

Community Comments
January 7, 2021

Dear D57 BOE, My daughter has been attending Kids Corner for the am session this fall at Lions Park. My daughter was the only child there on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. The other two days there were only a handful of children. It is not being used. On top of paying for Kids Corner, I also had to pay a babysitter to pick her up and stay with her for the afternoons. I am sad that my child will not be able to attend in-person school because I cannot find adequate daycare. I am positive that you can come up with a safe way to open Kids Corner where my child could attend the morning session then go straight to her classroom for in-person learning in the pm. Please reconsider your no lunch policy at Kids Corner. Daycare is not useful if you need to pick your child up in the middle of the day. Thank you for your time.

There is a hour where the school is not offering any service what am I suppose to do with my child for a hour. I have to work and I do not have any to watch him. The school needs to offer a better plan to get the children back in school.

Happy New Year, all! I wanted to thank you for your hard work so far this school year. We appreciate the time and effort you have put in to making well informed decisions that impact many in our community. Our experience so far this year has been absolutely amazing. Sure, we've had melt downs, technical issues and frustrations but we've seen such growth in our children, too. Confidence with technology. Confidence in handling issues on their own. Organization of their own spaces. There is a silver lining no matter how dark the cloud has been. The teachers (K & 4th grade... though I know they're all great!) have been going above and beyond and we so appreciate their efforts as well. We look forward to a time when they can all be back in their classrooms when it is safe for everyone! Thank you again!

I just want to express my gratitude for your hard work and consideration of the safety of our teachers, students, and community. You have all been making the right decisions.

I'm the parent of a Lions Park third grader, and I urge you to do what you should have done months ago -- declare that the 2020-2021 school year will be remote, full stop. Give families the much-needed stability of knowing what their kids' situation will be. Any plan that relies on wishful thinking and a best case scenario to achieve its success is destined to fail -- that the date has already shifted once lends credence to that assertion. Remote learning isn't a perfect solution by any stretch, but we need to stop pretending that it's not the obvious right answer. Let's put our collective energy into making it work, and we'll see each other once again in the fall.

I have 2 kids at Lincoln. Last Fall, I was given 2 options: full remote or 2 full day hybrid, I would have preferred the 4 1/2 day hybrid option that Brian Maye was supporting but since that was not voted on I chose full remote for both of my Lincoln students. If the 4 1/2 day hybrid model is now an option, everyone should have this opportunity to select their top choice and it would become my top choice.

How does the District intend to handle families that travel to high risk areas during school? My spouse travels for work often. Will our children have to isolate at home for a period of time every time their dad travels? Several students in both our children's classes are currently on vacation out of state. If returning in-person, will they be required to isolate prior to returning to school?

I am concerned about starting hybrid now, with the community metrics still in the "highest risk" category and the strong possibility that a more infectious variant is on the way. That said, I have full confidence that the district is working hard to do the right thing in very difficult circumstances. I would like to understand the reasoning behind starting hybrid now after pushing back the start date previously when the metrics were lower.

My husband and I are very supportive of the return school plan for the 19th. We urge the board to move swiftly to full time options as soon as possible. We have one child at Westbrook and one at Lions Park both of which have seen a decline in their learning and social emotional health.

Good evening, Just wanted to share that Glen Ellyn Covid tested everyone this past Monday so that they could safely resume classes (as safely as possible) on Jan 19. All students and teachers were tested. Is that an option for us?

First and foremost, please vote to move forward with the plan to open schools on January 19th with the hybrid model. Our children need to be back in the classroom. They can return to the classroom safely. The administration and teachers have done the hard work to make reopening our schools a reality. Thank you! Second, please work towards a plan for a full in-person learning option for the remainder of the year. We need a plan that allows for the transition to full in-person learning. Are we preparing for this? Are we flexible enough to make this transition in a timely manner? Third, please work towards a plan for our youngest students with IEPs to receive their full services in-person as soon as possible. These students need to have their needs met 100% in-person as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and attention to meeting all of our students needs.

I have watched every Board meeting since this crisis began. If the Board intends to not have full-time in-person instruction this school year--or until every teacher and student has been vaccinated--please just say so simply. Months have been wasted where kids could have been taught in-person, when COVID numbers were at a minimum. Repeated delays of any sort of return to in-person instruction have now led us to COVID numbers that are once again increasing--as expected during winter/flu season. This I suspect will now give you a renewed reason to delay in-person yet again. Again, if you do not intend to open the schools as neighboring districts have done without ill effect, please let parents know. Thank you.

Please move forward with the hybrid reopening. The district administration is confident in their abilities to provide a safe environment for staff and students. It's time to get back to some form of in-person instruction. Thank you.

I respectfully ask that you stick to the hybrid opening date of January 19, 2021. Please do not push this back any further. I also respectfully implore you to begin the task of getting these kids back in the building full time, five days a week. Our children are almost at one year of limited education, and every day counts at this point.

Administration and Board: Thank you for getting the ball rolling to get our students back in school in a hybrid model on 1/19, and for giving families of our district a choice. Thank you for looking at the overwhelming data from schools that have successfully re-opened across the country, that show that schools are not super spreaders when proper mitigations are followed, and that the best place for students, especially younger ones, is in the classroom. We hope, when the hybrid is successful, you will continue to

get the ball rolling on a full in-person return to school before the school year ends, of course with remote still being a choice for those who prefer that. Looking forward to getting our students back in school

Please get our children back in school like every other school in our area

Hello D57 School Board Members, Thank you for your time and years of commitment to our district. Catering to fear is never a winning strategy. Our children NEED to return to school immediately. PLEASE think of the long term effects of keeping our schools closed. School Board members have stated that they want the students to return and want nothing more. However, the school board knew in August that D57 had no intention of returning until at least November of 2020. THE TIME IS NOW! The other day my son was so sad and he couldn't explain to me how he was feeling because he has never felt this way for so long. He simply said I am just very sad! It broke my heart. I suggested we get in the car and drive to Fairview. I parked my car and we walked around the school building. My son said how good it felt to just be on the property and to remember the good times he has had. I can teach my son new academic content because remote learning is not providing enough material for him but I can't provide comfort from not attending his school. If we wait for the "perfect" data then we will never return. Families who are just not ready to return can choose to stay home. Teachers are essential and schools are essential. According to the CDC, Covid-19 is less fatal than the flu to all ages except the elderly. But we already knew that. This is a travesty! Based on a growing body of evidence, researchers suggest that schools do not serve as hot spots or major points of spread for COVID-19. Instead, they argue the number of cases in schools reflects both the infection rates and social distancing policies of their surrounding communities. The data suggests schools can remain open at in-person instruction with adequate policies in place. Recently, the Covid task force said it's safe for students to be in class. CBS News reporter, Bo Erickson, asked Joe Biden at a press conference, "Are you going to encourage unions to cooperate more to bring kids back to the classroom, sir?" Unfortunately, Joe responded, "Why are you the only guy that always shouts out questions?" Please tell the parents of D57 that the union is not heavily involved. The state guidelines require the effort for in-person learning. We need to refer back to June 23, 2020, when the ISBE issued a document called, Starting the 2020-21 School Year, Part 3 Joint Guidance in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Public Health (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Part-3-Transition-Planning-Phase-4.pdf>). As you are aware the document is understandably long and lays out the detailed set of plans for safe return to school along with important guidance and observations, including: "no amount of technology can replicate the effect of face-to-face interactions and instruction between teachers and students" and "in-person instruction is strongly encouraged" and schools and districts are encouraged to provide completely in-person instruction for all students in Phase 4, provided that the school is able to comply with capacity limits and implement social distancing measures." NY Times piece: "School children seem unlikely to fuel Coronavirus surges, Scientists say." The science says kids should return to school. We need to stop hurting our children. The long term effects are far worse than the disease. The CDC and National Safety Council recently stated "Chances of Death in the United States" heart disease has a 16.7% , Cancer 14.3%, Car Accident 0.94%, Drowning 0.089%, Choking on Food 0.038%, Sunstroke 0.013%, COVID-19 Infection 0.013%, and Electrocution, Radiation 0.008%. The recent survey that was sent to families should have been separated into two groups (one returning and one staying remote) to provide an accurate representation for D57. Why would I want to know the statistics for families choosing to stay remote over a family who wants to return? Those will skew results. District 57 has approximately 2,200 students originally 59% of the students planned to return in August and 41% chose to remote learn and 2% were uncertain about their choice. That is approximately 1,200 students dispersed among four buildings. 10-12 students per class, six feet apart, and masks. Small class sizes, students being protected by masks and six feet apart. This could have been done safely in August but fear

and fear alone was the deciding factor. No attempt was made to open in September, October and November approached and now here we are. One question that I ask is how can I take my child to shop at Target/Walmart/Mariano's for five hours but I can't send my child to learn in school for 2-3 hours where the environment is safe and clean. Families can sit on an airplane for 3-5 hours but they can not attend school. Employees that go into work each day and interact with hundreds of customers do not get the option to work from home and healthcare workers that are at a higher risk open their facilities to treat the community. Teachers are essential workers. I work at a public school that placed the student's academic and social needs ultimately first. This particular school district is opening its doors for its students later this month. The staff couldn't be more excited. One staff member stated that she was shocked at how many parents were not fighting to reopen the schools in November after they closed. Yet, D57 parents have been shouting from August and we are in January with the possibility of the board, once again asking the administration their opinions when it the school board's decision Students remote learning for 7 hours a day/35-40 hours per week/120 hours per month/600 hours since March is ultimately, decaying their frontal lobe and they are learning how to be "alone." Something is ultimately wrong with this scenario. We have a relatively small school district and spent millions renovating Fairview for the building to remain closed. Yet, the school board chooses to talk about expansion at Lions Park when the district, out of the ear, chooses not to even open their buildings. Last year, I was in the Fairview building and there was a period of time when at least 6-7 students were out of a classroom for 5-7 days over a period of a few weeks and there was not a concern to close the building to stop the spread of the virus. However, here we are covered in masks, sanitizing every inch of the building, temperature checks, signed documentation that students are fever-free, six feet apart, 10-12 students per classroom, teachers stationed at their desks and this warrants the school district to remain closed. Think about that statement for a moment? I end this letter with a plea to open the elementary schools to offer in-person learning and remote learning. Families that have medical and emotional needs that prevent in-person-learning or families that are not comfortable can be given the option of remote learning. The mental health of our children is crucial at this time. **KIDS ARE SUFFERING!** Please make decisions that are in the interest of our students!

I am sure the Lincoln hybrid plan took an incredible amount of organizing. It really looks like it will work well. Looking forward to January 19 and setting the plan in action!

Let's stay on track to open the schools on Jan 19th Reviewing metrics of community schools which have been opened through the pandemic as well as public schools in states with open schools have shown that following procedures of masks, hand washing, and social distancing have been successful in mitigating the spread of covid in school settings. The benefits to the children's education and social/emotional well being have far out-weighed concerns of potentially contracting a disease.

Happy New Year. I hope this message finds everyone well after the nice holiday. I am very anxious about this evening's board meeting. As we sat for 2 weeks at home over the break and reflected on the past year and what to expect and hope for in the coming year. I asked both of my kids what they were most hopeful for in 2021 and looking for to this year. Both of them simultaneously and enthusiastically responded they were looking forward to attending school in the building on January 19. As we discussed it further, they were excited about seeing friends and classmate, teachers and being in their classroom. The thought of them not attending in January has not crossed their mind. For them, it is not an option. They believe that the Board and Administration will not fail them again. Please, do not fail them. Do not start their year off with disappointment. I have watched them since March 2020, "attend" school and attempt to stay engaged in their classes and try to learn. I have watched them struggle through technology issues, I have seen them

lose all motivation to learn and problem solve. I have seen them successfully do as little as possible to get the best grade. I have seen them struggle with daily headaches because of the long hours on the screen. I have seen them lose all concept of time management as everything available to a child has been taken from them: no school, no homework, no outside activities, limited friend encounters. I have seen cabin fever set in, I have seen depression making their way into our home. Social interaction is critical in these young, developing minds. I strongly urge you to keep your decision and open the doors to the schools for those families that desire it. Give us the choice to send our kids to school for those of us that want and need it for our families. I strongly believe that our district and community members will do their part in keeping everyone safe. Thank you.

So I normally don't like to post personal things in a public forum but I feel the need to share ahead of tomorrow's board meeting. According to an infectious disease specialist from Lurie's Children's Hospital, there has been a sharp increase this week of kids with "long covid" symptoms. They are suspecting a new strain has hit Chicago that is effecting our kids and causing long term issues. This is not the MIS-C you see in the news but closer to the adult long term complications. They are putting a research study together and following patients in the next few weeks. Unfortunately my daughter who is 10 was added to that list today for inflammatory joint pain and swelling in multiple joint, pleuritis, eye and face inflammation, and severe abdominal pain and fatigue. She had covid 4 weeks ago. We are not out of the woods and the risk to our kids seem to be increasing every day. The doctor even made the comment that had my daughter presented with this a week ago he would have been stumped but now she is one of many in the last few days with these issues. No one knows what happens from here and its a terrible place to be as a parent. Just felt it was important to share as families make this hard decision of staying remote or going hybrid. Going back in person in any capacity at this point will increase community spread. We followed all the "rules" and still became sick. We can't afford to risk our children's health when we are this close to getting our community vaccinated.