

**COMMUNITY COMMENTS**  
**APRIL 29 – May 20, 2021**

I have a comment about the Remote learning options. Based on the board meeting last night you are expecting families to make a choice if they want remote learning in May when classes in the fall do not start till August. I do not think it is reasonable to make a family decide what they want to do 3 months before. Covid19 is ever changing, and we have no clue what will happen by then. We have no idea if covid19 cases will be virtually gone by then. I think you should instruct the Administration not to seek responses till at least July. Families should not be forced to make a choice now when we have no clue what the future brings. Also, the remote option should be offered to all families, regardless if they are currently remote or full in person. Again, we have no idea how things will be in 3 months. The plans presented are very ridged and not flexible. Flexibility is the key. Option 1 should be used so that all families have the flexibility. In fact, I think all classrooms should have the Tech Equipment so that if a family at any time decides that it is no longer safe for the child to attend in person, they can simply switch over to the live stream model.

I am writing to ask that you please reconsider your vote on the remote model offered next year, and change to model 1. That model would allow for families to choose between in person and a concurrent instruction model based on their comfort level. While I am sure trying to equitably balance the needs of all students, both in person and remote, is very challenging, I don't feel that the model the board has voted for is suitable for most of us who have chosen the remote option. Our oldest child has severe asthma, and with the number of cases and community spread in our area, in person instruction was not a viable option for much of this year. She also has ADHD, SPD, and anxiety, which unfortunately made the current remote model inappropriate for her needs and learning style. With most teachers vaccinated, the declining positivity rate and community spread, and the likelihood of a pediatric vaccine available by winter, we are more comfortable with an in-person model, but still have some concerns. Model 1, the concurrent model, would allow families to transition from in person to remote after holiday breaks, or if cases in the community increase above a family's comfort level. At this time, with only one more week to choose between these current options, either a year commitment to full in person, or a year commitment to an unknown remote model, my family has had to scramble to look into private schools for our children next year. This is not our first choice - we would rather have them in our district public schools, with their friends. As a big supporter of public schools, a former public-school teacher, and as someone who has spent countless hours advocating and volunteering for the schools in our district, I never imagined I would send my children to a private school. The schools in this district were one of the reasons we chose this town, and this particular area of Mt. Prospect. It is with this in mind that I ask the board to either call a meeting to potentially offer a concurrent model for students for next year, or to have the selection deadline postponed until after the next meeting when remote families can weigh in on this decision. As you know, the majority of remote families do not support the board's chosen model. I look forward to your response.

I am writing you as a concerned educator after the Board's decision to adopt the concurrent learning model, or model 3. I ask that you PLEASE RECONSIDER this decision, as it is not in the best interest of our students or staff. Currently, all District 57 schools employ some level of a "live-streaming" model, which entails that students are both in front of the teacher as well as on Zoom. This model, however, is not effective, nor equitable for our students, specifically those students who are live streaming into class. Even though our teachers have gone above and beyond with the task of attempting to reach all of our students' needs through differentiation and support (both academically and social/emotionally) factors beyond our control have made this difficult. First and foremost, our attention is divided between those students online and those in the classroom. This becomes more difficult as class sizes at Lincoln range from 32 students in person with 1-2 on Zoom, to 25 or more students on Zoom with only 5-7 in person. This inequity drives a lot of anxiety for both our students and our staff. Additionally, live streaming

results in loss of instruction. Teachers have to travel from class to class, unplug equipment needed to live stream and cart around materials to various classrooms throughout the day only having to reconnect everything (which works differently in each classroom) and deal with that room's new set of technology issues. Likewise, our classrooms experience consistent technology issues like loss of Internet or inability to access key sites and platforms like Google Classroom or students' online textbooks, again resulting in critical loss of instructional time. Other issues like the simple tasks of students listening to their peer's read aloud, answer questions, and contribute valuable insight through discussions can't be heard by all. Students live streaming are unable to hear those in the classroom and vice versa (despite the technology equipment that exists). These concerns are just a few of the major reasons why Model 3 will not work. We may call it concurrent learning but it really is not. This learning method is disruptive, inequitable, and unsupportive of our students. The board needs to look into other options and or guaranteeing remote classes for those students who for medical reasons are unable to attend school. I also implore the board to revisit its acceptance of Lincoln's large class sizes. In previous board meetings many board members and families voiced their concerns about class sizes skyrocketing in the elementary schools, yet Lincoln's numbers, who are by far the largest and continue to increase each year, has not been considered. It is time to look at making necessary adjustments to Lincoln both for your students and for your staff. These numbers, even in a non-pandemic year, are simply unsafe for our students. In short, I ask the board, to please reconsider its decision of Model 3 or concurrent learning. Please also make the right decision with regards to hiring the necessary staff to provide an educational experience that is worthy of all of our students.

I would ask the board to reconsider allowing milk service for the 2021-2022 school year. It is a good form of nutrition. I don't like to send milk in his lunch now for fear of it getting too warm and spoiling. Thank you.

I am aware that strategic planning is about to happen for our district. I am sure the new state mandates will be part of this plan and I look forward to seeing how you include the students and parents. I would love to be part of a community discussion. I teach in D207 and currently sit on our District Equity Leadership Team. It has been the first professional team that I've been on that I truly feel my voice as a professional has been heard. I sincerely hope that you consider including something similar in D57. I'm including our vision for learning. It truly works to center the student. In my work with our surrounding communities, I have also learned from the League of Women Voters that D25 is going to run action teams. I hope we have these too! It is a great way to include the community and build support. I really like their graphics too. Helps those of us who are visual learners. This is a time of lots of transitions and lots of challenges. I urge you not to rush the process of planning for the future learning of our students. From home, we may have a different vantage point of how the last 15 months have affected our children. I look forward to sharing my experiences and observations as a parent at an upcoming community meeting. I will keep my eye out for the opportunity.

I wanted to say thank you to all who took the time to listen the concerns and feedback of the remote families, and ask the administration to amend the prior plans. I know that my family, as well as many other remote families are greatly appreciative of the concurrent option. I think there was a lot of confusion as to what remote families wanted for the next school year, and I hope that going forward the district will employ more qualitative data collection in order to find the best paths to serve our diverse district. If the remote survey had included a field for families to include the 'why' of their decision making process, perhaps, it could have saved the families, the board, and the administration a lot of frustration and work. In a related note, I was wondering if the latest ISBE decision would impact the choices remote families made for next year? I included a link to an article, as I know things are changing rapidly. [https://www.wbez.org/stories/illinois-mandates-in-person-learning-this-fall-in-public-schools/f54c0f55-0165-446a-bad6-c71d512efe5e?utm\\_source=Newsletter\\_Daily-Rundown-](https://www.wbez.org/stories/illinois-mandates-in-person-learning-this-fall-in-public-schools/f54c0f55-0165-446a-bad6-c71d512efe5e?utm_source=Newsletter_Daily-Rundown-)

[Member&utm\\_medium=WBEZEmail&utm\\_campaign=Daily Newsletter Daily-Rundown %2020210519&utm\\_content=5%2F19%2F2021&DE=WBEZEmail](#)

On Wednesday, May 12, 2021, we were informed that our child was identified as a “close contact” to an identified positive case and all close contacts are required to quarantine for 14 days. No other information regarding the circumstances that led to our child’s exposure was provided until multiple parents repeatedly requested the documentation, records, and observations by staff for the evidence that led to this conclusion. Only after multiple district emails, did we eventually come to learn the detailed circumstance. This is unacceptable. The district used “privacy concerns” for the reason not to offer circumstances of exposure at the onset of their communication to parents. This does not reflect a high-quality school-parent relationship. Parents do not need private information of another student for the district to communicate the circumstances for their own child. It is every parent’s right to fully understand the circumstances of any situation, Covid-19 or otherwise, that results in alteration to their child’s education plan. After multiple emails, the exact circumstance had finally been revealed. The circumstance was that our child participated in the identified positive case’s outdoor masked lunch recess. The district policy was described by the building principal, as follows: “Our district's goal is to keep our students and staff as safe as possible, so that we can keep our doors open for in-person learning. The CDC, IDPH, CCDPH, as well as the Johns Hopkins Contact Tracing Course, (#1) require\* a 14-day quarantine for any close contact that occurs indoors or outdoors. A close contact is defined as less than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more cumulatively over a 24-hour period. (#2) There is no differentiation between a close contact that occurs indoors or outdoors. We are unable to guarantee 6 feet of social distancing at recess, which is a 30-minute period. (#3) At Westbrook, due to the young age of our students and the difficulty they may have in accurately reporting who they played with during recess 48 hours prior, all students assigned to a recess cohort are required to quarantine.” The district policy does not state anything with regards to “with or without masks”. Clarity is of utmost importance in any policy of high integrity. The district policy also does not clarify the legality behind the term “require”. It’s our understanding that CDC, IDPH, etc. presents information as guidance without any legal ramifications if the district were to apply something more nuanced to its situation. It would be helpful to parents to better understand what minimum legal requirements must be followed vs. supplemental measures and what data supports those supplemental measures. The district policy distinguishes the younger student population at Westbrook as not adequately capable to reliably identify close contacts (#3 in above policy). If the district wishes to continue a broad definition of close contact during times when the confidence of desk assignments is not available then we would respectfully ask the board and administration to change their mind and try to conduct interviews with students and assess each independent situation first in an attempt to narrow down the possibilities before making broad assumptions. We also suggest discussing additional ways students can be clustered during times when desk assignments are not available. In regards to transmission of Covid-19 outdoors, we also ask that the district reviews the latest evidence of Covid-19 transmission outdoors to further reduce the number of students required to quarantine next school year. The rationale would be that large amounts of students needing to zoom in for 14-days, perhaps multiple times throughout the school year, is excessive and negatively impacts multiple layers of the student’s development, as well as causes multiple layers of disruptions at home. We appreciate the district’s goal to keep students and staff safe as possible. We respectfully request the board and administration to review Covid-19 related policies for next school year to ensure that policies, at each of the buildings, reflect proportionate measures and are cautious to overzealousness as these decisions directly impact families beyond the school district’s internal goal. Some examples of how internal district goals directly impact families include, but are not limited to: May negatively impact parent work benefits, such as paid time off, or related allowances for time away from work. May negatively impact dual income families. May negatively impact family economic opportunities because of missed work due to quarantine. May negatively impact the student’s participation in extracurricular activities outside of school. May negatively impact family expenses when paying for out-of-pocket physician exams and testing that is not necessarily free. Included in the most recent district-wide emails, admin outlined the training that has been provided to staff to fully understand

and implement mitigation strategies, contact tracing, and quarantine procedures. This training was cited as a reason why the district believes its policies are with “high integrity”. To help add to the standard of a “high integrity district policy”, we would respectfully ask the board and administration to strongly consider adding the following layers to the district policy. These layers would build the confidence of district stakeholders, and are as follows: The district will honor both family privacy and family rights when communicating the documented & measured circumstances which led a student to being exposed to a positive covid case and thereby classified as a close contact. Provide seating charts without student names to illustrate distancing between positive case and close case student(s), recorded contact tracing interviews and staff observations to report distancing and time, and other circumstances that led to exposure. Any legal portion that can be cited, should be included. For example: Control of Communicable Disease Code, 77 Illinois Administrative Code 690 (#1 in above policy). The district, in the spirit of comprehensive education, will model the application of a wide range of knowledge sources to develop district policy as it relates to Covid-19, especially in the areas where school districts are not bound by established laws. A wide range of knowledge may be collected from sources such as, but not limited to: The specific expertise of the American Academy of Pediatrics. A variety of medical institute’s evidence-based research on disease transmission for both indoors and outdoors such as Mayo Clinic. Other related fields of expertise such as highly respected epidemiologists (ex. The Great Barrington Declaration). For example: consider the reliability of a PCR negative test result 5 days after exposure to be sufficient evidence for the return to school. The school nurse being the designee to help families obtain the proper release form from LHD to satisfy current IDPH decision tree. This demonstrates using the recommendation from AAP which supports that children can be in school learning and advise that minimum interruptions be made to their educational plan. This is especially reliable when students are evaluated and cleared by a certified medical doctor to return to school. Another example of #2 would be developing policies based on medical institute information. For instance, Mayo Clinic writes, “in some situations, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation, the COVID-19 virus can spread when a person is exposed to small droplets or aerosols that stay in the air for minutes to hours. When you're outside, fresh air is constantly moving, dispersing these droplets. So you're less likely to breathe in enough of the respiratory droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19 to become infected if you haven't had a COVID-19 vaccine. Click for full article: Mayo Clinic This article would support a policy that does NOT quarantine students who were outdoors with a positive case. \*\*\*All of the above leads to educators' application of the “least restrictive environment” and also employs the “best student-centered teaching practices” for all students. In closing, we would like to address district culture. We acknowledge the autonomy of each school district as they develop their own policies. While each district may have its nuances, it is D57’s Admin and School Board culture that gives us great pause for concern. Throughout the course of this school year, it has been the district culture, especially during in-person School Board meetings, to produce a less than amicable climate with district parents. When the school board began to recognize the increasing tension, instead of the school board cultivating a parent partnership, it cultivated defensiveness and condescension. We would argue that if the board would have chosen to intentionally meet parent’s in-person community comments/concerns with compassion instead of defensive reactions (and in some cases complete silence), perhaps we would find ourselves in a very different place today. We would ask the entire school board to reflect upon and then publicly share how it will intentionally work to change the culture of the school district in-person board meetings and other community building forums such that it reflects a more amicable and parent-friendly environment. We would ask all incoming district superintendents to also reflect and publicly share how they will influence the culture of the school district both inside and outside of in-person school board meetings in the upcoming school year. Thank you for taking the time to carefully read and consider our multiple talking points of concern. We look forward to hearing back from the school board and incoming administration. We continue to weigh our school choices for the next school year. We hope to consider your responses to this letter before registering our children for the fall.

I had sent an email to the Mt. Prospect Park District concerning an incident at the playground at Fairview School a couple days back and recently heard back from them with instructions to email you. I live at 305 N. Fairview and a few days back I took my grandkids to the park in the early evening. While there, another mom and child went to use the swings and in short order one chain snapped and the child fell to the ground and was crying a great deal. I suggested the mother have the child evaluated and also call the school district, but am not sure she did. However, I am contacting you. There are another 4 swings without any chains, a few others that are rusted and look ready to break. One slide is blocked off due to damage. In my opinion that playground is beginning to resemble a broken down inner city area that really in need of upkeep/maintenance/improvement. Its a poor reflection on the neighborhood. Your attention and forwarding to appropriate individuals in charge is requested. The reply I received from the park district is pasted below: Thank you for reaching out regarding the poor playground conditions at Fairview School Park. Although the park district maintains the baseball diamond and surrounding grass, we have nothing to do with the playground maintenance. The school playgrounds in D57 are maintained by the school district. I would suggest forwarding your email directly to them. The Mt. Prospect Park District has a certified playground inspector and he did go by the park to look at the swings and verify your comments, but there is nothing we can do. Let me know if you do not receive a quick response from the school district.

As a teacher at Lincoln and an advocate for best practice to support student learning, I am very concerned about continuing the concurrent teaching model into the fall. This model of instruction does not work with our large class sizes of over 30 students. When students are Zooming into class while we are also teaching students in-person, everyone loses. Most importantly, the students who are online lose a significant amount of attention and direction that they deserve. Here are a few middle school examples of why concurrent teaching is not best practice. 1. While reading together in class, the students online cannot hear the other 30 students in the classroom. They become lost unless the rest of the class joins the Zoom and puts on their headphones. Headphones need to be worn in order to eliminate the echoing of the sound. At the same time, though, those in person can hear their classmates reading in the room, but experience a delay as the sound goes through Zoom. It is very frustrating for all. 2. In-class students participate enthusiastically. The students who are Zooming in cannot see or hear what they are talking about, further isolating the students who are Zooming in and making them feel like they are missing out. 3. While teaching, students on Zoom often "chat" in order to participate. When a teacher is sharing the screen with the students Zooming and those in the classroom, the chat pops up for all to see. Private chats are then exposed to the students in the room instead of just the teacher. To disable this feature, teachers have to stop sharing their screens with the students in-person and online in order to open the chat. 4. If a teacher wants to talk to a student who is Zooming in private (about their grade or another academic concern), they will put the student in a breakout room to do so. The idea behind this is that the student and the teacher can talk, one-on-one, without the other students on Zoom hearing the conversation. However, the students in the room can still hear what the teacher and student are talking about, so the conversation is no longer private. Teachers and online students cannot conference privately when there are other children in the physical classroom. 5. If a teacher is absent or has to attend a meeting, students who Zoom in have to have an asynchronous lesson since substitutes cannot be expected to run a Zoom and teach the kids in person. We all know this is not best for students. If students are going to be remote next year, they need a designated teacher to teach them in the remote setting. They will get all of the teacher's attention and will be able to have the privacy they deserve. Please take teacher experience into account when it comes to this model. The concurrent model which is the same as what we are calling "livestream teaching" does not work at the middle school level.