



NEW HAVEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Minutes – Board of Education Meeting – August 10, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Mrs. Yesenia Rivera, President. The meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Mrs. Y. Rivera, President; Mr. M. Wilcox, Vice-President; Dr. E. Joyner, Secretary; Mr. D. Goldson, Dr. T. Jackson- McArthur, Mr. L. Conaway, Mayor J. Elicker

Absent: Ms. L. Arouna, Mr. A. Fiore

Mr. Conaway led participants in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Rivera announced that translation is available and she explained how to access it. Mr. Whyte remarked they will also be opening the U-Tube Channel as well.

361-20 **Mr. Wilcox made a motion, seconded by Dr. Joyner to approve the Board Minutes of July 27, 2020.** Atty. Alexiades pointed out some things to the Board in the event they wanted the record taker to change them.

On page 19, Item 328-20, Motion to Go Into Executive Session, the second clause wasn't part of the motion; that sentence should come out.

Page 21, Item 329-20, call the question; his recollection is that that was a motion to call the question but it doesn't state who may have seconded it. The question is who seconded the motion. President Rivera asked if that is a question we can find out by listening to the recording.

Atty. Alexiades noted that he sent the motion list around to the officers and several of the Board members but he doesn't know if anyone noted changes or corrections to Ginger. Dr. Jackson-McArthur asked who he sent the motions to. Ordinarily he doesn't send things to all board members so that it isn't misconstrued as a meeting by email. He explained further.

Mr. Goldson commented that he doesn't think that sending information to the full Board could be considered a meeting unless there is discussion and decisions are made about those items. He would prefer to have all Board members kept up to date on information that is flowing especially information regarding the minutes and upcoming agendas, etc.

Mrs. Rivera asked Atty. Alexiades if they were supposed to do anything with that email and let Ginger know if there was anything that was incorrect. Atty. Alexiades listed who he sent the email to and noted that Ms. McHugh or I can circulate the list to all members, if that is your decision. Atty. Alexiades added that he did this because a lot of time is spent on the minutes at every meeting and he thought this would be a more efficient process.



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361-1-20
Approval of Board
Meeting Minutes of
July 27, 2020

On the motion by Mr. Wilcox, seconded by Dr. Joyner, it was voted, by roll call, to approve the Minutes of the Board Meeting of July 27, 2020, as corrected. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passed.

Public Participation

Name *

Veronica Krisavage

Email *

veronica.krisavage@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

I am a high school teacher in New Haven. I teach 3 different subjects. When we went to distance learning in March I spent 10–12 hours a day creating new lessons for on–line learning, teaching myself new technologies, grading work, teaching, responding to students and collaborating with colleagues. I was exhausted. Now I am faced with having to go back into a classroom even though my age puts me in a high risk group, learn even more new technologies and reinvent my lessons one more time. It is only 3 weeks until we go back and I have no clear idea what I will have to do, when I am expected to do it all and how I will manage to do it since this summer for most of us has been stressful in more ways than one. Having students come back on the 3rd and expecting teachers to figure all this out by then is short sighted to say the least. I realize you are in a difficult position and have been trying to do your best to come up with solutions but I for one am not certain that I, as a teacher who loved what I do, the people I do I with and the students I do it for, will be able to sign onto your plan.

Name *

Akimi Nelken

Email *

akimi.nelken@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

To the members of the New Haven Board of Education:
When Governor Lamont announced last week that the decision about reopening would be left to superintendents, I breathed a sigh of relief. Throughout this entire ordeal I have felt cared for and supported by Dr. Tracey, district



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leadership, my own principal, and the whole of NHPS. I was confident that the decision made would keep our community's safety as the utmost priority.

On Monday, I attended one of the staff meetings with Dr. Tracey and Executive Leadership, and was shocked and disappointed that this did not seem to be the case. The hybrid plan is dangerous without appropriate safety measures in place, and teachers being told to “just make sure everyone is in a mask” when social distancing is not possible (in small classrooms, in crowded hallways etc.) does not inspire confidence. The fact that there is no testing protocol for staff or students does not make me feel safe. Connecticut is in a “good place” (according to Dr. Fauci) when it comes to containing the virus, but we will only remain so if we continue to be as vigilant as we have been for the past five months.

I am asking the Board of Education to please support Dr. Tracey in applying for a waiver from the CSDE to open school with distance learning. I see a few compelling reasons for doing so. The first is that our community is particularly vulnerable if there is an outbreak. Black and Hispanic people are far more likely to experience severe effects of this virus. According to one study, black residents are 2.5 times more likely to die from the virus than white residents. This means that even if infection levels are deemed “safe” for the state, they are likely not safe for our community. I would urge the Board of Education and the CSDE to consider New Haven's demographic makeup when deciding what is safe. As a teacher at Wilbur Cross for the last ten years, we have lost several students to gun violence and illness, and the effects on a community are devastating. I have helped students mourn the loss of family members time and time again. Please do not inflict more trauma on our community when there are safer options are available.

The second reason I am advocating opening with distance learning is because I strongly believe the educational outcomes for students will actually be better. Nearly all of the best practices I know for teaching in person are not possible when students must remain 3–6' apart, cannot face each other or touch shared materials. Group work and other collaborative activities such as gallery walks, “chalk talks” and even restorative circles are not possible under these conditions. Classroom management techniques such as using proximity are not feasible. Flexible seating arrangements such as small groups and concentric circles (for fishbowl discussions) will not be possible. In short, everything that I know how to do to make learning engaging and interactive is not allowable in this context.

Students will be in rows, 3–6' apart (I hope!), with the teacher at the front of the class, likely lecturing. This is kind



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of education is not worth the risk of coming into school in person. On the other hand, there are many creative techniques teachers can use online to encourage interaction and collaboration, especially now that synchronous classes will be allowed. Most teachers acknowledge that the distance learning that occurred from March to June was not what we hoped it would be. That does not mean that meaningful, effective distance learning is not possible. Give us the chance (and the tools!) to do this better, and I promise you we will.

Lastly, under the current hybrid plan for Wilbur Cross, I will only see my students for face-to-face instruction for 38 minutes per week. And yet I will spend 4 days a week engaged in delivering in-person instruction, without the time needed to dedicate to planning and facilitating the distance learning my students will be engaged in 80% of the time. Conversely, under the current plan for remote learning, I will “see” my students for face-to-face synchronous online instruction for 90 minutes per week, and I will be able to dedicate all of my time to planning and facilitating meaningful, relevant instruction, and providing extensive individual feedback on their work. To me, it is obvious which circumstance is likely to result in a better educational experience for my students.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective. My students’ physical, emotional and intellectual health is my utmost priority. I hope that you will do what is best for our community and support Dr. Tracey in applying for the waiver from the CSDE to open school with distance learning.

Sincerely,

Akimi Palitz Nelken, Lead Teacher, English Department, Wilbur Cross High School

Name *

Karlen Meinsen

Email *

kmeinsen55@gmail.com

Comments *

Dear New Haven Board of Education,

First, I would like to thank each of you for all of the time and efforts you have devoted to the New Haven School System over the last 6 months during this unprecedented pandemic we have faced. There is nothing easy or simple about this experience and I never thought I would see such an event in my teaching career. For 29 of my 30 teaching years, I have made New Haven Public Schools my second home. I have been married, raised my family, experienced life's challenges and have been "raised" by the amazing experiences the students, families, and my



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colleagues provided me. I have been blessed to be a part of a perfectly imperfect system. My classroom is my happy place. The small moments and small miracles that we experience in our classrooms are proof that we answered a calling that like none other, has a tremendous impact on our society and on the world's future. Having said that, we all feel deep down that the right thing to do is to go back full time and be where we want to be with our students. But, the Covid pandemic has changed our lives in every capacity and we cannot do anything that we want to do or used to do with any normalcy or without risks. I am not only a teacher, I am a mother, a wife, and a daughter to an elderly parent. My generation is not only raising our children, we are caring for our parents in their end of life stages. All of these facets make us who we are and has a definite impact on our ability to return to brick and mortar safely or unsafely, in most cases. Exposing us to the threat of the disease not only impacts us, but also our families and loved ones. Being immuno-suppressed or immuno-compromised presents additional layers of risks for us and our loved ones. The list could go on and on.

The bottom line is that returning to the buildings is not safe. The cons outweigh the pros on these lists and the risk is death. This is not a risk worth taking. Our students can benefit from excellent remote learning experiences that we have worked so hard to learn and deliver. We can commit to be even better at it this year. The decision should be based on science and the moral compass that if even 1 child's life or 1 teacher's life is in harm's way, we should not be back in the buildings together. Please consider the benefits of remote learning for this upcoming year as the safest choice for the 2020-2021 school year. We will put our heart and soul into delivering the very best remote learning experiences for our students and their families.

Thank you again for your service to the New Haven Public School System.

Very truly yours, Karlen Meinsen

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| Name * | Nijjalfe Waters |
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| Email * | nijjaifewaters@yahoo.com |
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| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Comments * | If you guys can send robo calls about everything else then it needs to a priority to send BOE meeting notifications, remember if |
|-------------------|--|



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students are disengage
for lack of internet then
the parents will be too.

Name *

LaKenya Browder

Email *

browderlakenya@gmail.com

Comments *

My son will be a senior this
year. What are the plans for
the high schools to provide
SAT testing and assistance
with college applications? Is
New Haven Promise still
intact?

Name *

Tricia Palluzzi

Email *

tpalluzzi@comcast.net

Comments *

I would like to know if/how the mechanical systems have been addressed. ASHRAE published a document on Infectious Aerosols which many school systems and health centers are following. They have suggested that altering the RTU's to 100% outside air with MERV 13 or above filters will help deliver clean air through the ductwork. The higher number of air changes in the room, the more filtered fresh air is coming in and pushing out the exhaust air. Since the updated New Haven Schools have newer systems, has this been implemented? If not, will it be? You can offer PPE and disinfectants, but this should be the first course of action.

Name *

Katja Lindskog

Email *

klinden@hotmail.com

Comments *



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Like hundreds of other parents in New Haven, we will not be able to participate in today’s BOE meeting about the upcoming school year, due to power outages affecting our area. It is therefore deeply concerning that you are going ahead with this meeting especially as it’s described as an “emergency BOE meeting.” If you are in any way attempting to resist reopening schools and trying to present that to the public on a day when you know so many of us can’t have our voices heard due to a state of emergency, then that really would be remarkably disappointing and undemocratic. I very much hope to be proved wrong.

Name * Paula Zimbrea

Email * paula.zimbrea@yale.edu

Comments *

Thank you for your amazing efforts to get the kids back to school during such challenging times. As our medical community is expecting a second surge in the fall, even several weeks of full school will have tremendous benefits for the children– giving them a study and social structure and helping them connect with their teachers. They could move that connection on line later if needed. There were two details I did not see in the NHPS plans: 1. for the online schooling, are the kids going to receive printed materials, so they can use the screen time only for teacher connection and feedback? 2. will the kids be allowed to bring their sanitizer, wipes and so on. Our daughter is 8 but has become very good with cleaning her work surfaces and her hands.

Name * Michelle Streater

Email * michelle.streater@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

Greetings,
I am a Head Start Lead Teacher I want to know if the preschool Teachers will have a forum for which teachers can discuss their concerns



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and reopening?
Our Daily close
interactions/distancing/
shared materials and spaces;
is different than the K-12
language that we're getting
from
guidelines.

Name *

Carmen Colon

Email *

socky15@yahoo.com

Comments *

How are you going to guarantee me
that parents are not going to send
kids sick to school?
Even before the pandemic we had
problems with kids been sent to
school sick.How am I going to know
if jo kid or member of the school
does not have Covid and just not
showing symptoms?

Name *

Amaris Rivera

Email *

amarisr85@gmail.com

Comments *

Hi, My concerns are about the children and family. I have a disable parent with a very high risk condition. In which
my only option would be to home school this year till there is a vaccine out if possible,because its the safest way



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for me and family. As much as I want my children to attend. In my position it's not an option. I will like to shared with other parents that fall in the same situation or similar. We need someone to lead us. We need to know how to proceed with this. Do we need to fill out forms. And what website can we go to fill out the form. For parents that feel that they are in a bind without a way out. Can someone please explain how can we work this situation out. Who we need to reach out to. Name of person if possible, phone number and email. Please if is even possible send us that information thru email. I hope to hear some positive news and your latest solution for this situation an these uncertain times.

Is greatly appreciated, Arivera

Name * Shari Rahamim

Email * shari.stelzer@gmail.com

Comments *

I have a daughter going into 2nd grade and this will be her first year in NHPS. I would very much like for her to return in person at least a few days a week, at least for the first month of school. It is crucial for development and understanding of her school peers and teachers to have some face to face prior to switching purely to distance learning (if it comes to that). In September the weather will still be warm enough to keep a lot of learning outdoors if need be. By now, children are conditioned to be accepting wearing of and seeing others wearing masks. I will be very dissappointed and concerned if elementary school kids (k-4) have only 100% distance learning offered to them. This will put a vast majority of the school population at risk of recieving minimal education, resources and support. It will put an immense burden on parents. Children will be starved of socialization and their development will be stunted. Their emotional wellbeing will also suffer. Covid numbers in CT are well under control at the moment and with use of broad testing and wearing masks I feel the risk is acceptable to send my daughter to school at least 2-3 days a week at least for the first month of school while the weather is still warm and covid cases are under control.

It also should be noted, with the amount of parents planning to keep their kids home no matter what the school board decision, the school population may already be much safer.



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Name * Nicholas Ryan

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Comments *

Connecticut has made great progress against Covid-19 and has recently shown some of the best numbers in the country. Last week, as of Thursday, 20 cases were identified out of 8,984 tests — for a record daily positivity rate of 0.2%, roughly 1 person in 500. These numbers have led Governor Lamont, his experts, and Dr. Anthony Fauci to conclude that Connecticut would be able to open its schools safely with continued vigilance. What information does the Board of Education have that the Governor of CT and Dr. Fauci do not? Given that the coronavirus is not going to disappear, and the prospects for a vaccine are uncertain, what threshold of new cases and positivity rates has the Board of Education set for when the schools can reopen in person?

Name * Katja Lindskog

Email * katja.lindskog@gmail.com

Comments *

Like so many residents of New Haven, our family was not able to join or give a public comment on the very suddenly scheduled BOE meeting on 8/5 due to power outages in our area. But a friend told me two days later that there was a decision to start the year remotely and maybe transition to a hybrid plan in November. I'm just writing a quick message (since I can't be online for long while the power is out) to ask you and your colleagues to please, please reconsider this decision. We have come so far – our own school community has even started cleaning our outdoor spaces to make room for outdoor classes. And the public health metrics simply don't support this decision – please don't sideline the science that arrived at those metrics. We all know what happens when science has to take a backseat in these decisions, and just like it would be foolish to reopen schools fully in hard hit areas of the country right now, so it would be unconscionable to refuse these children the opportunity to return to school on a basis that is not based on local public health metrics. We beg you to reconsider, for the sake of elementary age students in particular. The gap between these children and their peers in private schools in the



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area that are fully reopening will widen to such a degree it's hard to see how it could ever be rebridged. And that's just one reason of so many that this would be a disastrous decision. As you'll know, the later into Fall we get, the harder it will be to reopen due to the approaching flu season. The result could very plausibly be a full semester of remote learning only, if not longer. This pandemic is not going away any time soon. It could be here for years. Is this how we will exist for now on? What were the great sacrifices for in New Haven and Connecticut for – with great reduction of cases as a result of all those sacrifices and all that hard work – if this is what the community gets as a result? After so many months of imagining at the very least a hybrid reopening – and always with the option of going fully remote for those who wished – families are now waking up to the brutal realization that it was all for nothing. We're devastated, and utterly demoralized. And we feel at a complete loss after this sudden reversal from the Board. And we will keep pleading with you and your colleagues, as well as with the state, to respect the scientific assessment that the numbers are low enough in New Haven to warrant reopening in September.

Name * Ime Barrakh

Email * imanibarrakh96@gmail.com

Comments *

We can't believe the Board's decision this Wednesday. I couldn't watch because I had no power, and nobody I know even knew the meeting was scheduled, but our teachers let us know what happened. We can't believe it! It makes no sense, not right now, with the plans in the works for reopening, and only improvement in Connecticut in corona virus rates. Why did you do it?

Plea don't take away our kids education for such a long time. their teachers say if we don't open in September we're not gonna open at all because flu will be there in november. I hear all these parents say they're going to private school so their kids can be educated but we can't do that. If teachers are scared then talk to them. I've not heard the teachers I know be scared, but that bunch that talks non stop at every zoom meeting seem really scared and you should see what they want. But we don't understand it and Ill lose my job if my kids are home for so long. They wont do well with distance learning, theyre too small and cant understand it, any of it. That's the truth.



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Imani, mom to Terence, 8, and Jayden, 7 and Malika 4 who will go to preschool

Name * Josh Howard

Email * joshhoward@gmx.com

Comments *

To the members of the New Haven Board of Education,

The American Federation of Teachers has said it considers in person schooling to be safe when infections in an area is under 5%. In CT that number has consistently been 1% or lower for several months. It therefore seems the Board's decision cannot be based in science or medical caution, or in taking the advice of teachers. That is sad and, if approved, could have terrible consequences for not only vulnerable families but for schooling in New Haven in general, perhaps for years to come.

We urge you to please consider the large parts of the New Haven education community who are not in alignment with the Board's latest and incomprehensible u-turn. Parents, educators and school staff who want to return in September and who may not have been loud and vocal during the summer (because we believed the district was following the state's guidelines!), but who now feel utterly bewildered and betrayed, not to mention without hope. We applaud Connecticut and New Haven for offering a remote option to all families who wish to keep their kids home. We urge you also to be sensitive to the needs of teachers who are at particular risk if falling sick with Covid. But neither of those statements are in any way incompatible with reopening schools! Dr Tracey has been working on a reopening plan since March. It would be absolutely devastating for us all if it now can't proceed.

I talked to my daughter's first-grade teacher today. She was in tears, expressing both rage and shock at this latest development. And she felt there was no opportunity for anyone who wants to reopen to be heard or represented at the Board's latest gathering. She didn't even know the meeting was happening at all until halfway through, and she said this was the case for her principal and their colleagues. The BoE representatives will no doubt tell the State that the teachers are too scared to return. It may well be true that some teachers are very scared, and my heart goes out to them for feeling this way. But the District must own its responsibility in whipping up this atmosphere of fear, where New Haven and CT are somehow discussed as we're comparable to Indiana, Georgia or Arizona.



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Very, very fortunately, we are not. Those AFT guidelines were not released lightly. I imagine they were released in part to push back against reopening in parts of the country where transmission rates are very high. That seems prudent and sensible. But in the case of New Haven, there's absolutely nothing prudent or indeed sensible about the Board's latest embrace of vague and undetermined fears. And yet, despite the District and Board's continued references in all their communications to the "fears and misgivings" we must be feeling when faced with schools being reopened – still, when I talk to teachers like my daughter's wonderful 1st grade teacher, all I hear is a calm determination to return to school. I admire her and her colleagues immensely, just as I admire my wife's devoted care to Covid patients all through the Spring at Yale New Haven hospital. She had to live apart from us for nearly two months as we live with my parents. Until they realized that none of the staff, not the nurses or other staff, had got infected from the patients, thanks to their PPE and other precautions, even after several times when my wife got coughed on by a man who died the next day. She made a huge sacrifice for this community, by living apart from us and working night and day to save lives. We are not asking the same of educators, nor are they offering to do the same for us as my wife did for the community. They are offering to return to their workplace with precautions in place, at a time when community spread is much, much lower than in the Spring, and at a time when mask use is almost universal in our community. What's more, they are returning to work with children, and in the case of children under 10, they are half as likely to catch and transmit this disease than adults. In other words, we are not sending them into the lion's den. We are not sending our children into a lion's den. There will be cases, for sure. But cases do not translate into outbreaks. It is completely unreasonable to pretend they're one and the same, and to pretend New Haven is Los Angeles or Houston.

This is no way to make a decision. There was a reason why the person assigned to argue this case to the state felt they couldn't in good conscience do so. We implore you to let us all – educators and families – go back to planning for a September reopening. It is the morally and scientifically sound choice.

The Howard family

Name * Kay Lin

Email * KayW4@gmx.com

Comments *



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To keep schools closed in September was a decision that was entirely unexpected and blindsided not only families but educators who have been working hard to reopen schools in September, most likely on a hybrid model. Considering that the public health metrics more than allow for a hybrid reopening (in fact, they would even allow for a full reopening at least for children under 10), we are appalled and, frankly, devastated at this sudden turn of events. We deeply implore you to allow those who wish to return elementary schools in September as previously planned. In the words of Margaret–Mary Gethings, the principal of our own local school, who I spoke to this morning "if we don't reopen in September, then almost certainly we won't reopen at all this entire school year." She told me the teachers at our school are equally blindsided and devastated, after working so hard to get everything ready. This simply cannot be allowed to happen after New Haven residents, and people in Connecticut have made such big sacrifices, resulting in much improved infection numbers, so that we can have schools reopen. It will also absolutely devastate so many families in New Haven, and frankly the risks to vulnerable families in New Haven of potentially another whole year in remote learning will be much, much greater than the risks of reopening schools on a hybrid model in September.

We realize that advocacy groups like New Haven Public School Advocates have been the loudest voices in the area for the past month – but please, please understand that they do NOT represent the rest of us: elementary level teachers, and families with children elementary age. I'm sure they have very valid concerns about crowded high schools returning this Fall – but to push through a decision like delaying returning for ALL ages is simply not only irresponsible, and not based in public health concerns –but also simply not the morally right thing to do. For example at our own school, Worthington Hooker, 85% of the families polled in July wished to return to full-time schooling in Fall. We ask that you do not let an advocacy group that has organized a few campaigns to derail an entire district of children's schooling for a whole year. The results will be simply devastating, far outpacing any damage that the pandemic has already done to these families.

I want to let you know that a group of teachers and parents are right now organizing to push back against the delay and to allow us to return to school in September as we have by now been hoping for, for so long. It is very difficult for us to get organized due to the power outages in most of our local communities, but we will do whatever it takes to allow those who wish to return to elementary education to do so.

Yours sincerely, Kay Lin



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Name * Jocelyn Sanchez

Email * kel2110@columbia.edu

Comments *

As a parent (and doctor) writing from a New Haven school where 81% of families and educators surveyed want to go back to full-time in-person school this fall, I'm writing to plead with you and your colleagues to allow for the state's plan to proceed as intended. About three weeks ago, a report was released by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine that has performed an updated review of the evidence from around the world of previous school reopenings. The link is below, but in short they strongly recommend, from both a medical and a social standpoint, the reopening wherever possible of grades K-5, and to a slightly lesser degree, grades 6-12. This is in line with current medical data that shows that children under 10 are much less likely to spread covid to both adults and other children. We implore you to not let stunts like the NHPS Advocates "car parade" get in the way of basing your decisions on the available scientific data rather than fear tactics. Covid should absolutely be feared, but it must be feared on the correct scientific grounds. It's simply not like other viral diseases, and we have to respect and accept that. We've seen all too well what a dismissal of scientific evidence can do in this country recently, and we really must urge you not to get swept up in emotional appeals may be well-intentioned but that are based in ignorance and a refusal to absorb the data available on covid and on school reopenings from 31 countries.

National Academis of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report (summary with link to full report):

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/07/schools-should-prioritize-reopening-in-fall-2020-especially-for-grades-k-5-while-weighing-risks-and-benefits>

Connecticut is currently on track to reopen fully, and to go against the state's recommendation in this regard would be a huge mistake on so many levels, not least medically and scientifically. We hope and trust that you will be open to allowing available empirical and scientific data play a major role in your planning.

Name * Lanessa Berry

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Comments *

Dear New Haven BoE members,

I write to you with a heavy heart and great concern, having just been informed that while the power was out in much of our city, you held an emergency board meeting where the hybrid plan communicated all through Spring and Summer to us by Dr. Tracey and local school leaders was abruptly reversed, and instead you voted to delay reopening schools until at least November. Like many, many parents and educators in New Haven I was not aware this meeting was happening until it was far too late to submit a comment, let alone participate, particularly as we were without power at the time. The principal of my younger child's school told me tearfully the next day that she'd had no notice, no warning, of the significance of this meeting, and that no one she knows in the local education community who favors opening schools had been given a chance to comment or participate. She is, along with my other child's teachers at Nathan Hale, totally in despair at this abrupt and almost incomprehensible turn of events, as it has pressed pause on all their careful planning that the teachers and school staff have been so diligently involved in along with families.

This reversal of the hybrid reopening in September, from my understanding largely driven by a campaign by the New Haven Public Schools Advocates group over the summer, as well as resistance to Trump's idiotic tweets, to instead go remote for at least ten weeks of the Fall semester, seems not only highly ill-conceived from a public health point of view (who really believes we could start school again once flu season hits? Let's be real: what this vote is for is for a full year of remote learning for ALL GRADES, nothing less), but also seems premised on a fundamental misunderstanding of what's going on in our community right now. The Board and Superintendent's Office, having presumably been flooded with public comments, public demonstrations, and participation from a very well-organized group of high school teachers and parents, seem to believe that this decision is somehow rooted in the needs of the local community. Once you look at elementary level education, nothing could be further from the truth. We have not been able to be as organized or vocal over the summer, this is true – but then of course we're not going out on car parades and flooding public comments sections if we're under the impression that the desired reopening is going ahead! Just because we're not as able to make our voices heard together as one, as the very loud and well-run advocacy group who has dominated discussions with the Board lately, doesn't mean that we are not worth listening to. As a Black mother of two boys, as a medical professional who has lovingly



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cared for Covid patients for months and months as an essential worker, my voice – our voices – matter too. We have not politicized reopening in New Haven, but that doesn't mean we are wrong. We are not Trump voters or in favor of careless reopening in areas with high community spread. I have seen this disease up close for many months now, and I know what it can do. But to ask for New Haven Public Schools to reopen their elementary grades, at least for students under 10, in September is not irresponsible or a risk not worth taking. It is reasonable, and well within the range or risk that communities with comparatively low spread can take. The teachers at both schools I know that I have talked to since the Board meeting are shocked and frustrated at being steamrolled and spoken for by some of their colleagues who claim to represent "everyone." They do not, although they might make it seem as if they do. Many of us have felt cowed and scared into not speaking, made to feel as if we're wanting to kill teachers by resisting this huge reversal of previous plans. I've seen especially in the community I serve in my work that the fear is very widespread by now, often based on complete misunderstandings of what's actually going on in New Haven vs. elsewhere, with positivity rates and other metrics. It's not my job to help those people understand the real high and low risks of reopening, but I've done what I can, although I'm only one person.

The risks brought up at the meeting, the lack of funding and PPE not arriving on time, are real concerns and not to be dismissed. Perhaps Dr. Jackson-MacArthur's point about asymptomatic transmission also deserves more thought. But what you ended up with is not a solution – this is giving a vocal group of high school teachers and a very specific group of parents what they've asked for and sacrificing all elementary grade students and educators as collateral damage. To deny students under 10 the opportunity of going back, with all safety measures in place that have helped protect communities elsewhere, simply makes no sense. The consequences of your decision, if they are approved by the State, are vast and probably not yet understood in their full implications. Those consequences will be less immediate and flashy than infection rates or cases found at reopened schools. But they will be – and ,you must be aware of this – much, much worse in the long term. They will politically be less hard to pin down who's to blame, but that doesn't mean they won't be dire. I grieve for New Haven schools – both students and educators – that this is what it's come to. I will do whatever I can to plead with the State leadership to deny your request and to restore hope to us. But I'm only a resident, and have no "in" with you all, or with those who communicate with the state. I don't know how we can best be heard. I wasn't on the list of people who had enough advance notice to give a public comment to the BoE at their meeting.



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Those who want to keep their children home, I fully respect. Those teachers who wish to teach remotely because they are at high risk of complications from Covid, I fully respect and applaud. But to cancel everything for young children who will not, let's face it, be learning remotely – in many cases entirely without the devices or home environment conducive to learning – is a completely foolhardy reversal of a carefully worked out hybrid plan that was being rolled out up until this week's meeting.

On Wednesday morning, I helped out as a volunteer at our school to clear weeds from the school yard, to set up some outdoor classes in September. There was a great excitement in the air as we worked, distanced from each other, the children keeping carefully distanced but excited to be together, playing "air tag." Everyone was wearing masks. The adults and teachers were talking, full of hope and excitement at finally getting to plan for coming back together safely and cautiously. Don't take this away from us. Don't sacrifice New Haven elementary children and educators at the altar of political point scoring. Please.

Name * Ruhi Khan

Email * klinden@hotmail.com

Comments *

I'm writing as one of many parents in New Haven deeply concerned with Board's insistence on forging ahead with a remote model of education for elementary age students – despite local infection rates making a full reopening not only possible but desirable for that age group. New Haven is a district where many students, particularly those in the younger age group, rely on schools entirely for so many social, emotional and intellectual resources. Its student body, overwhelmingly students of color, don't deserve to get a lesser education than their peers in West Haven, just because we have a loud group that shouts everyone else down in New Haven rather than West Haven. We urge you to step in and insist that elementary age students – particularly those in age K-3 – can return to school as fully as is actually safe right now.

As you will be aware, private schools in the New Haven area are reopening fully, and this decision will only exacerbate divisions between low-income and higher-income students and their families in the area, with no real discernible benefits or payoffs to public health. We understand the need to reassure teachers, but considering the



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fresh influx of funding promised by the Governor on Friday, surely there is a way to provide PPE to elementary teachers so that they'll feel safe. Please don't let our schools down!

Name * Marco Lopez

Email * marcolopez1977@gmail.com

Comments *

Here's what my nurse friend, a fellow parents texted me after hearing what happened at your Wednesday meeting: "I'm surprised at how much fear has been induced into the teachers by recent campaigns. With the right PPE they'll be safe. I only say that as I was completely immersed in covid rooms in the icu as I did procedures and interacted for two months straight and none of our icu staff have gotten it. Not even our nurses. Masks and face shield. If that's what it takes for the teachers to go back then I'm all for it. Here's an example: I was doing a procedure on a covid patient. He was coughing all over me. It was horrible! He died the next day of covid. I did not get it and neither did our staff."

I think currently she feels terrified of voicing these thoughts in the face of the strong hold advocacy groups who want only remote learning has over the community, and how aggressively they push back against those who want any sort of reopening ("do you want to kill teachers" etc) so I don't want to give her name. But I still want to mention her because she sacrificed so much all Spring (she had to live separately from her two young children and her husband) to care for Covid patients and that this is what those sacrifices have left us with. Please don't let us all down like this. Connecticut has been around 1% transmission for months, which is much, much below the threshold that the American Federation of Teachers give for safe reopenings, as well as the CDC. I can't believe we have to still fight for this.

Name * Heng Zhao

Email * heng.zhao@yale.edu

Comments *

I'm a New Haven Public School parent. I'm shocked by the school closure plan approved by the New Haven Board of



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Education on August 5th to keep schools closed for two and a half months. This plan is putting my children and family through unnecessary hardship and I'm requesting you reconsider this plan.

Since March, our boys have been staying at home, and distance-learning through Zoom is nothing compared with in-person learning at school. Both of my boys are eager to go to school, and my wife and I are exhausted by the combined burden of regular work and home-schooling. We were excited to see the great progress that Connecticut has made against Covid-19, and the announcement previously made by NHBoE that the school is opening on September 3rd. With case number this low, I (and many parents I know) are feeling safe of sending our children to school. I feel that our kids and we deserve to be rewarded a somewhat normal life after our successful collective effort to bend the infection curve.

I understand that some parents may still have concerns and some may have medical conditions that render them more vulnerable to Covid-19, but this issue should be addressed by their own choices of doing distance-learning, rather than ALL families and children doing distance-learning. Families should be able to opt for in-person, full distance-learning, or a hybrid learning plan. In fact, I have responded to a survey sent by the school, and stated that I intend to send my children to school full time. Results of such a survey should be used to determine whether the school should open or stay closed.

Respectfully, I'm also questioning the rationale of the vote that happened on August 5th. Among the people who voted, there were two student representatives. While I appreciate that they voted what they think their fellow students want, it's not clear whether their belief is based on evidence and data supporting that most students prefer to have school closed. What if more students prefer to have school open than closed? Without a survey sent to the students, I'm not sure if these two students can fully represent the student group. As mentioned above, I think the survey results from the school earlier should be accounted for in this vote.

Name * Gilad Abiri

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Comments *

I write to you as a distraught parent to ask you for advice. My wife and I work full time. Our five-years-old, Dror, was supposed to start school at Hooker this September. The vote last Wednesday struck my family like lightning.



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The board is essentially telling us to homeschool our child, a thing that is both beyond our ability and extremely detrimental to him. Even if we could afford it, it is far too late to get him a spot in a private school. What could justify springing this on us this late? The state`s covid-19 numbers have never been so good, and will likely not be lower for years to come. What are we to do? Quit our jobs?

This makes no sense, and is extremely irresponsible. I ask you to change your vote on opening exclusively online.

Name * Hilary Delaney

Email * hilarydelaney79@gmail.com

Comments *

Dear New Haven Board of Education Members,

I am a parent of 3 NHPS students, soon to be 2nd, 3rd and 6th graders, one of whom has an IEP with NHPS and receives several hours of services weekly. I was shocked and appalled by the decision made by the board on August 5th and I do not believe it is in the best interest of our children. I would like to bring the following points to your attention:

1. Special Education

My daughter's IEP needs CANNOT be met through remote learning. Many strategies were attempted during the March-June timeframe and she at best has retained some of the information she had previously learned with ZERO progress. This is not acceptable, by law she is entitled to an education and by law the Board of Education should be providing the services outlined in her documented IEP. You are abandoning her and all children with disabilities in this district.

2. Remote Learning

The attempt at remote learning during the March -June timeframe was abysmal. Teachers provided busy work and were not seen or heard from for most of the school day, saying this is "learning" is a real stretch. (This did not apply to all teachers as some really tried with little district support.) Technologies were spotty and teachers had no direction on how to teach online. I do not see any difference in the approach as we move into online learning for the 2020-21 school year.



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Most of you voted for the first 10 weeks of school to be taught online without any regards for the families that chose to opt for in-person learning in the surveys submitted. You took that choice away from our family. Remote learning was always an option so why are you now sentencing all of NHPS students to this? There is NO remote learning program and NO technology!! The families that want and need their children in school, should be allowed to do so.

For the 6 of you that voted in favor of this motion, I did not hear one constructive idea that can make this work so I have some below for you. OPEN THE SCHOOLS for the beginning of the school year while the case numbers are low and learning can happen outdoors. During that time, the Board of Education can work with Dr Tracey and her team to get the following done:

1. Setup the IT Infrastructure required to enable all students to go online (wireless antennas, hot spots, access points etc)
2. Get a chromebook into the hands of every child
3. Setup a Special Education program that can still run in-person even if the schools are closed
4. Allow students to start school with their new grade teachers so they can build a relationship before starting any online learning
5. Allow teachers to get to know their new students, to evaluate where the students are at, both mentally and academically
6. Mandatory training for all teachers on remote learning strategies and efficiencies
7. Create a robust remote learning program for all grades, that includes live interactive learning, innovative practices and creative assignments.

We all know that come November, the worst time of the year for illnesses, that the schools will not open. The best we can hope for is next March or April.

OPEN THE SCHOOLS while we can and stop taking the easy way out. It is in the best interest of the students and families of New Haven.

Name * Cyrus Morris

Email * cym2424@columbia.edu



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Comments *

I can't understand, if we have the option for families to go fully remote, why schools can't reopen in September as planned? We're not in a high risk scenario right now. Surely teachers know that their own national organization, the National Federation of Teachers, puts the threshold of in-person opening at 5% positivity rates in the community. CT has been hovering around and just below 1% for several months now. Further, the CT Dept of Health guidance places New Haven in the low to moderate zone, favoring either a full or hybrid reopening depending on the particular week's numbers. We haven't been in the high risk zone for a long, long time. I just can't compute how you arrived at this decision. Please reconsider!

Name * Paula Zimbreaan

Email * paula.zimbreaan@yale.edu

Comments *

Dear BOE members, I am a New Haven Public School parent and a medical doctor. I have worked in a hospital during March and April when COVID testing was scarce, protection equipment scarce and we were just learning about what helps patients with Covid19 infections, so I have a solid understanding of how serious this health condition is. I am also a psychiatrist, so I am aware of the severe impact of school closures on children and families in the sense of domestic violence, lack of support for children with special needs and reduction of employment opportunities for parents

The school closure plan approved by the New Haven Board of Education on August 5th to keep schools closed for two and a half months is not acceptable for my family.

Any acceptable plan should include the option of in-person learning, beginning September 3rd, for families that wish for their children to be back in school. I believe that schools can be opened safely for full-time, in-person learning 5 days a week and will plan to send my children to school as soon as they do open.

Connecticut has made great progress against Covid-19. Infectivity is low, testing is available in New Haven, and summer camps have been run smoothly without Covid-19 outbreaks Reopening our schools, with great care and attention to safety for students, teachers and staff, is the wise decision. Sincerely, Paula Zimbreaan



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Name * Aleena Chavez

Email * aleena.chavez1986@outlook.com

Comments *

I'm a Kindergarten teacher and I'm so upset about your decision. It makes no sense! Just exactly how do you expect us to trust your judgement when you take decisions that only seem to be about what high school teachers want? Don't we matter too? We might not have powerful advocacy groups and car parades but we matter ok? My colleagues are so upset too. Just because we haven't been making noise all summer doesn't mean we should be ignored! We didn't KNOW we had to make noise to get the kiddos back into school. We thought decisions were based on the public health situation, not on who shouts the loudest and who can organize lots of public comments at meetings. We can't do that. We'll try but we probably can't, because we didn't know we had to and because we're not used to the politics of all this. I'm not a politician or an activist! We're just teachers going about our business trying to prepare for reopening as best we can. We feel so betrayed by how you're ignoring all the public health measurements. I'm sorry I don't mean to be rude but it's very maddening.

Name * Luca Cilibrizzi

Email * cilibrizziles@outlook.com

Comments *

I'm a para and I didn't have power until this morning when I found out what you did last week. Don't keep schools closed in September! If the virus will be here for years, then how could we possibly defend keeping ALL schools closed when the infection rates are currently low in our area? We have to seize this chance! The Mayor was right, and you are not, you are only thinking short term, no long term planning at all in this decision. Reopen in flu season in November? You might as well come out and say it: you want ALL schools to remain closed until everyone is vaccinated which might be in a year's time but more likely in two or three years. This is not the thinking of a functioning society. Schools are essential to our community, not a luxury. They're not bars or restaurants (which will remain open!), they're not movie theaters or weddings or funerals. They are at the heart of a community, what makes lives possible. They are like groceries and healthcare and housing. We need them, not just want them, and



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only high community transmission could justify keeping them closed, at least for young children. Early childhood education is essential! You might have good intentions, but your decision is threatening our whole community. I work in the district, my kids go to school here, and you have let us all down. I only pray the state won't let you do this.

Name * Jen Lavez

Email * jennil2106@gmail.com

Comments * We just got the power back and find out what you did while we were down! What!! Our teacher friends are going crazy, saying you are playing politics with the schools, that they get told By teacher leaders who know u to shut up if they want to go back or else they will be call a killer or trump voter. I don't know what to think, u are not thinking of infections but of what looks good or what is it? I can't face telling my kids your doing this. Please don't do this to us. Were not gonna make it.

Name * Joseph North

Email * josephnorth@hotmail.com

Comments * I'm writing to express my deep dismay at the New Haven school board's recent last-minute vote to prevent all K-3 students from returning to school in September. I am especially distressed by the fact that the decision has been made without a serious engagement with the underlying epidemiology. Surely if we have learned anything from this pandemic, it is that we ought to pay attention to the science?

For the last several months, studies from across the world have shown quite overwhelmingly that re-openings of K-3 schools do not lead to rises in community spread, nor do they put teachers at risk. Simply put, it has become apparent that young children simply do not spread COVID-2019 at anywhere near the rates adults do; in the normal run of things, they do not spread it to one another, nor do they spread it to their carers. Meanwhile, for



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such children the negative impacts of failure to attend school are deep and real: importantly, they miss crucial steps in social and emotional development, as well as intellectual development. They are also the group of children least capable of deriving educational value from online learning. As a result of this, a wide range of medical authorities and responsible professional organizations have strongly recommended reopening K–3 schools, including medical, epidemiological, and pediatric associations both in this country and worldwide

The case is less clear for older students, especially high schoolers, and I understand that the recent vote to try to prevent all students from going to school is largely based on concerns from high school parents. Yet the case for K–3 really is extremely clear. The board's sudden recent decision to reverse course lumps all students together as if they were high school students. This is a huge mistake, and does a serious disservice to our younger children, their parents, and the wider community. Again, in a pandemic, we need above all to base our public policy decisions on a sound understanding of the most current epidemiology. The fact that this seems to have been ignored is deeply distressing.

Also distressing is the manner in which the decision was taken. The community had been led to believe that, with Governor Lamont's decisions to re-open CT schools, the relevant decisions had been made, bringing an end to a time of deep uncertainty, and allowing people and institutions to get on with planning for the semester to come. It is therefore extremely upsetting to find the board plunging us all back into uncertainty by way of a sudden "emergency" meeting, with very little warning, with scant hours to prepare any kind of comment – and during a tropical storm which caused serious power outages across the whole region, no less. I am very reluctant to say this, given the seriousness of the charge, but from the outside, at least, that very much risks appearing an attempt to bypass ordinary democratic processes, and instead stack the deck in favor of special or vocal interest groups. Certainly many families, including my own, did not know about the meeting until it was too late to attend or comment – and were then stuck without power or internet access for the better part of the week following. A decision made in such a manner brings the whole process into question.

Finally, there is another form of evidence which really needs to be taken into account in decisions like this one, and which appears to have been ignored: the evidence of last Spring. We were all asked to call what happened then 'online education,' but the reality for K–3 students is that it was no education at all. Setting small children, alone, in front of screens for hours a day, and trying to hold their attention on schoolwork, is not education, and we should not pretend that it is. This is doubly true for children of working parents – 'online education' is no



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education whatsoever. For K–3 kids, then, the board’s recent vote is not a vote for 10 weeks of ‘online education’ – it is a vote for no meaningful education at all, for 2 ½ more months. Let us be clear, then, that this would mean that under the proposed new plan New Haven K–3 kids would go 8 consecutive months without school. That is a minimum under this plan. In reality, of course, there is no end in sight, since the plan just voted quite astonishingly calls for a return to in–person learning in the coldest part of the year, when nothing can be held outside, right in the heart of flu season. If the board is not willing to send K–3 kids back to school now, when CT infection rates are extremely low, and all cautious and responsible medical and professional advice recommends returning K–3 kids to school full–time, when *will* they be willing to let the kids return to school? In November, when conditions are worse? Are our kids going to miss more than a full year of education? Under this new plan it seems very possible, even likely.

It is a truism in the field of child development that early childhood education is the most important for social, emotional, and intellectual development. Happily, all the most current epidemiology points clearly to the fact that the K–3 students, at least, should be sent back to school. That is what we were all planning towards, up until the last–minute vote taken this week. Should the new ‘plan’ come to pass, we are now looking instead at a lost year of education for New Haven’s K–3 kids, at a crucial point in their development. That is too high a price to pay, when the epidemiology so strongly indicates that sending K–3 kids back to school presents minimal risk to their parents and teachers, and presents minimal risk of community spread.

Name * Kristina Crivellone

Email * kristina.crivellone@nhboe.net

Comments *

Dear NHBOE, Mayor Elicker, and all interested parties,

I am a first grade teacher with NHPS. I would like to sincerely thank the board for their vote to extend distance learning through the first marking period.

While I am desperate to work with my kids in person, we need further preparation. We need more support staff and funding. We need curricular plans that are FULLY developed for rollout. The models described in the staff and BOE



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meetings last week are a nice start, but are nowhere near implementation-ready. Starting school when we are neither ready to teach in person safely, nor effectively is NOT the right idea.

To those who oppose waiting to go in-person, I would ask: Have you, as a lone adult, ever spent a day with twelve six year olds (let alone 24)? Have you spent long periods of time with even ONE six year old and managed to keep them masked and cooperative for a MINIMUM of three consecutive hours? Have you ever tried to convey the difference in the way your mouth says /f/ and /th/ in a mask (so no visible mouth and tongue) while simultaneously trying to get the three current mask offenders to comply AND not lose the attention of the other nine kids? If you haven't, please use your skills of imagination and, as we say in class, make a mind-movie of what that looks like.

Additionally, many of my colleagues and I have repeatedly noticed the lack of many to consider teachers in their safety considerations (I'm not speaking of the board here, but in general). The best we seem to get is statements like, "we are concerned with the safety of the staff". But we aren't just "staff". We are PEOPLE with families. We are people with immunodeficiency; with diabetes; high blood pressure, etc.. We are people who are being asked to stay in insufficiently ventilated rooms for hours at a time with children from UPWARDS OF TWENTY DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLDS EVERY DAY. And then go home to our families with their own set of vulnerabilities. We have stretched and stretched to the demands of changing societal situations. We have already promised to protect your kids with our lives in the event of unavoidable danger. We did NOT agree to risk our lives when the danger is completely avoidable!!

Thank you for your decision last week. Thank you for considering SAFETY and the value of coming back the right way. Please uphold those decisions.

Thank you, Kristina Crivellone, Grade 1 Teacher

Name * Keisha Leyton

Email * kel2111@columbia.edu

Comments *

The school closure plan approved by the New Haven Board of Education on August 5th to keep schools closed for two and a half months is very difficult to understand. And it was done in a way that made this decision come out of



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the blue. Infections haven't gone up to levels that require remote learning. We didn't know we were supposed to spend the summer shouting louder than groups who want to keep the schools closed, because we thought you were following the science and researched recommendations. Nobody knew you could even do this while public health conditions allow schools to be open. It's so demoralizing, and with all due respect, feels like you took an opportunity during the storm when it would be a while for us all to find out, to make a push for something that doesn't actually make sense. We're not organized, we don't know how to get you to hear us in large numbers because we don't have means of contacting parents and staff across all the schools, like you and your activist group do. But please hear us! At this point we will have luxuries like gyms and restaurants open, and the necessities for regular people like schools closed. What is your long term plan? What happens next year when the virus is still here? Will we also close down grocery stores and pharmacies?

Name * Alexa B

Email * alexabarnettestorm@yahoo.com

Comments *

I'm a teacher but I don't want to say which school or grade because at the moment you'll be crucified for saying you want schools to go back! But my sister is a nurse, she's worked with covid patients for months and it's pretty clear that the high school teachers here have whipped up a frenzy that isn't supported by the science. I'm so disappointed in your not following public health recommendations. It sets a very bad example to the kids and to the families. I really wish you'd listen to the state's health experts as everything they say about how transmission works fits with what I've heard from my sister who has fought this virus in close contact for six months. Let me tell you that teachers are bombarded with campaigns from groups in the community every day, I don't even know how they get our emails but they have, and they tell us we'll all die if we go back and such nonsense. But if I didn't have my family to show me the reality I'd probably believe them too by now, even though there's not a public health expert among them! It's very upsetting. I feel so powerless. Please let us get back to planning for reopening.

Name * Keith L

Email * klindenn@hotmail.com



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Comments *

When our power came back on i heard from my son's friend that the board will not let the kids back in school next month. His principle had sent a message to let some people at the school know. The school seem pretty cut up about it planning to go back and then having to stop. this doesn't seem to help anybody and i'm so confused because i thought the governor allowed us to go back. i can understand how the high schools would have a hard time of it but i don't get why the kids have to stay home the younger kids, or thier teachers. they don't know what to do now. i signed the petition but don't know what else to do, so please help us now commissioner, because if you dont step in nobdoy will help us. the board dont listen to people like me out of work but i got their addresses from my son's friend who said to write you all at the same time. Mayor i'll be honest i didnt like you at first but they said you tried to stop this and i respect you for it, you dont just vote for politics but for people.

Name * Jessa Simpson

Email * jessasimpson@zohomail.com

Comments *

I'm a New Haven parent and hope what I've heard isn't true that you're not letting the kids go back in September. Every day we watch the governor's briefing online about the covid numbers and positivity rates, and we've been so happy to see that we've managed to stay in the moderate and often even low risk zone in our city and our state. But now it feels like it was all for nothing! Why should we bother working so hard to keep infections low when you don't even listen to the science? Mr Cordona I truly hope you will let the teachers and kids back into school. Our principal said that they have all the extra spaces set up and they're ready if they get the go ahead and she still wants us to have hope. She told us all about Dr Tracey's hybrid plan and it sounds really good for my third grader. But now I just don't know what to hope for. I have a third grader and a baby I can't be a teacher. He has a teacher, a great one! She wants to teach him and she thinks it will be safe if they wear masks. We've been practicing the masks for weeks now.

Name * Jill Kelly



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Email * jill_kelly@fas.harvard.edu

Comments *

I want to thank the Board for their vote to begin school remotely and for standing up for the health and safety of New Haven children, teachers, family and the broader community -- all of whom would be harmed by a local resurgence of the coronavirus.

The levels chosen by the state as cut-off values for in-person, hybrid and remote are irresponsible.

10, the level below which the state deems in-person acceptable, is a higher level of recent transmission than any other country that has reopened its schools has had at the time of reopening (and most still reopened with a phase-in or hybrid plan). It translates to 350 new cases per day in the state, or about 5 times the current levels of transmission.

25, the level below which the state deems hybrid schooling to be safe translates to 875 new cases per day -- approximately the level of transmission we saw at the peak of the pandemic in Connecticut!! 25 is the level Arizona has right now!!

That means that our state government is willing to let Connecticut lose all of the gains it has made in the last few months against this pandemic. Under this policy, they would not let schools go remote until the state or county, or possibly a town, is in as bad shape as Arizona.

Because the state has made an incredibly irresponsible policy decision, NHPS should not accept or adopt their metrics, cutoffs and plans, but should do just exactly as you have done: decide to act out of caution early, providing the time and certainty for the district to prepare a good remote learning program for this fall.

Name * E L Lipecki

Email * lipeckie@outlook.com

Comments *

Our whole family is in shock at this decision. I'd understand if we had lots more infections all of a sudden, but doing this now, so soon before reopening, just makes no sense. We support a safe return to in person school in September. For our kid it would be 4 days a week on the hybrid plan. That's fine although of course 5 days would be



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better. But what you're proposing isn't going to be education for the little ones. And with such low infection rates that's not a sensible choice at all.

Name * Nathan Grubuagh

Email * nathan.grubaugh@yale.edu

Comments *

Hi, I am an infectious disease epidemiologist at the Yale School of Public Health, and I have devoted the last 6 months of my time fully to our COVID-19 response. Early during the outbreak in New Haven, I helped to develop systems to provide testing to healthcare workers and test our wastewater for track transmission, and now I am developing novel SARS-CoV-2 tests to massively scale surveillance across the country.

On a more related note, I have worked closely with the National Basketball Association for the last 4 months to help them a protocol to reduce the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission within their "bubble". The advice that I can pass on from this is that no matter how detailed and researched the protocol, there will be things that missed and things that are not needed. Each school, with its unique collection of teachers, students, and infrastructure, will be different, and time will be required to fine tune the COVID-19 protocols to maximize both safety and education.

I am worried that the decision to delay in-person classes, among other things, will disrupt this very important period of acclamation and optimization of the COVID-19 protocols. New Haven is currently among the safest places in the country in regards to COVID-19, and cases have remained very low since mid-June. This is the best time to work out the nuances of teaching and learning in this environment, and moving into the late fall and winter to start will only make things more complicated as flu and colds circulate. In this scenario, we wont be left with much margin for error, and the additional time for prep will not make up for the lost experience.

I believe that the hybrid plan outlined by the BOE in previous meetings was practical and backed by science. I suggest that the BOE continue with this plan considering the current risk is relatively low, which will in the long run ensure a safer and better educational environment if the risk suddenly changes.

Name * Emily Bazelon



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Email * emilybazelon@gmail.com

Comments *

I'm a public school parent in New Haven. My son is a student at Wilbur Cross High School. I'm writing in support of the superintendent and the mayor's plan to reopen the schools in September. This is a fraught issue. The failures of the national government have bred enormous distrust about managing Covid. I understand that everyone is concerned about safety. But we have an opportunity in New Haven and in Connecticut. Because the state and local infection rates are low, we can reopen our schools in person responsibly, carefully, and incrementally. We should do that because the learning loss from the spring has already taken a serious toll on kids. If we keep them home til November--or, I fear longer--that ALSO creates risk for them in the longer term, and cost.

I appreciate the thought and planning and huge amount of work, from many stakeholders, which has gone into Dr. Tracey's plan and I support it. I also think the essential thing is to offer SOME in person school in the fall, for families that want it, even if we start just with the elementary schools and see how it goes (since younger kids are at the lowest risk for the virus and are the most poorly served by remote learning) We could then ramp up to middle schools and high schools. (Though to be clear, I would send my son back to high school in September if that were possible.)

I think there is a huge difference between SOME reopening, so the community can gain trust, and none -- or rather, only the reopening of private school and private day care in New Haven, which would create a very disturbing inequity. I am also upset by the possibility that other school districts in Connecticut will reopen, and we will not. When I checked today, it seemed like Hartford, Bridgeport, Guilford, Madison, North Haven, Hamden, Stratford and Milford were all planning full-time or hybrid reopening models. That's not a full list--just the districts I checked. Is New Haven going to be the only district that says no, we can't do this? I don't understand that outcome when our trusted professionals are saying yes, we can.

Please reconsider last week's decision and allow parents to make the choice to send their children to New Haven public schools in the fall.

Thank you for your consideration, Emily Bazelon, 104 Linden Street, New Haven, CT 06511

Name * Victoria Grubaugh



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Email * vparsons82@gmail.com

Comments *

We are entering as new parents in the New Haven Public School system, with a rising kindergartner. I am writing to express my extreme disappointment in the school board's decision to do remote only for at least the first 10 weeks of the school year. After listening to the primary presentation on Wednesday evening, but not being able to stay on for the full session, I continued to feel confident in your leadership and the plan that the Tiger team developed. The plan feels safe, in a state that is one of the best in the nation right now – recognized by Dr. Fauci, and offers families and teachers choice. The particular and thoughtful attention to what younger children need – i.e. more in person instruction – was a relief and impressive, relative to what I am seeing across the country's school districts. To wake up Thursday morning and see in the paper that the Board voted against the hybrid model, which I understood was the district's preferred recommendation, was a shock. I would add and not just a disappointment but caused panic. To change direction and go in direct opposition to the Tiger team's recommendation and to put in place the "high risk" plan in place when we are at "medium risk" (or "low risk" even) is confusing and has caused me to lose confidence in the BOE's ability to follow through on what it says it will do. At this late hour, this has caused complete chaos and panic for us and many families we know. I don't know why we should trust the schools will open in-person instruction after the 10 weeks, as the plan outlined appears to be purely hypothetical. It seems the voices of people that will never be satisfied if schools are open in any capacity, no matter how thoughtful and respectful of a myriad of choices were the loudest and my choices invalidated. I feel like I put undeserved faith in the Tiger Team's plan and the BOE, and now we are stuck scrambling with trying to figure out how to ensure our child has childcare while both parents work and she gets the quality of education, socialization, and stimulation she needs to thrive.

Doing a remote only model for any period of time – unless the science demands we do otherwise, which is not the current situation in New Haven – takes away the choice of families who want to send their children to school. As I understood the plan, teachers and families were given the option to not go in person. There is room for flexibility here to accommodate choice. It seems to me, however, that now is the time to accelerate and maximize in person learning before the possible second wave closure that may be coming – or the addition of cold and flu season complications. Now is the time to work through the new processes and adapt accordingly.



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I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that we are a middle class family with two highly educated parents. We are in a scramble and very stressed trying to figure out our next steps – i.e. hire a tutor, form a "pod" with other families, pull out for the year, beg for a kindergarten spot at a child care center and risk our "slot" at our preferred elementary school, etc. But as challenging and stressful as this for us, we can likely figure out the finances of paying for help and the right educational supports. As a Licensed Clinical Social Worker by background, and frankly a human, what keeps me up at night are the families in New Haven, and around our country, who do not have our means, savviness, or traditional academic ability. I worry about thousands of children in our city who will never catch up. Kids who fall behind in reading or math without the support they need to be successful through remote teaching and the trajectory of their education will be forever changed. I worry about the parents, most often women, who have been or will be forced to quit their jobs or reduce their hours because they do not have a child care situation available to them they can afford who can also support their child's remote learning – especially at this late hour. Or if they do manage to work, more often than not we learned this spring, it is mothers who bear the brunt of the stress of doing both – working while somehow figuring out supporting remote learning, often with multiple children at different grade levels. This vote was anti-child and anti-feminist. Yes I hear the calls that the public school system should not be the answer to all of society's challenges. However, starting with the cries of Horace Mann, public education is to be the great equalizer. It is not acceptable to rip away the role public education has played in education, family support, a safe place for children to be while their parents earn a living etc. all at once without a reasonable alternative. Where is the creativity for outdoor classrooms under tents for the fall? In our many parks? Our restaurants have figured this out in parking lots, on sidewalks. We can do more. We can be better.

In conclusion, I restate my disappointment in the decision made and hope the board will reconsider and offer safe choice to all families and teachers. The current plan is unacceptable to my family and has eroded my faith in the BOE.

Name * Darnell Williams

Email * williamsfamilyboo@zohomail.com



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Comments *

New Haven had a good plan to open in September! Why was it change? Little kids need each other and learning. We don't know what to do now.

Name *

Sean Hardy

Email *

historian45@yahoo.com

Comments *

As A 23 Year Employee Leading Support Staff At Mauro– Sheridan School In New Haven– The Opening Of School At This Time Is Unsafe For School Aged Children As Well As Adults! I Do Believe That Our Students Direct In Person Instruction Is Vital To Their Learning! However Because Of Our Present Situation Centered Around The Virus – At Home Learning Will Be More Applicable For The Safety Of All ! All Lives Matter And Proper And Suitable Precautions As Well! Consider The Remote Learning Until Further Notice ! I don't need any problems and neither do others.. Sean Hardy – Mauro – Sheridan School!

Name *

Nicholas Di Maria

Email *

nicholas.dimaria@nhps.net

Comments *

First off, I am a NHPS educator and I am very concerned at notion that teachers do not want to return as if we don't care about our students. Allow me to begin with a citation from Axios. Yesterday's headline read that 97,000 children tested positive for Covid-19, and according to reports this summer, it is believed that children play a key role in community transmission. It has also been reported multiple times that the virus is disproportionately affecting Black and Latino children, along with their communities. Those are our communities, our neighbors. I have students who have been infected, and students whose parents were hospitalized. I worry not only about their health, but the health of any future transmissions to other students and their families.

This is a time to choose the difficult option: to protect our community and yes that requires sacrifice. I will not



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sacrifice my student's or any member of my community to this pandemic.

DO NOT OPEN SCHOOL!

It is time we as teachers, parents, and community leaders come together, think proactively, and adjust to the most difficult challenge of our lives. We must be like water: ADAPT. That is the only way we can overcome this crisis.

Name * Jo Miller

Email * millerjs@outlook.com

Comments * I wish the Board would listen to the National Federation of Teachers. They deem in person schooling safe when infection rates in a community is below 5%. CT currently is at 1%, many days below 1%. I can understand why the Superintendent didn't agree with your vote last week. Dr Tracey's team worked hard on a hybrid plan that is safe and allows for reopening in September. What's the point of preventing schools from continuing their planning with that model at this very late stage?

Name * Toni Criscuolo

Email * therealtoni@sbcglobal.net

Comments * From a NHI Commenter that I wish to submit to the NHBOE: " Dear BOE, NHPS Parents & students: the "massive gaps" that plague NHPS students were there LONG before COVID. Poor support from home leads to disengaged students who fall farther behind every year– IN SCHOOL.
I agree that distance learning is not ideal but it's better than spreading COVID and it's better than getting sick and maybe dying.
If parents were so upset about the terrible education online; where were you to insist that their children repeat the year, so as not to lose the learning? Where were you when teachers were pressured to pass students? When the last marking period was NOT PERMITTED to lower a student's grade but only raise it? Once that was known; attendance



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dropped off-- where were parents to make their kids get up and attend class????

Teachers did the best they could--- some parents and kids dropped the ball but don't want to accept the responsibility. Good on you and God Bless you, Darnell! I hope you read this comment." Took the words right out of my mouth!!! YOU ARE DOING THE RIGHT THING-- ONLINE TILL SAFER TO RETURN!

Name * J Waters

Email * 2106sjw@gmail.com

Comments *

It makes no sense to abruptly decide to stay remote in New Haven rather than reopen in September because schools have had a lot of cases in Georgia, Indiana and Israel. It's a dishonest comparison, with no bearing in reality. Why not then compare New Haven to the hundreds and hundreds of school districts in Europe that have reopened successfully, with no outbreaks, all through the Spring? Certainly the infection rates and testing capabilities are much closer in those places to what is the case in CT right now than those other comparisons. It doesn't even make sense to point to cases being found more locally in summer schools. If one case is found and that cohort is sent home for testing and isolation then it means the system is working. The real case for keeping schools closed is if their reopening will fuel outbreaks. There is nothing to indicate that especially elementary schools reopening here in September will do so. There will surely be cases found now and then. But with something as profoundly essential to our community as schools at stake, then you have to listen to the Teachers' organization, to the Pediatrics organization, to the CDC, and the countless other organizations that have set the threshold for in-person schooling far above the rates we currently have here. With all due respect, for you to go against all those scientific assessments as well as your own Superintendent and Mayor, does not seem in service of your community.

Name * David Engerman

Email * engerman@gmail.com

Comments *



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I was both surprised and disappointed by the recent BoE vote to seek remote-only education for the start of the 2020–21 school year. While I would had not of course expected "business as usual," there are many many hybrid models that could keep students, staff, and their families safe while at the same time providing New Haven students with the education that they deserve. The arguments against virtual teaching are familiar (and to many, many educators compelling) – inferior learning, profound inequality, deprivation of key elements of the school experience, etc.

I implore the Board to work with teachers and principals to find creative solutions that would listen to the experts and would bring students to school under safe circumstances. As an educator, I understand the complexity of the issue, but this vote lets down our students. Given the views of the major and the superintendent of schools, the vote is also a vote of no-confidence – really, a slap in the face – of those charged with the day-to-day responsibility for safe management of our schools.

Connecticut in general, and New Haven in particular, have been a model for fighting the pandemic, and our sacrifices over the last six months have made it possible for us to find a creative, flexible, and safe way to bring students and teachers together.

Name * Matthew Niebels

Email * mattynibbs@hotmail.com

Comments * I believe our safest course of action is beginning the school year remotely.

Also, as a music educator, I would like to know what protocol to use for teaching wind instruments as well as singing.

Please include “specials” (art,music, band, theatre, PE, library, technology, dance,..)in the discussions to reopen.

Name * Meaghan Sheehan

Email * meaghansheehan@gmail.com



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Comments *

I support a 100% virtual opening in order to keep all of our stakeholders safe. While I do miss our students, and I know they miss their teachers, I consider the risks involved in having everyone in close proximity in the building and on the buses. At this time, I believe a virtual opening is the most responsible choice.

Name * Teresa Johnson

Email * t.grant766@gmail.com

Comments *

Good evening all, as a parent and a community member, I am here tonight to ask the board to please stand by your decision to support distance learning for the beginning of the school year at least. As we look around we have evidence of schools in other areas opening and reclosing within a matter of days/weeks. I do not know why we would want to risk our teachers or children's safety to confirm what is already known. The risk of returning to the classrooms far exceed the benefits. I know we all have the right to make the decision that we feel is best for us however we should also be able to depend on our district to provide a safe learning environment. For the past 10-15 years I have heard many of you say school is not a daycare parents need to make sure the kids come to school to learn NOW you are saying kids need to come to school so parents can work! Also for many years our schools have been underfunded, their education has been at risk for a long time....NOW (the state) say we do not want a LOST YEAR of teaching....well NEWSFLASH we have lost a lot of years hence not being able to implement a proper distance learning plan when other districts have been able to adapt swiftly.

Lastly, I think if the board really wanted to hear from parents/public you would not send out surveys that are designed to get the answers you want, you would not limit the public comments to 2 minutes and you would find a way to let more than 500 people into the meetings and you would not have a meeting when have of your district did not have power/internet!

Name * Anika Singh Lemar

Email * anika.singh@gmail.com



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Comments *

It is unfortunate that the Board appears to have given up on developing a safe plan to return to school. As evidenced by our experience last spring, there are thousands of children in the district who will be abandoned by an all-remote plan. And, worse, as of right now, there is no all-remote plan. We have abandoned in-school learning with no actual plan for remote learning. How will we reach students with an IEP? How will we reach first graders who don't yet know how to read, much less learn fully on-line? How will we do live instruction when too many families do not have the technology to support it? How will a gym teacher spend his or her days "remote teaching"? What else could that person be doing to support our students? In other words, what's the plan? Until we have one, we should not abandon the only plan we had, a hybrid option.

Name * Mila Venek

Email * mila.venek2021@gmail.com

Comments *

Please don't do this, keeping the schools closed. If you're really genuinely concerned about public health then weighing the prospect of remote learning until at least November against the risks of reopening partially and cautiously in September has to factor in all of public health. There's nothing healthy about this decision, not in a community that has worked so hard and come so far with Covid. I'm just one mom and I guess you're thinking why should we listen to her. But you don't have to listen to me! Listen to the CDC, to the CT Department of Health and to the American teachers union, that all say that the infection rates in New Haven allow us to reopen as long as the rates stay low. And most of all you should listen to our Superintendent who has worked tirelessly to make this happen. I'm sure she knows more about our schools than the rest of us put together and she would not be in favor of reopening in a month if she didn't deem it safe. Go to the state with demands, sure, but don't sacrifice all of us for politics!

Name * Elizabeth Wilson

Email * elizabethvital11@gmail.com



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Comments *

NHPS needs to get in line with the every other school district in CT and offer a hybrid plan. We want the same opportunity as students in other districts. Students are falling behind, and need a chance to meet in person to establish relationships with their teachers and peers. If we wait until November, then there is a good chance they will not see a classroom at all this year. That would be a huge disservice to our children! Just yesterday, the Governor publicly restated his directive for all students to be in the classroom come Fall. Why are we wasting time trying to justify an exception not supported by the data? We should be spending that time and effort getting ready to reopen safely. Finally, as stated by our Health Director, we have held summer camps, AAU basketball, football practice all summer long safely. How can we not re-open?

Name * Danielle La Pan

Email * danielle.lapan@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

Good Morning BOE,

I wanted to begin by thanking you for the vote last week and having the courage to put the breaks on something that could potentially be extremely harmful to the NHPS community.

I don't believe a student's social life should be more important than my (or their) actual life.

Let's really think about what going back to school means, because it doesn't mean business as usual or a social life for anyone. It actually has the potential to cause more trauma and more problems for students and the individual school cultures/communities.

– Group work, partner work, and team building won't be happening in most places because of the masks and distance restrictions.

– If a student is upset, a teacher can't console them like normal because of distance restrictions.

– If a young student is scared, a teacher can't comfort them they way they used to.

– Art projects are limited because supplies can't be shared.



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- Connections are limited because instruction will need to be lecture style followed by individual work.
- Lunch? That is a time for students to be with their friends, and instead, they will be in classrooms or only a few kids at a table.

- Buses? How are we getting kids to and from school safely?

Many parents are arguing that they need schools open for childcare. I understand this need, but this isn't actually the purpose of schools. We are well trained educators, not overpaid babysitters. Additionally, families yelling for the hybrid model clearly are ignoring the fact that the hybrid plan only had preK-3 in school four days a week and the rest only in two days a week. That's still three days a week of distance learning and the need for childcare. Hybrid will also guarantee that the distance learning portion is still done poorly because teachers are going to be doing two jobs at once, no matter what the district is trying to paint this as with rotating groups or whatever. I've been helping my principal outline what a hybrid and a remote start might look like at MBA. There are so many things overlooked by this hybrid return that need clear answers to for high schools. What happens to kids with free periods? That is usually their time to relax or do homework. They need need to be scheduled. Who is monitoring these kids all the time in an way that is equitable to the adults in the building and not breaking contract rules? Has any of this been thought through. What is the room being used in each school for students to be sent to if they fall ill? Do schools have these magical rooms properly set up that isn't a space already being utilized for another important purpose in the building? What cameras and microphones on computers? I heard Dr. Tracey say that 80% of teachers have those items. That is incorrect at MBA, and if the responses on social media are correct, that is incorrect in many schools.

School is two weeks away for teachers at this point. If these questions, and more, don't have clear and thoughtful answers at this point, how could we possible go back? Yes, numbers are low right now. Don't we want them to stay that way? What is the number of dead staff or students you are all okay with? There isn't zero risk to returning, so knowing that in urban, mostly Black and Latinx communities that this virus has been worse, what's the number you can live with as the death toll because there will be one.

I truly hope the State approved our distance learning start. That is the only safe way to do this.

Thanks, Danielle

Name * Berryman Jonathan



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Email * jgbmusic@aol.com

Comments *

Kudos to the New Haven Board of Education for recognizing that children and people of color are protected classes on whom institutions do not and ought not hastily experiment. Considering that more than 80% of our NHPS students are students of color, our population fits both protected classes. As the in-person reopening of schools is certainly an experiment, with virtual-learning participants serving as the control group and face-to-face participants serving as the experiment group, the NHPS has made a wise decision in its voting to extend virtual learning into the first quarter of the 2020-2021 school year. Do we need to know whether virtual learning is safer than in-person learning or is it better to know that virtual learning has left no blood on our hands? The cost of wellness is priceless to the sick. The cost of living means nothing to the dead. As a veteran educator and New Haven resident, I appreciate the NHPS decision to protect us all from needless experimentation and peril. Protection from harm is valued over later struggling to forgive an egregious miscalculation of risk.

Name * Stephen Poland

Email * stephen.poland@riseup.net

Comments *

You, the Board of Education, have wasted two months. Had a decision around remote learning been announced early and definitively, we could have spent the last two months collectively using our time and energy to figure out how to provide communities, households, young people, and teachers with what they need in terms of support, resources, safe social interactions, outdoor learning spaces, etc.. We are now three weeks away from the school year starting, and we are still stuck in a debate about how to best conduct the upcoming school year, leaving precious little time for everyone to prepare for whatever form schooling will take.

Of course, we all understand that you are all in an extremely difficult position because it is indisputable that there are no *good* options. We are living in a pandemic, and life in a pandemic is objectively difficult. However, it is also indisputable that there was always tremendous uncertainty about the fall term, and the very fact of that uncertainty ought to have signaled to you that you needed to make a definitive decision prioritizing the safety of everyone



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involved. That is fundamentally what your job is, before anything else: to keep young people, teachers, staff, and community members safe. Without that foundational prioritizing of safety, we would have no public school system. I urge you to definitively announce remote learning across New Haven Public Schools as soon as possible, so we can all use the remaining time to prepare as best we can for a safe autumn school term. Unfortunately, by allowing the uncertainty to fester, you have unwittingly fanned the flames of a heated public debate over school reopening with multiple different competing plans, which has consumed far too much of all of our time and energy with absolutely *zero* to show for it. Please do your job by putting this debate to an end, and quickly move to assess and support everything our communities need to do the best we can with this difficult situation. We cannot wish this pandemic away, simply because we would like life to return to normal. It is bigger than us. It is your duty to rise to the occasion, and we are depending on you to finally, belatedly do the right thing. Let's be in this together with solidarity and care.

Name * Caitlin Engler

Email * caitlin.engler@gmail.com

Comments * I would like to thank the Board for voting in favor of remote learning for the beginning of the school year. I absolutely want to be in the classroom with my students, and I am very excited to meet my new class. Unfortunately, in this current environment, until it is completely safe to do so, for our students, teachers, or their families, remote learning is a better option. Thank you for supporting the safety of the entire community.

Name * Mike Piraneo

Email * michael.piraneo@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments * As a music teacher and father of an entering pre-K student, I am relieved that the district takes our safety seriously and fully support distance learning as we open in a few weeks.



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For my son, working from home has been and can be a great opportunity to teach and spend time with my son.

Will pre-K teachers share resources to teach at home?

Musically, this a great opportunity for students to develop digital music literacy, which is extremely applicable for students in our modern technological world. As they listen and consume music on the internet, it can be our goal to transform them from consumers to producers.

One of the largest benefits of music is its group participation, and we have digital platforms which allow this most important attribute of music. When our environment is safe enough to allow students to be physically together again, this is something that we can look forward to rather than fear.

Name * Carl Testa

Email * carl@carltesta.net

Comments *

To New Haven Board of Education,

My name is Carl Testa. I am a parent of a child going into first grade this Fall at Quinnipiac STEM Magnet School in Fair Haven Heights. I am also a part-time teacher at Educational Center for the Arts. I am writing in support of the recent decision by the Board to hold classes remotely. CT has done well during this pandemic and we are seeing low numbers of cases and deaths. This is due to the fact that CT is still adhering to social distancing and avoiding indoor spaces. Bars in CT are still not open due to health concerns. We must continue social distancing if we want to maintain these low numbers and keeping schools closed is a part of that. Considering that many of our public schools do not have updated HVAC systems or even windows that open, we cannot responsibly expect teachers and students to congregate indoors for classes as normal. Some parents are advocating for "parent-choice" as to whether to attend in-school or not, but unfortunately this choice does not take into account the teachers' perspective and whether they have a choice to teach in school or not, or whether they would truly have a choice to send their children into school or not. I support the schools conducting remote learning until all of the public schools are FULLY funded meaning that HVAC and physical upgrades are completed, PPE is purchased and distributed, school nurses, school counselors, and contact tracers are hired, and COVID-19 testing is made



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available to all students, teachers, and staff. Let's center and hold up the most vulnerable during this time and make sure their needs are being met and looked after. Thank You.

Name * Jon Cap

Email * jon.cap@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

To the New Haven Board of Education:

I feel the push from parents for their child to go back to school comes from the point of not really caring about school quality or their child's social life but rather desperation, and lack of child care if we continue to do remote learning for the upcoming school year. I would like to outline an idea that may be able to solve this problem along with many other problems and concerns that the district faces.

If we continue distance learning for the beginning of the school year this will be the safest way to educate our students.

Specific neighborhood schools could be opened up for childcare centers where parents that are in need could drop off their child. The children would bring their laptops and classwork, and work on their online lessons that their teachers have posted. These locations could also provide a grab and go lunch service for the students that live close to that school. The people who meet the qualifications to work at these sites could be new haven residence that are unemployed due to the pandemic.

The district is always in a struggle financially: If we close down the buildings that are not in use during the distance learning or for the child care centers the cost of utilities and consumable materials would add up in savings.

Even if all NHPS employees(bus drivers, food services, custodians, etc) still got paid, the district would not spend money on fuel for buses. As much food in the cafe, cleaning and bathroom supplies, stationary/ school supplies, etc. This is not even including all the money that will be spent to try and retrofit schools and classrooms to be safe and clean for the pandemic.

The money this year from savings of extracurricular activities and sports would also add up.



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This is not a perfect plan (none of the plans are perfect). There are many things to work out if we choose this way. Students, families, and staff will have to make some sacrifices but this is the best plan to keep everyone safe and will save the district money.

Name * Mila Venek

Email * mila.venek2021@gmail.com

Comments *

My husband wrote to the State Board of Education last week when we heard the news about your vote. Like so many others we've been without power but even if we hadn't, we had no idea we were supposed to attend every board meeting just to make sure the state and superintendent's guidelines will be followed. Anyway, they wrote back this:

The Governor and Commissioner strongly believe that with the currently low transmission rate of COVID 19 in our state, that students belong in school being educated. While the decision regarding the implementation model is that of the superintendent of schools, a process has been developed that will require districts (represented by the Superintendent and the local Board of Education Chair) who chose to implement only online learning to attend a meeting and discuss the reasons for their decisions. Addendum 4 to the Department's guidance regarding the reopening of schools addressed the implementation of remote learning only. Specifically, "should a district determine not to provide an in-school option while in the low or moderate category, an exception approval is required from the State Department of Education, the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Health. Superintendents should consider developing a local structure to include the school medical advisor, local health director, and school nurse leader to consult when making decisions." (See attached document from which this language was taken.) Thus, there is a process that will be implemented to address the decision to begin schools in New Haven with only remote learning.

So according to this the New Haven BoE doesn't really have a very good case for keeping schools closed? The infection rates are not in the high risk zone, and neither the Chairwoman of the Board nor the Superintendent



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agree with the decision to keep schools closed, and I heard they don't want to argue the case to the state themselves. How can this be happening all the same? Why is there such chaos in New Haven, and why is the Board acting this way? Who did this? And who is this helping, three weeks away from the planned start? I know we should just move our kids to a different district like so many people are doing now, but first of all that's easier said than done and also I also want answers.

We didn't know we had to keep commenting and showing up to Board meetings the whole time for the district's guidelines they sent to us to be implemented. Even tonight we can't join the zoom, our internet keeps cutting out and I'm so anxious we won't get people to know in time that they should join the meeting. How can we have a say without joining zoom meetings which is very hard for us at our house? So many people have this problem.

We thought you were actually working on how to implement the plan, not trying to go against it. And with all due respect to the teenagers on the committee who I'm sure work hard, it's not a good feeling to know that two high schoolers has this power over the lives of so many families of elementary school children, as well as the elementary school teachers. Our situation is so different from theirs when it comes to learning and especially remote learning. This doesn't feel like a very thought through decision, although I mean no disrespect to all of you who work very hard by saying that. But so many of us were taking completely by surprise by this, not even knowing it was in the cards at all, and so soon before school was meant to start.

Please reconsider your sudden decision that will be so hard for so many people here.

Mila and Paul (parents to Tommy,6 and Ash, 9)

Name * Michelle Hampson

Email * michelle.hampson@yale.edu

Comments *

Dear NH School Board,

I was dismayed to hear of your recent vote to delay in-person learning this year. Please reconsider this! There is no better time to put our feet in the water than now. Let's try the hybrid plan that has been developed, monitor covid cases, and see if we can keep the numbers low. We are fortunate that Connecticut is in a good place now, and that we have this opportunity to try a balanced approach that can potentially further education and preserve public



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safety. If the numbers go up, we can shift to remote learning and study where we went wrong, and try again when the numbers once again stabilize. There is no point in delaying before we have tried anything when the numbers are good – it is simply avoiding the difficult challenges that we must face if we value our children's education.

Thank you for considering this comment, Michelle Hampson

Name * Robert Rhone

Email * orangekiosk@gmail.com

Comments *

Thank you to the board for making the safe and prudent choice for our return to distance learning this fall.

I have been teaching in New Haven for 11 years and I care deeply for my students and colleagues.

I understand the difficulty of this choice I have two school aged children and know how complex this is.

I hope that you stick to your guns and do what is right for the health and well being of the NHPS community.

Two of my biggest concerns about returning in person are about masks and ventilation. If there are no standards for the types of masks along with 'from the top' and 'clear and concise' expectations the inherent wiggle room will be taken advantage of. In high schools students do everything they can to bend the rules despite the consequences, this health crisis will not change the tendencies of teenagers. If we return in person, I hope that you set out a minimum requirement for types of masks. A knitted scarf shouldn't be acceptable, a t shirt pulled over the face shouldn't be acceptable, a single layer of micro fiber shouldn't be acceptable. Also, I would like to know exactly the expectation I can hold students to when it comes to wearing their mask in my classroom. If a student requests a break from wearing their mask during class time is that ok? Will their distance from each other in my classroom make it so they won't need to wear their mask in class. What if I want a rule in my classroom that students wear masks the entire class period? Will I be backed up by the system on a rule like that? Clarity on that is absolutely necessary.

The second big issue I have with returning is connected to the close space of our classrooms. My school building has no opening windows, which normally makes sense but now is to our detriment. Will the ventilation systems be inspected and or upgraded? Is it acceptable to purchase a hepa filter for my classroom and work space? Clarity and a plan for this is necessary.



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Recently in an interview the Governor cited the low infection rate of nurses as evidence for a return to schools. My last question is how will we be making our school buildings and procedures more like Hospitals (i.e. ventilation and mask and safety equipment procedures) so that we can share in the safe work environment of nurses?

Name * Sarah Gelb

Email * sarah.gelb@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

Good evening. My name is Sarah Gelb and I am the Music teacher at Lincoln Bassett Community School in New Haven. I am writing this comment in support of the remote learning plan to reopen schools. The wise decision to extend remote learning through the first quarter of school not only provides the district more time to properly prepare for in person learning, but also keeps students and teachers safe.

As the music teacher, I see over 350 children per week. If I were to remain in my classroom or travel around on a cart, I risk becoming a “super transmitter” of the virus. This is concerning not only for the health of my fellow staff and students, but also my myself and my family. Additionally, if we were to start with in-person learning, I cannot sing, play many of my students’ favorite games (many of which in include holding hands, passing objects, or hand clapping), or play wind instruments; all things that have been enjoyed and valued by the vast majority of my students. If the district begins virtually, I can not only engage in social emotional music activities, but my students can still sing along with videos I’ve made or even create music using software or homemade instruments.

The most important thing about the virtual start plan is that it keeps children, staff, and families safe and healthy. While we can make up for some lost lessons and learning over this past year, we cannot make up for a lost life. One life lost is too many. Thank you for your proposed plan to remote start and for making health and safety the priority.

Name * Christi Sargent

Email * christi1023@gmail.com

Comments *



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Thank you Board for making the right decision I regards to the beginning of the school year.

I am aware that the plan has not been approved. As we think ahead, my major concerns are proper masks, ensuring masks are worn by everyone on the building, plans for how to proceed when students refuse to wear a mask, and the ventilation systems in all building. How will you proceed with these very important safety protocols? How will you get our buildings and safety systems to emulate those of a hospital? There are good reasons why we do not see high rates of Covid in hospital staffs. We need the same measures in our buildings or we should remain closed until that is possible.

I realize how difficult this is, I urge you to consider the safety of ALL stakeholders, teachers and staff included.

Name * Akimi Nelken

Email * akimi.nelken@new-haven.k12.ct.us

Comments *

To the members of the New Haven Board of Education:

Thank you for making the prudent and compassionate decision to open school remotely for the first ten weeks. It is my sincere hope that the CSDE will approve New Haven's plan.

I am aware that there are many parents and members of our community that do not support your decision. I understand this; as a parent of a 14-year-old and 3-year-old, I see how desperately our children need social interaction, routine and normalcy. Most of the proponents of remote learning focus on safety, and this is because safety IS paramount. However, I'd like to use my time today to explain a teacher's perspective on why remote learning will be better for our children instructionally.

I strongly believe the educational outcomes for students will be better if we open remotely, especially at the high school level. This will be my 11th year teaching English at Wilbur Cross, and students love my classes because they are interactive, student-centered and rely on a high degree of collaboration between students. This is what students miss about coming to school. However, nearly all of the best practices I know for teaching in person are not possible when students must remain 3' apart, face the same direction and cannot touch shared materials. Group work and other collaborative activities such as gallery walks, "chalk talks" and even restorative circles are not feasible under these conditions. Flexible seating arrangements such as small groups and concentric circles (for



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fishbowl discussions) will not be possible. In short, everything that I know how to do to make learning engaging and interactive is not allowable while complying with the safety guidelines. Students will be in rows, 3' apart (I hope!), with the teacher at the front of the class, likely lecturing. This kind of education is not worth the risk of coming into school in person. On the other hand, there are many creative techniques teachers can use online to encourage interaction and collaboration, especially now that synchronous classes will be allowed. Most teachers acknowledge that the distance learning that occurred from March to June was not what we hoped it would be. That does not mean that meaningful, effective distance learning is not possible. Give us the chance (and the tools!) to do this better, and I promise you we will.

Secondly, the idea that teachers will be able to teach small groups in person and online within the same class period is ludicrous. Even when students are working “independently” they often need support from teachers. Teachers will not be able to give the students who are remote the attention they need because they will be constantly assisting and addressing the students there in person. Under the hybrid plan for Wilbur Cross, I will see each of my students for one 38-minute class per week. There is no way I will divide my attention from my in-person students for even one minute of those 38 minutes—that time is so precious and my students are risking their lives to be in school. So when will the students who are fully remote receive instruction? Conversely, under the current plan for fully remote learning, I will “see” my students for face-to-face synchronous online instruction for 90 minutes per week, and I will be able to dedicate all of my time to planning and facilitating meaningful, relevant instruction, and providing extensive individual feedback on their work. To me, it is obvious which circumstance is likely to result in a better educational experience for my students.

Thank you for your support in opening schools remotely. Please let teachers know how we can support your application with the CSDE—we are eager to help.

Sincerely, Akimi Palitz Nelken, Lead Teacher, English Department, Wilbur Cross High School

Name * Lani Rosen-Gallagher

Email * lan.rosen@gmail.com

Comments *

As a parent and an educator, I see many sides to this equation. I have a child in a school here in New Haven and



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I've taught my Yoga & Mindfulness program in many of the New Haven schools. I was also a first-grade teacher in NYC PS. I truly believe that in person learning is ideal for most students. I so badly want my child back in school. However, I do not think that the hybrid models that were suggested would give our students the socialization and be effective for learning to make it worth the risk. I have not seen a plan that creates a model of safety for ALL students across the city. I have not seen a plan for bussing that makes sense with all the other protocols that were being put in place in the school. It is not fair to put our teachers in this position to be guinea pigs, seeing what is happening all over the country right now. Yes, CT is in a very different place with our covid numbers. But it just takes one person to infect others in a class. The implications of this are disastrous. If we start with the 10 weeks of remote learning, I am hopeful that the city can put a plan in place that will work for most students. I understand this is not ideal for working parents. I am unable to work due to this pandemic and am feeling the strains as so many of us are. I do not think it's worth the safety and risk to our teachers and children since we really don't know how this virus will affect each individual who gets it. If we can coordinate with many of the outdoor programs that were successful this summer and make a plan that can work for ALL schools in New Haven to be able to be run safely, then that is a plan I will get behind. As of now, I am in support of the 10 weeks of remote learning while we create the best and safest learning environment we can. Thank you.

Name * Rebecca Cohen

Email * r.cohenpsyd@gmail.com

Comments *

Good evening Board, Dr. Tracey, and NHPS community.

My name is Rebecca Cohen and I am a clinical psychologist who grew up in New Haven and attended NHPS. I am a single parent of a 5 year old who will be attending Kindergarten this year and entering NHPS.

Firstly, I want to share my belief that we are all being placed in positions of making near impossible decisions regarding the health and safety of our children, families, and communities and that I know everyone is operating from that place. I know we are all doing the best that we can under these terrible circumstances. My position is that I support the Board's decision to begin the school year remotely.

I have been attending the recent board meetings and keeping myself informed on CT's status with regard to COVID



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numbers. It remains my belief that the costs and risks of reopening in-person continue to outway the benefits. I fully understand the toll that remote learning takes on working families. In my own case, I have had to make major changes to my life to support remote learning for my child. And believe me, I am devastated that we won't be starting kindergarten in the way we have been visioning for the past 5 years. Plus, let's face it, we could use the "break" and a sense of normalcy.

I want to speak specifically to the claims people make about kids needing the socialization that will be provided in schools. I want to be sure that people are considering the reality of what a school day will actually look like because I think we easily jump into a fantasy that kids will be enjoying their experience at school. In reality, we need to consider the massive toll this will take on kids to have to not touch, stay in certain spaces, wash and wash and wash. And how will these behaviors be monitored and managed by teachers? Teachers who are already so burdened with the new ways of teaching are also now tasked with managing behavior to minimize potential contagion spread in their class. I can't even imagine how stressful that would be. And we know as caregivers, that stress does not help us manage children's behavior effectively.

In my search for schools, I visited over 10 schools over two years. At each school I asked two questions: what anti-racism practices do you employ and are your teachers trained in trauma informed education practices. Only two schools were able to answer these questions sufficiently (or at all). I note this because for many people these public health crises are traumatic. And if our schools were previously not implementing these practices (which are above traditional social and emotional learning) pre-COVID, how can we expect that they will be prepared to manage behaviors now under these incredibly stressful and even traumatic circumstances without inadvertently perpetuating the stress, trauma, and even disparity.

If children are struggling with the new rules, how will this be managed? Who will be labeled as having behavioral problems and will receive consequences and who will be supported? Again, I do not believe that staff always target certain children on purpose. But we must understand the intersection of implicit bias and child behavior management and support. And if staff have not had overt and ongoing anti bias and anti racism training, disparity will occur.

Children need to play, touch, explore, discover and have agency around their learning experience in order for it to be meaningful and effective. Under the current plans, this will not be possible. I fear that they will be "managed" all day to try to be safe and that socialization and even education will be secondary.



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We need to look at this for the longrun not just the immediate need. We need to deeply invest in safety now to continue to keep our numbers low and our children and families safe. As such I support beginnig the school year remotely until sufficient safety measures are in place that do not burden children and teachers.

Name * Emily MacMelburn

Email * emacmelburn@gmail.com

Comments * Thank you so very much for your vote last week. I've been teaching in New Haven since 2005, and I'm very proud to be a part of this school system. I know it was a tough call, and many people are criticizing it. As one of the people who would be risking their health and the health of their family to be teaching in person, I thank you for valuing my health and safety, and that of my coworkers, my students, and their families. One life is too many to risk when we have another viable option. Thank you!

Name * Jennifer Shaw

Email * jenniferljshaw@gmail.com

Comments * One of the most important concepts I teach in my class, Statistics for Social Justice at Metropolitan Business Academy is how to interpret statistics in terms that make sense. There's a 1,716/132,600 chance of drawing three hearts in a row from a standard deck, but what does that really mean? That's about 1.3% chance; in other words, if you tried 100 times, it might happen once.

Mathematicians often call lotteries a tax on the mathematically challenged for two reasons: because when the reward is great enough, people will ignore -- and even inflate -- the astronomical odds against them by buying more and more tickets; and because it's human nature to be biased in one's own favor. As the NY Lottery's slogan used to say, "hey, it could happen!" I'm just as guilty of this bias: I went to sleep on November 8th, 2016, content



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with the 95% to 5% likelihood that I would awake to America's first female president. Needless to say, probability didn't work out in my favor: even if 95 out of 100 times I would have gotten the results I wanted, one of those 5 times is what actually happened.

And that's what worries me now. When it comes to winning the jackpot in the lottery, we're all willing to pin our hopes on that 1 chance out of 292 million, sure that, "Hey, it could happen!". But when it comes to the lives of our students, staff, and educators, are we still willing to pin our hopes on those odds? Because according to the current transmission rate in CT, fewer than one person will get infected by an infectious person right now. That seems really low, or unlikely to happen. And when we look at the death rate in CT, it's only 125 people per every 100,000 people. Most likely I won't be one of those 125 people; most likely your kid won't be one of those 125 people. Are those stats in your kid's favor? Most likely. But, hey, it could happen.

I can teach your kid about stats from my home, while they're as safe as you can make them in your home. I can't teach them if either of us is in the ICU. Parents should be demanding the country, state, and city provide viable economic solutions to childcare, housing, and healthcare issues, not demanding that the city sacrifice teachers to act as childcare. Opening schools to get parents back in jobs is the most temporary of bandaids on the 200+ year old wounds of racism and misogyny that have caused these great economic disparities. Putting all the kids in classrooms right now is like the power companies in our area: we're busily cutting away branches from our power lines, instead of investing in an underground system that will guarantee we all have power in the future. We need to focus on BOTH parts of the stats: those 125 people who will die, as well as the 99,875 who won't. In other words, we need to focus on what's best for right now AND for the future. Putting me in the classroom right now won't actually fix the economy, and it will cause several deaths. Let's stop arguing about whose branch took out the power in the area, and instead get the limb down, get the neighbors' generators going for all of us, and then refocus on building a better system. Let me teach your kids remotely while we work to fix the system that put us in this situation in the first place. Because yes, the odds are low you or your kid will die, but I'm not willing to pin my hopes on that, because it COULD happen.

Name * Carrie Smith

Email * carriesmithbak@gmail.com



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Comments *

I am in full support of the Board's decision to resumed full distance learning in the fall. As a teacher and parent of students in New Haven, my number one priority in life is to keep kids and their families safe. Covid-19 is a deadly and debilitating disease who's containment requires great sacrifices from both individuals and the communities in which they belong. As members of the New Haven community, we have the obligation to account for hundreds of years of systematic racial oppression when we make decisions that impact public health, as BIPOC are the more likely to suffer the worst consequences of the disease.

Our country is no longer set up to take care of one another. Largely, we would rather force parents to choose between protecting the health of their families and keeping their jobs to keep their families sheltered and fed. New Haven leadership, in partnership with Yale, must be the visionaries we need to end this false choice. We must devote of energy to ensuring that families have what they need to endure these hard times without losing what's most important- life- while protecting what is necessary for life- food and shelter and healthcare.

Yes, educators must work to create robust and streamlined online/at home learning experiences for all students, but not keeping up with pre-pandemic learning expectations is completely acceptable at this time. Pressing pause on in person learning will not bring the end to our kids and their future success. Instead, throwing kids into schools that must run completely differently than what they are used to, schools where sickness and even Covid related death is near certain, will be what will crush this generation of kids.

I am keeping my boys at home to engage in remote instruction until a vaccine is ready. I will not return to school in person until the vaccine is ready.

We must make remote learning work for all. New Haven can do this. Yale must fund this. We must rise together from this mess knowing that we did everything we could to value each and every life equally.

Name * E Geertz

Email * ebxwgeertz@gmail.com

Comments *

To Dr. Tracey and the Board -- Many thanks for all your work this year.



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We have a circumstance in which not all resources are available to all public school systems. It seems to me that many, many local parents do not grasp that basic fact, and it's hurting our process for dealing with academic year 2020–2021.

It doesn't make sense to compare what North Haven is doing to what NHPS is doing; the systems are, at their cores, not equals to each other in terms of numbers of kids served, numbers of schools, funding, and transportation issues. For starters.

The superintendent of the No. Haven school system is earning \$170k plus benefits to run six schools. Supt. Tracey is getting \$250k to run 44 schools, of which a significant percentage are magnet schools, which means she's got to take into account a far more complex group of students , many of whom come from all over the county.

Think about what these folks are earning per school, to run these places, and you can immediately grasp what the differences might be in terms of resource pools.

This isn't unimportant. It's not irrelevant. To complain that NHPS isn't ready to open safely in September doesn't necessarily mean that the NHPS administration is utterly incompetent; it means they are facing challenges magnitudes larger and different from what the far smaller suburban systems are facing. If you ask me.

This is not to say I think 54 Meadow has handled this disaster perfectly; I have lots of questions I would ask.

Among them: Why did we not consider a system in which K–5 would return to on–site learning along with any child with an IEP or similar; and 6–12, unless special needs, would do remote learning? This would be a compromise I could understand.

But the larger point I want to make stands:

I want to acknowledge that in our state, the plans for school made by various cities and towns for this fall were not made on level playing fields and I resent the implication that they were. I hear in so many dialogues with parents that they are such. We need to face our reality, yes, but also question WHY the realities are so different, so close by.

I thank all present for their time and efforts on behalf of NHPS students, faculty, administration, staff, and parents.

Name * Jonathan Wyrzten

Email * jonwyrzten@gmail.com



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Comments *

Dear BOE – please provide for some form of in person instruction, at least for the elementary grades at the start of school in September. CT and New Haven are in as good a position in terms of lowest COVID rates in the country as we will ever be over the 12–18 months, and it is important to get at least some of our youngest children in the classroom.

The following participants participated via Zoom. Video is available at NHPS.net, Public Meetings, to view.

Mrs. Rivera asked Dr. Joyner to keep the 2-minute time.

Ms. Peg Oliviera, Worthington Hooker Middle School parent, spouse of a NHPs high school teacher, and the Director of the Gisselle Program in Early Childhood at the Yale Early Childhood Center; Ms. V. Horsley, parent of two, Hooker and Cross; thanked the Board and Superintendent for creating a plan for the district to deal with this global pandemic; Ms. Noelle Shipley, Career teacher, resident of New Haven, referred to the letter Dr. Tracey sent out in July to staff and teachers; Ms. Leslie Blatteau, Metro teacher, parent of a Kindergartener at Hill Central, thanked Board of Ed members who made the decision to begin the year with remote learning; Ms. Rhonda Roumani, Worthington Hooker parent, thanked the Board and Dr. Tracey for showing leadership in making a very difficult decision; she reiterated her support of what some of the other people have said before her; Ms. Nataliya Braginsky, New Haven high school teacher and resident, thanked the Board and teacher administrators for making the decision of opening the schools for remote learning; Mr. Joseph North, commented that he thinks it is worth recalling that the majority of parents and teachers supported returning to school; Ms. Jessica Light, teacher/parent, noted that teachers do not want to return to school because they do not yet feel safe; Ms. Jill Kelly, NHPsA member; thanked the Board for their vote to begin school remotely and for standing up for the health and safety of New Haven children, teachers, families and the broader community; Ms. Becca Miller, commented she is supporting the Board's decision to start school remotely and she listed her reasons; she noted that teachers agreed to come back on September 3rd if there is a safe plan but there is not a plan in place; Ms. Vicki Grubaugh, social worker, Kindergarten parent at Worthington Hooker, wife of a Yale Epidemiologist, voiced her disappointment at their decision for remote learning; Ms. Kirsten Hopes-McFadden, ESUMS parent/teacher, gave her interpretation of an eighth grade class and the struggle to have a student keep his/her mask on.

To view this portion of the meeting the Video is available at NHPS.net, Public Meetings

Mr. Goldson advocated returning to 3-minute for speakers in Public Participation.



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President’s Report

Compensation Equity Committee – Appointment of Members and Charter

Mrs. Rivera commented that in terms of the Compensation Subcommittee, she has appointed Mr. Phil Penn, COO; Ms. Lisa Mack, HR Director; Mr. Larry Conaway, Board member; and Ms. Sequella Coleman from the SAA. Mrs. Rivera stated she is also going to ask Food Services and the Paraprofessionals appoint two members each to the committee, as well as asking that their meetings convene after September 1st to allow time to settle the Food Service contract.

Mayor Elicker thanked Mrs. Rivera for her efforts in coming together with that group.

Mr. Goldson raised his disappointment in not being included on that committee since he has been raising this issue for as long as he’s been on the Board and certainly for as long as she has been President of the Board. He is disappointed to not be on the committee.

Mr. Conaway asked if there were any teachers or parents on that committee. He also asked if we want to consider that or do we feel that is good enough. She feels it is good enough. Mrs. Rivera said, she has asked the Food Service leadership and the Paraprofessionals leadership to appoint two representatives each.

**362-20
Convene Executive
Session 6:30 p.m.**

On the motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mayor Elicker, it was voted by roll call, to Convene in Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. to discuss Collective Bargaining Agreement; and a Discussion of Attorney-Client Privileged Communication Regarding the Board Vote on Reopening of Schools. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passed.

- i. Executive Session pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-210(9) re: strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining; and pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-210(b)(10) re: communications privileged by the attorney-client relationship.
- ii. Discussion and potential vote on collective bargaining agreement discussed in Executive Session. A. Agreement with Local 933 (subject to ratification by union membership)

Also invited to attend: Atty. Natalia Sierra Milan, Atty. E. Alexiades, Dr. I. Tracey, Mr. P. Penn, COO and Ms. L. Mack, Human Resource Director.

Mrs. Rivera noted as a reminder that they will have to exit this meeting and then logn on to the executive session. Mr. Goldson asked to have the link to their emails resent because he doesn’t have any paperwork and if there is any paperwork that we are supposed to review he would also like a copy of that. He knows that there was an email that went out from Shipman & Goodman because he hasn’t seen it. He just got power a little while ago.



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Atty. Alexiades pointed out to Mrs. Rivera that she included the discussion and potential vote on collective bargaining agreement and that she should be after executive session.

Mrs. Rivera noted that they are out of executive session and no votes were taken.

363-20
Approve Proposed
Contract Extension
Agreement w/NHFT
In Principle

On the motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mayor Elicker, it was voted by, roll call, that the Board approves, in principle, the proposed contract extension agreement with the NHFT subject to approval of the written agreement. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passes.

364-20
Approve to
Amend Agenda
Agreement w/NHFT
In Principle

On the motion by Mr. Goldson, seconded by Dr. Joyner, it was voted to amend the agenda to authorize legal counsel to request an exception review for our school reopening. Motion passed. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passes.

365-20

Dr. Joyner proposed a motion, seconded by Mr. Conaway, that the Board of Education authorizes legal counsel to request an exception review in accordance with Addendum 4 to the State Guidance in Adapt Advanced Achieved dated August 3, 2020 of its decision on August 5 to open schools remotely.

Mayor Elicker commented that he will be voting in favor of this even though he still thinks that it is important to come to some sort of compromise and that the hybrid model is the best approach. At the same time, the Board voted to go in this direction and I think that the board going in this direction and it is important to have legal counsel.

Dr. Joyner remarked that he believes that the decision should be made by people closest to it. I believe that we have a critical mass of professionals in our city educators, physician's mental health experts and I also believe in local control. One of the greatest tragedies in human history was justified because somebody said we were just following orders; and one of the greatest victories was when someone said, we need to get into good trouble. This is the time for this community to take responsibility for its children and its families and he believes that New Haven has the intellect, the ethics and the courage to do the right thing for our kids. We cannot allow the blind to lead the sighted.

365-1-20
Authorize Legal
Counsel to Request
Exception Review

On the motion by Dr. Joyner, seconded by Mr. Conaway, it was voted by roll call, that the Board of Education authorizes legal counsel to request an exception review in accordance with Addendum 4 to the State Guidance in Adapt Advanced Achieved dated August 3, 2020 of its decision on August 5 to open schools remotely. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passed.



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Superintendent's Report

Personnel Report (discussion and vote anticipated)

Dr. Tracey requested approval of the Personnel Report.

366-20

Approval of
Personnel Report

On the motion by Mr. Conaway, seconded by Dr. Joyner, it was voted by roll call, to approve the Superintendent's Personnel Report. Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passed.

Dr. Tracey thanked the Board for unanimously agreeing to this report. She noted that Ms. Jamie Coady has been appointed to be the principal of Clinton Avenue School. Ms. Coady is an enthusiastic and highly skilled instructional leader that possesses a strong commitment to the academic and social emotional development of students. She has spent the last 16 years at John Martinez Sea & Sky STEM Magnet School as a classroom teacher, an administrator and assistant principal. She received an NHPS Taps Award in 2018 and is a graduate of SCSU with a B.S. in Political Science, an M.S. in Urban Studies and a 6th year in Educational Leadership. Ms. Coady is currently working on her Ed. D. specializing in Transformational Leadership at the University of New England. Her dissertation focuses on the use of restorative practices in schools throughout Connecticut. Dr. Tracey welcomed Jody aboard.

Ms. Coady thanked Dr. Tracey and the Board of Education for this tremendous opportunity. She also thanked her parents who have been listening to this entire meeting today and she thanked them for doing that for her. Ms. Coady also thanked Luis Menacho and her Martinez School family. It has been an amazing 16 years at Martinez. She has been surrounded by a very professional, dedicated and supportive group of people and she just wants to say thank you to them from the bottom of her heart, it's been an amazing experience. Ms. Coady remarked that she is very excited to take on this role at Clinton Avenue School she looks forward to working with the staff, students and families to continue their growth and success as we move forward. Thank you everyone and good night.

Mrs. Rivera, Mr. Conaway and Dr. Joyner congratulated Ms. Coady on her appointment.

NHPS Strategic Plan

Dr. Tracey commented that she has been presenting the strategic plan for New Haven Public Schools that we've been working on for a while and, just so you know, there are action items that will have individuals assigned to different aspects of the work. She just wanted to share with them because she thinks it has to be adopted by the Board. She noted that they have shared this with them but when we worked on this we had set certain metrics and were not expecting COVID when we set these metrics in place, but it is still part of the plan and seeing the year that we've had, she doesn't feel we can be held accountable if testing is not one of the things our students are going to be engaged in during this time of COVID.



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Dr. Tracey pointed out their overarching goals to the Board. She referred them to Page 5 of the document that was provided to them entitled Overarching Goals and stated they want to establish a strong foundation in Early Learning and that's why this is so important. Goal 2 – to have high achievement for all learners, Goal 3 – the development of the whole child, Goal 4 – preparation for college and life and Goal 5 – an unwavering commitment to equity growth and progress.

Dr. Tracey then went on to the priority areas which are the same ones they have been working on as follows: Academic Learning, Operational Efficiencies or Organizational Efficiencies, Culture & Climate, Talented Educators and Youth & Family Engagement. We believe that putting these domains in place is moving towards better student achievement in our public schools. We know that this achievement will be impacted by COVID. We have had a whole semester of students not getting what they need although our teachers work very hard to support but we know that there are many losses in the instructional part for our students as we struggled through the spring semester and she must give kudos to her staff for trying to do the best they could under the trying circumstances.

Dr. Tracey continued to explain that there is also the potential for academic loss again during this extended period of COVID and thinking of moving towards complete remote learning. In terms of academic learning, we are engaging in instruction, we are looking at standard based curriculum, we're looking at what assessment and feedback and grading would look like. Regarding grading, last marking period the Board supported us to make sure that the grading policy was adjusted because of where we are. She thinks the Board needs to think about that in the next couple of weeks. If there is not a compromise on certain things, how will assessment and grading be factored in, we may need a new policy around how we would grade students. Culture & Climate, we want to have safe school environments, social emotional growth so even with COVID we are going to focus on social emotional learning for students. She continued to explain that a lot of students have been traumatized throughout this process. Some of them have had deaths in their families some of them have lost school and the relationship building with their teachers, so we want to make sure that we are providing that next step for students. We want to focus on talented educators and youth and family engagement and extended learning opportunities. It is going to be very difficult to do that in this time of COVID because a lot cannot be done well virtually and we do not want to keep our kids on computer all day learning things virtually.

Attendance and chronic absenteeism is going to be impacted. Tomorrow the State has a meeting with us around this topic and she is not sure how that is going to be factored or whether we are going to be impacted greatly in New Haven should we go without having clear attendance policies and how that would work in a remote or COVID learning environment. We look at talented educators and what our recruitment strategies are how much are we focused on minority recruitment. We made sure the HR department will be receiving someone to focus on and help the senior recruiter on minority recruitment. How do we retain teachers, what are the conditions that we need to put in place to retain our best talents. We are focusing on professional learning. We are looking at data systems and how can we refine and connect data systems to improve onboard professional learning and evaluation of staff. Dr. Tracey noted that the State said there is going to be teacher evaluation and the question is, how we do that in the plans that we are putting forth. We have also set data targets for literacy and literacy growth and we will set data targets for



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math and the students on track for graduation. We know that although we are presenting this, many of it will be delayed in a sense what we are expecting but at the same time I had promised the Board that I would share with you the strategic plan in a nutshell, and this is it. If the board has no questions we can move on. Mr. Conaway asked if that is the same plan that we talked about there are no changes, right? Dr. Tracey answered, no; we just added the data sections. Mr. Conaway said then we can move on.

Dr. Tracey noted that the reason we are presenting this is because this is what we are adopting. She's not sure if it needs a Board vote for adoption or just sharing.

Mr. Goldson called a point of order. He remarked that there is no item on the agenda that asks us to adopt a strategic plan, and quite frankly, he hasn't even looked at it yet. He's sure it's great, terrific. Mr. Goldson asked if there is a reason why it couldn't be done at the next meeting.

Dr. Tracey said there is no reason why it couldn't be done at the next meeting, but we had decided way back if you remember when I was Interim, I promised you that I would have a strategic plan. Mr. Goldson said yes, however, he would prefer that it was listed on the agenda as an approval item.

Dr. Tracey commented that her objection to that is that we have too many touch points with the Board, so that we're not told that it was not ever presented.

Next Steps Regarding Reopening Plan

Dr. Tracey remarked that no matter what plan we have school is still opening. Orientation is going on; bus routes are being sent out by the end of the week to all families. We still have to do those things. Even though certain things may not materialize, we still have to continue planning because everything is still what if and uncertain. As a school system we don't want to be left in the dark without having plans, moving forward. Professional development is happening as we speak. We want to make sure that we continue. Someone said always make sure you have a contingency plan; always have a Plan A and Plan B, so if one doesn't work out the other will fall in place.

Dr. Tracey commented, in relation to that, some information was leaked to the New Haven Independent and she wants to be public with her comments to those who are listening. Dr. Tracey stated that she did not share that information with anyone at the New Haven Independent and she leaves it at that. However, I also presented to my Board some possible implications of a complete remote plan and she shared with the Board the major part was around the possibility of finances being deployed from some of the grants that we depend on, and 75% of those grants pay teacher's salaries and it will have an impact on sports, PreK and other things. She commented that her Board has decided that it is



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important that we make a statement and we will be working to see how we can come to some compromise regarding the reopen plan. Dr. Tracey continued to explain.

Mr. Goldson commented we are always open to compromise because we want to see our kids in school eventually. However, we were clear that the compromise has to provide for the safety of our students, staff and families of NHPS. Any compromise that we may come to with the State will involve parents and teachers in the discussion points around that. This is not a political game with us, it is about safety first and if the State can guarantee safety measures that we all agree to, then we certainly can talk about reopening remotely or hybrid.

Dr. Tracey added that we have the opportunity to get extra funding into the school system to make sure that those safeguards teachers were talking about could be in place. Dr. Tracey noted that she will make sure that those things are being mitigated. Our schools are being cleaned right now and she is getting status updates on a daily basis. She continued to explain.

Dr. Jackson-McArthur noted that we just voted on a motion on meeting with the State, that's a waiver. She thinks that it should be stricken from the record that we decided to compromise, it's a little misleading, because we did not compromise. Dr. Tracey mentioned something about a compromise but we did not say that. We said we are coming to the table with the State and that Atty. Mooney is going to work with us towards a waiver. At this point, we are still opening September 2nd with the distant learning model. Dr. Jackson-McArthur asked if that could be taken off the record. Dr. Tracey gave her recollection of what happened and what she had written down was, "We will be working to see how we can come to some compromise regarding the reopening plans. We will be engaged in contingency planning."

This discussion continued at length and included comments from Dr. Joyner, Dr. Jackson-McArthur, Dr. I. Velázquez, Dr. Tracey, and Mr. Conaway.

Dr. Tracey added that she had reached out to Commissioner Cardona and, as of today, this is where we are. We were told that the Commissioner is working with a group of individuals putting together a panel to discuss the reopening plan request for a waiver and they told her they would get back to her in a couple of days. She indicated to them that there is a sense of urgency around this because her staff has to be settled in order to make clear decisions. Based on that, they need a letter from the Board making their rationale for the plan for the waiver.

Dr. Jackson-McArthur initiated a discussion regarding the plans that are being considered. She wanted to know what we are doing right now. Dr. Tracey stated that we are in limbo because we don't know what the decision is going to be. We have been planning and we



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have contingency plans for all of the plans. Dr. Tracey continued to explain the contingency plans that are in place. Dr. Jackson-McArthur alluded to tomorrow's Webinar and asked if Dr. Velazquez is running the webinar. Dr. Velázquez explained the process in detail.

Finance & Operations Committee Report

Mr. Wilcox reported this committee met and directed everyone's attention to a couple of items that were in there packets. Pat DeMaio has a new cover memo that they are adopting, which adds specific questions that make it clear what we are expecting and that all of the questions be answered. Mr. Wilcox gave details on this. Mr. Wilcox suggested that Board members review the new documents and if they have any questions or comments, to forward them to the committee members and Dr. Tracey.

Mr. Wilcox also mentioned that they had some discussion items such as committee priorities from now to the end on of the calendar year and those are also listed. If you have any thoughts or questions as to what you would like to see the Finance Committee directing attention to over the next few months, please email the committee and Dr. Tracey. Mr. Wilcox noted that Information Only Items were also in the packets.

Mr. Wilcox proposed to approve the following FINANCE & OPERATIONS-RELATED-ITEMS: 14 Agreements, 3 Purchase Orders and 1 Contract. Mrs. Rivera seconded.

Mr. Goldson asked about Items 4 and 5, regarding the agreement with Carol & Michael Frawley regarding storage at 763 Edgewood Avenue and asked Mr. Wilcox to please explain it to them. Mr. Wilcox explained that they had a long discussion on this. This is property adjacent to Edgewood School and, if you recall that when it opened there wasn't enough space for storage at the school. It is listed twice but it is for two different years, which is easy to miss. Mr. Wilcox explained the situation in detail.

Mr. Goldson then wanted to know what is being stored there and Mr. Wilcox answered it was described to him as various types of supplies and they also mentioned that it would be particularly necessary for cleaning supplies related to keeping the schools clean when we reopen for physical, on-site student engagement.

Mr. Goldson responded that this seems a little odd to him that we're paying \$8-9,000 a month for storage of cleaning supplies at a private entity. He would like to get more information on this. Mr. Goldson noted that he is not going to vote on this tonight because he feels uncomfortable about it. He remembers that he raised this a couple of years ago and he was told he was going to get the information and he never did.

Dr. Tracey explained to Mr. Goldson that this storage space has been going on for the last 15 years and the reason why it didn't come up is because it was the same company but it has changed hands, so that is why it is before us again and she explained in detail. She



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also explained that there is mostly classroom space at Edgewood School, so they have no place for storage because they don't have a basement.

Mr. Penn, for clarification, corrected the amounts; Item 4 is for the 2019 year and is \$350 a month and Item 5 is for the 2021 year, for a total of \$4,200 per year, per item. Mr. Goldson then commented so we are approving a contract for 2019 which is already expired. Mr. Penn answered that it is his understanding that it was in the name of the property owners and it was then changed to an LLC. Mr. Goldson then commented that he doesn't understand why we are doing this when we have other buildings in the district that can be used for storage. He continued to explain. He would like to see a commitment that this is going to end at the end of this year. He continued to explain. Mr. Goldson commented that if this is not separated out, he is probably going to vote against the entire package because he doesn't agree with those items.

Mr. Goldson stated that his second issue is around the Information Only Items. For several months he has been saying that these items should not be on the agenda. When he was President he was told that these items are put on the agenda because it was suggested by the auditor and they were there for public information not that we had to vote on them but that there was a record of them and that the Board was aware of them.

Mr. Goldson remarked now he believes more than ever that should be the case and he gave the reason why. Two weeks ago it was passed on the agenda to hire a law firm and it was under For Information Only for \$14,000 and it did not come before the full Board. He explained that the attorney that was hired was hired to investigate him. So he is going to keep a much closer eye on what we are doing here and the public should get the same consideration. If he had noticed it, he would have asked questions about it. In the meantime, he asked Mrs. Rivera that she add to the agenda next meeting a discussion around this investigation. Your lawyer has not contacted my lawyer, so I don't know what it's about. It's one of those things that happened to Dr. Birks. Now it's going to cost this district more money and it doesn't make any sense to waste district money on something that is silly. I know I haven't done anything wrong. In closing, he added that he would like the issue of the investigation to be added to the agenda for discussion at our next meeting.

Mr. Wilcox added that the reason the, For Information Only, items are on the agenda is because there is no action required on them. He continued to explain the other places these items are included. Mr. Wilcox commented that his suggestion remains for all of these things, the Finance Committee meets twice a month and has for many years and he suggested that all Board members and any members of the public that are interested can also take a look at the items that are posted on the district website. The items do not appear on the agenda they are as stated, For Information Only. Mr. Wilcox concluded by inviting anybody who has any questions about any item that we are looking at to please



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email the entire committee and Dr. Tracey. We are committed to bringing these questions and to get answers to what this Board wants.

Dr. Joyner remarked that last year he brought a proposal to the Board to get a free audit of our financial practices and it was shot down. If we really want to assure the public of our honesty and ethical practices, we should find some money to do an audit of our financial transactions. He commented that it would probably settle once and for all how well we are spending public money.

Mr. Goldson commented that we have a bunch of items on the agenda that don't have action attached to them, so to say that the items are not on the agenda because no action is attached to them doesn't hold water. Mr. Goldson noted that transparency should be our catchphrase of having these items on the agenda and he explained in detail.

On the motion by Mr. Wilcox, seconded by Mrs. Rivera, it was voted by roll call to approve the following FINANCE & OPERATIONS RELATED-ITEMS as follows: Mr. Goldson, no; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes. Motion passed.

AGREEMENTS

- 567-20**
The Winters Group Non-Financial Agreement with The Winters Group, Inc. to provide professional development training on Intercultural Diversity Inventory and to design a learning plan for NHPS from February 11, 2020 to December 31, 2020.

- 568-20**
ACES An agreement with Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES) to provide support and management of the arts program at Betsy Ross Arts Magnet Middle School and Cooperative Arts and Humanities Magnet High School from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in an amount not to exceed \$853,033.

- 569-20**
Lumen Touch, LLC An agreement with Lumen Touch, LLC for development and maintenance of the Brightcare Health Data Management Program for 17 school health centers and 6 dental clinics, from August 15, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$40,750.

- 570-20**
Carol & Michael Frawley An agreement with Carol & Michael Frawley for month-to-month rental of 660 sq. ft. of storage space located at 763 Edgewood Ave. in an amount not to exceed \$4,200.00 from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

- 571-20**
Carol & Michael Frawley An agreement with Carol & Michael Frawley for month-to-month rental of 660 sq. ft. of storage space located at 763 Edgewood Ave. in an amount not to exceed \$4,200.00 from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.



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- 572-20**
Dr. Yann B. Poncin An agreement with Dr. Yann B. Poncin, to provide psychiatric consultation, in-service training and support to assist staff schools in planning for students with complex social emotional needs, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2020 in an amount not to exceed \$20,000.
- 573-20**
Common Ground Charter School An agreement with Common Ground Charter School to provide Special Education services for New Haven students attending Common Ground to comply with their IEPs, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$144,200.
- 574-20**
Booker T. Washington Academy Charter School An agreement with Booker T. Washington Academy Charter School to provided Special Education services for New Haven students attending Booker T. Washington Academy Charter School to comply with their IEPs, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in an amount not to exceed \$57,963.
- 575-20**
ACES An agreement with Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES) to provide Urban Youth Elementary School for “at risk students,” from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in an amount not to exceed \$1,179,750.
- 576-20**
ACES An agreement with Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES) to provide the ASPIRE program for students with significant behavior challenges from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$1,479,075.
- 577-20**
Institute of Professional Practice An agreement with Institute of Professional Practice to provide behavioral therapists for students transitioning from Brennan-Roger and Strong School Autism Preschool Program to ABA/Autism Support Program at Brennan-Rogers, Strong and other programs for students with autism, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021 ,in an amount not to exceed \$570,900.
- 578-20**
CompuClaim An agreement with CompuClaim to provide direct claiming services for Medicaid reimbursement provided to Medicaid eligible students, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$97,200.
- 579-20**
Aveanna Healthcare An agreement with Aveanna Healthcare nursing care to a special education student with complex medical needs from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$62,699.
- 580-20**
ACES An agreement with Area Cooperative Education Services (ACES) to provide assistive technology services for students with special needs, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$59,008.

PURCHASE ORDERS

- 581-20** Naviance, Inc. for annual software subscription and support for Student Success Plans for



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- Naviance, Inc.** grades 6-12 from September 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$69,846.01.
- 582-20 NCS Pearson, Inc.** NCS Pearson, Inc., to provide software licenses for SSW, SLP and School Psychologists for scoring and evaluating students, from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021, in an amount not to exceed \$51,000.
- 583-20 Frontline Technologies Group, LLC** Frontline Technologies Group, LLC d/b/a Frontline Education for renewal of IEP software from August 24, 2020 to June 30, 2021 in an amount not to exceed \$42,419.

CONTRACTS

(The following Contract was a previously Tabled Item)

- 584-20 Tucker Mechanical, Inc.** Award of Contract #21632A-2-2 to Tucker Mechanical, Inc., for On Call HVAC repairs for fiscal year 2020-2021 in an amount not to exceed \$200,000.

Mr. Goldson commented that we have been at this meeting for more than four hours and he made a motion to table any of the remaining items that we could deal with at the next meeting. Dr. Joyner seconded. Mr. Wilcox noted that we did it last time. Mr. Goldson remarked it is not debatable re Robert’s Rules of order. Mrs. Rivera remarked then let’s vote on it because clearly there is an item that we need to discuss. Mrs. Rivera, no; Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, no; Dr. Jackson-McArthur, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, no; Mayor Elicker, no. Motion failed.

Governance Committee Report

Dr. Jackson-McArthur reported that we are not going to be voting on the policy before you tonight because it is not the right one. We will have it for our next meeting.

Dr. Jackson-McArthur announced that they met with the appointed chair of the SRO committee, Dr. Torre. We had a very nice conversation meeting going over goals and what we’re looking for. He is going to be sending out a survey to his committee to find out the best time to have their first meeting. So they’re on their way. This is not going to be a quick process. She feels he is going to be a very good chair and his vision and the vision of the Governance Committee and what we’re looking for are compatible. He will be reporting at our meeting every two weeks.

Teaching & Learning Committee Report

Mr. Conaway reported that they do not have a report this evening. They have a meeting coming up.



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Dr. Joyner took this opportunity to thank David Cicarella for his tireless work as a Union leader, as well as Ms. Sequella Coleman and Ms. Hyclis Williams. These are some difficult times and Dave has done everything that he thinks a forward thinking Union leader would do to help this community. Please convey my thoughts about his leadership and support for what we are trying to achieve as a school district.

Head Start Committee Report

Mr. Wilcox reported that their next meeting will be on Thursday, August 20th at 5pm. After that he'll have a more complete report. Mr. Wilcox noted that he needs to bring up something was moved from last month's meeting when we adjourned early. As you may recall, our Head Start committee's charge was going to run until July of this year. We are now past July and so he is going to move that we just make it an open-ended committee in terms of it being in existence. Mrs. Rivera seconded.

Mr. Goldson wanted to know what exactly an open-ended committee is because we don't have an open-ended committee in our bylaws.

Mr. Wilcox explained fully. Mr. Goldson agreed with Mr. Wilcox and agreed that this committee should be more than it is. He suggested that a motion be made to make it a standing committee which would be the best way to go. He hopes this will be added to the agenda as a Standing Committee and a Bylaw change.

Mr. Wilcox commented that regardless of what this group decides, we will be meeting again on Thursday, August 20th to continue the work of the committee. If the will of the group here is that we have a motion to amend our Bylaws to add this as a standing committee, we will. Mr. Goldson explained the committee process in detail. He feels it is important to make this a Standing Committee and as long as we have Head Start we should have a Head Start Committee, it is just a formality and it gives it more standing.

Mr. Alexiades suggested that they could do both. They could authorize it as an Ad Hoc Committee so that they have a vision going forward, while you decide whether or not you should amend the Bylaws. Mr. Goldson commented that sounds like a good idea.

Mr. Wilcox remarked based on that, he will withdraw his previous motion and move that we continue the Head Start subcommittee on an Ad Hoc basis with the understanding that we will be coming back to the Board with a motion in a future meeting to add it as a Standing Committee. Mr. Goldson seconded.

**585-20
Add Head Start
Committee as
Standing Committee**

On the motion by Mr. Wilcox, seconded by Mr. Goldson, it was voted by roll call to continue the Head Start subcommittee on an Ad Hoc basis with the understanding that we will come back to the Board to make a motion to add the Head Start Committee as a Standing Committee. Mr. Goldson, yes, Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Jackson-



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At a Later Date **MacArthur; Mr. Conaway, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes; Mrs. Rivera, yes.
Motion passed.**

Facility Naming Committee Report

Mrs. Rivera remarked she does not have a report for this committee. They are trying to set up a meeting within the next few weeks.

Food Service Task Force Report

Mr. Conaway commented they have no report. Their next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday.

**586-20
Adjournment**

On the motion by Mrs. Rivera, seconded by Mr. Conaway, it was voted by roll call to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. Mrs. Rivera, yes; Mr. Conaway, yes; Mr. Goldson, yes; Mr. Wilcox, yes; Dr. Joyner, yes; Mayor Elicker, yes. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginger McHugh

Ginger McHugh, BOE Recording Secretary

“A video of this meeting is available on the NHPS website, NHPS.net, Public Meetings”