MDUSD encourages public participation in district business by way of public comments.

One method of leaving a public comment is to email BoardComments@mdusd.org. Emails received are automatically distributed to each board member. Emails will be entered into the public record on this document when received on 10/21/2020. Monitor public comment emails below.

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wimmerj@mdusd.org
Good Morning Mount Diablo School Board,

I am a teacher with the school district and have many concerns about reopening the schools until cases are lower across all cities in the county. Even with schools closed for distance learning, in my classes this year, I know of 3 students and 3 separate times that students on the Alliance campus (a small site) have had someone they live with or themselves test positive for covid 19. That means that at least once a month (including two students on our site right now), the students and staff at my site would have been exposed to covid for possibly weeks before any symptoms developed for the people currently infected. I also expect those numbers to be higher, since many of our students have only shared this information with one or two trusted staff who they know will respect their privacy. These are just the students who have shared this information personally with me. Also, in one case, a student's family has been infected on two separate occasions, and have had to quarientiene the whole family. These both happened only about a month apart from each other, so it is clear that students and staff can be infected multiple times. We also have had other students on site who have lost parents to covid since the beginning of the school year. The risk is still real and dangerous to all of our students, student's families, and staff. Also, because most of our students come from Concord, Pittsburg, Bay Point and Antioch, our students and staff would have a much higer chance of contracting the disease than staff and students at College Park or Northgate, whose communities have less cases, and tend to have less issues with student behaviors. This does not seem equitable or fair to students, student's families or staff. Even with a hybrid model, our staff would have been exposed to these cases, and then been exposed to all the students on site. I know we all want to go back to teaching in person. Distance learning is hard on teachers, students and families. I have personally never worked so hard in my life, and am feeling so much pressure to show my students and families that I am trying my best, so that we can continue this year in a way that is safe for everyone. There is so much stress and pressure that many teachers are not sleeping well, if at all, and having stress dreams even when they do sleep. This is a difficult time for everyone. However, I am high risk. If we choose to do a hybrid model, I will be forced to choose to take an accommodation that may mean I cannot continue to work with my kids or on my site this year, or to take unpaid medical leave and lose my benefits until it is safe for me to come back. The reason why I am high risk is that I have a genetic autoimmune disease, so I need my medical benefits. However, the idea of having to start all over in distance learning possibly on a new site with new kids, or the thought of trying to juggle DL while teaching all subjects is really stressful and mentally taxing. These are what teachers have been

told to be prepared for if they seek an accommodation allowing them to continue to work safely from home. In a hybrid model, teachers may be being asked to work both virtually and in person at the same time. This is two separate and very difficult jobs at once. The amount of pressure and strain being put on teachers this year, so they can prove they are still doing their job is already too much. Adding a hybrid model and other concerns onto this is asking too much. Maybe teachers who want to go back on site could volunteer to teach the highest need groups who also volunteer to go back. Though, I am still concerned for these students and staff, as well, no staff or student should be forced to return. No teacher should have to do the jobs of several teachers at one time, just to be able to stay safe. Covid is still very present and most likely we would have to close our schools shortly after opening due to case increases. This causes more disruption for our students, staff and families. Europe reopened and now they are having a second wave that is bigger than the first in some countries. We are also seeing a similar event happening in many states accross the U.S. who have reopened too soon. Our cases are down, because we have been opening slowly and considerately. Schools are challenging to open, because there are so many variables (including student behavior issues, which make it challenging to enforce safety rules). I apologize for the long email, but all of these things need to be considered and things need to be kept safe and equitable for all students and staff.

Thank you,
A concerned teacher

bunny4tif@aol.com
These students are suffering and many are doing it in silence. They are isolated and lacking focus. This isn't just about academics it is about much much more.

I see my children slipping into depression every day that there is no plan to return. They constantly ask what is the purpose of all this. They have a great group of teachers pushing them along. There are also a few teachers who are on the other side of the spectrum.

I hate that the happy to be at home distance learners are trying to force everyone to do distant learning. This should be a choice. Those that want to stay home do that. . Those that want to return to school do that.

I have seen many of my friends leave out of state for better educational opportunities. Their children are succeeding in life and moving forward while we sit here in limbo.

My children thankfully have the opportunity to travel all over playing the sports they love while others can't afford that. My children have the opportunity to have a mom at home keeping them on track with distant learning. Other children do not. My children have the opportunity to have mental health services while others do not.

It is time to make a plan and get these kids back to school where they need to be. They need to be back at school.

Tiffiny Barraco

kmartinstaylor@gmail.com
Our children are struggling with distance learning!

We have two daughters who are in 1st grade and 3rd grade. They need school!!! It's is incredibly vital for their social emotional development as well as their education.

Our youngest has learning disabilities and needs support. What she is getting via zoom is not enough. She is falling further and further behind her peers. She cries in frustration that she is not able to keep up and struggling. This is negatively affecting her relationship with school, social emotional well being, and educational trajectory.

Both of girls need school!!! Please at least consider a hybrid option
Sincerely
Kristen Martins-Taylor

tom.weibert@elevareconsulting.com
Hello,

I have a 5th grader in MDUSD. The staff is trying hard to make online distance learning work however it is not effective. Students need to return to school immediately. If the teachers union members will not return to work then I would prefer to see them replaced. Enough is enough.

Evidently an employee at a fast food restaurant, grocery store, gas station, any big box store is an essential worker. There is nothing more essential than developing our next generation so they are educated and can support themselves.

I am fine with someone deciding that it is not safe for them to teach. That is their personal choice. Then I would expect them to step out of the way and let someone else take up the job that is.

In Pursuit,

Tom Weibert

marion.wagner@comcast.net
The CDC continues to say that prolonged indoor exposure over 15 minutes is not recommended unless the indoor space has excellent ventilation with filtration. Most of

the schools do not have that. YVHS certainly doesn't. Returning our kids to poorly ventilated classrooms puts them and anyone they go home to at risk. If there is a classroom outbreak the school district will be at risk for lawsuit for violating recommendations on ventilation.

DVC is remote only for rest of school year as is The UC system and the Cal State system. Antioch is staying remote only.

MDUSD needs to keep kids and families safe and do the same.

The biggest spread of the virus is high school and college age. My daughter sees many other teens, including some from YVHS, clearly violating mask and social distancing rules on social media every day. She does not want to be locked in a classroom with these people taking these risks. Other teens have told her they don't intend to follow the guidelines at school either. Admin cannot watch them all at all times.

It is not safe to re-open high school for sure.

Marion Wagner
Parent of a YVHS senior

cgbeer@gmail.com
Just a quick note to say I am a parent of two children at Valle Verde who supports returning to in class learning.

Thank you
Chris Graham

haymoe@ehsd.cccounty.us
Board,

I am a mother of two children at the elementary stage at Mt. Diablo Unified. I am appalled at the level of parental involvement you have allowed this school year in terms of the decision making with both distance learning as well as returning back to school. With much of the burden of educating our children on the parents this year due to the virtual learning and only TWO hours of face to face education time and ONE hour on Wednesdays, I find it absolutely ridiculous that you do not allow parents to voice their concerns and listen to them more often than not when and before you decide on how to educate our children. I am NOT for opening schools and I do not want to expose my children nor my family to COVID. It is too soon and there are no vaccines. However the current structure that you have in place right now with 2 hours of face to face time and one on Wednesdays is ridiculous. I work full time as does my husband Monday through Friday. My sons are in tears when they are not able to get answers to their assignments that I cannot give them until 5 or 530pm when MY work day is over. Why can't the

school day be longer for our K-5 families? We are NOT trained teachers and cannot take time off from work every day to sit with our children during ZOOM to understand the assignments. We cannot all afford daycare or PODS. This is new to everyone and I afford everyone some flexibility however it is now October and this needs to be addressed. Why can't teachers open up their ZOOM while grading assignments in order to allow students to sit with them and go over their questions? There are many parents who feel the same way. I hope this is addressed and not just thrown to the back of the list of comments as I have seen happen in prior meetings. We the parents make this school district what it is by having our children attend.

Elgina Haymon, MA

nanersoner@yahoo.com
HI, I am writing on behalf of all the kids who are SUFFERING not being able to return to school in any foreseeable future. It is time to bring the kids back to school. If MDUSD is concerned about safety, what happened with the $25 million dollars it received from the federal government? Have you thought to ask parents to run fundraisers? PTA fundraisers for PPE? Families who can afford private school and tutors will....and families who cant...well cant... and that is UNFAIR EDUCATION. Distance learning is not good for everyone. Kids are having TROUBLE. Families are having TROUBLE. It is time to do something about that. We need you to step in and get this taken care of. Let families who want to continue with distance learning do that and let families who want in-person do that. I work in a hospital setting, my family works in a grocery store and we HAVE TO GO IN-PERSON TO WORK. Teachers and school staff are NO DIFFERENT and shouldn't get special treatment at the cost of our kids education. Please, PLEASE, take into consideration the KIDS and why in-person education is what a lot of these kids NEED to be successful in school and really in their lives. Thank you

nichole@2friendsevents.com
I wanted to thank the board, staff, and teachers for doing an amazing job during these challenging times. Overall my kids are doing OK but I do see that the daily Zoom is starting to wear on them. I realize there is a lot to consider when deciding whether or not to open schools. My only ask is that you consider every possible option of opening the schools in some capacity. Even if it's one day per week, or possibly just for clubs and small group activities. As a parent, I would be grateful for any type of somewhat social and slightly normal interaction that gets my kids out of the house, around their friends, and away from the computer. Thank you for all your hard work.

Nichole Simpson

cbruce@gmail.com
There needs to be changes made if we cannot get back to in person school

We understand that there are difficulties and issues that arise with in person schooling during the covid pandemic - just as we understand that there are difficulties and issues with distance learning (technology/ emotional issues/ parents work life/ educational experience)

Is this district too big to manage? Can we break the district up? Why are teachers protected at the costs of our children? Where did all the money go to set up back to school safety?

So many districts are back to at least a hybrid. How did they do it - if you cannot work out the answers maybe ask them?

We have reduced educational hours/ activities with no regard to the future of our children

We need answers and accountability and respect given to the families who are suffering because of this districts lack of manageability

Camellia bruce

jocelyn@oriondo.com
Learning and social interaction is important for the kids and faculty. This is unprecedented times.

Please explain the MDUSDs existing safety protocols each school must follow if school is to reopen - such as PPE, sanitization practices, social distancing, open ventilation, temperature checks at school (this should not be an 'honor system'), any increased nursing staff onsite(?).

I don't support re-opening because it unnecessarily exposes the families of children and teachers should there be an event. In this situation, please explain what is MDUSDs infrastructure to support continued learning for unaffected people?

Another reason is winter season is coming bringing in colds,flu, and other respiratory ailments. Reopening schools now would confound the screening process for Covid.

From a concerned parent of multiple children in MDUSD .

Best
Jocelyn

zacharyjraher@yahoo.com
Dear Board Members,

Tonight you are being presented with learning loss data. It's hard for me to figure out what date window all the data is being pulled from, but I wanted to point out that the D and F data for middle and high school is coming from the 1st quarter progress report which only represents the first 4 weeks of distance learning. During this time, students and teachers have been trying to get accustomed to a different style of teaching and learning and there were several connection issues. These connection issues are also leading towards absences as well, which I think is on some earlier slides. I'm not saying the data has gotten better or even worse, but the first 4 weeks of switching to distance learning was never going to be a seamless transition.

Raher

erin@42inc.com
I would like to provide comment on re-opening MDUSD schools to in-person instruction. I am strongly opposed to most students (especially high school students) going back into the classrooms.

The county has low numbers right now but we are heading into winter and flu season. We see numbers are spiking drastically all around the country.
What happens when our numbers in CCC go back up to purple tier levels? Then we go back to distance learning all over again causing another disruption for these students who are just now getting in a rhythm of distance learning?

At least with distance learning the focus is on learning. In-person learning will cause anxiety for many students and distraction for all as the focus will shift to the safety precautions and away from the actual teaching and learning.

I hope that the district can find a way to get our most at risk students back in the classrooms - homeless, SDC, TK and K-1. This should be done right and safely. It seems prudent then to wait until the start of second semester to get other students by grade level back in the classroom based on how Covid numbers are looking come January.

MDUSD is a very large district with families in very different situations. I hope that MDUSD is considering all voices in this decision not just the very vocal families from the more affluent areas of the district who face much less risk in sending their kids back to school.

Thank you for your time.

matthewkracht@yahoo.com

Dear Board:
I write in favor of resuming in person school. I have a 7th grader who has been making the best of distance learning but it is not an ideal situation and now is no longer necessary. My daughter comes to me nearly daily saying she has had too much screen time. Imagine a kid saying such a thing. She has even purchased special glasses so her eyes won't hurt as much from staring at the screen for her classes. It has impacted her negatively on an emotional, intellectual and social level.

According to the survey data, 65% of parents want to send their children back to in school learning, as opposed to the minority of 35% (which is not nearly 40%). The state and county guidelines both indicate that schools may safely reopen. There is no reason to continue the unnecessary lockdown of in person learning. The state's Health and Human Services sec Dr. Mark Ghaly has indicated there is no correlation between returning to school and an increase in Covid.

The sentiment of listening to science and following science is often stated. Here, the science says resoundingly that it is okay to open the schools up. The opinions of non-health professionals such as board members or teacher's unions should not trump the actual data and stats.

Regards,
Matt Kracht

brian.brown07@gmail.com
MDUSD Board Members -

We would like to submit a comment for the public record regarding the school opening plan. Primarily as members of our broader community, and secondarily as parents of a second grader, we are deeply concerned that our policy making is discounting the significant negative consequences of not having in-person school, especially for the youngest-aged children, and children with special needs. These consequences include significant impairment in learning and social emotional development, loneliness and depression, and for many parents in our community, the inability to work. These consequences are of course much more drastic and pronounced in underprivileged communities, for which this district serves. This inequitable result is particularly troubling as we watch private schools return to in person learning, and many parents fall back on day care rather than structured school.

The risks of COVID-19 are very real, and many families have suffered devastating losses due to COVID-19. We also acknowledge the legitimate concerns that teachers and parents have about returning to in-person learning. However, we think it’s critical we also give appropriate weight to the first and second order negative consequences of a lack of in-person learning as we make policy decisions. This is particularly true in light of increasing evidence that in-person learning is not the “super spreading” vehicle we

feared. (See: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/10/schools-arent-superspreaders/616669/).

We acknowledge that there is not a perfect solution to this dilemma. However, we feel it is critical that our leaders show courage in the face of potentially immense criticism and blame, and craft a creative solution to a challenging problem. For example, perhaps teachers that fall into higher risk categories could be given the option to remain as remote instructors, and teach those students whose parents elect to keep them in full distance learning. While this is obviously unorthodox and likely goes against norms (or even rules) established with the teachers union, this is a time to set aside orthodoxy and create a plan that addresses the real needs of children and families. This solution would potentially also address the need to socially distance children per the State's guidelines, as many parents would presumably elect to keep their kids home. We believe that there must be a solution that respects the legitimate concerns of parents and teachers who are not yet comfortable with in person learning, but also provides the very necessary learning experience for those that are comfortable with taking the associated risk.

Thank you for reading our comments and considering our perspective. We trust you are working tirelessly, and it is certainly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Brian and Kimberly Brown

Parents of child at Walnut Acres Elementary

drkatenovotny@yahoo.com
Your job is to educate our children, not pretend to be public health policy making "experts." The County Health Dept says you are free to open, the risk of death is close to zero, the numbers of people infected with COVID are naturally and expectably rising as is necessary to promote immunity in the large numbers and thereby protect the vulnerable. This is how it works. We are tired of the moving goal posts and misreporting of the C-19 data. This is now an exercise in government control under the guise of "safety." Of course some vulnerable people will die, that is part of the natural process, the risk of being alive. Infinite greater numbers worldwide are being killed by the lockdowns— starving, suicide, overdose, avoiding medical care, the personal losses due to the economy crushed and more. The truth is the more people who are infected the better off our health as a society. This is the United States whose motto is "pay any price bear any burden" to strengthen our country. This noble position has been thwarted by the current "if it saves just one life" mentality. Sticking to this mentality goes against the biology of natural selection, against Immunology 101 and will lead to all of our eventual destruction as a society. We are being held captive by pandemic lies. Open schools now!

mreyes2785@yahoo.com
Hi

My name is Melissa Esposito. I am submitting a comment via email since I am at work today and am not sure I will be able to attend the entire meeting

I am a mother of three MDUSD students. My husband and I are both esencial works who currently work with the current decreasing Covid population. We also have a multigenerational home.

We feel that as the contra costa county continues to open and as most surrounding schools have begun to open or have set dates to open, it is time for MDUSD to do the same.

In this current time everyone is very great full for all the essential workers. All those people who go to work everyday since the begging of covid, at target at Safeway and Costco just to name a few places. Just so we can all go pick up a bag of much needed “potatoes chips!” or have the pleasure to now go to in-door dinning.
We have come a long way from the beginning of this pandemic when we would only go out for “essential items”
We all get to go to any store as well as now do indoor dinning with out thinking if they will be open or closed at this current time.

This being said, it is now the time that all MDUSD students, have that same right they should have the right to go back to school. Just as most people have been also able to go back to some sort of normalcy.

I understand that going back to school won’t look “normal” and that things will be a bit different but MDUSD can not have “Selective” fear of Covid. It’s is not fair or in the best interest of our children.

Thank you for your time.
Melissa.

jennifer@wci-gc.com
Good Morning. For your board meeting today, please consider this article from NPR

“Despite widespread concerns, two new international studies show no consistent relationship between in-person K-12 schooling and the spread of the coronavirus. And a third study from the United States shows no elevated risk to childcare workers who stayed on the job.

Combined with anecdotal reports from a number of U.S. states where schools are open, as well as a crowdsourced dashboard of around 2,000 U.S. schools, some medical experts are saying it's time to shift the discussion from the risks of opening K-12 schools to the risks of keeping them closed.

"As a pediatrician, I am really seeing the negative impacts of these school closures on children," Dr. Danielle Dooley, a medical director at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C., told NPR. She ticked off mental health problems, hunger, obesity due to inactivity, missing routine medical care and the risk of child abuse — on top of the loss of education. "Going to school is really vital for children. They get their meals in school, their physical activity, their health care, their education, of course."

You can read the rest of the Article here:
https://www.npr.org/2020/10/21/925794511/were-the-risks-of-reopening-schools-exaggerated

** Please reopen our schools November 2nd! ASAP.

Jennifer Wallig

aldridgea@mdusd.org
Good afternoon,
Thank you for the information.
Biggest note of concern about hybrid learning is the statement, " students learn from home 3 days a week with direct teacher online support"
This would work on Wednesday when everyone is home. As a teacher, how in the world would I be giving direct online support to the students at home when I am teaching in the classroom with the other set of students?
Other districts that have tried this are failing and the end result is worse that 100% DL.

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Allegra Aldridge
First Grade Teacher
Mt Diablo Unified School Dist.

bentdrew@hotmail.com
As the parent of two high school students in the District, I encourage the District to continue with online learning. A return to school at a time when COVID-19 is still circulating in the community with the long-term effects on those who get the virus still being studied does not make sense. This is especially true as we enter flu season and COVID-19 cases across the country, and more recently in California, are rising. We will

also soon have students returning from college, as well as holiday gatherings that have the potential to increase cases. It would be sensible to wait and see where we are at the beginning of 2021 or even plan for a return in fall 2021 rather than trying to rush back to school now. For my boys, online learning is working well. I understand that is not the case for all students. If there is a safe plan to move forward with in person learning, it should start with kindergarten and younger grades, as well as kids who are struggling with online learning. Sending all students back right now is not a safe solution and safety should be the priority. Thank you.

Ben Drew

shaunamaffei@gmail.com
Hello,
My name is Shauna Maffei. I have (or had) two children in MDUSD. I had a fifth grader at Mt. Diablo Elementary and an eighth grader at Diablo View Middle School. Due to increasing concerns for my younger son's psychological well-being he has since been removed from distance learning and placed into private school. An opportunity not afforded to most students struggling right now however one I am grateful for.

In less than a week's time our county will move into a less restrictive tier on the California blueprint for reopening. As it stands today we are looking at a 3.8% adjusted case rate and 1.9% positivity rate. What does that mean exactly? For those of us trying to help our children muddle through school right now... it means nothing. Technically the tier we're in should have allowed our children back in school.

As a board I anticipate that you already know what you plan on doing on behalf of "our" children. However if you drag it out long enough and create special task groups and hold special meetings it looks like you're working to get our children back into school. You've managed to create some very colorful reopening plan documents and tell us how "grateful" you are that we as a community were able to slow the spread. We've been doing this for seven months. You have had plenty of time to make a plan and put it in place.

Tell me.. why are there no dates? Why won't you sit down as a board and say on January 5th we will return to a hybrid model? Tell me what will be accomplished in today's special meeting?

Is the situation complicated? Absolutely. Are teachers essential? You bet they are.

You owe it to all of us as parents to put something in writing now. Our children deserve more than endless special discussions.

Our children need to return to school for their educational, emotional and psychological well-being of our children. I have a son who will start high school next year well behind where he should be. A kid with every opportunity under his belt who hates distance

learning so much he can taste it. Imagine what this is doing for the children whose parents cannot provide as much for them.

We've stopped talking about mortality rates and now all we talk about is infection rates and the what ifs. Rip the bandaid off and DO SOMETHING.

Sincerely,
Shauna Maffei

greatfulnurs@icloud.com
Please let our kids back into schools. Our community is suffering enough
The health department gave the ok to open

Are you not capable of wearing masks , social distancing and washing hands then please consult CCHS. There are school based nurses available Open the schools our teen suicide rate has quadrupled Kids with IEPs are not getting services
Kids are failing because distance learning is not learning .
Teachers are essential as firefighters nurses police and grocery store clerks etc have been working since pandemic began Those workers lives are not disposable
I know your teachers love working from home , I see you on zoom earring playing with your kids etc Our kids and our lives matter

Go back to work we need the schools open It is detrimental to children health not to attend Please vote your conscience

wimmerc@mdusd.org
To Whom It May Concern,
I am an SEA on the Olympic High School Campus in the Mt. Diablo School District and I truly believe it would be a mistake to reopen school this year. I know that it is challenging for students, parents and teachers to do long distance learning. As an educator I know going back under the current conditions of having to wear masks, stay six feet from one another, worry about where you are, what you touched and who is around you, would be a very stressful and difficult environment to teach in for all concerned. At Olympic we service students from Concord, Antioch, Richmond and Pittsburg, which have some of the highest cases of covid cases. It is not right to have schools like Olympic, Concord High and Mt. Diablo start in person teaching, as we are at higher risk. Also, though some of our students will follow the guidelines set up, a lot will not. They will not want to put the time or effort into staying safe or keeping others safe.
With that being said if we do have to go back this year, it certainly should not be until after the winter break.
I want you to know I miss our students terribly, but to start up in the conditions that would have to be put in place, would make it even more difficult than distant learning and it feels like we are just getting a routine established. I know this is difficult for everyone, but please let us keep our community safe.

Sincerely,
Cathy Wimmer

dr.ropelato@gmail.com
First of all, I would like to commend the teachers in working with what they have been given and their continued support of our children. Our teachers at HOLA have been wonderful, as well as our administrators and support staff. However, it has been completely unacceptable the way the board and union have handled this situation. The lack of information and the complete disregard of the recommendations from various medical and other committees regarding the harm that distance learning is doing to our children has been frightening. The willful spread of misinformation based on FEELING and not facts is horrifying. Some children might be thriving with DL and those families should feel free to continue. However, you are taking away the choice that parents should have regarding making the best decision possible for their children. My children are attending daycare anyways and my husband and I have been working in person this entire time. The risk of COVID has been exaggerated by people's feelings and it is unacceptable to use this as metric in deciding to re-open. The ACTUAL numbers should be used. I understand the fear that people are experiencing because this has been shoved in their faces from day one. As people isolate themselves and keep getting these sensationalized headlines, their fear intensifies. However, this is not a reason to stop working and providing what our children need. The district received $25 million to ensure we could purchase proper supplies and precautions to re-open safely. Where has this money gone? As other districts around us open up, MDUSD sticks out more and more as a sore thumb. For those of us who want in person learning, is the district going to pay for our kids to go to private school? Are you going to transfer us to another district? If you are taking away my choice for my kids based on false data and excuses, I feel I am owed compensation for these poor decisions that are affecting my children's education and mental health. This is also not sustainable for many families. The sheer energy it takes to complete all the learning tasks with two children while also working all day long leads to intense burnout. I did not go to school to teach. I commend those who did and we need to be able to support those people in doing their job, back in person. MDUSD also seems to pride itself in striving for equity. It is therefore startling that given the choice to re-open and provide equitable instruction and access to services, that the district is dragging its feet. Our most vulnerable and being affected disproportionally and this is NOT in line with striving for equity. It seems the district is hemorrhaging students as those with resources pull their kids out for private instruction. This will result in long lasting consequences for the district and its funding. Many parents support re-opening and it is time to listen to us. There are many creative ways to accomplish this, and many parents are willing to donate to fill in the gaps, whether that be money, time or supplies. We should use the resources we have and get our children back in school and follow the schedules other local districts have put in place regarding getting kids back in person.

Melanie Ropelato

Kendra.D.Sullivan@outlook.com
Hello,

I have a daughter at Sun Terrace Elementary and I would ask like the board to please open the schools in a hybrid style. Not only is my daughter the only girl in her class but she is also having other illness that require more help with her executive functioning skills. These skills cannot be taught over the internet no matter how hard you might try. She needs to be around other girls her age to see how they conduct themselves and to try out any skills that she is learning. I ask for hybrid because she does do extremely well over the zoom meetings but not every parent is ok with their children going back to school and with the hybrid it's a way to make sure that the students can get some social skills and/or exercise as well as in person instruction but be at home enough to help stop the spread of covid.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

Kendra Sullivan

amygolan@gmail.com
To the Distinguished Board-

I think we need to make decisions that are in the best interest of the kids, particularly the elementary school age.

The 9 hours per week of live instruction is not nearly enough to not only teach kids what they need to learn, but also falls short on their social connectivity (which impacts their emotional well-being). I know some teachers in the district are teaching more because they know students needs it- but most are not.

In fact, for the 2 weeks of parent teacher conferences additional time was taken from their mere 9 hours per week. I don't understand this one at all, but it's done, so lets focus on how to reopen the schools.

There are many, many schools across the country that are open and functioning well and safely. These should be the models of how to do things. Some are doing full-time and some are hybrid. The hybrid models that are working are ones where the kids at home watch through a camera the day at school.

Additionally, daycares are open across the county and state and are functioning efficiently and safely. Bancroft daycare , for example, has approx 160 kids at their facility for 8 hours with school, food and outdoor time and there have been no covid cases.

Lastly, one of my children is in the TWDI program (Spanish program) and they need more in-person, live instruction. 4.5 hours per week is definitely not sufficient.

I think the research shows the lower risk for elementary age kids and their transmission rates. I think that we can reopen safely with the proper safety measures in place.

Thank you,
Amy & Amir Golan

amandamaz33@gmail.com
To Whom It may concern:

My daughter is 6 years old and in the special day class with Mrs. Smith at Silverwood Elementary School. Distance learning has not been working for her and in fact has caused great regression. This is a fundamental time for her age and I am very concerned about her future. She needs to be in a classroom setting with all the services being met to her needs which she is unfortunately not getting at home. With her smaller classroom size it should be ok to go back to school. Please consider the needs of these special ed children!! Thank you for your time.

-Concerned Parent

lynn_marie55@hotmail.com
Dear MDUSD Board Members,

As a parent of 4 kids within the district, please know that I fully support reopening schools for in-person models. As a county, we are at the point where it's the right thing to do and so I urge you to move forward.

Thank you,

Lynn Smith

amandagav@gmail.com

Hello, I am writing to be another voice in support of returning to some form of in person learning. I viewed distance learning last spring as a temporary situation. We were all sheltering in place and flattening the curve. Now covid is here for the foreseeable future, our local cases have come down to a point where the state and county are allowing schools to open, and we know a lot about how to reduce the risk of transmission (masks, distancing, hand washing, ventilation). Now we need to move forward with a balanced view of covid risk along with risks of prolonged school closures.

It's not right that private schools are open and public schools are not. Families that have money for private school or a tutor or a pod can weather this a lot better than those with fewer resources. I also think that schools should be prioritized in the whole society. For example, Ireland just instituted another lockdown because of rising cases, but schools are remaining open there because they are a priority.

I am happy to see a hybrid plan in today's presentation. Now is the time to put a clear timeline on these plans and move forward with them. I would also love transparency on funding, since I hear a lot of rumor that the district doesn't have the money to open.

I hope the board and superintendent are looking at the data that is starting to come out about covid spread in schools. For example, this NPR article today, along with others recently, have some good data.
https://www.npr.org/2020/10/21/925794511/were-the-risks-of-reopening-schools-exaggerated?campaign_id=174&emc=edit_csb_20201021&instance_id=23343&nl=coronavirus-schools-briefing&regi_id=56929154&segment_id=41749&te=1&user_id=029abd538b63f44899ffa8b92ad6ec48

michael.schneiderca@gmail.com
Hi Everyone,

My thoughts of the upcoming re-opening plan-I apologize for the length of the document I know this is not a simple task. Click on the link below.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jsAMijO1o-yuVrWVJmbWhrbIZwR8rFjE/view?usp=sharing

Thank You

Michael Schneider

michael.schneiderca@gmail.com
Hi Everyone,

In case links were not allowed for public comments here is the actual document.

Thank You

Michael Schneider

Walter.Eckalbar@ucsf.edu
Dear MDUSD Board of Education and Superintendent Dr. Clark,

I want to say thank you for providing the materials for discussion today. I believe these data are an essential starting place for understanding the impact distance learning (DL) is having on our children and families. They also represent what many parents have been asking for since approximately the start of school in August, which is some sign considering and evaluating plans to reopen once state and county guidelines allow our district to do so. While much frustration remains over the uncertainty of opening, it is information like this, and hopefully the discussion that follows from it, that will give parents, teachers and staff the information required to make decisions in their own personal lives, but also giving them some form reassurance and certainty can simply alleviate stress of the unknown. These materials stop short of providing a full-fledged road map to plan on, but they are a step in the right direction.

I'd also like to provide a short introduction to myself. I am a parent of two elementary school aged kids, however, now only one attends a school in MDUSD. I am also a scientist. My primary expertise is in genomics technologies and the genetic contributions to disease, but my research areas are vast, including projects investigating COVID-19. So, while I am not an epidemiologist or virologist or other specialties of more direct relevance, I do study COVID-19 as part of my profession. So, I hope you will consider the points I raise below with that in mind.

Based on reviewing this plan, my family's own experience with DL and my understandings of the scientific literature of COVID-19 and the societal impacts of DL, I have the following comments:

Due to lack of transparency or apparent urgency of MDUSD to return kids to in-person learning, we have removed one of our two children from the MDUSD system. Our 5th grade son struggled mightily under DL. It was a battle every day to get him to simply log-on for the on-line instruction. He would get up frequently or get distracted by other activities in the house, causing him to become lost and behind when returning. For on-line learning to have any chance at success a parent had to sit with him every moment of the class. When at in-person school, these behaviors were not nearly this much of a problem for him. He thrived on the school environment and group learning. He needs that personal interaction to be motivated. Additionally, all the help we put into his learning meant we were taking help away from our second child's learning activities. Under DL, we were simply stretched too thin with too much happening all at once. Neither of our two children were learning effectively and DL caused emotional strain on our family. Because of this, we have moved our son to a private school doing in-person learning. While this situation works for us, we also recognize we have the privilege to be able to afford private school and still provide support for DL. Not all families and children have such luxuries.

A phased reopening plan cannot wait until January of 2021. The impacts of DL on the education of our children are profound. This is seen in this very report with approximately a 50% increase in the proportion of students receiving multiple D or F grades in their first quarter reports. This is learning that cannot simply be 'made up for' later. Some of these students do not have the time or luxury catch up in subsequent years. This will simply be lost learning. The impacts of this will be evident in our youth for years, if not decades to come (https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/18/covid-19-could-lead-to-permanent-loss-in-learning-and-trillions-of-dollars-in-lost-earnings). All children have a right, one that is guaranteed by the California State Constitution, to an adequate public education. At the present moment, it hard to see how these students are getting that.

A reopening plan should be based on the best available science and modeled on successful reopening plans. In my review of the plan and observations at other board meetings or statements, I see many topics brought up that have dubious scientific backing regarding their ability to spread the virus, but I also see some things included that ignore known mechanisms of transmission or do not learn from previous school reopening failures. I will summarize a few issues here:

· Stable cohorts for all age groups. A successful reopening plan is going to have to allow for some teachers, staff and students to turn up positive for COVID-19 without shutting entire schools. The way to prevent that is to limit contacts. High school students should not be in unstable groups as is referenced in Dr. Clark's presentation. This will fail and cause school closures. Solving these problems for high school students will be challenging, but it is none the less critical. A core class model or other approaches should be explored. Some subject areas may simply have to stay 100% DL, while others can come back. Creativity and willingness to disrupt norms is going to be essential.

· Mask wearing for young age groups is likely ineffectual. Young children have been regularly shown to be less susceptible to contracting COVID-19 and less likely to spread it. Additionally, masking wear compliance among young kids is likely to be low and even when worn, they may frequently be worn improperly. Disease spread should be mitigated from young kids in other ways, including distancing or plexiglass barriers. Mask should be worn outside their cohorts, however, so in hallways, bathrooms, etc.

· Utilize reasonable ventilation solutions. Aerosol transmission has been shown to be a minor contributor to disease spread, instead airborne droplets are the primary mode of infection (which is why we cloth masks work, aerosol transmission would require N95 or above). Because these droplets are heavy and subject to gravity they do not stay airborne for long and fall to ground within typically short distances (which is where the 6 foot guidance comes from). Focusing limited resources on significant upgrades to HVAC systems is unlikely to provide a justifiable level of decreased disease transmission.

· Adults remain the primary vector of COVID-19 disease transmission. Reopening plans cannot ignore the roll staff, teachers and parents' behavior play in keeping

schools safe. Adult-to-adult contact needs to be reduced to as close to zero as possible. Most case tracking studies in schools, camps and daycares share essentially two findings: 1) Older kids, greater than about 13 years of age, easily spread the disease. 2) Most outbreaks at younger age group facilities have included or haven't been able to rule out adult-to-adult disease transmission between parents and staff/teachers.

· Ask for help from parents in donating resources and time! Getting our children back to school is a priority for us as well and we don't expect you to solve all problem or rely entirely on local, state and federal funds. I'm sure if along with the typical school supplies teachers usually ask for PPE, hand sanitizer, wipes (hard to find still, but why not try), or other materials were asked for, many parents would provide them. If you can't make a plan based on unknown donations, ask for them now! Remember, many parents are already at home facilitating DL now and we don't expect this all to go back to normal. If we can facilitate DL, I'm sure many of us can help facilitate in-person school as well.

The timing of this meeting, 4pm, makes full participation impossible for many families. Many parents would like to participate in this meeting and make public, live comment, but have work obligations. We also need to balance supporting DL, meaning helping children with independent work at reasonable times of the day. I myself cannot summarize these comments to you because of work obligations. I would implore the board to reconsider the timing of any future meetings discussing something as important as a return to in-person school for the more typical 6pm or 7pm start times.

There have been multiple reports of parents getting kicked out of the Zoom meeting while attempting to make public comment. I do not want to believe this is a nefarious action, but it is highly suspect that the individuals this has happened to have been critical of the board's actions in the past. I understand technical problems can occur, however, we are no stranger to zoom, so it is suspicious that the meeting appears to be going along without other interruptions, but only certain individuals are removed from waiting rooms.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. I'm also happy to work with the board or superintendent at any capacity I can to help.

Best,

Walter Eckalbar

nic911@comcast.net
I think it is time to put the kids first!!! I think as parents and a lot of of working parents we have been patient and understanding but that is quickly coming to an end. My son is and now was a 1st grader at Mt Diablo Elementary. Today was his first day at a private school because we cannont sit by and watch him fall further behind. It was a

sad but necessary decision. We love the teacher Mrs Starbuck that he got, and she is doing the best she can with what she is up against and the minimal hours she is from what I am hearing allowed to teach.
How does a 6-7 hour school day n person instruction turn into 2hrs of daily instruction via zoom???????? My son was excited about Mrs Starbuck and that he had friends in his class, but unfortunately he will not get the chance to enjoy that.
Every age is suffering in their own way but the younger onesTK - 3rd are missing a time when they are learning, routine, fundamentals, etc

I keep hearing you are meeting to get a plan together..... you have had 7 months now to get your plan together , even mutiple plans.

Also be honest with the parents don' string them along, tell us the truth about when or if in person learning will return before next fall.

I hope for all the kids and parents still at one of your schools that they get some answers soon.

Regards

Nicole Fromme

carolyn.eisen@gmail.com
It is time to begin a phased, safe re-opening of MDUSD K-12 schools!
Metrics determined by the state of California have met the criteria to re-open Contra Costa County public schools. Mayors in California's 13 largest cities have sent a letter to Governor Newsom urging him to take further action to re-open schools asap.
Contra Costa and MDUSD area preschools, daycares, Pod programs, camps, sports and extracurricular activities have been open for months, with no resulting outbreaks or community spike in Covid cases. Teachers and staff in these programs are valued, just as public school teachers and staff are, and as such many safety measures are in place to protect them and the kids. When there have been cases, it has often been found that it is the adult staff or teachers bringing Covid into the school or program, not vice versa.
Many Contra Costa and MDUSD area private schools have returned to campus or plan to in coming weeks, thus offering opportunity for wealthier families to have better access to education than those who can't afford private
Keeping children at home distance learning moves us rapidly away from any previous steps towards equality - distance learning causes additional hardship for lower income families, non-English speaking parents, single parents, families with two working parents, kids with special needs and so many more.
MDUSD and MDEA present distance learning as if it's an acceptable substitute for regular, in-person education. It's simply not. It works ok for some kids but for others it is essentially non-education. It is causing mental health issues in kids and parents who struggle, economic issues for those who must leave the workforce to teach their children and physical health issues for kids with less opportunity to be active. We can

only hope that the damage from these intensely stressful months won't be lasting and that kids can get back on track to where they were last winter - but there is no guarantee.
MDUSD and MDEA currently present a defeatist attitude and excuses about the challenges surrounding returning to campuses. Other districts can and are doing it, and we can learn from their models. With a switch to a can-do, positive attitude and engaging the many, many eager parents to help with safety plans and funds to ensure compliance with guidelines, MDUSD can do this too.
Studies across the board - in other countries, in New York and in California - are showing that school re-openings have not increased the spread of Covid. Science and metrics, infectious disease experts, esteemed pediatricians, etc. agree that the risks associated with keeping our youth distance learning at home may be higher than the risks of returning with safety measures. Please keep politics, feelings and opinions out of your decision making! Go with the science and get our kids back on campus NOW!

Carolyn Eisen
Parent of Sequoia Elementary 3rd grader and Sequoia Middle School 6th grader

ashley-vanmaanen@hotmail.com
Good afternoon,

I am a mother of a 5.5 year old kindergartener who attends zoom schooling through Walnut Acres elementary. Not only was my daughters last few months of preschool taken away from her but the huge milestone of starting kindergarten in person with friends has been robbed of her as well. With the curriculum that kindergarten now covers it is very hard for her to get the type of schooling she needs and deserves through zoom. I am willing to work with the school and teacher to assure safety and distancing so that our kids can get back to the classroom. It is important to these kids to get back to face to face teaching in person so they can thrive and grow. I thank you for your time and hope that together we can make this happen soon.

Ashley Dawson

Continue efforts towards schools reopening
Inbox

luz@navas-pinzon.com
Dear Board Members,

I am glad to see that there is more discussion around reopening the schools in our district, even if it is a gradual, phased approach.

We are beyond the wait-and-see period, as it is clear Covid will be with us for a long time...the masks, the social distancing, the precautions...it is a new way of life, probably even after a vaccine is available. After a vaccine arrives, it will still take time to fully establish its safety and efficacy. It is unreasonable to continue to wait an undetermined amount of time to event start preparing to reopen schools.

Our county has made progress with lowering Covid cases and schools are officially allowed to open by following the appropriate safety guidelines. So please determine what is needed at each site to make it safe. Determine at each site what could allow additional students to return safely. Personally, it's been disappointing the way the use of outdoor space has been completely dismissed, if it was ever considered at all. No one asked to move all learning outdoor, but why not use it whenever possible, as much as possible? It's been equally disappointing that the Task Forces established earlier this year either stopped their efforts or have not communicated any updates since their ONE presentation.

Since you have chosen not to be a leader in the schools' reopening efforts, plenty of other districts' reopening plans and safety protocols are now available for reference. Please use them. Please involve your teachers and site administrators in creating solutions that will work for all stakeholders. Please continue to remember that DL (wether it's good or bad) relies on the premise that a parent can be home with children - a privilege not everyone can afford. Remember that when you go about your day and meet the people that show up to serve YOUR needs - a lot of them are parents!

Thank you,
Luz Pinzon

jessicarrcooper@gmail.com

My daughter is enrolled at a MDUSD elementary school in Pleasant Hill for kindergarten. We have not logged into Zoom, not even once, and completed zero distance learning packets.

Do you know how many times we have been contacted by the teacher about our absence? ZERO!!! Not even a single email!

Do you know how long it took for the school to contact me about unexcused absences? 3 WEEKS!!!! First contact was 3 weeks!!

No accountability by teacher or school. This is a complete failure.

I enrolled my kid in private school because I care about my kid actually learning this year! The school and teacher sadly have proved it was necessary to move to private school. Still waiting for school to send paperwork to officially pull my child out, not holding my breath.

kellyglon@hotmail.com

OPEN SCHOOLS SAFELY NOW! Stop putting the teacher's unions wishes above children's futures. This kids deserve better!!!! The MDUSD is ruining lives each day you decide not to get these kids back in the classroom. Shame on you guys for not even having a date yet. Shame.

Kelly Glon

emma.e.rennie@gmail.com
Dear all,

I would ask that you do not return our students back to school until we have a vaccine or the situation is much much better than the red tier. If you look at all evidence from other countries, as well as US states, every single region/county who has opened up the restrictions have spiked severely after kids returning to school.
It will be much worse for our kids to return then have restrictions implemented yet again.
I understand that some families need to return to school because of hardships- so please have a limited number of spots available for these kids. This is what has been happening in other countries, for example Scotland has mandatory spots for all government and healthy workers.
But please do not return all kids back- this will result in a spike yet again and more deaths to our vulnerable populations.

With best regards
Emma Rennie, mother of a walnut acres elementary student and a Northgate High student.

cjpetricca@gmail.com
Dear Board Members,

As a parent of two students under the age of 6 at two different schools in the District, I would like to request that the Board move forward with the next steps in order to get our kids back into classrooms sooner than later. With the levels of of COVID-19 decreasing in our community, now is the time to look at how we can safely return at least some of our students to in-person instruction.

At each of the last few board meetings I have attended virtually, it seems the board has only been examining the problems. We have had 7 months to understand the problems the District faces with returning our kids to school. Now, we need solutions. We need a detailed plan and a clear timeline for when the District will implement that plan.

I look forward to hearing the Board's plan on how to safely re-open our schools. My young children need to have the option for in-person learning as soon as possible.

anitapjohnson@hotmail.com

Thank you for dedicating yet another Special Study Session to the Reopening Process. We all appreciate the time and effort that you are dedicating to these important decisions.

Last night, the MDEA Executive Board passed this Resolution regarding Reopening Safely and Humanely:

Mt. Diablo Education Association (MDEA)

Resolution on a Path to Reopening Safely and Humanely

Whereas, students would benefit from safe, in-person instruction; and

Whereas, MDEA is dedicated to reopening as soon as it is safe; and

Whereas, COVID-19 is a life-threatening illness which affects persons of all ages; and

Whereas, COVID-19 can cause significant pain and disruptions to major life activities if a person survives; and

Whereas the spread of COVID-19 can be controlled only by community-wide use of preventative measures and limits on interactions between individuals and stable cohorts; and

Whereas, COVID-19 is more prevalent in some towns/cities within the district; and

Whereas, reopening with less restrictive criteria would most likely lead to more frequent reclosures and quarantines.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that MDEA is committed to the health and safety of **every child, every school, and every community**.

Further, be it resolved, that MDEA demands that the decision to reopen be based on the following **community health metrics**:

1. Anyone in the county must be able to get a free test within 48 hours and get the results within 72 hours.
2. Fewer than twelve new cases per day countywide for 21 consecutive days.
3. Fewer than seven new cases per day per 100,000 people for 21 consecutive days in each of the following communities: Bay Point,

Clayton, Concord, Martinez, Pacheco, Pittsburg, Pleasant Hill, and Walnut Creek.

4. A combination of other criteria that will reduce the likelihood that schools will become vectors for the spread of the disease.

Further, be it resolved, that MDEA demands that the following **protocols** be clearly communicated, funded, and implemented before schools reopen:

1. To foster open communication, the district must keep the community informed of the number of known COVID-19 cases among student, family members, or staff at each site.

2. A plan and procedure to provide on-site, no-cost COVID-19 testing during the workday for all staff and students.

3. A plan and procedure to ensure that students and staff must test negative for COVID-19 before they return to on-campus instruction. The test must occur seven (7) or fewer days before the student or staff member returns to their site.

4. A plan and procedure to ensure that all staff and students are tested at regular intervals thereafter.

5. A plan and place to isolate anyone who develops symptoms while at school. This plan shall explicitly address the staffing and procedures for the isolation area.

6. A plan to provide ample masks, shields, barriers, gloves, toilet covers, gowns, other necessary PPE, hand sanitizer, and hand-washing stations.

7. Protocols to ensure that all areas and materials used by staff and students will be cleaned and sanitized in compliance with guidelines from local, state, and federal health authorities.

8. Protocols that require everyone on a school campus to perform daily health screenings, wear a mask, and maintain six feet of physical distance. These protocols will clearly establish the consequences for violation and that school administrators, not MDEA members, will be responsible for implementing consequences.

9. A plan and procedure to ensure that all classrooms and other areas used by staff and students approved for in-person instruction are appropriately ventilated. This plan should include a procedure for regular

updates on the quality of ventilation for each classroom including the dates that filters were last changed.

10. Schedules which will significantly limit the numbers of people in any enclosed areas, with established and maintained stable cohorts.

Adopted by unanimous vote, MDEA Executive Board, October 20, 2020.

This resolution clearly sets forth our reasons for caution around the reopening process and delineates clear criteria for reopening and identifies necessary protocols that must be in place. This document will guide our discussions with the district as we continue to work through the reopening process.

The Superintendent will share data this afternoon regarding the learning loss that students are experiencing. No one questions that this learning loss is real and tragic. However, it is important to remember and to celebrate that the students and many of our community members are still alive and healthy now because we have remained in the Distance Learning Phase.

The number of cases in our county has been declining. This presents some hope that it may soon be safe for our schools to open. While a specific date may provide reassurance and structure to some individuals, MDEA believes that the final decision must be guided by community health metrics. It is highly likely that the number of cases will increase again in flu season and over the holidays and the actual reopen date will be later than January.

Caution around actual reopening and the use of community health metrics is essential to ensure that every child, every school, and every community is safe and healthy. Careful use of these metrics is also essential to ensure that once we do reopen, we can stay open and will not have to close again or to have whole schools quarantined.

However, it is good practice for management to actively plan to reopen and to develop all of the plans and agreements that will need to be in place. We appreciate that Dr. Clark is being proactive and transparent.

Take care and stay safe.

Anita Johnson, President, Mt. Diablo Education Association

jennyctiu@gmail.com
Dear Board:

I understand that we have to protect the teachers who are in the vulnerable population due to their age or having pre-existing conditions such as obesity, heart and respiratory conditions, diabetes, etc. But has there been any discussion with the teacher's unions about having these teachers get a doctor's note placing them on disability? If they are on disability, this could be a legal mechanism to put these teachers strictly on distance learning duty. I won't take credit for this idea. It was proposed by Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, professor at Stanford University Medical School, a physician, epidemiologist, health economist, and public health policy expert focusing on infectious diseases and vulnerable populations.

https://abc7news.com/health/stanford-doctor-leads-global-movement-against-covid-19-lockdowns/6977799/

I ask you bring this up to the teacher's union to see if that will help reopen our schools.

Sincerely,
Jenny Tsang

tamar.gonsalves@gmail.com

Since I'm unsure that I can keep everything to 3 minutes I am writing as well. Much of this may be a duplicate later but just in case.

First, I'd like to say that the time of day these meetings occur are really prohibitive to many parents who might otherwise comment about re-opening schools from verbally commenting. Sure they can email but they should be given the opportunity to voice their opinions out loud. These are the people not going back to school affects the most, the parents that work. I myself at 4 pm will be juggling work and my 3 kids and pray that I don't get interrupted. There are also parents who won't speak up for fear of retribution towards their kids. I know for a fact because my ex-husband is one of them since his girlfriend is a teacher.

Moving on, it's been 7 months since we were all put on lockdown and told we had to take our kids out of school and flatten the curve. 7 months to plan the re-opening. 7 months and here we are still not open. We have been moved to a tier, no matter how bs I think dictator Newsom's tier system is, we have been moved to the tier where schools may re-open and yet my kids are still in front of a computer screen. And my kids are the lucky ones. Pretty bright kids who are doing somewhat ok, I think, I'm pretty busy at work while they are online for school, so I'm praying they are ok. They also had access to a teacher last spring so that was lucky for them. Not everyone is lucky.
https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-10-12/school-reopenings?fbclid=IwAR1d5d3sHwemg0G-Rn_w9G2IyixqWvSQfEjuycsv3tbwuMG7M2XgaGlM2Qw

I am infuriated as I see that San Ramon Unified and Walnut Creek Unified are preparing for openings and we are still sitting here. Why? It's not because of science anymore.

The science is saying that the chances of children contracting are ridiculously low and that no surge has been linked, https://abc30.com/california-schools-school-reopenings-reopen-are/6840899/ ,to the schools that have re-opened. Statistically and scientifically speaking we should be opening up but we aren't. Why? Because of fear. NO LONGER IS THIS SCIENCE.

In that vein let's speak about what is surging. TEEN SUICIDE. Mental health issues. You are ruining our children's childhood. Milestones and memories are being ripped away. Gone is 5th grade camp. Gone is graduation.

Multiple Mayors including San Francisco's Mayor are calling for schools to open. (see attached). You have received 25 million dollars to re-open. What have you done with the money? You can now choose to open. https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/for-schools-and-childcare?fbclid=IwAR0NhMyP0j5f0MOSFFcsflC7FjhKAIwbA4NSwD7wkWUunUEiycop6nlMQx8 You are choosing not to. You are choosing not to give parents a choice at all.

There is a petition with hundreds of parents signatures asking you to open and give us OUR choices back. If teachers and some parents are living in fear let them. Let them stay at home. Quarantine the sick. Not the healthy. Let them choose to stay home. Let us choose to go back to school.

I am watching my children's friends be pulled from schools and put in private school, homeschool and even move to other states. Guess what this is going to do to your previously already inadequately funded schools? Because we were told that they were not well funded when we were in school. This is why us parents had to fork over hundreds and hundreds of dollars annually on top of our taxes. So now you are losing kids left and right. Bye bye teachers, administrators and big salaries. I can guarantee you these kids won't be back once they see a better option.

Teachers under CTA are basically saying that they aren't essential but that's not true. And if they are essential they need to be there in person just as our grocery store clerks, nurses and other essential workers, IN PERSON, not hiding behind a screen doing a half ass crap job. Fire them and get new ones. http://lite.cnn.com/en/article/h_ff45bf78c07194d1891813cd34f57712

Please see all these links:

Doctors declare lockdown unhealthy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7Ms30KUxG4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1KFPRSVj_Tk_-VOvbj48wm6r5XvNZ4tB8LNPFLUc3-GbR82QIJ74b_fIs

'This is the right time': UCSF pediatrics professor explains why SF schools could reopen now

https://www.sfgate.com/coronavirus/article/San-Francisco-schools-reopen-when-plans-COVID-time-15655358.php?fbclid=IwAR2GgbyLoLuQbKVll9c7HAjAYrXZhZ_NIcLln2BMnd7gv7Phz4gpwt3vObw

NYC Schools open:
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/19/nyregion/schools-coronavirus.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&fbclid=IwAR1YOhSB0C1eJdu8eBmSWXbkZ9zb1S8G72utqjt4KHKgCwpcdf1TxEebC-g

Orange County open:
https://edsource.org/2020/a-look-at-orange-county-as-first-in-a-wave-of-school-reopenings-in-california/641701?fbclid=IwAR15anYCSoyQpoYmW5dM8C0GdzN6Q8skpSY0ZCsE6tugO694wbHWlBzk_eA

This email is long already I know. So I will conclude. Put our kids back in school in person. Thank you

Tamar Gonsalves

evaseto@yahoo.com
Please note that the CDC has updated the definition of close contact:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact

Given this, it's important that notifications of confirmed coronavirus exposure be expanded.
It's unacceptable to not let parents know.
Most of the guidelines I see are about staff notifications and reporting.

Please also be aware of outbreaks happening in locations where schools have opened.
It seems that all of this should be taken into account.
It's extremely disruptive to anyone's plans if we are constantly switching between distance and in-person learning.

Nationally -
https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/08/28/906263926/how-many-coronavirus-cases-are-happening-in-schools-this-tracker-keeps-count

Florida -
https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2020/09/30/under-legal-pressure-florida-releases-names-of-schools-with-covid-19-cases/

Michigan -
https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/10/coronavirus-outbreaks-reported-at-84-michigan-k-12-schools-and-30-colleges-in-oct-19-report.html

Utah -
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/18/us/coronavirus-schools-reopening-outbreak.html

New Jersey -
https://www.nj.com/education/2020/10/22-outbreaks-reported-in-nj-schools-where-kids-or-teachers-gave-covid-19-to-each-other.html

Will there be regular testing of school teachers and staff?
Will those results be posted for public?

I would like to see the District be transparent about the number of confirmed cases.
An ongoing updated dashboard would be useful...by school.

Information about useful dashboards:
https://www.ratecoviddashboard.com/ratings

Example of a A rated dashboard - UC Berkeley
https://coronavirus.berkeley.edu/dashboard/

Parents should have penalties for sending confirmed cases or quarantined children to school.
These should be in the planned reopening.
Too many parents know that parents send sick kids to school.
There should be daily certifications of the students health before they are allowed to school.
Parents who certify that their kids are healthy when they are not should be identified and penalized.
Parents should be allowed to pursue legal action against those who fail to disclose and send their sick kids to school.

The District should require flu shots for students and staff.

The District should be as careful as possible to adhere to known mitigation efforts such as increased ventilation with MERV13 filtration, physical distancing of at least 6 feet and increased access to hand washing and cleaning. If for example, the District cannot accommodate 6 feet of spacing there should be clear statements that this is less than what public health officials advocate. Many are not aware of the public health guidelines so it's important to state what they are and when the District cannot follow.

Teachers, Staff and their unions seem to be under public criticism for the delay in reopening. It would be useful for the District to indicate which of the unions negotiating points are in line with public health guidance rather than just seeming like unreasonable

requests. It's important for the District to acknowledge staff's right to a healthy workplace and the requirements the District must follow in accordance with Cal-OSHA. It's important that there is not finger pointing and assigning of blame between the District and teachers and staff. This should be collaborative.

Eva Seto
Parent

mabhorst@gmail.com
Please don't reopen. I don't want germs in my house.

But if you truly want to help families, especially those with working parents, please require teachers to provide much more supervised, instruction time. Some days, my six year old twins barely have any zoom time with their first grade teacher. But they then hours of "independent work." But since they are learning to read, they can't do "independent work"!! I have to read the schedule, read the instructions for each problem, help them navigate to numerous resources (workbook, to chrome book, to math book, to journal...), answer their questions - basically I have to be their teacher! That's not distance learning. That's homeschooling with an agenda set by the teacher. And I still have a job. And I still have another kid to help through 4th grade. And I'm still the primary parent who handles dozens of other domestic duties each day.

I don't want schools to reopen but I understand why many many parents are pushing for that result. Distance learning is not going to work, especially for younger students, unless teachers learn how to teach thru zoom rather than just assign work that some other adult has to read, understand, and explain to a student. Maybe worry less about covering every standard and spend more time supervising kids as they apply their new knowledge to workbooks, journals, etc. Encourage break out groups. Walk kids thru the answers. Be the adult in their life during school hours.

Otherwise, you are asking working parents to do a lot of the supervision/guidance that teachers used to provide. And we can't survive that and hold down jobs of our own.

Melissa Horst

tovamoore@gmail.com
Esteemed Board Members and Superintendent,

I am writing to encourage a slow, thoughtful, and phased-in return to in-person learning experiences. I felt very, very worried hearing the comments by board and community members encouraging an accelerated return to campus, even a mid-semester return. As much as every one of us wants school to feel "normal" again, I encourage us to keep in mind that "normal" school is simply not an option. Our choices are between distance learning and a hybrid model (which will, as far as I can tell, still be 60% distance learning or more). Each of these choices is unsatisfying and problematic, but these are

the choices we have, and it appears that many members of our community still do not understand this crucial point. There are many challenges with distance learning for students (and believe me, the same goes for staff!), but a hybrid model will be very little like “normal” school. I get concerned when I hear the hybrid model discussed as if it will “fix” problems regarding isolation, mental health, and quality instructional time. It will not. At best, we will simply have different challenges to face: some things will get better, and some things will get worse. The sooner we accept that the hybrid model is not going to “save us” from these challenges, the sooner we can make thoughtful and informed decisions about how to proceed and how to find creative ways to support students, staff, and families, no matter what learning model we are in.

When considering if, when, and how to implement a hybrid model, I humbly (if also pleadingly!) ask that you consider the following:

1. The areas of concern regarding distance learning (peer interaction and collaboration, workload, academic support, mental health support, and hands-on engagement) would all still be areas of concern in a hybrid model:

a. Peer interaction and collaboration: If we do a hybrid model as safely as possible (as of course we must), students will be in small cohorts and not free to socialize with their friends (in fact, they might not ever attend school on the same day as their closest friends—I can only imagine the emails you will get about this during the scheduling phase!). During class, they will be masked and kept to a 6-foot distance from their teachers and from each other. The amount of peer interaction and collaboration that is possible in this environment is quite minimal. Over Zoom, group work is doable (if somewhat unsatisfying) through the use of breakout rooms and collaborative documents. But as creative as our educators are, I have yet to think of ways to allow for meaningful peer interactions during in-person class while also adhering to requirements for masking and social distancing. Ultimately, classroom instruction in many classes will look a lot like it does during distance learning: teachers lecturing at a physical distance, and students on their devices or completing other independent work (except now with the addition of all-day face coverings—comfy!). If you have ever felt “alone in a crowd,” I think you can imagine how disappointing and isolating it may feel for students to be near their peers but unable to see their faces, or have private conversations with them, or share learning materials with them, much less hug them. I am reminded of a friend's Grandmother, whose nursing home tried several months ago to encourage social interaction by allowing residents to eat dinner six feet apart in a large hall. She said it was worse than just dining alone: “After a while you stopped bothering to try to talk to anyone.”

b. Workload: If students only see each of their teachers once a week, the amount of work they will be doing for each class completely on their own will actually increase in a hybrid model. This greatly concerns me (if students are struggling with asynchronous learning, why are we creating more of it?). Keep in mind also that the quality of academic materials that teachers will be able to provide for this asynchronous learning time will also likely decrease, due to teachers having less prep time in which to create

and assess it. I can see this leading to more students falling behind as they await answers to clarifying questions regarding their assignments. It also concerns me that secondary students who miss just a single class period (or whose teachers miss a single class period) will go two weeks (!) without seeing that particular teacher, especially with how many absences and lack of substitutes we are likely to have.

c. Academic support: Again, with teachers on campus teaching full-time schedules, they will have less time to provide students with academic support. Right now, teachers and staff are aiming to answer all parent and student emails within a few hours and teachers are able to set up one-one-one appointments with struggling students; both of these will not be possible in a hybrid schedule. This is incredibly obvious, but it's worth taking the time to really consider: teachers cannot be both engaged online with students who are at home and teaching class in-person at the same time. During the three days (?) a week that students are at home learning asynchronously, they will have almost no support unlike in Distance learning when they would have daily access to teachers. Consider also that, for safety reasons, students will often be quarantining at home even during their "on-campus days" (because they have a cold, because someone in their household has a fever, etc.) These students will go days without even hearing the voice of one of their teachers. Even when students are in class for their one or two meetings a week with their teachers, they will not be receiving much academic support. Teachers will not be able to crouch next to student desks and walk them through assignments; we are unable to get close enough to them to even see what they are working on. In talking to colleagues, it seems that most teachers would plan to use around half of their class time (so, two class meetings a month) for testing (since it is easier to ensure academic integrity in-person)—so it is likely that they will still be learning the majority of their academics through Distance learning.

d. Hands-on engagement: This is, I think, the best argument for a hybrid model. Especially in elective classes such as art, foods, drama, and auto-shop, and P.E., it would be an enormous improvement to have students able to engage with hands-on materials. (Though my daughter's teachers have been amazing with sending home hands-on projects bi-weekly to accomplish this--Shout out to the Holbrook Kindergarten Team!)

e. Mental health support: This is the one that really gets me. This is my work.

A hybrid model will not solve the isolation, depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges being faced by our students (and staff). Like you, I have heard from many students and families that are struggling with mental health during distance learning. These challenges are real, and they are significant. I have also been in communication with many staff members who are struggling with their own mental health, and this badly needs attention. However, I get really, really, really concerned when I hear folks talking about the hybrid model as if it will resolve the mental-health issues that students and staff have been experiencing during this pandemic and during distance learning. I really wish it would, but I have even greater concerns about student and staff mental health in a hybrid model than I do during a full distance-learning model. Let me explain:

a. Students forced to “opt out” of the hybrid model due to their own pre-existing conditions, or due to living in households with at-risk family members, will feel more isolated and depressed than ever. These will be some of our already most high-need students from a mental-health perspective. Right now, these students are sharing the collective Zoom experience with their peers and getting online “face-time” with their teachers. They could have new teachers and classmates abruptly in the middle of the year. If we move to hybrid model, we will need to create robust mental-health supports for these students and ensure that the same rigour is given to their academics.

b. Students who do come to campus, but are concerned about the risk of Covid-19 (this will be a lot of them) will likely experience an increase in anxiety due to concerns for their own health and the health of their family members at home. Imagine the tension in a classroom when a student inevitably removes his mask to drink a sip of water, or—horror of horrors—coughs. Students will also likely experience the stress that comes from falling further behind in their classes (see lack of academic support, above) and being frequently tested in-person on material they have essentially had to learn on their own.

c. Students present on campus will have the painful experience of their teachers, classmates, and even their friends literally physically recoiling from their presence. They will experience this not once, but every day—probably many times a day—as they walk through hallways, as they get out of their seat to sharpen their pencils, as they attempt to use the bathroom. For many of our students, it will not matter how many times they tell themselves that these reactions are only due to COVID-19 and “nothing personal”; it will hurt.

d. Mental Health Support I think there is a misconception that having all students on campus would mean easier student access to critical wellness-center supports. In a hybrid model, wellness staff would have to decide between either 1). pulling students out of a class that is the only time they will see that teacher that week, or 2). meeting with students by Zoom during their asynchronous days. What I can tell you, is that in the event that students return to school on a very part time basis (2 days per week), it feels irresponsible for me to support them at school--removing them from the little time they will have teacher contact--instead of supporting them while they are completing distance learning so the support they will receive from me (and many of my colleagues) will be similar to what they are receiving now for mental health support.

e. A hybrid model will throw into semi-chaos the little consistency that some students and staff members have in their lives right now. Childcare schedules (for staff members, and also for students’ families) will become incredibly complicated, adding significant stress for some families. Some students will get new teachers; teachers will get new students. Students and staff will be absent more than ever before (calling out for a cough, hopefully not something greater), sometimes for long periods. And all of us will live with the uncertainty of the questions, “Will we still be here on campus next week?” and “Is today going to be the day that someone at our school tests positive for

COVID?" We could experience the preventable death of a teacher. We could experience the preventable death of a student. Would we (staff or students) be responsible for the death of our own family member?. At the very least, our school will likely have to shut down at some point (as schools across the nation have already experienced) due to positive cases or staff shortages, creating even more chaos. 2020 has already been a time of incredible uncertainty for all of us, and uncertainty tends to breed fear, discomfort, and anxiety, especially for our most vulnerable populations. If we are going to add more uncertainty to the lives of our students, their families, our staff members, and their families (not to mention risk lives), we had better make sure it's worth it.

3. The logistics of creating a hybrid-model schedule are enormously complex. The "regular" master schedule itself takes months to create. Now we are talking about a brand new master schedule, with shifting numbers of students and staff (some of whom I assume would be opting out last-minute), with new class-size restrictions based on the measurements of classrooms themselves (which vary widely across campuses and school sites, even within the same discipline), plus the obvious, seemingly-impossible challenge of limiting each student's number of student contacts in her day, even though students are all taking different courses. Health officials recommend "small, stable cohorts" of 14 or less. This may be logistically possible at the elementary level (if no students had siblings in different classes or schools), but at the high-school level, it seems very-near impossible due to the fact that students necessarily have multiple, subject-specialized teachers. Creating a schedule that is even possible—much less ideal—will take a lot of time.

4. The logistical challenges of keeping students and staff safe (ensuring masks/PPE, ventilation, enforcing distancing, etc.) are also immense, and there are a lot of as-yet unanswered questions about how this will all work. Initiating a hybrid model without clear protocols in place for these issues would be a grave mistake, one that could literally cost lives. I know that district staff and focus groups have been working on plans for many of these issues, and progress has been made (I personally was on 7 committees over the summer between a district one and several MDEA ones so I can imagine how much this has been worked on). But I encourage the board to ensure we have clear, sensible plans for all of them (that are approved by site admin and by teacher representatives) before we make the decision to reopen campuses. Here are just some of the considerations I have … considered (I trust there are many more I haven't thought of):

a. Current information suggests that COVID-19 is airborne, such that masks and distancing are not enough to prevent its spread in enclosed spaces. For example, it has been found to linger in the air in bathrooms. Will we be adding additional bathrooms to our campuses? Will there be a wait period between people who want to use the bathroom? If so who will enforce it? How will we make sure that all students and staff members have the opportunity to safely use the bathroom when needed?

b. Our HVAC systems are, I assume, being updated. Who will monitor them to ensure that every classroom has proper ventilation and air quality?

c. Who will be checking each day to ensure that all students are wearing an appropriate mask? Masks with valves, for example, facilitate spread of the virus.

d. What will teachers and students be expected to do if a student removes his mask during a class period? Should we leave the classroom? How strictly are we going to enforce this?

e. What about when a student is having difficulty breathing with her mask on? Where can students go to take "mask breaks"? Does that then contaminate a location on campus? Will students there need to be monitored? By whom?

f. Are we sending students who exhibit any symptoms to the nurse? To the office? Are we hiring additional nurses?

g. How often will facilities be disinfected, and by whom, and using what substances? Will the substances be both effective in killing the virus and safe for our students with chemical sensitivities?

h. Will students be monitored in any way before school, after school, and during breaks to ensure distancing? If so, who will do this?

i. What will we do when there is a fire that compromises outdoor air quality for many days in a row? Will we be asked to keep doors and windows open, exposing everyone to hazardous air? Will we be asked to keep doors and windows closed, increasing risk for COVID-19? Will we all just stay home?

j. When a student begins exhibiting symptoms but does not have a positive COVID-19 test, what will happen? Will all the students and staff members that the student has been in class with that week be required to stay home? How far will this reach?

k. Who will be in charge of contact tracing? Will names be given?

l. Where are students and staff going to be eating lunch? Again, given that the virus can linger in the air, I assume people should not be eating in classrooms? What about on rainy days? Smoky days? Will distancing be enforced? If so, by whom?

m. Are we prepared to deal with lawsuits that will come if a student (and their family) is exposed to COVID-19 due to a failure of any of our above protocols?

n. From where will families who do not have masks receive them? Do we have a budget for student masks?

5. We will lose many highly-qualified staff members in any hybrid model, and even more if we rush to implement hybrid without detailed plans and protocols in place. As I

understand it, leaves are only being granted to staff members who not only have very specific medical conditions (or have a direct dependent who has one of these conditions), but also have a doctor's note specifically stating that the condition prohibits in-person teaching. And in talking to staff members with such conditions, it seems that even staff members who have classic pre-existing conditions placing them at high risk for serious complications from COVID-19 are finding themselves unable to get a doctor's note explicitly prohibiting them from returning to school in person (Kaiser in particular seems unwilling to provide such notes, and Kaiser is the main health provider for our district). What this means, I think, is that we will risk losing many of our staff members not just temporarily, but permanently, as many will make the difficult decision to resign and seek employment elsewhere rather than risk contracting COVID-19. The survey provided to staff did not allow for "I would prefer to work from home but cannot get a doctor's note for my situation." I believe that the numbers in the survey would be drastically different that what was received. In addition to staff members with underlying medical conditions, some of the other types of staff members we are likely to lose are:

a. Our most experienced, veteran teachers, many of whom are in leadership roles on our campuses (many will resign or retire early due to being in a higher-risk group)

b. Teachers with young kids who do not have safe, adequate, affordable childcare for all of their on-campus days (teachers will be expected to be at school 4-5 days a week, while their kids are not in school or are in a hybrid model attending 2 days a week)

c. Our best subs, most of whom are retired former teachers and are in a high-risk group due to age

d. Staff members with a high-risk person who is (necessarily) in their "bubble" but not a direct dependent (I fall into this group)

6. If we go to a hybrid model, we will likely have to return to distance learning anyway, due to staffing shortages.

Everything described in the last section is before we even start dealing with what to do when the staff members that are able/willing to teach in person have to stay home because they are sick with … well, anything, or because they are quarantining after possible exposure, or because someone in their household has a fever, or because they are so burnt out they simply can't possibly do another day (many staff are already near this level of burnout, and hybrid is likely to exacerbate stress/exhaustion for many). Honestly it's hard to imagine that a hybrid model (especially one that is rushed) will be staffable at all; at the very least, we will experience a sub shortage the likes of which we have never seen (even in "normal" times, teachers are regularly asked to cover for other teachers on their prep periods due to sub shortages, and I'm guessing that people will not be lining up to become substitute teachers this year). Even if, amazingly, we are able to find people willing to be substitute teachers, and we have protocols in place for what to do when multiple teachers are absent on the same day, families might grow

tired of sending their students to campus, only to have the one or two times a week they are supposed to see their qualified teacher be led by a substitute.

Because it will not be safe to simply “send students to the library” or have them congregate elsewhere when there are no teachers or substitutes available to supervise them, it is likely that school will have to be canceled last minute some days, or—more optimistically—we would go back, either temporarily or permanently, to full distance learning (again, this would be after having lost many of our most qualified teachers).

7. The quality of teaching and learning in a hybrid model will, for most classes, be lower than it is during full distance learning, partly due to the disruption in student/teacher relationships. The quality of instruction may be improved for some elective classes such as art, PE, drama, foods, and autoshop, as well as some lab science courses (because of access to needed materials). But most classes, including nearly all core classes in math, English, history, and languages, will suffer:

a. Students will have decreased synchronous time with teachers, as low as one or two class meetings a week, and a significant portion of this time will be used for testing. Remember with block schedules and everybody was concerned that students would only see their teachers three times a week? One time a week is simply not enough.

b. Student schedules will change: it is unclear how many. Relationships that have been built over the first semester would have to be begun anew with new teachers, now with the added disorienting reality of never being able to see your teacher’s face. I am surprised that more people are not alarmed by the prospect of shifted schedules, as these also bring the obvious added academic challenges of students that are suddenly behind or ahead in pacing, or are in a class where some of the students are building on a shared experience from first semester, and other students are not.

c. We will likely lose cohort academy and the relationships we have built with those students, especially regarding racial equity work. Right now this is our best way of making sure every student has “somebody” checking in on them.

d. Classroom management (what some people might think of as discipline, though I don’t see it that way) would necessarily become harsher. No longer will teachers be able to crouch near a student and quietly check in with them when the student is disengaged or acting out. All of those interactions will take place at a six-foot distance for all in the class to hear.

e. The relationship between students and their teachers will be fractured, not only because schedules will change, everyone will be masked and distanced, students will see their teachers less, and classroom management will be harsher, but also because teachers will view their students not just as students but as potential vectors of illness (because they are). This strain in teacher/student relationships will have a direct impact on student engagement and success. (Side note: it may also be particularly harmful for juniors who hope to seek college recommendations from their current teachers).

f. Teachers will talk and engage less, generally. It's hard to project your voice through a mask. It's hard to support students or address inappropriate behavior from a six-foot distance. It's hard to be engaging when students can't see your face and you can't see theirs to gauge how they're feeling. Practically speaking, students will end up watching a lot of videos, doing independent seatwork without teacher support, and testing (in other words, it won't be much better than what they're doing during their asynchronous time).

g. Teachers will be hyper-focused on protecting their students and themselves from risk of transmission (making sure students stay seated, enforcing mask-wearing and distancing, prohibiting sharing of materials, etc.) This will further damage relationships and also mean that less of our teachers' energy and time is available for actually engaging students in learning.

h. Because of the very real threat of contracting COVID-19, teachers' and students' brains will spend more time in a "high alert" mode (fight/flight, amygdala hijack), which directly disrupts learning ability. This high-alert mode also blocks empathy (which also requires use of our pre-frontal cortex). For these reasons, when making your planning decisions, it would be very useful to have information not just on how many students and staff members are willing to return for a hybrid model if that decision is made, but how many students and staff members feel truly safe doing so.

i. Speaking for myself, I am a very engaging counselor when I feel safe: I'm funny, quick-witted, inclusive, kind, thoughtful, and creative. I make students feel safe and included and connected to the material. When I feel anxious, most of that goes out the window. Nobody learns or teaches well in survival mode.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Rather than start from scratch with an entirely new model that is more problematic than the one we are using now, I believe we should focus on improving student engagement and mental health within the distance learning model, including bringing students on campus in targeted groups. I strongly support the district to look into a plan such as:

· After school, in-person small-group academic and emotional support (academic tutoring, co-curricular clubs, academic clubs)

· Quiet learning spaces to allow for technology access and technical/instructional support

Rather than moving to hybrid learning in January which may not yet show the fallout of the holiday get-togethers, I think we should consider staying in phase three for the remainder of the school year. Doing so would provide following benefits:

1. It would allow students to keep their current schedules, building on the relationships they already have with their teachers rather than disrupting their course schedules mid-year.

2. It would continue to provide the highest amount of synchronous learning time for students.

3. It would allow teachers to build on their learnings with their current systems rather than learning a completely new model of teaching; this would result in higher-quality content.

4. We would retain quality teachers when we need them most.

5. All students who want to do so would have multiple opportunities to engage meaningfully with peers and teachers on campus each week.

6. Families experiencing Wi-Fi issues or who simply need breaks to get students "out of the house" could take advantage of the quiet learning spaces on campus to engage in distance learning.

7. Students who are unable to come to campus due to health concerns will still feel included in our community—they won't have to "opt out" of the system entirely and receive all new teachers.

8. It will not be discriminatory against students and staff members with pre-existing health conditions.

9. It would avoid the logistical nightmare of a brand-new master schedule, daily prescreening, PPE, physical-distancing enforcement, facilities disinfection, ventilation updates and monitoring, testing, contact tracing, staggered bathroom usage, and staff and sub shortages.

10. It would give all students and all staff (who feel so differently about whether it's safe to be on campus) the power to make their own choices about when and how to be on campus—a little control when everything feels out of control.

I hope our district has plans to re-think the hybrid model, and it is possible that a different model they create will address some of the concerns I've brought up in this letter. I'm not saying a safe hybrid model can't be done (I don't think our current plan is safe, but I know we have brilliant and creative people working on a better model). But whether or not it can be done, I'm not convinced that it should be done.

If we could easily "try" hybrid, then that would be great—we could try it for a week and see how it goes. But a hybrid model is not something that we can easily "try" at the snap of a finger, as some suggest! The logistics that go into planning this are unbelievably complicated, not to mention every individual staff member's needs regarding

scheduling, childcare etc. We could not “try” hybrid without necessarily losing staff and students to resignations and opt-outs and causing great disruption to our academic year.

If we do move to a hybrid model, I hope at the very least that members of our community are aware of the major limitations of such a model, and do not expect hybrid to fix the major issues we are facing during distance learning, to improve student learning or mental health, or to feel anything like regular school. And if we go that direction, perhaps the board could help instill confidence in the safety of the hybrid model by volunteering to sub on our campuses during the first quarter of in-person school. I know this would go a long way (I am being completely serious!).

For what it’s worth, my own distance-learning work is going surprisingly well, and I am continually learning more from my generous and even more creative and tech-savvy colleagues. Most importantly, my students feel connected to me, and I have been able to provide family counseling as well within the purview of my role.

I became a counselor because I can’t imagine work “more” important than this. 2020 has been an incredibly challenging year, but I still feel that I am contributing to students and able to support them academically and emotionally. I am sad to say that I think this would change under a hybrid model (if I were to continue after assessing for our family's needs).

Thank you very much for your dedication to this community, and for reading this incredibly lengthy letter. I am counting on you to prioritize safety, teacher retention, academic quality, and student and staff mental health by continuing our distance-learning model while adding on-campus supports.

As a wise colleague said, "The hybrid model will imperil the health of students and staff and diminish learning, all without providing real benefits for social-emotional well-being." Please, listen to teachers.

From a safety standpoint as you make this decision, I believe that it is important to look beyond the fatality numbers that many are touting as being important. Long term effects of COVID-19 seem to show to affect even the asymptomatic. While I am sure that you are individually doing your own research about this topic, here are a few studies/articles that I wanted to include to counteract statements that are being made about the virus being "low risk."

The Conversation
https://theconversation.com/kids-are-bigger-coronavirus-spreaders-than-many-doctors-realized-heres-how-schools-can-lower-the-risk-144562
"A large study from Korea published in July found that older children, ages 10 to 19, were just as likely as adults to spread the virus to others. Younger children were suspected of infecting fewer people; however, a hospital in Chicago found that children under 5 with mild to moderate COVID-19 actually had more coronavirus genetic

material in their upper respiratory tracts than older children and adults." Once younger children are with more younger children, I would bet that infection numbers will increase--could it be that they are most likely to spread to people around their own height and just haven't been around other young kids due to school closures?
American Academy of Pediatrics
https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/
While children under 18 make up 24% of US population, they represent almost 11% (697,000) of COVID positive cases, (but children were more sheltered than other ages due to being kept home from schools). Those numbers come from only 5-16.6% of the testing completed.
Between 9/24 and 10/8 (2 weeks) there was a 13% increase in cases among children. This time period occurs when schools have started back up, but there wasn't a causal connection made. As more schools go back, it is realistic to imagine even higher numbers.
Asymptomatic Injuries
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7462877/
"The analysis of the positive cases from the cruise ship Diamond Princess revealed that 73% were asymptomatic, of whom 54% had lung opacities on CT..."

We are responsible for the long term safety of our students as well as their academics.

Thank you for taking the time to read this .

Tova Moore,
LCSW PPSC

devin.yeates@gmail.com

Dear MDUSD Board Members,

As parents of 4 children in Mount Diablo Schools (College Park HS, Pleasant Hill MS, and Sequoia Elementary), the topic of school reopening is of paramount importance. We feel it is critical that the MDUSD board, administrators, and teachers urgently find solutions to reopening schools consistent with public health guidelines for the benefit of all students.

First we'd like to acknowledge the incredible efforts of our MDUSD teachers for their resilience and ability to adapt to the remote schooling environment. With few exceptions, the quality of education has far exceeded what our family experienced in the spring when the schools were initially closed.

While the quality of education is better than in spring, teachers have admitted that the remote schooling environment has created significant limitations on the amount of

learning and curriculum covered. We must admit there is a cost to all MDUSD students, and even more so for disadvantaged students who need additional educational support.

The cost to our students is borne out in the experience of our own children, one of which in particular is not thriving by learning behind a computer screen all day, without the personal, in-person, connection to teachers and peers. Physical cues from her peers are absent, leading to lower engagement with learning.

The state of California guidelines for reopening, in our opinion, have been warranted and appropriately conservative to protect the health and wellbeing of our community. These approaches have worked to reduce the occurrence of COVID in our community. As we all know, those public health guidelines now indicate that opening schools can be done safely with occupancy restrictions within Contra Costa county.

Considering 1) the importance of bringing the quality of education back to in-person standards and 2) the fact that appropriately conservative public health guidelines indicate that schools can be reopened in a safe, though restricted, manner it is critically important that the MDUSD board, administrators, and teachers to urgently seek for solutions to move forward with a plan to reopen.

Please respectfully consider that decisions on reopening is the most important action that the school board will take during their tenure and for our children's educational future. Please also give appropriate weight to parents concerns and wishes regarding the school opening, as a large part of the burden is now being borne at home.

With appreciation,
Devin Yeates
Rachel Yeates

scoutfnch@gmail.com

From the data supplied on slide #6 on Dr. Clark's presentation, the percentages of communities total population that have tested positive first column is total, second is in the last 14 days:

Bay Point	4.187%	Last 14 days .150%
Clayton	.5292%	14 days .026%
Concord	1.870%	14 days .097%
Pacheco	1.891%	14 days .027%
Pleasant Hill	.8813%	14 days .017%

Walnut Creek .911% 14 days .045%

As you can see Bay Point schools in particular are at nearly double the cases of all other cities in the district in the last 14 days – in highest disparity - a full 9 times higher. More affuelent communities are able to stay home to keep themselves and their families safe. And if their children were to become ill, are much more likely to be able to take time off to keep their children home.

I do not blame Bay Point's community for this, it is just a fact, many of our families MUST go to work in order to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. This sometimes means making the decision to send your child to school sick. This is a fact of school life. And now it could be a very deadly one. And it is more likely that the staff of a Bay Point school will be put at risk in this way.

If English Learners are among the first students to return to school, this too will put a disproporiate amount of the students back in our Title 1 schools as compared to our schools in other communiities. Most of the Elementary schools in the Bay Point area alone have more than 75% of their students classified as English learners.

It is unfair and inequitable to put the staff, students, families, and the community at large in these locations (often older schools with poor A/C, heat, and filtration systems) at greater risk than those throughout our district in schools that do not have the same challenges and number of students classified as English learners.

On slide 9 of the presentation there are two mentions of "isolation room staff member" – who will this person be? That feels like a very polite way of stating "staff member who will escort a child exhibiting symptoms to the office and be responsible for monitoring them." I do not believe we have the right to volunteer ANYONE for this duty. If this is a duty that our district will be assigning, I firmly believe an administrator should be the person responsible to do it.

This virus is running rampant through much of our country. Manchester, England and all of Ireland have returned to lockdown status as the cold weather and continued reopening of their countries have brought about new surges of the number of positive cases. Here in California is hasn't gotten cold yet – we haven't entered the season that usually results in many more people getting ill. While we cannot be sure what will happen when we get there, a lowered immune system from just your regular cold or flu can leave someone much more suseptible to COVID infection, or once infected, leave you with much lowered ability for your body to fight it off.

I am concerned about filtration and ventilation in our schools. I am concerned about a child's inability to adere to social distancing and other safety requirements. I am concerned that parents cannot be counted on to self report or keep their children home if they exhibt symptoms. I am concerned that the district is not granting requests from staff to have applied for modified work from home status. I am concerned that the survey sent to all staff was biased toward confidence in reopening, if the only options

we are given are “Yes, I would come to campus” “No, I would ask for 100% work from home” (I ask that you look at my comment about what is happening to work from home requests throughout our clerical/office staff) or “I would leave the district” many, many people cannot afford to choose B or C, so A is the only answer. There was no way to give a shade of grey in our answers.

We are not, by and large, a workforce of people trying to shirk our responsibilities. We have worked in this field long enough to have a realistic expecation of the system failings that are extrememly likely with opening schools. With no idea what winter will bring for this disease. With a eye toward the fact that illness runs rampant through schools during normal times. With the inordinately unfair and much increased risk this would put on our poorest and most vunerable communities and the staff members who provide them services. With no idea if a vaccine is coming.

With all of that in mind - it just isn’t time to be pushing to open our schools.

kataling@gmail.com
Dear Board Members,

I understand today's main topic will be discussions around the possibility of returning to school. I know there are challenges and complexities, but I respectfully ask that we keep students' social and developmental needs as our top priority. So far, it appears a lot of decisions have been made by the Teachers Union protecting the teachers interest and I fear that parents and students' interest are not being properly represented.

We have 3rd graders in a dual immersion program that only get a total of 9 hours a week instructional time online, with all 30 students together (no additional group breakout sessions). Teachers are great and doing their best, but this isn't a healthy state developmentally nor socially and emotionally for our students. I am also disappointed that they further reduced this little instructional time to accommodate for parent-teacher conferences.

Please consider and protect the students best interests, which is to return to school in a safe manner and provide the much needed face to face instruction that other schools in the area are already doing.

Regards,
Mrs Vonberg

rebeccaadesigns@gmail.com

Please re-open our schools

Walnut Creek is opening to kindergarteners in November and grades 1-8 are returning after Winter break. Also San Ramon announced they're reopening.
We can't allow MDUSD to not reopen.
At Highlands, the teachers bring their kids to school. Those children are allowed to socialize and play together on the school playstructures. I cannot bring my child to work. Of course the teachers don't want to go back! My daughter receives 8 hours of instruction a week. She is falling behind. When my children need help I am told to Google it. I am not a teacher. I cannot afford a nanny. I need to work and my kids need in person instruction.

My second grader is sad and Isolated. I will not let this continue. If the schools do not reopen, I will be forced to quit my job.
I will transfer my children to another district that is open.

briewatega@gmail.com
Good afternoon,

We are parents of two children (Kindergarten and 3rd grade) who attend Hidden Valley Elementary. We understand the Board has a tough decision to make on whether our students return to in-class instruction or not. Since COVID hit in March, we have flip-flopped on the issue but as it stands today we feel it is in the best interest and safer for all that we continue with 100% distance learning. We are both full-time working parents and have struggled with balancing work and virtual schooling. We have put into play a system that is working for us and our family. We fear that returning to school or having to shift back and forth could be more detrimental to our children. If we do have to return to in class instruction, we will be forced to pull our children out of Hidden Valley and the MDUSD community -- a place our children are growing and thriving in currently.

Hidden Valley is the school I attended as a young child and I hope to be able to keep that historical continuity. We have so much Hidden Valley/MDUSD pride and we hope that the board will make the right decision, in the best interest of the children. Let's keep Hidden Valley and MDUSD the strong community that we all know and love and whose legacy will endure for years to come.

We appreciate your consideration on the topic.

Stay safe,
Kevin & Brieanna Watega

ndorazi@gmail.com
To whom it may concern,

I do not like distance learning and can’t wait for it to end. It is isolating and alienating. Troubleshooting video and WiFi is maddening even for those of us with access to

appropriate technologies. And yet, I still think it’s a better option for our upcoming school year than any of the proposals that involve returning to buildings.

When we consider returning to physical school under the CDC guidelines we must center this question: which benefits of in-person education will be available to us with these restrictions in place? Sadly, I believe that a classroom operating under these protocols will be less effective and more traumatic for the children than the inadequate and painful experience of remote learning.

Add to this the timing of reopening during flu season, and every parent, child and educator will be wondering with every sniffle if this was worth the risk. A few more months of distance learning is a better option than seeing my child, or any other child, sick with a deadly virus.

Please do the responsible thing, and advocate for the safety of our children. Do not open up prior to flu and holiday season. It will inevitably end up with going back to distance learning. Give our kids a chance at staying in schools when we do finally come back.

Nick D'Orazi RN, BSN

Concerned parent

hescot2@gmail.com
Even though some parents want a CHOICE, they are not recognizing that teachers and especially aides, would not get a CHOICE.

The CDC, just hours ago, changed the guidelines for exposure.

"Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated."

Will we be testing every person, teacher and student?

kristineka@gmail.com
Please continue working on a plan to allow students to go back to school. I have a kindergartner, 3rd grader and 5th grader, they are doing their best with online school but are suffering emotionally and socially because of it. I know many parents are willing to help clean, provide supplies and do everything they can to help the schools be safe for students to return. But it IS important even in the midst of a pandemic.
Thank you for your time.

Kristine

hescot2@gmail.com
What do you think is going to happen at Christmas time? All those families will get together with no masks and then bring it back to our schools. Shouldn't any decision at least wait until 2 weeks after that to see where our numbers are? We are learning the effects of this on a daily basis.

Has anyone thought about how they will keep SEAs safely more than 6 feet from students? There is NO WAY to do that. Teachers can easily stay away from students but aides can not. And the students with behavior? How will we be safely distanced from them?

I take care of my parents, both in their 80's and with health problems. Currently, we stay in the house and do not allow outsiders in, just to make sure that they (and I) stay alive. How will you guarantee that? By taking temperatures and asking if they are sick?

I feel that distance learning hasn't been given a chance for people to get used to. If they knew that this was the model for the year, people might buy into it better.

Don't get me wrong, we WANT TO GO BACK but at what price? I could never forgive myself if I killed my parents by bringing home something for which there is no cure.

danonash@gmail.com
The CDC, Federal Gov, State & Country has said you can open for full in person learning. Do you know something they do not? Are you suddenly better equipped, more informed? If so you need to share with the nation!

Do your job and open our schools!

drdougnovotny@yahoo.com
You are a Board of Education, not of public health. For months the Board has refused the in-person education children need & deserve — the “reason” given was the County Public Health officials and the governor.

But now changing goalposts! County Health gave the “green-light“. But you weren’t ready. Even today the light remains green...you sit with the car in park, blocking the intersection while our children wait, behind. They lose. Families lose.

Education is essential! Millions of other essential workers are at work every day. If teachers think their duties aren’t essential, or if they’re elderly or with medical reasons to remain remote, let them stay at home. But meanwhile let the children go to school like the public health officials say they safely can. Most teachers are well within tolerable risk levels to teach in class, and new ones or assistants could be used where necessary. If you were problem-solving rather than problem finding we could get this done.

Parents are beginning to organize boycotts, and make plans to get out of public schools like this one if it remains too corrupt to do it's job. If you think budgets are tight now, just keep doing what you're doing and they'll get much worse with family flight.

As a PhD from University if Chicago I know how to recognize good vs bad research, and when it's cherry-picked for political agenda. This cherry picking goal post is nonsense making.

Douglas C. Novotny, Ph.D.

nessrozo@gmail.com
Hello,

Please start bringing our children back to school. I have 2 children at Walnut Acres and we need support. Children are suffering the effects of social isolation and possible mental health concerns, they need to be at school. Children with working parents are also disadvantaged. Even if children go back in small learning groups a few days a week would be very beneficial. Other school districts have gone back and we should as well! Evidence shows that schools are not the super spreaders we thought they were https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/10/schools-arent-superspreaders/616669/

hrrussell@gmail.com
Hello,

Would 6-8 graders retain the same teachers that they have had since the start of school?

Or would teachers switch if some teachers are 100% distance vs. in classroom?

Thank you.

Heather Russell

clontzk@mdusd.org
Dear Superintendent Clark and Board members,

The Bridge Program has no barrier in the office. Our classrooms need desks or something else for students to sit. Most Bridge students sit at tables.

As far as cleaness, I have had to call M&O to get our classroom cleaned. This is disheartening as I have high expectations with a clean and safe room to be in.

Thank you for your time,

Kristi Clontz
Special Education Assistant II Classroom
BRIDGE Program, Mount Diablo Unified School District

nblade15@icloud.com

I agree with everything you mentioned Debra Mason, which is why I don't want my 3rd grader back until things are safe. I think after January or possibly later is the best decision. I'm among the 40% that would like to continue DL, and although it may not be the best option for my daughter, it's the safest option vs. my kid getting COVID. I want to keep our teachers, students, and community safe.

GO SLOW

nessrozo@gmail.com

Elementary school should be first to open. These children really need our support. It's difficult for them to get true learning on zoom calls all day and worried about how they will lose basic skills.

kallbac@gmail.com
Thank you for your careful consideration, the understanding of COVID, both short and long-term impacts, the transmission, etc. is changing day by day. Today CDC recommendations changed "CDC redefines COVID-19 close contact, adds brief encounters"
https://apnews.@com/article/virus-outbreak-health-infectious-diseases-1fb2e2a5b3fc0dd61f5756277c2d9364

The recommendations change as more is learned, as they should, and as more data comes in:
"As we get more data and understand this COVID we're going to continue to incorporate that in our recommendations," CDC Director Robert Redfield
and so I understand how difficult it is for you to make decisions when recommendations are in flux.

One question, if transmission is less likely in outdoor spaces, can some outdoor classes be setup?

Best,
Kristy

nksteinert@icloud.com
We are new to the area, and we've been frustrated as we have been watching our friends down south go back to classes. They have transitioned smoothly and infection rates have stayed low. We are in favor of our children returning to class when safely able to do so. Thank you. And thank you to all the teachers who have worked so hard to make distance learning a success. --nicole steinert

stylinape711@yahoo.com
Your letter to parent on 6/26/2020 included the following for your "Roadmap to Reopening"

Health experts at the state and county level hold the highest authority guiding the decision-making for our Reopening Plan. We continuously look for their latest guidance and recommendations to the fullest extent possible.
Last week, Contra Costa County Health Dept. approved the reopening of all K-12 schools.

It is time to stop playing politics and open the schools. The district made their politics very clear when they praised a known anti-family, Marxist organization, by posting messages on multiple school marquee boards!

Concerned MDUSD parent