2019, it has been found that rates of suicidal contemplation as well as suicidal action have increased more than 25%. This is not all, though. According to doctors at Harvard, it is estimated that kids, those same kids who are sitting in our schools and behind our zoom classes, are 10 times more likely to die of suicide than of the coronavirus. I feel as if I have made the strong case that in going back to school fully, we do not risk our teacher's lives while, at the same time, we are saving students' lives. I implore you to make a student-focused decision at the end of tonight. Thank you.

Hello to all the members of the School board. I appreciate all that you have done this last year. I know that this year has been stressful, difficult, confusing, and lonely but now I must ask you to be BRAVE. Our children and teachers have done everything that has been asked of them. Our children have matured a lot in this last year, because they had to. They have learned to wear masks, wash their hands, not hug their grandparents. My children have done everything that has been asked of them to comply with COVID restrictions especially during hybrid, because they know that if they don't they will have to return to remote learning. I have a 4 yr old in Circle of Friends and a 2nd grader. My children are moody, they fight with each other and us more during asynchronous learning and remote learning days. On days/times they are in person they come home happy and excited to tell me all about their day. There is something very important about separating school and home. I am asking you to be Brave like our children have been brave. We have been able to see positive results in other districts and private schools that have returned to Full day in person learning. Now is the window to return to school. COVID cases are down, hospitalizations are down, treatment has gotten better, vaccines are becoming more available, the weather is getting better allowing for open windows outdoor lunch, recess and gym. I am asking you to TRY. Now is a great opportunity to see what works and doesn't for Full day in person learning with a smaller percentage of students for in-person learning, prior to the start of Fall. I am asking you to believe in our district like I do. We LOVE d57 and want to continue to stay in d57. Unfortunately because of the last year we have chosen to find a backup plan for the Fall 2021 school year if d57 can not find a way to return to Full in person learning. We are currently a home with 2 working parents, 1 of which is working from home. That will not last forever. Soon the rest of the workforce will be called to return to their in

person jobs. I will tell you that I am a CRNA (Nurse Anesthetist). I have had to work throughout the pandemic taking care of COVID patients. I had to learn to work past my fear and be Brave. Even as a healthcare professional I still feel that the risk of my children being closer than 6ft to others is worth it for their mental health, growth and development, and their education. We all know that going to school is more than just the basic curriculum, if that were the case I could homeschool my children but they would not be the well rounded, well adjusted people I know they could be.

I'm in 6th grade. I think district 57 should go back full day. All the schools have the classroom space. Lincoln has an entire row in every classroom that is empty. Most of the students are okay being less than 6 feet apart. Being in hybrid has been awkward. The students are afraid to connect and interact with each other because they only see some kids two days a week, and then on zoom. And zoom has no interaction really. Because students only see each other 2 days a week, they don't really know each other, unless they've been in the same class with them from the beginning of the year. I know that students are hanging out outside of school, so it won't be as much of a problem for the distancing, because students are already used to seeing those kids. Some students are playing sports with each other, so they spend even more time together. Students want to go back, and they are not really worried about the distancing because they already hang out with most of the kids. And the students will stay in the same classroom unless they're going to gym, so there will be little interaction in the hallways. Zoom also is weird. There is absolutely no want to do school when over zoom, and kids are more motivated to learn and get excited over school when they are in the building. Multiple kids have told me that zoom has no interaction and that they feel like they are just on a zoom meeting but not part of the class, I have the same feeling too. Hybrid doesn't work, because then you see the same kids on zoom and then you don't feel like they are the same people you were with in the classroom a day or two ago. Hybrid feels more like a chore than an opportunity. Hybrid feels like only a half of a gift you got, and the people giving the gift kept the other half for themselves. It feels like the teachers are the people giving the gift, and the students only are getting half. Actually it is exactly that. Teachers are getting to know both sets of kids in the hybrid class, while the students only get to see the kids in their hybrid. Students want to know everyone in their class. Lincoln can't get that connect over zoom on Wednesdays, there are people in the class that they haven't met before. And Lions, Fairview, and Westbrook students haven't seen the other kids in the other half of hybrid. They've only seen their names on their google classrooms. There can be no connection to the hybrid A and hybrid B students that way. Students right now have no connection with other students unless they talk with their friends in their class. Students are trying to tell the Board to let us go back full day every day, so I hope you listen to what we have to say before you make your decision.

We would like to commend your ongoing regard, during the decision making process for the safety of every person in the schools . We recognize that you have faced many difficult decisions throughout this past year. We encourage you to maintain the recommendations set forth by the IDPH, which include maintaining 6 foot distancing, hand washing, and PPE, through the end of the school year. As the elected representatives of your certified staff, we try hard to keep you updated on the current ideologies of our members, who are also your employees. As you weigh the options for the remainder of the current school year, and look toward planning for the start of the 2021-22 school year, we want to ensure that you are armed with as much information as is necessary to make the decision that is in the best interest of all parties. Just over 70% of your certified staff feel strongly that the IDPH guideline of maintaining 6 feet of distance is important for the rest of this school year, even after having received the vaccine for COVID. The vast majority of your certified staff, 99%, feel strongly that the IDPH guideline of wearing PPE even after having received the vaccine for COVID should continue to be enforced. Like many in our local community, we miss traditional instruction, but not at the potential cost of our health. Based on information currently available, 58% of our members are in favor of returning to full time, five day instruction, for the upcoming, 2021-22 school year. We want to again thank you for making decisions that are based on the recommendations of the experts at the Illinois Department of Public Health. Recommendations of the staff and the community are opinions, but as we look to those who are most

educated and experienced in the field of public health we once again implore you to adhere to those guidelines. Sometimes doing what is right is difficult, and it has been a difficult year for all.

As you vote tomorrow, I implore you to consider the task force data, as well as the numerous schools locally who have decided to return to full in person instruction. The numbers were pretty clear cut that our district families would either choose full in person or full remote. Please listen to the numbers and accept what the majority of our district wants. As President Kowalczyk alluded to in the last meeting, this could affect a minority of students who would then have to go from hybrid back to remote due to comfort level. That is going to be such a small amount of students that to cater to them would be unfair to the rest of the students who have been sacrificing all year. Finally, in regards to the data, the teachers were not asked their comfort level IF vaccinated. I think that is a pretty big missing piece of the puzzle. At this point, most teachers have received at least the first, if not second, dose of the vaccination. Please reject the task force's proposal, but use their data and proceed with full in person.

I strongly urge the board to continue an all-remote learning model in any spring plan. In addition, while my student has been handling change well, the change in teachers after second quarter was difficult for my all-remote learner. The Board should not institute any changes that would result in additional teacher changes for the remainder of the school year. I understand that the Board is considering an option for full return-to-school schedule plan for the remainder of the school year. I am severely concerned for the health of our teachers, students, and community if this plan were to move forward. Any plan that would not provide for the school to comply with CDC guidance on distancing should be immediately discarded. At a time when more contagious variants are spreading across the nation, the virus is known to spread through indoor air even at distances greater than 6 feet, and we are so near to the end of the school year, I think the current models of learning should be continued. Teachers, while they may be vaccinated, should not have to compromise their family's health in order to keep their job -as their families remain unvaccinated and unprotected from this virus. The more students are packed in schools, the more likely it is that these new, more dangerous strains of COVID will take root in our schools, in our teacher's families, and our community, which will lead to increased illness and death. Please, keep the community as safe as possible by following CDC guidelines on distancing - throwing out any plan that would not comply. By keeping our student's safe at school, we are also keeping our students safer outside our schools as they begin to congregate at in-person activities that are now able to restart (i.e., clubs, sports, arts) and with their friends in outside activities. I know you all have the toughest of jobs and thank you in advance for consideration of this letter.

Thank you for making smart decisions that have kept our kids safe yet enabled them to be in school as much as possible. People who want kids in the buildings full time during the pandemic are the ones who speak out at meetings (sometimes in a very ill-mannered way). But there are a lot of us who feel the opposite. And we do not agree with comments made at the last meeting about the board failing the community. Rather, we are satisfied with the current hybrid options. We want our kids in school like normal, but that's just not the world we're living in right now. We prefer to follow the experts' recommendations. We don't think going to full time with less than 6 feet is safe enough, and we hope this is not the decision that is made. We also question how this would even work if it's implemented just a handful of weeks before school ends. We've come so far and are so close to the end, we just don't see the benefit of so much disruption for very little benefit. Sometimes the most vocal critics seem like a larger representation than they actually are. Please know there are many in the community who are thankful for the decisions you've made and hope you continue down the same path. We have faith that we will safely be in full time in the fall and for now we appreciate what D57 has done to give everyone an option.

I have not attended the board meetings in person, but have been paying attention. I do see my kids (attending Westbrook and Lions Park remotely) struggling socially and academically with remote learning and strongly believe the kids need to be in school full time. This is why I am speaking up now. I

urge the Board to vote on a full-time option to implement this Spring. During the last Board meeting there were a couple of Board members that made assumptions as statements regarding the reason parents chose remote learning. My family chose remote learning because the hybrid model was inadequate and we felt our kids would not succeed if we sent them to school for only 2.5 hrs a day with asynchronous learning and a 2-hour lunch time. Both my husband and I are working from home and it is very difficult to manage with meetings and schedules. For us, the hybrid option that is available is not a viable option and feel a better one should have been offered. I am disappointed in the Board, the slow reactions, and continuous changes of plans and recommendations. At the beginning of the year the initial option was to go full time. After that the decision was to hold off and offer hybrid. I mention this because I thought the first hybrid options presented were good, especially the one that was recommended and had hope the kids would be back in school. Then when current hybrid was selected, it wasn't even close to the recommended option. At the last board meeting I heard repeatedly that everyone wants the kids in school full time, however I don't see action being taken to support this and I don't feel there is a sense of urgency. If the goal for everyone is to get the kids back in school and the only things preventing this are (1) space 4 or 6 feet and (2) livestream, these are solvable problems. All this being said, I want to mention I have been really impressed with the teachers adjusting to all of the changes. They have been organized, are doing a good job communicating, and are trying their best. My opinions should not overshadow the opinions of parents that want their kids remote as every situation is different. I also understand that you cannot please everyone. However, if approx. ½ the parents want their kids full time that should be an immediate option along with the remote. Please vote to have both full-time in person and a remote option.

Hello, I have a daughter going into 5th grade at Lions park and a son ending /Lincoln middle school in the fall. I'm emailing to express my support for full-time in-person school as soon as possible. My children are not getting the education they deserve and it's been challenging for their mental health. It is important for kids this age to develop their education foundation and establish long term relationships with their peers. They cannot do this in a hybrid or remote environment. The ISBE guidelines FAQs from August 2020 advise social distance as much as possible and that 'desks do not need to be spaced 6 feet apart; however, it is recommended that excess furniture be removed from classrooms to allow for as much space as possible in between desks'. Vaccines should be completed for teachers very soon so there should be no other obstacles to prevent the return to full-time in-person school. Please listen to the community, the parents, and most of all the students and vote yes to the in-person full-time school option on March 4th.

We are 356 days into the pandemic. 356 days that students have not been given the opportunity to be in school full time. 356 days of learning that is gone and not able to be recovered. 356 days of children being asked to adapt and be resilient. Many of these days have been parents advocating for their children to receive the education they deserve by attending school in-person. Parents advocating for a robust learning experience that is equitable to the learning of their remote counterparts. Parents are frustrated. Kids are frustrated. The community is frustrated. I am sure you are frustrated too. I never thought I would be in a position where all families are fighting for the education they feel is right for their children. I do not expect perfection, but I do expect planning and thoughtful consideration of all parents. I expect my children to receive an education that is the best possible given the unfortunate situation that our world is experiencing. The children in our district have not received the best possible. They have barely received an adequate education in the past year. Fault does not lie with the teachers, fault lies with Board Members and the Administration for not creating substantial plans throughout the year that meet the needs of the students. It is apparent that remote and hybrid is not working for families. The time has come to fully consider a full day option for the families that need it to bridge the gap that is seen, felt and experienced. No one is asking that remote learning be removed or altered in any way. What these families have is apparently working for them. It is fortunate that these families have a learning model that is working for them and is meeting their needs. Unfortunately, a vast number of families have not had the privilege of a working model. Remote was not working for my children. Hybrid, while a slightly better alternative, is not what it can or should be. My elementary child is only receiving 3 - 3.5 hours instruction per day (this

includes zooming in for specials each day). This instruction time is less than what ISBE states children should be receiving. How is this allowed? Remote learners receive the full 5 hours, if not more. Asynchronous work during hybrid is not learning. It continues to be busy work that is not challenging the mind. My child needs to have the interaction of other students and the teacher to be challenged, to encourage creative thinking and problem solving. No teaching occurring in science or social studies is an embarrassment to the district that I used to be proud to be part of. My middle schooler, while attending 2 full days is a good start, but again, not close to ideal. Teachers are still acclimating to the live-streaming and learning to manage their attention between in person vs at-home students. Zoom continues to offer its challenges. And as we have seen in the recent weeks, internet issues at the school have caused additional problems while learning. The children in our district have shown they are responsible and can follow the rules in place of wearing masks, social distancing, hand washing, etc. Let them be in school more. It is time to offer families a full-day, in-person learning model: *Spring Model preferences, as illustrated by the task force survey results, show that 25.9% want a remote option and 42.5% desire a full day less than 6 feet option. This equates to 68.4% of the population being satisfied. Why not make over 50% people satisfied with the learning options? *62% of current hybrid desire a full day less than 6 feet option. 65.2% of current remote desire to stay remote. In addition, 12% of current remote desire the full day/less than 6 feet option. This tells me that 12% are currently keeping their kids home because of scheduling, childcare, or other conflict, not necessarily because remote is their preference. It is time these children are allowed in school. *Why are we arguing over 2 feet? 6 feet vs. 4 feet, is not much difference. I believe in masks, handwashing and safety protocols. Why is 2 feet keeping us from properly educating our kids? Why is 2 feet adding to the emotional and mental well being of so many of our district families? *Weather is getting warmer, spring is around the corner. Classrooms will be able to open windows more frequently to allow for air ventilation. It may also be possible to move some class time outside if weather permits. In addition to a full-time option, I also request to NOT instill a 2-week adaptive pause after spring break: *Chicago Archdiocese, which has successfully implemented a full-time/full-day option for families since August 2020, is not implementing an adaptive pause after spring break *Neighboring public schools are not adapting an adaptive pause *Our district will only have been in school for 8 weeks of hybrid learning, for only for 12 hours/week or less. Why take away something that is working and helping the kids? Only 9 weeks of school remain after spring break. This is critical classroom time that you are considering eliminating from kids who struggled during remote. In the best interest of the kids, please keep them in school. *The task force survey regarding the adaptive pause included results of teachers and families who are currently remote. These results should not be considered in deciding if there is an adaptive pause. Their opinion, while valued, should not be considered in a decision that does not impact them. *Having an adaptive pause after Spring Break may actually increase the number of families to travel. Travel costs, including airfare, will be cheaper, which may encourage families to travel. *By the end of Spring Break, the majority, if not all teachers and administrators in the building who wish to have the vaccine should be vaccinated. This greatly minimizes the risk they have in getting the virus. The children in the district have demonstrated they can follow the safety protocols. They have been living with this for nearly one year and understand what it takes to be in school during these times. Allow them in. Have trust in the community that we will do what is right by continuing not to send our children to school if they are experiencing symptoms. Parents have spoken that the kids need and want to be in school and accept a less than 6 foot distance in classrooms. Please make it happen. Only 55 school days remain. Let's make the most of this time by fully opening the schools. These children are our future and we can not keep withholding the education they need and desire.

As a parent of a full remote student, I am writing to you to ask to please consider keeping the recommendations the task force recommended and keep the current hybrid-learning and remote learning models that are in place for the rest of this school year. It is very important that the remote children continue to receive the support that they are currently getting with the zoom classes. My son is in Lincoln and am very happy how the remote learning has been going. All of us want our children to be back in school and have the "normal" life as they had a year ago. For many different reasons families have chosen

to keep their children remote and for many different reasons families have chosen to have their children go back to live person education. At this point, with everything going on, the one thing that I think everyone must do is RESPECT and BE KIND to everyone and their decisions. The current model is providing this to an extent and is the best option for both groups. I know the in-person learning is not quite what everyone wants and I'm sure the remote learning is not what everyone wants. There is a saying.....you are never going to make every person happy every minute of the day. I believe there should be a compromise then and that is what the current model is providing. It is very important that ALL children feel like they are getting the most of school from the teachers. As much as the children are getting attention in school, the remote children should get that as well. The children already have gone through changes of schedules and teachers this year as well as just coping with the change of life for the past year. At this point, why make any more changes? For a couple more months, is it worth it to make any changes? Instead of trying to figure changes out for the last couple of months of school, get a head start and start planning for the next school year so EVERYONE can be back in school. Please keep the current model for the rest of this year. Thank you for all your time and effort that you put into your work on the board.

Please open Lincoln Middle School. Catholic schools have been open for children to attend school every day of the week.

I appreciate all that you have done this last year. I know that this year has been stressful, difficult, confusing, and lonely but now I must ask you to be BRAVE. Our children and teachers have done everything that has been asked of them. Our children have matured a lot in this last year, because they had to. They have learned to wear masks, wash their hands, not hug their grandparents. My children have done everything that has been asked of them to comply with COVID restrictions especially during hybrid, because they know that if they don't they will have to return to remote learning. I have a 4 yr old in Circle of Friends and a 2nd grader. My children are moody, they fight with each other and us more during asynchronous learning and remote learning days. On days/times they are in person they come home happy and excited to tell me all about their day. There is something very important about separating school and home. I am asking you to be Brave like our children have been brave. We have been able to see positive results in other districts and private schools that have returned to Full day in person learning. Now is the window to return to school. COVID cases are down, hospitalizations are down, treatment has gotten better, vaccines are becoming more available, the weather is getting better allowing for open windows outdoor lunch, recess and gym. I am asking you to TRY. Now is a great opportunity to see what works and doesn't for Full day in person learning with a smaller percentage of students for in-person learning, prior to the start of Fall. I am asking you to believe in our district like I do. We LOVE d57 and want to continue to stay in d57. Unfortunately, because of the last year we have chosen to find a backup plan for the Fall 2021 school year if d57 cannot find a way to return to Full in person learning. We are currently a home with 2 working parents, 1 of which is working from home. That will not last forever. Soon the rest of the workforce will be called to return to their in person jobs. I will tell you that I am a CRNA (Nurse Anesthetist). I have had to work throughout the pandemic taking care of COVID patients. I had to learn to work past my fear and be Brave. Even as a healthcare professional I still feel that the risk of my children being closer than 6ft to others is worth it for their mental health, growth and development, and their education. We all know that going to school is more than just the basic curriculum, if that were the case I could homeschool my children but they would not be the well-rounded, well-adjusted people I know they could be.

I would like to thank all for your work this school year. I can only imagine how hard it is to make decisions for the community as a whole. I am writing to you today to ask you to please also advocate for the remote learners. Please do not change what they have continued to have since the beginning of the year. I am fearful that because so many parents want full time in person, my children will then have the unfortunate alternative of live streaming into a classroom. I would like all the children to get the same

education and attention that they deserve. I understand that the administration is possibly looking at the alternative of having the remote children live streamed into the room for their school day because of in person. This makes it “easier” for everyone to fit comfortably in the room while utilizing all teachers. Please imagine yourself as those remote students being streamed. This would be a huge change from what they have been doing since August. They had their teachers attention immediately and now they are set up on a screen in the back of the room. They can see the other students in the classroom sitting at their desks. Can these students in the classroom communicate with the remote kids? Now, let’s also think about the teachers, live streaming would be something new for them. I am positive that this will take time to learn and to work out all the kinks that go with learning something new. I am a teacher, I know, live streaming is extremely hard. Not to say I wouldn’t try my hardest to learn and do what is needed in the classroom. But to put to you honestly, I would like one of the administration to try it for a week and tell me how it goes. Do we really need to add one more thing on to the teachers already exhausting list? I have faith they will try their best. But why can’t this be something introduced for the fall instead? Please keep in mind, we are not out of the wood yet. The pandemic is alive and well. I am totally with all the parents that are advocating for wanting their children back in school. I know, as a remote parent I want the same as those parents, for my child to have a quality education. In saying this, I want to be equal too. I have faith that ALL board members will keep this mind while they are making their decision to change yet again the school year. Thank you for your time.

Thank you for the fine work you have done this year in keeping our children safe and educated. I am concerned that a two week period of remote learning after spring break will be a major step backwards, especially for the in person hybrid students. Would you consider offering a two week period of remote learning as an option SOLELY to those families that have traveled instead of to the entire school population? The rest of the population could then resume their hybrid schedules and not be negatively affected by someone else’s travel plans. Also, I just wanted to say that I’ve always appreciated the district’s stance on safety, especially with regards to the recommendation of 6 feet of distancing. Please do not compromise the safety of the students and teachers by lessening this recommendation. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service. Stay well! Thank you for your time and consideration!

I am a special education teacher at a middle school in Des Plaines School District #62 as well as a parent to 3 children, one at Prospect High School and two at Lions Park Elementary. As you are well aware, D62 has been in person 5 full days since September of 2020. Parents were given a choice, 5 full days in person or 5 full days remote. We are seeing more and more surrounding districts giving parents that choice. I ask you to start providing realistic choices that reflect the current climate and current data surrounding covid and the decline we are seeing. D57 has not offered these choices to parents as of yet. What has been offered is a hybrid program of 2.5 hours a day, which is incredibly short. I want my children to benefit from in person instruction. I have made sacrifices to make hybrid work as it is the only choice where my children can get hands on support. I want my children at school even if it is 2.5 hours. Currently, my children spent half of their day at Kids Corner. They are bored, they spend their free time on youtube while at school, between art, music and pe class, according to them. I am very grateful for my in-laws because they have been supporting my children through that time. Not all working parents have that type of support. I ask the board to start providing choices to families that increase student in person time. Working parents who are being asked and demanded to go back full time in person to work do not have unlimited child care resources and require choices that meet the needs of the community that reflect the current climate. I am disappointed to see that D57 has not moved forward yet with 5 full days in person as so many surrounding school districts have begun to do. I am here to tell you it can be done and it should be done for our children! In my district, working 5 days a week in person during this school year with students in person, I have seen that this is possible. I asked you, the BOE, please don’t get caught up by the 6th feet social distance recommendation. Many districts have gone back with 6 feet or less and they are able to stay open. Our kids deserve better than a 2.5 hours a day of education. I wanted to address a

recommendation that was made at the last board meeting. The recommendation was to put in place a two week adaptive pause after spring break. I haven't heard of any other district even putting this on the table. D62 certainly does not recommend this. We would be going back to full remote. Do you have a plan for those parents who work full time and will need another environment for their children to receive adequate education for those two weeks? Not everyone can afford to take two weeks off. One of my sons has autism and ADHD. My husband and I have spent a lot of time and money on speech, occupational and ABA therapies to help him be the best that he can be. His social skills have declined, he doesn't want to play with his friends as much, he prefers to be alone, and he pushes his friends away, which was not the case before. As you know children who have autism struggle with social skills, if they don't practice the skills that they have learned they lose them. Not having classmates to socialize with and not being able to practice those skills in a school setting for so long has had a negative impact on him. Going back 5 full days as soon as possible is the only way to limit regression for our special education students.

I would like to voice my concern on how important it is to get my children back into school full time. This is not only from a learning standpoint but more importantly for a mental health perspective. I have noticed a huge change in my daughter's behavior since they have been home this long. They are not happy, detached from the family, and worn out I have two step children that attend Arlington Heights schools and since they have been back full time, I have noticed a huge change in their behavior. They are less stressed, worried, and all and all in a much better mood being able to interact with other people and get back to some sort of normalcy I have seen so many other schools being able to achieve full time in person learning, why cant Mount Prospect? With Covid numbers dropping and vaccine numbers increasing now is the time.

Thank you for continuing to look out for the safety, well-being, and education of all students. As several board members expressed in the fall, remote is not easy, but it is essential during these unprecedented times. Some families need it, depend on it. While we all look forward to the time when this is behind us, the fact is there is still a pandemic going on. And there are new variants on the rise. While some people will only get mild symptoms when exposed— it is more dangerous for people/families with medical conditions. **THERE CONTINUES TO BE A NEED FOR REMOTE** Kids who need to stay remote due to medical conditions, or medical conditions in their families, or families who do not feel safe sending their kids with new variants on the rise should continue to have a robust remote option where teachers are engaged with, and focused on, remote learners. The CDC continues to recommend that people with medical conditions that could put them at higher risk avoid being indoors with people they do not live with. Their family members are also encouraged to avoid indoor spaces with people they do not live with, so that they do not inadvertently bring the virus home to vulnerable family members. While it is great that the numbers are improving and that schools do not seem to be super-spreaders, that does not mean that there is no spread in schools. The virus does spread in schools. For example, there have been recent outbreaks at two middle schools in Arlington Heights, as well as other schools in the area, even with mask wearing. Bottom line, there is still risk. And for some families it is a greater risk. No family should be put in the position of having to decide between their child's education and potentially putting a family members health or life at risk. **A ROBUST REMOTE PLAN IS ESSENTIAL** It is important that remote students have teachers that are engaged with them and focused on teaching the remote learners. Remote is not easy, but the current model works. What makes it work is that teachers are assigned to the remote classes and focused on the remote students during the time that they are teaching those classes. The current remote option provides an opportunity for teachers to check in on students, to make sure they understand the material, by going into private break out rooms and/or sending private chats to students. This would not be possible if the teacher was standing at the board teaching a room full of in person students at the same time. It is also important for remote students to feel like they are part of their remote class and not "looking in" on what could feel like someone else's class. There was a lot of talk about the emotional well-being of students whose parents felt they needed to be in person. That is important, and it was addressed. The emotional well-being of remote kids is just as important. Please don't make changes

that could put our kids at risk. LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL - ROBUST REMOTE The CDC advises getting elementary schools (K-5) in person before middle schools (6-8). They indicate that there is more risk with middle school students. Continuing the robust remote option is at least as important for Lincoln Middle School as it is for the elementary schools. Middle school material is more challenging. Some middle school students need the interaction with their teachers that they receive during learning. Privacy is also an important consideration. Sometimes there is a need for a brief private conversation, or a check for understanding, in a private chat room on zoom. The likelihood of a teacher in an ‘in person’ classroom being able to have a private conversation with a remote student (full time live-stream) is not likely. The in-person students would at a minimum be able to hear what the teacher is saying to the remote (full time live-stream) student. When in person students are in the classroom, attention and privacy for remote (full time live-stream) students would greatly diminish. Middle school can also be a challenging time socially. Kids this age can be self-conscious. The last thing they need is to see their faces up on a screen in the classroom where the in-person students can “view” them. This could make them feel more self-conscious, more isolated, less engaged, and less comfortable participating. Being in a class where all students in that class are remote gives more of a sense of being part of the class. And of course, middle school students are more likely to spread, or be affected by, the virus than elementary students. Not to mention the old building, old ventilation system, small classrooms, and small windows that don’t always open. If anything, the elementary schools should be in person before middle school. Continuing the current remote option should be possible at Lincoln. They currently have more than one teacher for each grade teaching a remote section for each core subject. The need for remote will likely continue in similar numbers. Even if it were to reduce, it makes sense that at least 1 out of the 9 classes in each grade for each core class could continue to be remote. For example: 7th grade would have at least 1 math class, 1 ELA class, 1 Science class, and 1 Social Studies class taught as true remote sections. The other 8 sections in each of those subjects could be taught in person. Depending on the need, more classes could be designated as true remote classes. Having at least one remote section of each core class for each grade taught at the regular level would be helpful. DO NOT CHANGE WHAT IS WORKING. The current remote plan is working relatively well for families that need it. If in person/hybrid is not working, make changes to that (within space and budget constraints). But don’t break the successful remote option. Remote students have already had to deal with changes (new schedules, new classmates, new teachers) so that other children could get the benefit of some in person instruction. If you have to make the remote classes bigger because the in person classes get bigger – that is reasonable. Combining remote classes would be ok as long as remote classes still have dedicated teachers who are focused on the remote students. But don’t diminish the remote experience. Please don’t put the remote kids education or social emotional well-being at risk. Please continue the current remote option. It is working. EQUITY It is important to provide an equitable education to all students in the district. Kids that have the benefit of being in person part time and also have some live-streaming likely have at least as good of an experience, overall, as full time remote students. But, full time live-stream would not be equal to full time in person. It wouldn’t be equitable. Just a few weeks ago, families in D57 who chose hybrid had an opportunity for their kids to receive an improvement in learning by attending some days in person. Now the same families who received an “upgrade” are demanding more. It is not reasonable to expect remote families to receive a “downgrade”, which could negatively impact their children’s education and social emotional well-being. Parents of remote students are just as concerned for their children’s education and emotional well-being as any parents. Please do not take away an option that is working relatively well for these students. It is not perfect. But please don’t make it less engaging. Don’t put remote students education and social emotional well-being at risk by diminishing the current true remote option. SPACE CONSIDERATION AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS It seems like an important question is “Does the district have the space and money to offer full time in person for all students, in an environment that is safe for all students?” If the district does not have the space and/or money to provide full time in person for all students, in an environment that is safe for all students, then following the task team’s recommendations and continuing the current options for the rest of the year is the appropriate approach based on the district’s space and finances. That way admin and the task team could focus on improvements for the

current options for the rest of the year, as well as putting together a plan for the fall. By all means, if the district has the space and money for all kids to be in person with 6 feet distancing and provide a true remote option for families who need it— let’s do it! If not, adding additional in person time should not be at the expense of the remote students.

WHY FULL TIME LIVE-STREAM IS NOT A GOOD IDEA

Districts that have tried the live-stream model are abandoning that model. It is hard for remote learners. It is hard for teachers. District 25, for example, is offering a choice for the fall of either true remote with teachers assigned to remote classes or in person. At a board meeting in the fall, D57 board members said that they did not want full time remote students to have to do live-stream because remote is challenging enough as it is. Live-streaming part time and having the benefit of in person classes part time is one thing, live-streaming all day every day is another. Quite frankly, even with the great teachers in our district, full-time live-stream students would likely get the short end of the stick. It could be very difficult for teachers to give full time live-stream students the attention they need when in person students, right in front of them, are vying for their attention. While no one is dealing with an ideal situation due to the pandemic, part time live-stream balances out for students who are also in person part time, but it would not balance out for full time live-stream students. Being “a fly on the wall”, watching what is happening in an in person classroom, would not be good for students’ education or social emotional well-being. Live-stream could be helpful for snow days and when kids are out sick, especially if a recording is made so that students can go back and review it later, or again.

ADDITIONAL THINGS TO FACTOR INTO DECISIONS: VARIANTS: New variants have been reported in over 40 states, including Illinois. Some of the variants are more contagious, and cause more severe disease. There are also documented reports of people who had the virus and then months later became infected with one of the variants.

Ventilation/Accumulation in Indoor Spaces Please see the attached New York Times article which shows how the virus accumulates in indoor spaces. Masks are important, needed, and helpful. But this accumulation happens even with masks. Simply breathing (even when wearing a mask) allows some breath/virus into the room. Talking, even more. Shouting or singing, a lot more. It accumulates and can infect people.

ASYMPTOMATIC SPREAD: There may be more asymptomatic spread than is currently realized because the studies so far have not tested for asymptomatic spread. Without regular testing of teachers, staff, and students there is no way to tell how much asymptomatic spread is occurring in a school, which could impact vulnerable people. Researchers are saying that fully vaccinated people are 95% protected from severe disease but they believe that vaccinated people can still catch and be carrier’s of the virus (they would most likely be asymptomatic) and they could bring it home to vulnerable family members. So, if teachers or students have vulnerable family members - in person still poses a risk for loved ones who are not yet vaccinated.

CHILDREN ARE IMPACTED: Sometimes people say “Oh, children are not as affected as adults”. But if it is your child or family member it matters a great deal. And do we really stop and look at how many children are affected? Here are some statistics to think about. Over 1,222,023 cases of coronavirus were diagnosed in children 0-17 years of age. 11,882 kids were hospitalized with coronavirus. 866 kids were in the ICU (intensive care unit). 178 kids died of coronavirus. Over 2000 kids contracted MIS-C. 32 kids died of MIS-C. The above statistics are from a December report. They are likely higher now.

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD AT BOARD MEETINGS

We appreciate that you are trying to be receptive and willing to listen to parent and community feedback. We know you have the best intentions. But, please recognize that parents of remote students are not likely to attend in person board meetings while a pandemic is still going on. By allowing an hour of comments before the board meetings and an hour of comments after the board meetings you are inadvertently setting up an uneven playing field. Please consider how long it would take to read all of the comments sent in by parents who are advocating for the robust remote option. Then take an equal amount of time and allow public comments for that same amount of time. It makes sense to allow the people who are there in person to speak before the other comments are read. But both sides should be given equal time during board meetings. Some parents simply cannot come in person because they are being more careful. If people are choosing remote – there are good reasons why they would not attend in person. The current approach gives an inaccurate representation of the needs and wants in the community. Please level the playing field at board meetings. The added benefits of this are that the board will probably feel less under attack and

the board will be able to get a better feel for the various needs in the community. As a community we are not looking for you to simply follow what some nearby districts decide to do. It that is what we wanted we wouldn't need a board. We could just use an algorithm or computer. We value your thoughtful, decisions that look out for the well-being of all students. Thank you for continuing to ensure all students in D57 receive an equitable education. In order to accomplish this during a pandemic, continuing the robust remote option for all grades is essential.

A public visitor filled out the following form on Mount Prospect School District 57's website on 3/4/2021 at 12:04 PM. Below is the data submitted.

Form: Board Feedback

Your Comment:

- Hello, I am writing to express our family's support of the recommendations made by the District 57 Task Force at the February Board Meeting. Most experts agree we are at a turning point in the pandemic, and we urge patience over the possible risk of prematurely making changes that have the potential to roll back the forward progress we have made towards mitigating COVID risk. With a full-day, in-person model being presented at tonight's Board meeting, I encourage the Board to take the following into consideration: What Does the Majority Really Want? Over the last few weeks, advocates for full-day, in-person learning have repeated the statement, "the majority of D57 parents support this." I think this is too simple of a take-away, and it neglects a deeper digging into the numbers. I would argue, when numbers are combined (support for full-remote, current hybrid, and full-day with 6 feet of distance), a majority of parents (approximately 57%), still have concerns and prefer a cautious approach to a re-opening. Limited Time Remaining in the School Year As a family with two-working parents, we understand the immense hardships of this school year. If the discussion of full-day learning was happening before the start of the third trimester, our family may have felt differently; but with school scheduled to end in approximately 12 weeks (8 weeks from the time a full-day, in-person model could likely be rolled out), we feel the benefits of a full-day model would be limited, and potentially create more issues than the change would solve. Which brings me to me next concern: Consistency From our personal experience as a working family, navigating changing schedules has been a huge stress point. We have changed our work schedules and enlisted paid help to navigate the current hybrid model, and another change might not be possible for us. Will our employer allow another schedule change at work? Will the paid help we enlisted be available at different times and on different days? These, and others, are questions we don't have answers for. And our concerns are not only about our work schedules. Our children, and most children, benefit from consistency. We want our children to continue learning with the same teachers, to start school at the same time, and to follow the same Zoom specials schedule. We want consistency -- for ourselves, our children, and for our educators. Support our Teachers As I mentioned above, the consistency we desire is not just for ourselves and our children, but for the educators who have navigated these unprecedented times with creativity, kindness, and (so much!) patience. The survey conducted by the Task Force clearly indicates teachers continue to have concerns about returning to full-day, in-person learning, and prefer the current hybrid model. It is expected that D57 teachers will be fully vaccinated (and largely protected from serious illness) by the end of the school year -- let's give them this time to get there. Often undervalued and overworked, we constantly ask our educators to do more than teach our children, and we feel strongly, especially given the limited time remaining in the school year, continuing the current hybrid model is a way to show support. And teachers, no matter our personal stance on re-opening, deserve to be heard and supported. Recommendation from Task Force and Public Health Agencies and most major health agencies continue to recommend hybrid learning as a way to meet the needs of as many people as possible, and mitigate COVID risk. The CDC, an organization frequently cited as pushing for reopening, just published updated information and D57's hybrid model in line with

the current guidance for Cook County. Again, with limited time remaining in the school year, I encourage the Board to default to these expert recommendations, despite pushback from many parents, and continue with the current hybrid model. Final Focus and Goal All of this said, our family firmly believes that a return to full-day, in-person learning is of highest priority for next school year. We firmly believe the recommendation from the Task Force to continue with the current hybrid-model is the best decision for this school year, but that students absolutely need to return to the building in as "normal" a capacity as possible for the 21-22 school year. The last year has been incredibly difficult. It is far from ideal. It is frustrating. It is hard to navigate. We see so many areas that could be improved upon. We see the negative impact remote/hybrid learning is taking on our own children. But when our family looks at the big picture, and we take into account everything listed above -- we feel strongly that continuing the current hybrid-model is a solid decision. Thank you for all your hard work.

Please factor the information in these articles into your decisions: <https://www.mprnews.org/episode/2021/02/18/michael-osterholm-on-how-new-covid-variants-could-change-the-pandemics-trajectory> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/02/26/science/reopen-schools-safety-ventilation.html> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/16/health/covid-children-inflammatory-syndrome.html> https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7006a5.htm?s_cid=mm7006a5_w

Thank you for your efforts to identify the best and most appropriate path forward to return students to in-person learning as we move through the COVID-19 pandemic. As a board member identified at the last meeting, I understand you are making decisions based on the best available information and data at the time you must make the decision. As you evaluate learning model changes, please support and direct the district to implement mitigation measures, including physical distancing based on the current public health guidelines. I understand the six-foot physical distancing has a direct impact on the number of students that can physically be in-person in a classroom at any one time. While there are tremendous and incalculable benefits to students being in person, it should be balanced with what we know works to limit transmission risks associated with COVID-19. We know the risk for transmission of COVID-19 increases as people spend more time indoors in close proximity with people they do not live with. This perfectly describes schools. However, the evidence is accumulating that in-person learning can be safe even when community levels of COVID-19 are high. This is great news, but the important caveat is that in-person learning can be safe if schools consistently and correctly apply mitigation measures. The Centers for Disease and Prevention (CDC) identifies two mitigation measures that are the most important to keep students and staff safe in schools. These include universal and correct mask use and physical distancing. When community transmission is over 50 new cases per 100,000 population per week, CDC strongly recommends (they use the word require) physical distancing of six feet or more. As of March 2, there are 99.9 new cases per 100,00 population in the past week in the 60056 zip code (<http://covid-dashboard.fsm.northwestern.edu/>). When community transmission falls below 50 new cases per 100,000 population, CDC recommends physical distancing of six feet or more to the greatest extent possible (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>). I fully support the Board and district planning for the time when community transmission falls to lower levels identified by CDC. This will happen and we should be prepared to immediately transition to learning models that focus on more in-person instruction. In the interim, I ask the Board to consider implementing the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education as they exist.