

July 27, 2020

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in a special session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, July 27, 2020. Pursuant to Public Act 101-0640, the President determined that an in-person meeting or a meeting conducted under the Open Meetings Act is not practical or prudent because of the disaster.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, the following Board members answered present: Nancy Kupka, President, Mike Davenport, Vice President, and Members Sherell Fuller, Dan Nicholas, Terry Pavesich, Rick Pavinato and Joanna Vazquez Drexler. All Board members participated virtually.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Rob Lang, Assistant Superintendent for Staff Resources; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Mark Staehlin, District Controller; Jim Kolodziej, Director of Buildings and Grounds; Janice Schwarze, North High Principal; Ed Schwartz, South High Principal; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

The following were physically present at the Administrative Service Center: Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

There were three visitors. A copy of the Visitor Roster is attached.

1. DISCUSSION OF THE DISTRICT 99 2020-21 RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

Dr. Thiele thanked the Board for having another meeting to discuss the proposed plans to return to school. Dr. Thiele shared 300 Public Comments were received on line and the majority support the Hybrid Plan. He noted of the 5,085 students in the District, only 4% have chosen the Fully Remote option. He stated the Administrative Team believes it is essential to start the school year with in-person learning.

President Kupka presented data on the spread of COVID in DuPage County as well as states around Illinois and information on those at risk. She stated, though the Hybrid Plan is good, she is concerned for the health and safety of students and staff and therefore proposes the school year start with Fully Remote instruction and move to the Hybrid Plan in a few weeks.

Board Members advocated for the Hybrid Plan or the Remote Plan, including a Remote for Most Plan, for the start of the school year and shared reasons for their position.

After the discussion concluded, the majority of the Board favored the Fully Remote Plan. Dr. Thiele stated the administration and staff volunteers are currently working on a Fully Remote Plan.


Dr. Thiele stated the plan for return to school would be an Action Item on the Agenda of next week's Board meeting and if the Board voted for starting Fully Remote he would advocate at every Board meeting to bring students back into school.

2. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicole Priomos, South High faculty member, addressed the Board and advocated for a remote start to the school year. Mark Molinari, South High faculty member, parent, coach and community member, advocated for the Hybrid return to school. Darren Orel, South High faculty member and community member, advocated for a return to school under the Hybrid model. Public Comments submitted via the on line Public Comment Form are attached.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Member Pavesich moved and Member Vazquez Drexler seconded a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the unanimous voice vote of the seven members in attendance, the President declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.



Nancy Kupka, President



Juli Gniadek, Secretary

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| Name | Comment |
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| Wendy Fredricks | <p>Thank you for your continued work on the plan. I am in support of hybrid as I feel it is essential to start the year having students connect in person with their teachers. The detrimental effects of isolated, remote learning have negative mental, emotional, physical, and academic impacts. I have a senior and sophomore who are high achieving with all honors/AP classes, who will academically thrive with an in person offering. Remote learning which brings increased isolation will hurt them academically as their is much collaboration, group work, and support within the classroom that is difficult when 100% remote. I am also a teacher who is fully committed to being in person at the level my district in planning for (which includes in person). With safety protocols in place (masks, distancing, hand washing /sanitizing, etc), I feel we must return to the level that is inline with the current phase. For those who do not choose hybrid, remote is available and isbe is modifying recommendations to be 2.5 hrs of synchronous learning a day for all students. Please allow the choice. Many of us are choosing hybrid and feel that choice is important to the overall success and health & wellbeing of our students.</p> |
| Lauren Schlesinger | <p>Dear District 99 School Board, As a teacher at North High, I am writing again to urge the board to be cautious and begin the academic-year with remote learning.</p> <p>District 99 prides itself as a district that always makes decisions based on what is best for students. Students need to be healthy and safe above all else. Holding in-person classes puts students at risk. In DuPage County, 664 young adults between the ages of 10-19 have already tested positive for Coronavirus. Skills are important, but health and safety must come first. Even though the administration has tried to take steps such as splitting the class sizes and providing masks--the risk is not 0. My classes are often 28-30 students; given the size of my classrooms, it would not be possible for 14 or 15 students to be 6 feet apart. The classrooms are not big enough; as a teacher, I need you to know that this is unsafe. Furthermore, five individuals below the age of 20 have already died due to COVID in Illinois. After losing Beth Dunlap, as a school, we cannot afford to lose another member of the community because we were impatient and reckless instead of gradually opening as a school. COVID has also caused permanent kidney damage in 30% of Coronavirus patients and caused brain damage, neurological damage, and lung damage. I enjoy doing in-person work with students, but their long term health is more important than anything else. I want our students to live long healthy lives.</p> <p>In addition, as a district, we proudly say that data drives our decisions. Unfortunately one cannot say that the hybrid plan is driven by data. As reported by the Chicago Tribune--"COVID-19 cases among people 10 to 19 years old have increased from accounting for 5% of total cases prior to July 1 to 18% of cases in DuPage County as of July 19, county data show." And in addition--"The 7-day rolling average of new COVID-19 cases reported daily in DuPage County has increased 96% in less than four weeks."--as reported on July 20th. The data shows that cases are severely increasing in DuPage for the general community and also increasing specifically for our students' age-group. Listen to the data. The data is showing us that we must be cautious and due to community spread, now is not the time to hold in-person classes--it is too dangerous. Please do not yet bring students back to school while cases--especially within the 10-19 age-range are on the rise in DuPage County. Please exercise caution.</p> <p>In summary, we must put students first and recognize that their health is more important than anything, and we must exercise caution due to the reputation DuPage County currently has as a hot-spot for COVID cases--especially in the 10-19 age group. Instead, begin remote and listen to the data--when cases are falling and have stabilized at a low number, then gradually phase in in-person learning for the highest need students, assessing the data and pulling back when it is necessary. Put our students' and families first and protect their health. We cannot rush into reopening. --The hybrid should be our eventual goal, not our beginning.</p> <p>Sincerely, Lauren Schlesinger DGN English</p> |

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to ensure our staff and students are provided with a safe and effective return to the classroom. I am an English teacher at South High School and I urge you to begin the academic year with a fully remote learning plan. No in-person education plan is safe in the current conditions of our community, and the proposed hybrid plan will not meet the social-emotional or educational needs of our students.

While I believe we should be focused on how to safely get back into the classroom, this decision should not be rushed based on the start of the school calendar but rather when the virus rate in our community safely permits it. Currently, the 7-day rolling average of new COVID-19 cases reported daily in DuPage County has increased 96% in less than four weeks. Disregarding this grim statistic will put our students and staff at an unnecessary risk all for the sake of starting the year off in-person.

While I applaud the District 99 administration for working tirelessly to develop a school plan that is as safe as possible, our current reopening plan lacks clarity in strategies to mitigate spread such as contact-tracing, quarantining, and reporting of COVID-19 cases to staff and family. Masks and social distancing are only part of the equation when accessing the risk of reopening schools, and the virus will not pay attention to a clock or a tape measure to follow the current contact guidelines of being "within six feet for more than fifteen minutes." A school environment should not be used as an experiment to determine whether spread will occur under these circumstances. Students and teachers are not statistics.

Michelle
Davis

Furthermore, I am disappointed that the proposed hybrid plan was created without collaboration with our staff and DGEA, as I believe we are sacrificing fundamental curriculum for sub-par face-to-face interaction. The hybrid plan, as it stands, has left many teachers in our district lost with how to deliver a meaningful education for our students. In fact, according to the DGEA survey, 94% of respondents expressed concern surrounding the lack of teacher preparedness to teach under this hybrid model. These feelings were echoed further in each of the DGEA meetings this week when teachers continuously expressed frustration and confusion over how this plan will succeed from a pedagogical standpoint. School is set to start in less than three weeks, and because educators were not included in the process of designing this plan, we are ill-equipped to open successfully.

While returning to the classroom is imperative, doing so amidst a global pandemic is not only reckless, it will result in further disconnect from our students. A virtual classroom cannot directly replicate in-person learning, but it is not due to physical presence. The classroom provides opportunities for collaborative, cooperative, and social-emotional learning. However, these strategic models cannot happen in the type of classroom that will evolve as a result of this hybrid plan. The proposed safety protocols are exceedingly necessary, but will eliminate the ability for students to work closely with others. Meaning the classroom will only allow for individual activities and direct instruction, both of which can be achieved in a virtual setting. Therefore the benefits of this hybrid model do not outweigh the risks involved for the community.

While the administration has developed a myriad of safety protocols for our schools to follow, there is no way to guarantee safety for in-person instruction. Every individual in this district is fully aware of the daily risks we will be taking by being in the building. My mind continues to circle back to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs --the psychological theory that without satisfying the basic and immediate need for safety, it will be near impossible for students and

Rebecca
Letourneaux

I urge the Board to vote the hybrid model for our kids to return to school this fall, with each family having a choice whether to do 100% e-learning or return under the hybrid. This model will allow families to choose which scenario best fits their individual needs. A 100% e-learning model threatens to increase the gap between those kids with a lot of support and financial means at home from those who do not. Some kids can discipline themselves enough to e-learn full time, but those who cannot will fall behind (absent the ability to secure tutors, etc). While there is a risk in everything we do, the District has worked hard to put in place guardrails to provide a safe environment for the kids at the school. The risk to those kids who will fall behind without a choice is too great.

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| Barbara Pearcy | <p>My suggestion is to open the school to daily, in person instruction, with modifications, including masks. Those parents who feel that their children should not be in school due to their own concerns about the virus, could have their children log in to the teaching going on in the school classroom, thereby remotely learning with the class.</p> <p>This would allow parents who feel their students need the structure and consistency of daily in person instruction with their teachers the opportunity for them to benefit from this type of plan, and those who would prefer remote learning for their child to allow their student to learn while logged into the ongoing class instruction.</p> <p>The physical, in person, daily plan could be adopted to start the school year, and could be moved back to the hybrid model if it becomes necessary.</p> <p>As I believe has already been stated, teachers who are at high risk, or who have family members who are, could teach remotely with a teachers assistant physically in the classroom.</p> <p>Thank you for your time</p> |
| Melissa Nuttall | <p>Please vote in favor of the hybrid model as it allows for parents to choose if in person or e-learning only is best for their family. I am in favor of the in person hybrid model and sincerely appreciate the time administration has taken to develop a model that has the best interest of students in mind while adhering to public health and safety guidelines.</p> |
| Becky Schenk | <p>I want to strongly encourage the board to offer the hybrid teaching schedule. I want you to consider a few things:</p> <p>1)A family's economic status will greatly impact a child's success if we go 100% remote. If parents have money or a stay at home mom, I'm sure there will be paid tutors helping their children learn. On the flip side, if both parents work and don't have extra disposable income their children are going to be left behind and asked to fend for themselves. This will separate these groups even more.</p> <p>2)We take risks everyday. We try to do our best and keeping those risks low. But if you have a teenager and you hand over your keys for the first time, you know there's a risk. If you travel by car or plane, there are risks. If you water-ski or snow ski, there are risks. We are not immune to risks. But if we are smart and try our best to minimize those risks- by wearing face masks and socially distancing- we can enjoy learning in school with our peers.</p> <p>Teachers are essential. Our schools are essential. Please give families a choice. We can opt out at any time. Being flexible will give our community choice and a sense of belonging. If we are denied the choice, I can't tell you how disappointed my family and son will be. We need to have a choice.</p> <p>Thank you for listening. Becky Schenk</p> |
| Maureen Perry | <p>We would like the Board to approve the hybrid model. We feel the in-person learning is invaluable and cannot be replicated in remote learning.</p> |
| Keri LaMantia | <p>I am in support of the hybrid schedule!</p> |

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| Ann Cummins | <p>I am a D99 parent of an incoming freshmen and senior and truly empathize with all points of view regarding hybrid and remote learning. However, after weighing all the information, I support the hybrid model to return to school.</p> <p>The American Pediatric Association recommends students be “physically present in school” as much as possible, emphasizing the major health, social and educational risks to keeping children at home. They cite children have shown to be less likely to catch and spread the infection than adults, and symptom and recovery time is less severe. That said, we obviously need to protect adult teachers and staff, providing a clear support plan for them. I feel the District’s hybrid plan will both support the benefits of returning to school while instituting safety precautions to mitigate risk for our students, staff and families.</p> <p>These are tough choices - with no clear cut directions. Whatever the decision, please know how much this community appreciates the hard work of the District, our educators and the school board.</p> |
| mollymaci3@gmail.com | <p>Hi - First I would like to thank the District 99 committees, staff and administrators for working on this difficult project. These uncertain times give no right answers and navigating all options must be very difficult. I would like to voice my opinion that a hybrid learning system needs to be implemented if possible, knowing that it may go away for periods during the semester depending on outside numbers. The current Hybrid plan is a good starting point, but I feel we can do more than having kids in the school for just 2 half day blocks per week. I would like to see the kids in school at least 3 days a week if possible, even if that's alternating weeks, 2 days one week for one block of kids and 3 days the next week for 1 block of kids. I understand the difficulties with mask wearing - but feel that the in person instruction is critical to the learning process. I also feel that with online learning - it should be done where teachers instruct during the 1st 20 minutes of "class" and then stay on the zoom call to help anyone who has questions or wants to review anything. Kids should be required to log into the call and should be called on at random just like in class - to ensure they are paying attention and following along. This may already be being planned, but is not what I saw last year when we suddenly had to go remote. Thanks again for all your do - your hard work and efforts are truly appreciated.</p> |
| Kim Dennison | <p>We support as much in-person learning as possible. While the hybrid model provides considerably less instruction time than typical school, we believe it is a far superior option than complete remote learning. We also recognize that these are very difficult decisions and a “no-win” for everyone. We thank the Board and the Administration for the countless hours you have all spent drafting and revising these plans.</p> |
| Kim Dennison | <p>We support as much in-person learning as possible. While the hybrid model provides considerably less instruction time than typical school, we believe it is a far superior option than complete remote learning. We also recognize that these are very difficult decisions and a “no-win” for everyone. We thank the Board and the Administration for the countless hours you have all spent drafting and revising these plans.</p> |

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| Barbara Pearcy | <p>Also, as I am sure you are already aware, the CDC has now stated that they feel schools should reopen this fall with completely in person learning. This could be done with modifications, masks and precautionary measures. Below is an article from the CDC's website, cdc.gov.</p> <p>The Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall CDC</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html</p> <p>The American Association for Pediatrics is also now in favor of schools reopening with in person learning, with modifications and precautionary measures, as they feel the dangers to young people of depression, anxiety, drug use and overdose and abuse within family unit far outweigh the low risk to these young people contracting the virus and passing it on.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to read my suggestion and the article I've sent. I understand and appreciate the amount of time, thought and effort that you and the entire district are putting into considering the safety and mental well being of students and staff.</p> |
| Jenny Kay | <p>Board Members,</p> <p>How is it even possible to be talking about possibly reopening for any in person learning when there are more cases in the state of Illinois now than there were in the spring when it was deemed unsafe for in person learning? You realize there are no restrictions in place for travel in Illinois so we need to look more than just at our county. I hear over and over from the administration they are doing what's best to keep our teachers and children safe and that is just not the case. The safest thing is all remote learning until there is a vaccine. Please consider the broader community as well kids are in more than just contact with each other and teachers. Also, please explain how it will be fair for class grades to be compared from someone who does hybrid learning to someone who strictly does remote learning. Obviously much easier to cheat when taking tests remotely, be realistic this is an issue. Keep learning all remote and focus on doing it correctly and our community will be safer and our kids will still receive a great education. Do NOT cave to the parents whom are looking for a babysitting service. One lost life is one too many. Thank you, Jenny</p> |
| CAMILLE P | <p>Good evening, I know this is not a very easy vote to make next Monday. However, after listening to the plan presented last week, along with a Parents' Club virtual meeting with the DGN Principal, I strongly feel that the hybrid program is safe and best for our children. Kids need to connect with their teachers at the beginning of the school year. Their mental well being is important for their development into adulthood.</p> <p>The 'safety protocol' that will be enforced at DGN put us at ease with our decision. I know it was a hard work for each high school to come up with the best safe way to welcome students back and DGN worked hard investigating options.</p> <p>Sincerely, Camille</p> |

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| Kimberly Workman | <p>Dear District 99 Board Members,</p> <p>My husband and I are writing on behalf of being IN FAVOR of the Hybrid Model that the administration presented to the Board last Monday evening. As parents of 3 children that will be attending Downers South this fall, we are EXTREMELY impressed with the safety measures that the administration has structured to keep our kids and teachers safe during the in-person learning. This is coming from a family who since the beginning of this pandemic has been extremely cautious. In fact, we believe that these safety measures keep our kids safer then when they hang out with their friends.</p> <p>We strongly urge you to allow us the choice whether or not to send our children. We do not feel that beginning the school year remotely is best practice for our children (2 of them being incoming freshman).</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>Jon and Kim Workman</p> |
| Brad Keown | <p>Please do hybrid learning. Consider the families that are not able to afford full day care for their children.</p> |
| Lisa McTigue | <p>I am in favor of the hybrid model for the beginning of the school year. I believe it is essential that students have the opportunity to meet with their teachers face to face.</p> |
| Lizzie Workman | <p>Dear School Board,</p> <p>My name is Lizzie Workman and I will be a Freshman at DGS this year. I am strongly asking you to vote IN FAVOR OF the Hybrid model to begin the school year. I have worked extremely hard in 8th grade to be in Honors classes this year.</p> <p>My sister is a junior and has always been so excited to attend DGS. I want to be allowed that same opportunity as her.</p> <p>My parents have worked really hard at teaching me and my siblings how to be safe during this pandemic so that we protect ourselves and others. It is time that we be allowed to practice those good measures with our peers and our teachers.</p> <p>I recognize that the Hybrid model is not for everyone and those individuals are given the choice to do 100% remote learning. Please consider the flip side of that, 100% remote learning is not for everyone. Remote learning is NOT for my family and we should be given the same options as those that oppose the hybrid model.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration,</p> <p>Lizzie Workman Class of 2024</p> |

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Barbara
Pearcy

As I have stated previously, I feel strongly that our students need to go back to school, five days a week, for in person instruction at the school. These teens need the structure, the consistency of going into the learning institution each day; they desperately need the daily social interaction with peers as well as teachers. The increase for these young people in depression, anxiety, drug abuse and overdoses, anger issues within family units, have all drastically increased since the school closures and social isolation began. While the schools did their best to implement remote learning, the majority of students do not learn without the daily, in person, face to face interaction with their teachers. How can there be any kind of teacher student relationship when they are only physically in class one period, one day a week? That relationship is so important for these students to develop for individual academic success.

The physical, in person, daily plan could be adopted to start the school year and could be moved back to the hybrid model if it becomes necessary.

This age group is at the lowest risk for Covid; with little to no symptoms if they do contract the virus. As of July 26, the 7 and 14-day rolling positivity rates (which includes the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths) are up less than 1 point at 3.7 and 3.3%, respectively in Dupage County. Initially, the governor's goal was to be below 20% for the positivity rate; he has changed it to 8%, but again, we are at 3.3%.

Regarding the grading policy for the hybrid plan, it does not seem plausible to expect the same grading system to be used as when the students had 50 minute periods, 5 days a week, of in person learning in class. These students now have one 50 minute period of in person instruction, 1 day a week, while the rest is remote learning of only 30 minute periods each. This is putting even more stress on these students, as they are being required to have the self motivation to do a lot of the learning on their own. I would like to see the grading system be reconsidered if the hybrid model is adopted initially for the fall.

If the board decides to begin the school year with the hybrid model, I feel there needs to be a plan to move forward into daily, in person instruction within the school itself.

Thank you for your time.

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| <p>Barbara Pearcy</p> | <p>My suggestion is to open the school to daily, in person instruction, with modifications, including masks. Those parents who feel that their children should not be in school due to their own concerns about the virus, could have their children log in to the teaching going on in the school classroom, thereby remotely learning with the class.</p> <p>This would allow parents who feel their students need the structure and consistency of daily in person instruction with their teachers the opportunity for them to benefit from this type of plan, and those who would prefer remote learning for their child to allow their student to learn while logged into the ongoing class instruction.</p> <p>The physical, in person, daily plan could be adopted to start the school year, and could be moved back to the hybrid model if it becomes necessary.</p> <p>As I believe has already been stated, teachers who are at high risk, or who have family members who are, could teach remotely with a teachers assistant physically in the classroom.</p> <p>Thank you for your time</p> |
| <p>Ethan Workman</p> | <p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>My name is Ethan Workman and I am an incoming Freshman at DGS. I am asking that you give all of us students a chance to attend school even if it is for 2 half days. Remote learning did nothing for me last year and I do NOT want to start my high school career that way.</p> <p>I am not afraid of the virus and my parents have taught me how to social distance, wear a mask and to use hand sanitizer so that I keep me and those around me safe.</p> <p>Thank you for your time,</p> <p>Regards, Ethan Workman Class of 2024</p> |

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| Britni Mitchell | <p>Dear District 99 Board members, friends, colleagues, and community members,</p> <p>I have been trying to find the most transparent words during the course of this planning period, and, as a result, this letter represents my reasons for supporting the proposed hybrid model for our return.</p> <p>A week before my 30th birthday, almost 5 years ago, I was diagnosed with relapsing-remitting Multiple Sclerosis (RRMS). Attempting to navigate and control this autoimmune disorder while experiencing single parenthood and full-time teaching was nothing short of exhausting; however, as I felt I was drowning in all aspects of life, the warmth I felt from my students during this time was unmatched. For those of you who do not know me, I am entering my eleventh year of full-time teaching in the English Department at Downers Grove North, and I would say, in all confidence, that the heart of my teaching lies in my role as coordinator and classroom teacher of the AVID program.</p> <p>The AVID students organized a Walk for MS team for me annually. They carpoled and stood in awful weather to be there for me. They brought their entire families to support ME. I believe now is the time for me to be there for them, and the way that I can best do this is by showing up in a difficult time and being present.</p> <p>I entered teaching to help disconnected students find connections through learning. My goal has always been to reach students perceived as unreachable and to provide safe spaces for learning and evolving. I can say, with confidence, that I have reached this goal and will continue to embody this as my teaching purpose. Without personal connections and the physical ability to make lasting first impressions, none of this would be remotely possible.</p> <p>Please understand that I empathize with our collective concerns. For 5 years, I have lived my life on high alert throughout every flu or cold season. My body cannot handle certain vaccines, so I am accustomed to being mindful in any and all public settings. I communicate regularly with my neurologist, who has given his blessing for me to return to work after we reviewed the district plan. I would not agree with something that unnerved me; I am the single parent of a 6-year-old who fully relies on me. In all of the time I have had to process, I have concluded that there is not going to be a perfect solution for a dynamic situation so far out of our control and comfort, and I do believe, with all my heart, that the district has come up with the best possible compromise amid ongoing crisis.</p> <p>During our remote learning period, what most resonated with me was the trend in who was being left behind. We have many students in our district who became primary caretakers for their siblings while their essential worker parents worked tirelessly to provide food and services for the community. We have students who, for the first time, were attempting to learn technology at an unforgiving pace. We have students who absolutely depend upon face-to-face communication because without school, they are isolated. I am concerned that the growing mental health issues in our students will only worsen without (at minimum) a face-to-face connection. It is wholly evident that starting the year remotely will place disadvantaged students in a situation that</p> |
| Todd Schenk | <p>I believe it is critical that each student is given an option of at least some in person class time every week. A fully virtual approach has many costs for our students — educational, social, and emotional costs. While I certainly recognize the health concerns and risks involved with in person learning, those concerns can and should be addressed and the risks managed through reasonable social distancing measures, with a virtual-only option for those who choose it.</p> |
| Lori van de Wetering | <p>Hi, I have twin daughters who will be seniors this year at DGN and I just want to say I'm satisfied with the hybrid plan presented last week. I appreciate all the hard work and consideration that has been put into this plan by all parties and I hope the plan moves forward. Thank you.</p> |
| Angela Crowson | <p>I support the current hybrid schedule. I have four students at North one senior and three sophomores. I have discussed the options with all four of them and they prefer the hybrid schedule with the in person learning. They feel safe and comfortable returning to the classroom. They understand the rules, the protocol, and the importance of them. They are willing to do what is needed to stay safe in the building.</p> |

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| Kristen Nowka | <p>I urge you to vote for the hybrid model. This allows ALL families to choose what is best for THEIR family. I would like to see my kids back in school. My kids would like to be back in school. My kids are very capable of wearing a mask and following the rules. They understand that they will have to temp check every morning and possibly be temp checked at school. Parents and kids who want to be back in school understand the procedures put in place for their safety and the safety of faculty. Voting hybrid allows families who want full remote to still choose that option if they feel that is best for their family while allowing those families who feel some in person class time, the hybrid model, would greatly benefit their kids. Please, allow all parents the opportunity to choose what is best for their family by voting for the hybrid model. Thank you so much for your time.</p> |
| KATHY STOPKA | <p>I appreciate the position you are in and I can only imagine how time consuming and stressful all of this has been for you.</p> <p>I have heard some very concerning rumors that the school board is now leaning toward full online learning rather than the hybrid learning option. This is very frustrating to me. As you know, the CDC and the IBSE have recommended students return to the classroom. I feel you have come up with a safe plan to allow the students who choose to be in school to stay healthy. This virus isn't going anywhere and we need to learn how to live with it, not hide from it. The smaller class sizes, face masks, face shields, hand sanitizer...you have planned will make it safer in the school than it is to go to Jewel, Target, Costco etc. And I suspect the majority of teachers, students, and parents who are against hybrid learning are not completely avoiding going out in public where there are fewer safety precautions in place. If you are giving students the option of 100% online learning, you need to give students the option of hybrid learning. It would be unfair and hypocritical of you to not allow this choice.</p> <p>We live in a community that offers a public schooling option and we should be given the choice for our children to attend (in person) school this fall. The lower grades in Downers Grove are able to attend school full time. I understand there are logistical reasons why this is easier to plan for the younger students. However, I am sure that once you have the final numbers of students who choose fully online learning you can come up with a very realistic and safe way for the rest of the students to attend classes at DGN and DGS. If we have to resort to 100% online learning again, we will be falling behind the competing schools in our area. The majority of high schools in our area are returning in some aspect to in person learning.</p> <p>I have said this before, and I will say it again. I am VERY concerned about the mental health of our students if they have to continue being so isolated. It is not healthy. With the prospect of school sports being cancelled as well, it is even more important for our students to be allowed some social interaction with their peers. We can only take away so much from them before it is more than they can handle. Interacting via Zoom is NOT the same thing as being able to see your teachers, coaches and classmates in person.</p> <p>Please, please, please reconsider your position and offer the hybrid learning option to our DG high school students.</p> |
| Stephanie Radeke | <p>I vote hybrid</p> |
| Kryssy Vavra | <p>We are hoping for returning to the classroom. Please allow families to choose what is best for them.</p> |

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| Anonymous | <p>Dear members and community. I currently have 2 students at DGN schools. A junior and senior. I am in full support of returning in any form to the school. I have full trust, confidence and faith in the administration and all parties involved to create a safe environment to return to. I have seen my two high achieving and fully involved students negatively be impacted by remote learning. They have lost all interest in school with remote learning and they have suffered mental health lasting effects of a fully remote learning system. They need to go back. We, parents, need the choice to address what is appropriate for our families on an individual basis. For some that will be stay home. For others, it means inperson learning. The teams have worked extremely hard to accommodate all the guidelines, scheduling and other aspects of a return to school. I am asking you to approve CHOICE in our 99 community. Allow the well thought out hybrid plan to move forward. Allow those that are concerned enroll in remote. Allow teachers to feel safe and give them all the tools they need to make that happen. We need CHOICE. You have the power to do the right thing.</p> |
| Eric Stopka | <p>I am writing you as a concerned parent and community member, to implore you to please reopen our high schools following the hybrid plan that was outlined during your recent public board meeting. Our community has struggled over the past four months with the Coronavirus situation. There are many conflicting statistics, and opinions floating around today, and it has led to a divide in our community that I am fearful will continue to grow as we isolate ourselves.</p> <p>I believe that the student-teacher relationship is a sacred one, and is tantamount to a good education. Students must have interaction with teachers in order to not only learn the material, but to develop a healthy critical thinking approach, that only comes out when teachers can interact in person with students. Some of our children's best learning opportunities have come when they have been able to seek out teachers and deeply explore topics that they did not understand. In a society where critical thinking and challenging the status-quo is being degraded, this is an important skillset that needs development.</p> <p>I've also heard that a minority of teachers have indicated that they feel it is not safe to return to school. I believe during the televised broadcast that 70%-80% of teachers indicated that they would not have a problem returning in a hybrid solution. It now appears that the MINORITY of teachers (in this case, less than 20%) are causing rethinking of how to return. While provisions for teacher's safety do need to be taken into account, its also been mentioned that some teachers are facing child care situations. Regardless of how badly the teachers union would love this added benefit (as well as that of hazard pay!?) it is NOT up to school district to provide accommodations for teachers who have child-care issues. All other professionals have to make plans to account for their child-care, I don't see why a child care situation for a MINORITY of teachers has to affect my child's education.</p> <p>In short, please consider: A healthy learning approach that follows CDC guidelines, I.e. SAFELY MAXIMIZES student-teacher interaction; Providing for safe alternatives to learning for those that CHOOSE TO SEND their children to school; Providing for additional resources to clean school facilities Surrounding communities have already made decisions to go back in hybrid solutions; if you move forward with a remote learning ONLY solution, you will be hampering the educations of the children you are charged with providing.</p> <p>Eric Stopka Downers Grove Parent, Resident, Voter, and Tax-Payer</p> |

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| Keri Norris | When casting your vote, on whether to have a hybrid learning model or a 100% remote learning model, I urge you to please give a considerable amount of reflection upon how our special ed students could easily and quickly regress in a 100% remote learning scenario. It has been shown, March through mid-June, just how much the special ed students can struggle in a remote learning setting. These kiddos, more than others, need so badly the face-to-face interaction with their teachers and supporters. Families of these students greatly fear they will lose their kids, entirely (academically), if they are not allowed to get back into the building and establish some kind of relationship with those who are helping them. I can't explain how great this fear is for many, many families. Our SPED kids WANT to come back, and that speaks volumes, for the very point I'm trying to express. Thank you for your consideration. |
| Keri Warehime | I 100% want my children to be back in school for as much in person learning that is safely possible. Our children need to be in school in order to be successful from a mental and physical standpoint! Please let families choose what is best for them!!! |
| Allison Heverin | I am writing to support the hybrid model proposed by the board for the start of the school year. While I was initially skeptical as to the safety of this model, the parent talk with Principal Schwarze last reassured me as to its viability. As a parent of a child with a 504 plan, remote learning was incredibly difficult last year, despite best efforts from all involved. The hybrid model will make a huge difference for my student's ability to succeed this semester, and provide a foundation that will hopefully make a later return to remote learning (if necessary) more successful. I am impressed with the amount of planning that has gone into this model in such a short time. I would add, however, that I hope that all teachers are given the option to either teach in-person, or remotely, just like the students. I would be supportive of any teacher (or staff member)-- regardless of whether they are in an "at-risk" group or not-- deciding to stay home, and would be willing to sacrifice the hybrid model if there aren't enough teachers who voluntarily opt to teach in person. They should be given the same options that the students are given and none should be forced back into the schools against their will. |
| Aileen Bloomfield | I have an incoming sophomore and I fully support in person hybrid learning. Families should be given a choice of hybrid or 100% remote based in their needs and comfort level. |
| Mr. Jed Ramsey | I would ask the board to move forward with the proposed on-site learning option. I understand there are individuals and families that are hesitant to attend school in an actual building and the remote learning option adequately meets their wants. However, all data that I have seen for the local and surrounding communities tells a story that the majority of parents want their children in school. Local and national health organizations support this idea as well. Again, please move forward with the option of the on-site learning that the "silent majority" is asking for and allow the "vocal minority" the option to choose remote learning. |
| Mr. Jed Ramsey | I would ask the board to move forward with the proposed on-site learning option. I understand there are individuals and families that are hesitant to attend school in an actual building and the remote learning option adequately meets their wants. However, all data that I have seen for the local and surrounding communities tells a story that the majority of parents want their children in school. Local and national health organizations support this idea as well. Again, please move forward with the option of the on-site learning that the "silent majority" is asking for and allow the "vocal minority" the option to choose remote learning. |
| Gina Cecchi | Please vote for the hybrid learning. These kids need to get back to in person learning even if it's only part time. |
| Jessica Venouziou | I would like my kids to go to have more in person learning at the start of the school year. |
| Beth Adamo | It is my sincerest hope that the board votes to approve the Hybrid Learning model as suggested & diligently researched by our administration. This offers wonderful solutions for both those interested in hybrid learning & those who wish to choose 100% remote. It gives each family the opportunity to make the right choice for their situation. Knowing at some point we may need to go 100% remote, this model gives teachers the opportunity to meet their students, explain the syllabus & what is expected in the class. It creates a foundation for learning that is essential in the beginning of a new school year. This model works to ensure the safety of teachers & students alike. Thank you for your hard work & dedication to making the right choices for CSD99! |

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| Geeta & David Wood | I encourage the board to continue with their plan to offer families a choice between full remote learning and hybrid. I understand and respect both options but personally, I will be sending my child to school if hybrid is offered. I think getting any amount of in-person learning is better than none. My son will be a junior which is a very important year for his education. Obviously, the health risk is there but I believe the plan the district has in place should assure that the kids and staff will stay safe. So again, I urge you to give families a choice between remote and hybrid. |
| Amy Toth | I am in full support of the hybrid learning model that has been proposed. I am thankful for all the hard work that went into the development of the model. I know the administration and staff of both North and South have the best interests of our students. |
| Mr. Jed Ramsey | I would ask the board to move forward with the proposed on-site learning option. I understand there are individuals and families that are hesitant to attend school in an actual building and the remote learning option adequately meets their wants. However, all data that I have seen for the local and surrounding communities tells a story that the majority of parents want their children in school. Local and national health organizations support this idea as well. Again, please move forward with the option of the on-site learning that the “silent majority” is asking for and allow the “vocal minority” the option to choose remote learning. |
| Jennifer Piloni | I support hybrid learning |
| Susan Mancuso | We fully support hybrid learning and plan on taking advantage of said learning plan this fall. We believe having our child experience face to face learning in this difficult environment is integral to her success. We have discussed all the changes and rules put in place to protect everyone’s health and she understands the importance of following through. Please allow our children the opportunity to attend school in some capacity this fall! |
| Scott C | Board, Please put the safety of our community first and strictly focus on remote learning. We currently have more cases in Illinois now than we did in the spring when it was deemed unsafe. If we are really going to put the safety of our teachers, children and community first as the administration repeatedly says they want to do the only option is full remote learning until a vaccine is available. Also, if you decide to go ahead with hybrid plan how would you not be able to tell everyone whom shared a class or bus with someone who test positive for Covid? This should be rather easy to do as you know who takes each class or bus. Why not be overly safe rather than we will only inform you if in contact with someone for over 15 minutes and closer than the six feet apart as your plan currently states? Put the safety of our community first, parents can be responsible and help with remote learning and when a vaccine is ready we can return to in person learning. Let’s be proactive for once instead of having to be reactionary after risking lives in our community! |
| Tina Cosenza | Please vote to let our kids back in school. If parents do not feel comfortable, they have the option to do 100% on line. With proper safety precautions, the hybrid option is the best idea for returning. My son needs teacher interaction as the e learning last spring was unsuccessful and left us feeling unprepared and educated. They need the social aspect as well. Keeping retail stores open should NOT be more important than keeping education going. Again parents can choose to do 100% on line, let's us choose to go back! Thank you! |
| James Haack | My name is Jim Haack and I am a teacher and parent of a student at Downers Grove North. I feel that our school has put together a plan that will allow us to get back into the building, even if it is on a limited basis. I am comfortable with the hybrid model that was presented to us and ready to get back with our students with all the safety measures we will have in place. |

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| Lora Dominow | Please, give parents and students the choice of hybrid OR remote learning! It's a disservice to the students and staff to not at least give choice. I hose who feel it is unsafe or are unsure, can choose to stay home. Our students deserve a choice!! |
| Carol Victorin | Full E-learning was necessary when the Covid-19 pandemic started to keep our students and community safe. However, e-learning has many serious shortcomings which made it unsuccessful. First, each class met only two days per week versus five days a week for traditional in-person learning. Second, a students grade could not go down which reduced effort at the get go. Third, a majority of tests/quizzes were open book which is not a good measure of performance. Fourth, students mainly had to watch random videos to learn lessons rather than learning from an in-person teacher. Fifth, each teacher followed a different approach to providing lessons and assignments which made it confusing for students to follow. Finally, students were not able to socialize and really engage in learning. E-learning was never designed to be used long term. Now that we have learned how the virus is spread, that kids are not at risk for contracting the virus, and how to take precautions, the best option would be for the schools to reopen with full in class learning. A hybrid approach should not be considered because it is going to be very disruptive for the students and families and student learning will be sacrificed. |
| Alison Myers | We are asking the board to please vote for the hybrid plan. Our daughter is an incoming 9th grader who was previously homeschooled. She chose DGN for high school over other options including private schools and homeschooling. Her adjustment to high school will be much easier if she can be in the building with other teachers and students, even if it is only part time. Last spring, her one day a week school went to remote learning (zoom), and it was hard on both teachers and students because it is not even comparable to in-person learning on many levels (academically, socially, emotionally). She is looking forward to the opportunities DGN has to offer, she is excited to feel a part of the community, and our confidence is in the hybrid model. Thank you. |
| Bridget Haack | As a parent of a student in District 99, I feel strongly that the students need to get back into the classroom. E learning, while it works for some, is not beneficial to all. I feel that the district has put in place the necessary safety measures for both teachers and students, and feel confident that returning to the classroom will and can be done safely. PLEASE get our students back in the classroom. |

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| Farrah Velazquez | <p>Dear Board of Education, Colleagues, Families, and Community Members of District 99,</p> <p>This is my 9th year teaching at North High School, and my 12th year teaching. In all of those years the question that has guided my practice has been, "Is this what is best for kids?" When I consider whether we should return to school in a hybrid model or a fully remote model and what is best for kids, my 12 years in the classroom, my work researching COVID, and the work the administration has put forward to construct the hybrid model, it is clear that returning to school IS what is best for kids.</p> <p>Last semester, I saw too many students get left behind or struggle to achieve and learn in the fully remote setting. I experienced honors students who are typically outstanding learners and thinkers crumble and disengage from school and learning because they could not mentally handle being so disengaged from the classroom environment. I talked with students who tried their best to focus, because they wanted to do well, but they simply cannot thrive outside of a structured school environment. I consoled students who felt like their lives were spinning out of control as they tried to balance their need to work, watching siblings because their parents are essential workers, do their own school work, and just missing that connection they need at school from their teachers and friends in order to make all of their obligations at home seem less burdensome for a 16 year old.</p> <p>School is a dynamic environment that requires the connection of teachers and students; this connection CANNOT be attained in a fully remote environment no matter how hard we try as educators and our students try as learners. This is why I intend to send my own children to school in the hybrid model their district has adopted as well. We know that this may not last very long, and we may have to go back to a fully remote option, but the students and teachers of District 99 need this time to establish those connections and trust before that happens. I am looking forward to getting back into my classroom, and I implore you to give us that opportunity. We need to do what is best for kids.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Farrah Velazquez DGN English and Fine Arts</p> |
| Kathy Johnston | <p>The ISBE and IDPH has issued guidelines to have the kids return to school in a "safe" environment if they are followed. District 99 Administrators, along with several task forces have developed a plan within these guidelines. There is a risk/reward to the kids returning from school and both the ISBE and District 99 feel the risk is worth the reward to have the limited "in school" time. In addition, there is an OPTION for those that do not feel safe in sending their kids to school. Please do NOT take away the Hybrid options for those that feel the school and the ISBE guidelines have been reviewed by health professionals and feel it is better for the kids to attend in person on a limited basis for as long as possible. Again, those that do not feel comfortable have the option to stay home.</p> |
| Jennifer Kozak | <p>I thank you for all you are doing. Here is my question: With the expectation that a blended solution would only be in place for 2-4 weeks before students have to go back to 100% remote learning does it makes sense to send kids to school and then ask everyone (students, teachers, parents) to shift gears and adapt to full time remote learning? Wouldn't this cause more disruption to the learning process? What benefits are there to starting school in person if we expect to move to 100% elearning sometime in the fall?</p> |
| Carla Marinaccio Williams | <p>I have listened to the Parents Club video regarding remote learning and I wanted to make sure my voice was heard on behalf of my son in full support of the hybrid learning model. Mrs. Schwarze spoke about vulnerable kids and the need to connect with those kids. My son is not in that category, however, I would say that his learning was severely compromised with the 100% remote learning from the spring. I am so worried about his learning if we go fully remote and also about his mental health of not being in an environment where he can meet his teachers and see other kids. Mrs. Schwarze also spoke about the 6 feet distancing and the schools ability to keep our kids as safe as possible. I fully support this model. If we do remote learning, our kids will still congregate and probably not as safe as they would if they were in school. It is critical for these kids to meet their teachers and be in a classroom. Please vote to approve the hybrid model. Thank you.</p> |

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| Nancy Cremer | <p>As a parent of three high schoolers this year, I urge you to make in-person learning an option. I understand that remote learning will be different from the spring but not all students are equipped, have the support or learn best in this environment. We've spent so much time making our children's mental health a priority and giving parents/students an option of in-person learning is absolutely necessary in continuing that mental health. Dist 99 has taken pride in being a community, a place of safety, service and collaboration and not just a school. Being in school would create a community environment for incoming freshman and an opportunity for the seniors and everyone in between the opportunity to be leaders in the school that they love. What makes Dist 99 so unique is the collaboration and efforts of the students and teachers within it. To go fully remote would only increase the already high numbers of overdoses, depression, anxiety and suicide. Hasn't our district been through enough in the last few years? I appreciate the district creating an environment that will be safe to those who want to go back to in-person learning. I plead with the community, BOE and the district to offer in-person learning as an option.</p> |
| Demetrios Pappageorge | <p>Dear D99 School Board, faculty, and community,</p> <p>I completely understand that there are teachers and students who will not be able to return to in-person classrooms due to very legitimate health and childcare issues, and I understand that many people are struggling with fear and doubt. However, it is vitally important that we offer in-person education. I think we all agree, in-person education is far superior to online. In-person is exponentially more effective with regard to educational gains, social/emotional health, and especially keeping our disadvantaged and under-supervised kids on track. There are, however, two points that must be added to the discussion.</p> <p>First, and please do not take this as an insensitive dismissal of pain, loss, nor death, but life by its very nature involves risk. If we lock ourselves in our homes indefinitely for the sake of safety, we risk quite a bit of loss (i.e. mental health and also deaths due to substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide from depression). The truth is - There is no such thing as a zero risk life. For instance, we have roughly 36,800 fatalities a year due to car accidents. We could prevent 100% of those deaths if we all stop driving, but do we stop driving? No. Society has decided driving is more important than the risk of death. Also, more than 775,000 children, ages 14 and younger, are treated in hospital emergency rooms for sports-related injuries each year. In 2017 alone, and on top of those sports hospitalizations, there were over 500,000 injuries to people who were merely exercising. Did we stop playing sports and exercising? No. In all of these areas of life, rather than eliminate the beneficial activity - we choose instead to look for ways to do them more safely. And that is what the back-to-school hybrid plan offers - a safer way to do school while we wait for COVID to subside.</p> <p>I'm not sure many people realize this this second point, but if we fail to supply more than an online experience for an extended period of time, we might very well lose our whole public school system. If we are not there supplying social/emotional support, after-school sports, clubs, arts programming, driving lessons, actual working relationships (rather than virtual), and everything else that cannot happen online, then people will turn to home schooling, private online classes, and in-home tutors. Indeed many already have. Why would anyone want to pay these taxes, these salaries, and these building and administrative costs if they could do just as well or better elsewhere? We really could lose our whole equitable, affordable, multifaceted, rich, personal, activity-based, relational, and otherwise excellent public school system for good. We not only need to do what is best for our D99 kids today, but we need to think about the long term impact. Are we really ready and willing to throw in the towel without giving our families a choice?</p> <p>So for these and many more reasons, I believe it is vital that we return to the classroom. The option to learn from home is still available with the hybrid plan, so I move that we get back into the classroom this fall to teach and support the students and families who need the real connections and opportunities that only come from in-person education. I sincerely hope you will make that happen.</p> <p>Demetrios Pappageorge, North High English & Fine Arts Teacher</p> |

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| Carissa Hunter | Please begin the school year with the Hybrid model. It will give the students a solid foundation and starting point by allowing them to meet their teachers and classmates and become familiar with the subject matter, course outline & classroom materials in person. They may have to revert to remote learning as the uncertainty of the virus continues, but at least they'll have had some in person classroom time to start the year off right. |
| Michelle Palenik | I would like to see my son back in school from the beginning of the 20/21 school year. If it means starting Hybrid, that's a good start. Thank you. |
| Michele Pecenka | I feel the hybrid model is well thought out and in the best interest for our kids. I appreciate the time that went into this...I know there is a parents group out there advocating back to in class full-time. Many feel this age group has "not been affected" or the effects are "much less severe" . I am strongly opposed to full time in class at this time...the reason, in my opinion as a healthcare provider, this age group has not been affected is because they have been home and protected since March!! Bringing them all together so quickly and expecting teachers to police the kids and risk their own health would be a mistake. They need to be able to mask AND social distance for as long as possible. |
| Jennifer Fioti | <p>As a parent of an incoming Freshman student, I am 100% for a hybrid model. Understandably everyone is concerned about the safety of their children and staff. But as the CDC mentions in their latest statement "At the same time, the harms attributed to closed schools on the social, emotional, and behavioral health, economic well-being, and academic achievement of children, in both the short- and long-term, are well-known and significant." COVID is not going anywhere any time soon and will never completely disappear. We can not wait to get kids back in a classroom until it is no longer an issue. I believe the administration has come up with a safe plan to bring them back and we should have that option to do so. Furthermore, these students are young adults that are VERY capable of following the rules. They want to be back and I have no doubt wearing masks and shields will not be the issue that some believe.</p> <p>While I appreciate all of the safety concerns involved with this and fully respect a family or staff members decision to stay remote, it should not take away the choice of going hybrid for the many of us that believe THAT is the right choice for OUR family. Please do not take away that CHOICE.</p> <p>Thank you to Dr. Thiele and administration for your dedication and hard work to get our children back into the classroom. Many of us understand the obstacles you are facing and we appreciate everything you do.</p> |
| Bethany Keown | Good Morning - My comments are in regards to going back to school. I feel that everyone needs to make the best choice for their family for various reasons. In my opinion the hybrid option would be the best for all because it gives families that want to send their kids to school can and those that don't can keep their kids at home. I will choose to send my child to school as much as the school will allow. I appreciate all of the steps 99 is taking to ensure the safety of the kids while giving them the education that they need. Please keep the hybrid option available! |
| Stefanie Irby | Please vote in favor of the hybrid model. These kids need to be in school for their mental health, which is just as important. Statistics are in our favor. |
| Hemaxi Mistry | I am in favor of hybrid model, because I truly believe that kids learn more in an environment where us humans are present together and working towards same goal. There is the sense of belonging, feeling of connection with another human being and seeing the role model who can help guide their future, motivates them and create a self esteem. These are some really important factor that can go missing if everything goes online learning. I am hopeful that board consider this factors before voting and give our children a chance to achieve the most. |
| Melissa Phifer | I am completely supportive of the hybrid plan. It is very well thought out and my senior is very excited about it. I am confident she will thrive this school year if she is permitted to execute this schedule. She is taking 3 art classes, so being in class at least once per week is crucial. We both feel with a mask and a shield she will be safe. Thank you for the many hours spent formulating this plan. We are hoping and praying it will be approved. |
| Stephanie Lake | I believe every family should be given a choice of hybrid or remote. |

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| Jennifer VanHoutan | I am in favor of a Hybrid schedule for the Fall 2020 at DG99. |
| Jennifer Nielsen | I support hybrid learning for my child. I would actually prefer more in person learning and more time with the teachers than the superintendent identifies, but understand the limitations that exist in terms of social distancing. I also support a parents right to choose 100% remote learning if they choose that for their children. I would also like to understand the requirements to get the students and teachers back in the classroom full time as nothing has been mentioned as to the parameters that must exist for full in person learning. |
| Sean Lovelace | Hello, my name is Sean Lovelace and I am a Special Services Teacher in our Multi-Needs program at Downers Grove South. These certainly have been trying times for students, parents, teachers, staff, and the administrators of District 99. This is my 15th year in education and each year what brings me back is why I first started in education, doing what is best for kids. At this time, I believe being in school for in-person learning in some form is what is best for kids. Last spring, everyone (parents, students, teachers, administrators) agreed that in-person learning was more beneficial for students than remote learning. We have a well thought out and detailed plan that will put teachers in front of students for at least the start of the year. This is a crucial time in the developing of academic and personal relationships in the classroom and I believe that we need to do everything in our power (with all safety precautions and guidelines followed) to make this happen for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. I have three young children, a wife who works full-time in education, and we will adjust and adapt just as every family in the District 99 community has had to do since March. I am grateful to work in such a great community and I am looking forward to seeing the students of Downers Grove South very soon, SOUTHSTRONG!!! |
| Kate Scheck | It is vital that these kids get back to as much IN PERSON learning as possible. Remote learning is a worst case scenario and should be used as sparingly as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration on this topic! |
| Annie Bleau | If District 99 can adhere to the strict guidelines provided by the state regarding COVID 19, it's our hope that a hybrid approach be used to open school this fall for the best chance of a more effective education and improved social/emotional growth of our kids. |
| Kristin Civitanova | Good morning, I am a district 99 parent and believe my child needs to return to school this fall. The hybrid schedule would be most beneficial for my son. I do however believe every family should have a choice as to which plan works and is best for their family. Thank you. |
| Sarah Havle | To whom it may concern: I am a parent of a soon to be Sophomore at DGS. Recently, I have had a conversation with him and he told me how excited he was for school to start because he has been extremely lonesome for his friends and peers. I know that Dr Theile and the DG 99 School Board and all of the faculty and staff are looking out for everyone's health and safety measures but I also hope they are taking into consideration the students mental health as well. I know in school is not going to be like it was, but any in school session I think is better than none. Please do not go 100% remote, let the parents CHOOSE please give us options. Thank you!! |
| Sophia Bowerman | I am voicing my support for the hybrid model to start school. While limited the social interaction it provides I believe is paramount to student success. |
| Anonymous | I thank you for your diligence during this difficult time. I understand the information you receive about this virus from health officials is constantly changing and recommendations are inconsistent, making your job more difficult. The only thing that seems consistent is that everyone has a strong opinion. I hope the board decides to give a choice to parents on selecting the hybrid schedule (with the option to move to remote learning at any time) as well as the option to only participate in remote learning. I hope the parents who are urging the school to reopen and who want even more in person learning than the hybrid schedule offers, really think about how they will handle their child becoming sick and showing symptoms. If their child develops a sore throat, cough or temperature, will they have no problem keeping their child home from school to avoid spreading germs or does their desire for their child to be back in school, trump spreading a dangerous virus? |
| Sarah Marshall | Our vote is hybrid schedule for our two boys. We are worried about mental health as much as this virus. These kids need to be back in school in some capacity. We have trust that district 99 will do their very best to keep our boys as safe as possible. |

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| Melissa Rausch | <p>Thank you for taking the time for this additional meeting. I understand the task ahead of you and do not envy the position you are in because ultimately the lives of your staff and the lives and education of the students come down to the decision you make and it is one of pandemic size responsibility.</p> <p>As a parent of an incoming freshman, a mother of children who will be attending 2 different schools in District 58 and a teacher who sits on task force reopening committees in my own district, what I have seen transpire over the past few weeks as it relates to the start of school across all districts is a mad rush to get students back in person without a real consideration for the physical health, social emotional well being , and academic growth of the the students and without real consideration for the physical health, social emotional well being, and professional integrity of staff.</p> <p>It concerns me that the District is rushing to create a plan that leaves everyone with great uncertainty, contains lack of continuity of education, and places the District's most valuable assets at risk.</p> <p>I ask you today to please reconsider the plan that has been proposed, pivot, and commit to the decision to developing a plan that begins remotely and phases to in-person instruction, and dedicate this time right now to developing a robust and informed approach to remote learning based in best practice and online pedagogy.</p> <p>There are only 14 business days before students report to school. 14 days to have PPE and cleaning supplies ordered and delivered. 14 days to ready the buildings, mark hallways, put up signs, remove furniture from rooms, organize desks. 14 days to train teachers, counselors, support staff, bus drivers, custodial staff, and others on the new health and safety protocols and the new ways to complete their job functions. 14 days to develop and disperse information and supplies to students and families and train them on the new health and safety protocols and the new ways they will function as students. 14 days to get ready to bring students and staff back into buildings in a global pandemic.</p> <p>I urge you to be brave. I urge you to be a pioneer. I urge you to be a leader to other other districts in DuPage County who are still committed to opening in-person. Pivot. Make the decision to open remotely. What is stopping you?</p> |
| Jamie Guerin | <p>I am submitting a comment in support of the district 99 hybrid learning plan for the fall. I am truly impressed with the thought and consideration put into this plan and feel that it is the best option for starting school in August. Specifically, I believe it allows the district to flex in and out of remote learning as necessary thereby providing our students with the most opportunity for in person learning. Additionally, forming student/teacher relationships is imperative to the success of students throughout the school year, and this plan allows for that. Please consider passing the hybrid plan.</p> |
| Erin Gee | <p>I am voicing my support for the hybrid learning model, although my first choice would have been 5 days a week in-school learning. The CDC and ISBE are in agreement that in-school learning is safe to resume as long as specific precautions are taken, and the number of COVID cases stays below a certain level. The decision to return to the school building needs to be made by each family of both students and faculty, an individual assessment of risk. Those who need or want to choose remote, can. I'm happy they have that option. I'm a nurse in a hospital, we follow policy regarding safety and we ARE safe. We know so much more about the virus now than we did this Spring. Students and teachers will be safe also. I truly hope the board will not allow the fears of a subset of our stakeholders persuade it to disregard the science behind the decision of the CDC and other governing bodies to allow in-school learning. It is critical for not only our students' adequate educational growth, But also their mental and emotional health. Any of you who are parents of high schoolers saw what this past Spring did to them. We cannot let it happen again. Fear should not be the deciding factor for this decision. Science should lead us forward. Thank you.</p> |

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| jen watts | <p>I am reaching out to ask the borad and the related task force, admin and teachers to look at the existing Hybrid model and to work to modify it to include less independent learning and MORE in-person learning. The reason for presenting the hybrid (and spending so much time in creating this) is because we all understand the importance of creating the student teacher relationship. I ask the board to push D99 into making this Hybrid plan more robust, let's get more student teacher time. Espcially since we all are going into this with the assumption, we will all be remote after a few weeks. Lets start off STRONG and SAFE, my ask is to look in detail at creating a hybrid that includes more than 60 minutes of face time per class a week. There are ways to increase this valuable teacher/student interaction with still be safe. I urge us all to ask for more!! Thank you.</p> |
| Dina Jhobalia | <p>If we are to use the hybrid model, how will this impact the paraprofessionals? since based on last time, we really were not able to work remotely.</p> |
| Chris McGrath | <p>I am a teacher at North High, a resident of Downers Grove, and a parent of three, and I understand parents' concerns about sending their children back to school. My wife and I have gone back and forth on the concept myself, and through our discussion, we believe that sending our children back to school is the best option for our family. Please allow parents to have the choice to do what is best of their families.</p> |
| Donna Wilson | <p>As a parent with a child that attends Downers Grove North I want this Board to understand that the community looks at our schools along with staff to be essential to the welfare of our children. We moved to this community because of it. Remote-only learning is not an option for our students who need us more than ever. The Board needs to look at all layers to this when marking their decision. The irony of this is that our children are safer in schools, virus or no virus. Their mental and social health will suffer taking a gap year and I assume a majority of our teachers do want to go back to work. Allow those that are not comfortable to remain home and provide additional assistance remotely. I prefer live learning for all because the science shows it would not implicate the health of our students anymore than the flu, mono or other virus that can also happen. And school is where they should be. If hybrid is your only next best option then decide already. But here is what will happen, the community will be sending their child to private schools or will just move. Your decision will have enormous impact on this community. Put politics aside and acknowledge that the true data on this virus shows it's fatality rate is less than 1percent. Parents understand the risk. Let them have a voice in the decision. These are our children. This is our community.</p> |
| Paul Miller | <p>I am concerned with which class will be held virtually or on site. There are certain classes that require face to face interaction with the teacher. Those would be the sciences and math to name a few. How will those classes be handled. Also, the messaging to the students last semester was very poor. Basically, informing the students that their grades were frozen as of March was the wrong message to send. Many students completed the minimum required work. If most of the classes are to be virtual, the students should be held to the same standards as if they were in school.</p> |
| Andrea Conley | <p>The administration has done a fantastic job creating a plan to get students on track for fall while following health department and ISBE guidelines. Please allow parents the option to choose hybrid learning for their children. It is essential that students get in person time with their teachers.</p> |
| Julie Chen | <p>Our family is hoping for the in person hybrid model, so that our kids can have as much in person interaction with their teachers as possible. I also wanted to thank everyone on every level of planning for their tireless efforts! You have done a great job in thinking through so many possibilities during this difficult time. We appreciate you.</p> |
| Bob Kearney | <p>Remote learning is a dangerous experiment being conducted on our children. It is good that parents who want their kids to be e-learning guinea pigs are given that choice. Those of us who want the school to follow the widespread accepted evidence showing that Covid is a low risk for teenagers should be given the option to have our children return to full-time in-person learning. It is disappointing that that is not even being considered as an option despite the low health risks for teenagers. It is probably too late now to have such an option in August or September. I urge the school administration to begin working now on having that option available for October at the very latest.</p> |

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| Nicole Szydlowski | I was all in favor of my kids going back to school in person until I did the math on the hybrid plan and realized we are going from 4 hours per class per week of instructional time to less than 2 hours. Somehow, the administration thinks we'll be able to get through 80% of the curriculum with less than half the instruction from teachers. This does not take in to consideration the 10-20% of the curriculum the kids didn't get through last year in classes, like Math, that build on themselves. Even if 80% is achievable, it is still not acceptable for the kids taking AP classes. Therefore, I am now in support of whatever learning format maximizes instructional time. |
| Dan Gowen | High school needs the hybrid plan and as much inperson learning as possible. |
| Rita Brezina | <p>I first want to say, I am thankful for the work that has gone into getting to this point. It's an incredibly complex and unprecedented situation, and the information changes daily. So, thank you to all parties involved!</p> <p>I am in full support of (at least) the Hybrid model. I believe in-person learning works better for both of my children in high school. I think if it's offered for a 100% remote option, then people should be able to opt in for more time in school as well. Also, if my elementary and middle school students can be in school all day every day, how can we not be accomplishing more than 8 hours of in person instruction for our high school students?</p> <p>I greatly hope we can put our students in the school! Thank you again.</p> |
| Maryam Soto | I work as a nurse in Cook County and there is an uptick similar to the what we saw in April. There is already talk of us closing one of our hospitals again(closed for surgeries) to prepare for the rush of covid patients we'll be seeing. Our hospital admins are blaming the uptick due to younger people spreading it and having no disregard for others. I don't have trust in students abiding by these social distancing rules whatsoever. |
| Melissa Surette | I support the hybrid model. I respect that some people are not comfortable sending their kids to school and the hybrid model allows for that. However, there are kids that suffer significantly by not having any in school learning. My family found e-learning very challenging. I will be very disappointed if district 99 does not offer the hybrid model. |
| | Strongly prefer hybrid learning option |
| Laura Wilson | I am writing to extend my opinion that we owe it to our children and students to enter back into the classroom. I do understand that there is a risk to this but I also believe there is a risk to keeping our students home. I believe it's really important to at least try to have some face to face connection at the start of the school year. This will serve to set expectations, develop connections and provide a glimmer of hope for normalcy. I am a medical professional and have been on the front lines from the beginning of this pandemic. I believe we can decrease our risk of spreading if we do what we have been told. Masks, distance and hand hygiene. I do believe that if community spread reached a certain level then its probable that we will need to move to complete remote learning. However, we are in a place within this community that community spread is low. Let's at least get the school year established with face to face learning and react according to the virus and the numbers. |
| Amy Glawe | In regards to the start of school, I believe that the teens need to be in school. The hybrid schedule that has been put forward is a good compromise of in school and at home. My son has told me that last Spring he learned almost nothing with the all online learning that we had to finish the school year. In person learning is low risk and they need to be in school learning. We must do better with the online portion of our program and then they need as many touch points as possible with their teachers and faculty to keep them on track and engaged. Tactile learners suffer greatly with online learning. Online learning also hurts those who are most at risk of failing in our schools. Not all students are independent learners. We need to support them as best that we can. |
| Laura Stephens | I want my daughters back in school doing the hybrid learning . |
| Tina Horazy | I think it is very important to get the kids back to school. They need to go back more now than ever. |

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| Kathryn Rodriguez | I strongly believe that my child (a 9th grader Zoe Rodriguez) would benefit from the hybrid plan. I here is a need to meet teachers and students in person to make the school process "real". Other reasons are social practice, on hand instruction for things harder to do online, and a feeling of community. I worry that if we do not start hybrid now we may lose the chance once flu season starts. I feel the district has come up with good safety measures and may possibly make the kids safer from other illnesses. |
| Jim Paul | I he kids should be in the classroom. Understand if some families feel otherwise and it should be their choice to keep their kids home. Our family feels it's important to go back to school. |
| AMY BOONE | <p>I applaud the Administrators of District 99 for working so hard to come up with a plan that addresses all studnets during this difficult time. We have had 5 children pass through DGN with our youngest entering her Senior Year. DGN has had a great impact on our children's lives and we know that everyone there has the students best interest at heart. I 100% support the proposed options put forward. Our daughter wants to attend in person learning - we want her to attend in person learning!! Teens need some social interaction for their social/emotional well being as well as the fact that Seniors need to start prepping for College which is difficult online only!</p> <p>Please allow the hybrid model proposed until full in-person instruction is allowed. There is no reason not to allow this because if anyone is uncomfortable, they have been given the opportunity for complete remote learning. The proposed model addresses everyone's need - you can go to school if you want or you can stay home if you want - seems like a win/win!</p> <p>For our family, we want our daughter in the building in front of the great teachers of DGN to help her be successful in college!</p> |
| Robert M. Benton | <p>I wo options exist, the hybrid schedule and 100% online. I am sympathetic to the fact some parents would preter learning this fall to be 100% online. I hey have an option to do learning 100% online. I would ask the board to not take the option of the hybrid schedule away from families that would like to do a portion of learning in person. Please let families decide.</p> <p>Many families would like to participate in the well constructed, and arguably conservative approach, presented by the D99 Leadership and parents committee. Many students, parents, and teachers believe in person learning is still a critical component of learning and would like a portion of that to continue this fall.</p> |
| Ryan Stopka | I am a junior at DGN. I really want to get back to school. I want to be IN the classroom learning. I do not think e-learning is as good as being taught in person. If we do not get back to learning IN school we are going to fall behind the other schools in Illinois and neighboring states because most of them are going back to in person learning. We should have the CHOICE to select hybrid learning. It will be very unfair if you do not allow us to have this choice. You are going to have a lot of safety precautions at school to keep the students and teachers healthy. I also think you should divide the days by grades not alphabetically. After the people who want to stay home to learn make that choice, you will have fewer people in the school and will be able to divide us by grade and still have smaller class sizes. I just transferred here my sophomore year and didn't get a full year in at DGN. I don't want to miss even more of my high school experiences at DGN by being stuck learning in my house all the time. Thank you! |
| Holly Pappas | I hank you for all the time and hard work being put into the plan for our students. I fully support the hybrid plan, but don't support using the hybrid schedule if/when students move to fully remote learning. The hybrid plan will be the only opportunity for our students to make an in-person introduction/connection to their teachers/peers and this is very important, however once learning becomes fully remote it is important that students learn as much as possible and should go back to their regular schedule via zoom. |

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| Robert M. Benton | <p>Regarding the proposed hybrid schedule, many parent support this approach, but want to maximize the amount of direct instructional / lecture time between teachers and students.</p> <p>From looking at the Group A and Group B schedules, it looks like students can expect 1 hour and 50 minutes per period per week for each class. This is quite a drop from a 100% in person instructional time of 250 minutes (4 hours 10 min – 5 days x 50 min per day). This concerns me that a lot of valuable “live” instructional time is missing in the schedule.</p> <p>A suggestion: If each period’s in person instructional time was also conducted over Zoom and remote sessions were available to all students (A and B), teachers would not be burdened with repeating lessons and students would get more instructional time. This would likely bring the total amount of “live” instructional time (a combination of in person learning and remote learning) up to 3.667 hours per week. This would make a lot of parents feel more confident that direct instructional time isn’t being lost.</p> |
| Karen Leinart | <p>I have many health and safety concerns about the proposed hybrid plan, but my overriding concern is with the instructional time provided for the students. In the proposed plan, they will receive 1 hour of in person instructional time and 50 minutes of remote instructional time per class per week. That’s approximately 40 % of the instructional time afforded in a normal school schedule. A fully remote learning plan could easily provide students with 100% of the normal instructional time. Their normal school day schedule could easily be followed remotely. Please vote to put education first and provide our students with all of the instructional time that they need. Voting for a 100% remote plan that follows the normal school schedule provides for the education, health, and safety of our students and staff.</p> |
| Kevin Bruno | <p>I believe our children need (in class) daily instruction by teachers. My preference is in-person instruction because most kids learn better when they have in-class interaction with teachers and classmates. My children also prefer in class instruction and want to go back to school.</p> <p>Given a hybrid schedule or full e-learning, we prefer hybrid. That being said, why can’t we have zoom meeting during each of their scheduled class hours. It would provide time for lectures and time for questions/interaction. While this is not as good as being in school, it would be better than the limited interaction proposed.</p> <p>Why don’t we have those kids who feel comfortable going to glass attend and those who don’t feel comfortable listen via software from home. This would allow both to learn and doesn’t force students who are higher risk to attend in-person.</p> <p>E-learning in the spring was not good; more e-learning will negatively impact many of our children. This is not good for their development and their future academic careers.</p> |
| Michelle Schmidt | <p>First, I would like to take the time to say thank you to all involved in gathering information and resources, as well as putting together plan options for the fall.</p> <p>As a parent and person working in education, I wanted to express on behalf of my husband and myself strong support of either a blended return to school or full return to school.</p> <p>There are a lot of unknowns as we head back to school. The one certainty though, is that it is inevitable COVID will be around for awhile. Working to prevent the spread is needed, however we can not live in fear of the what-ifs. Our children need the structure, stability, emotional, physical, health, and mental support that being at school provides.</p> <p>Please support the plan that gets our kids back into school. Thank you for your time.</p> |

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| Jill Powers | <p>Dear members of the Board of Education, I would like to be a voice in favor of the hybrid learning schedule to begin the 2020-21 school year. While we all wish that school could start "normally" and all students could attend 100% without the fear of Covid-19, that is not our reality. Given that the families who do not feel comfortable or should not return for medical reasons have the option to learn remotely, I think it is critical for our students to get as much in person instruction as possible. The administration, teachers and task force have worked very hard and done an amazing job to put together a hybrid schedule that checks all the boxes for current required guidelines. Following their recommendations, I feel that the students will most benefit from being back in the classroom this fall. It is my hope that you will vote YES for hybrid learning in district 99.</p> |
| Amy Romano | <p>At this present time and date have the teachers prepared videos, resources, assignments and a curriculum to support hybrid learning, remote learning and the transition back to full time/part time learning? Also, has the staff and administration approved this curriculum and does it meet the ISBE guidelines?</p> |
| Debbie Kartsounes | <p>I have two children at DGN and I am in favor of the proposed Hybrid plan. I am satisfied with the safety measures put in place and believe that the only way we can hold our students accountable for their education is to be in front of their teachers at least twice a week.</p> |
| Guy Bloomfield | <p>I thank you taking the time to diligently explore options for our children this fall. I support a full return to in person education.</p> <p>Per advice from the CDC, and the American Association of Pediatricians (AAP) I think that the risk to our community seems manageable.</p> <p>Per the AAP: "Although children and adolescents play a major role in amplifying influenza outbreaks, to date, this does not appear to be the case with SARS-CoV-2. Although many questions remain, the preponderance of evidence indicates that children and adolescents are less likely to be symptomatic and less likely to have severe disease resulting from SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition, children may be less likely to become infected and to spread infection."</p> <p>The e-learning in the high schools last spring was decent, but was not nearly as good as the education my children received in person. Given the low risk, I would like to maximize their education.</p> <p>Thank you again for your time and thoughtful consideration,</p> <p>Guy Bloomfield</p> |
| Ryan Powers | <p>Hello, My name is Ryan Powers, DGN class of 2024. Please vote YES on hybrid learning. I want to start my freshman year in high school in person. Thank you.</p> |

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| Angela Homborg | <p>I here is still time to make this right. You talk of the importance of teacher student relationships and that is really not going to be what it should with the current plan. If you are ok with 2 days of in person learning, then why wouldn't it be all 5 days since that is what everyone agrees would be best for the students. These kids need that more than ever. The fact that the lives of all of these kids has been turned upside down is way more detrimental to their well being than what Covid MIGHT be to them. See https://flattenthefear.com/press-release/over-1500-physicians-sign-petition-supporting-the-reopening-of-schools/ as well as the article</p> <p>Also see the article from July 20th, Covid facts that flatten the fear(same website). My kids' doctor as well as my husband's see no reason kids should not be back full time. They both have kids of their own, so if there was anything to be worried about, would they be pushing to get their own kids back in person full time?</p> <p>In terms of lunch, pick a time and have them eat in an already socially distanced classroom, wherever they are at the time. It's not as big of an issue as you are making it out to be. The teachers need to think about how lucky they are to have jobs. Think of the thousands who have lost their jobs. Think of all of those who put on their masks and took care of those who did get sick. Think of those that kept the grocery stores going and supplying their families with food,. Think about those workers at target, wal Mart, etc that kept them stocked with necessities. The teachers need to do their job and put on whatever they want to feel safe and let the kids know if they have certain fears and I believe that with the good kids that we have, they will respect that. The classrooms are already going to be socially distanced. It is time to quit with the political garbage and do what is right for the students. All of you seem to have forgotten that and care more about perception and politics. These kids are our the future of our country. Let's be sure they get the best education they can.</p> <p>Lastly, I do realize there are students and families with health issues.</p> <p>As you have proposed., I agree 100% with giving families the option for remote learning. Those families who are fine with full in person learning should get a choice too. You want to be fair, then give the choice to the families. Thank you for taking the time to read this.</p> |
| Jennifer Stephens | <p>My name is Jenniter Stephens. I have an incoming freshman and a senior. I support a hybrid model moving towards a full day, in person plan.</p> <p>I am a registered nurse in a busy academic medical center. I know these pandemic times have been incredibly challenging. I have seen it first hand. The way that I do my job has changed several times over the last four months. It has required flexibility and creativity.</p> <p>I appreciate the work put forth to devise a hybrid plan. It too required flexibility and creativity.</p> <p>I feel it is incredibly important for the academic, social and most importantly mental well being of all the students for them to return to school.</p> <p>If there are concerns that Covid-19 will spread like wildfire or that teachers will be at risk, there are now numerous studies that prove this to be untrue. In fact, with proper PPE and safety protocols, teachers can be protected and students can too. If ISBE, the education experts, and AAP, the child health care experts are all saying in person learning is best. We should listen to them.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Jennifer Stephens</p> |
| Amy Nemeth | <p>I am in favor of in person learning for my two high school students. Given that all students have the choice to do full time elearning, the students that would prefer to have any in person learning offered should also be able to have that choice.</p> |
| Walter Jeske | <p>I he proposed hybrid plan seems to me to be a reasonable way to address a difficult situation. I would recommend its acceptance with one change. I would suggest removing the late start on Mondays in favor a full day of remote learning.</p> |
| JULIE KOORS | <p>I WOULD LIKE MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HYBRID VERSION OF LEARNING THIS FIRST SEMESTER</p> |

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| Melanie May | <p>As a biologist and a mom, I implore the board and administration to delay the hybrid plan, begin with fully-remote learning, and consider alternative supports such as learning pods for students with greater needs. Echoing what Ms. Kupka stated in the July 20 meeting, we do not yet know enough about this virus to meet in person confidently. Parents and students, teachers and staff cannot give informed consent to return in person at this time when knowledge of the risks is this incomplete. Consider how much we have learned in the last two months – since May, when the country began opening up again. Now we know that kids are susceptible. Now we know that 10- to 19-year-olds – the vast majority of school-aged children – transmit the virus as much as adults. Now we know that people who have even mild symptoms can remain sick for weeks or months, with the potential for long-term complications. There have been no silver linings here, no “magic bullets.” Everything we learn about this virus further illustrates how insidious it is and why caution is needed. Consider how much we will know in the next two months. Come September, will we say, “I wish we hadn’t opened the schools yet,” or will we say, “I’m so glad we waited”?</p> |
| Sharon Bowers | <p>I am a nurse at a local suburban hospital , I have been at work through this entire pandemic . Our July inpatient Covid numbers are the lowest they have been in 3 months . We are doing a good job here in the suburbs . The CDC is recommending in person learning. I have an incoming Freshman and a Senior . I appreciate all the work that has gone into the hybrid model and believe that the kids should definitely be back in person as proposed . This hybrid proposal is excellent and well thought out with every precaution in place . Those who want their children to go fully remote should do so but the rest of us parents want our kids back in school . School is ESSENTIAL , teachers are essential just as nurses and store/restaurant workers are essential. Our students are already behind. They need to meet with their teachers in person , this is crucial . Remote learning is only as good as the support the kids have at home . Some kids will do fine with this but many will not . Depression is skyrocketing . Please pass the hybrid model that the district has proposed and let the kids go back to school! Thank you !!</p> |
| Dawn Fenner | <p>Dear Board I ask you to strongly consider hybrid learning as an option for students this fall. I know my son learns better in person. Even if that was just a couple days a week, it would be beneficial. Thank you for your consideration.</p> |
| Kristin Purcell | <p>It would be very helpful if classes, in person and e-learning, were recorded so students can go back if they need to review material.</p> |
| Tami Janicki | <p>First, thank you to the Board. This is not an easy feat knowing no matter what you decide, many will not be happy. Second, I completely respect families who choose 100% remote because it is your right, your choice. Whether it be due to medical reasons and/or fear of the virus. But I ask you specifically, please also be respectful to those of us who wish, who need, to have our children in school at some capacity. Whether it be due to academics and/or mental health. The fighting, the judging is just too much. What is best for one may not be best for the next. Please be respectful and supportive. This is not an all or none type of situation. If your child is remote and mine isn't (or vice versus), you cannot expect their experiences to be exactly the same. It's impossible. Whatever your decision may be, understand the ramifications and adjust. My hope is that both my children will be in school and playing their fall sports ASAP with whatever safety measures needed in place. My hope is that should you not want that for your child, you have that option as well. Last, for the record, my kids and their friends all say they learned nothing remotely and desperately want to go to school. To me, that speaks volumes.</p> |
| Lisa Lockerby | <p>Please provide the options and choice of either hybrid or remote learning so parents and students have a choice as Hinsdale and Lyons I ownship did for their students. Not all students were successful last spring with remote learning and as a result their mental health suffered. We cannot allow ourselves to retreat in our homes until a vaccine appears. I'm sending my junior student athlete back to a college campus of 30,000 students in August and some of his classes are in person. My senior daughter at DePaul is also attending classes in Lincoln Park this fall. I returned to my office full time in June as real estate is deemed an essential business. There are risks associated with all these decisions; however as a family we believe there should be options. Please understand the mental and emotional ramifications of only having students learn remotely with no in person interaction amongst their peers or teachers. We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated administrators and teachers in District 99 and I'm confident a plan can be established to benefit all students and staff. Thank you -</p> |

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| Melissa Melcher-Hosni | <p>I thank you for allowing me to comment. I support beginning the school year 100% remote. While I agree choice is important to all involved, this particular choice greatly affects our entire community. I feel the board should err on the side of scientific safety and protect the community as a whole from potential large outbreaks of COVID-19. With cases rapidly rising again, this is not the time to turn our schools into experimental labs and see what happens. PLEASE choose safety over "normalcy". Thank you.</p> |
| Meeta sinnappan | <p>I feel comfortable sending my student back to school in the hybrid model for limited in person learning. The district has been very thoughtful in proposing this plan. I would love to see add'l remote learning from teachers as other surrounding districts have- but do support the limited in person interaction</p> |
| James Beavers | <p>I ask the board and related committees to use scientific facts and our current reality as the basis for the decision on our back-to-school plan, not political affiliations nor hopefulness. Although I so wish for my children to be back in school with their friends and in all their activities, I personally cannot see an option that involves the majority of the student body back in the classroom for even an hour in a given week that does not greatly increase the spread of the Covid virus in the Downers Grove Community. We should not make our school systems the reason for increased spread of this disease at a time when we must remain cautious and vigilant in keeping a check on the spread of Covid. I manage 10 offices across the country with approximately 175 employees. Each day, our operations are dominated by Covid. We are constantly dealing with exposure issues, both direct and indirect. All our offices are in flux between skeleton crews, shift crews and total remote environments. Some offices that tried to go back full time are now back to shift work because of exposures. Some that were back to full staff are now in full remote operations again because of exposures or high community spread rates. Operations are a daunting task that continues to become more and more difficult as this virus rages. I cannot fathom a school building with thousands of individual commingling being able to operate without harboring the increased spread of this disease. The mental impact on our children is immeasurable if they would be the reason for spread of this disease to other friends or family members. I strongly support a 100% remote environment for the fall semester.</p> |
| Melissa Theisen | <p>As a Downers Grove resident, District 99 parent, and a certified staff member in Naperville Community Unit School District 203, I respectfully implore that the BOE approve the hybrid learning model which will allow students to attend some classes in person while also allowing those families that choose the 100% remote option to have that choice as well. Unfortunately, we are all in a state where risk-reward is a now a consideration. There is currently and always has been a certain amount of risk in the public schools. Although circumstances vary, the pandemic is another form of inherent risk and schools are putting into place safety procedures and protocols as a means to lower the risk level. In my opinion, despite this risk, the rewards of in-person learning are worth the determined risk. Some of the largest rewards include the ability to develop a teacher-student relationship, the opportunity for peer interactions in an environment with safety protocols, the positive impact on mental health and social emotional needs, and the opportunity for students to experience the community and culture of their school. Allow the families of District 99 to make the choice they feel is best for their student by approving the hybrid plan with the opportunity for those who would like all remote to also have that choice.</p> |
| Peggy Delaney | <p>I am extremely grateful that our administrators and the board are taking thoughtful consideration into how to return safely to school while still working on how to provide remote learning to families who need (or want) to minimize COVID19 exposure. I fully know staff and all personnel in D99 are working diligently to provide a safe environment. With that being said, I want to share my experience while picking up my sons chrome book today at NHS. The school did a wonderful job with marking the floor for 6ft distancing. They had hand sanitizer available, and staff adhered to maintaining 6ft from parents and children. However, the entire time I was interacting with the gentleman who was gathering my sons chrome book, not once was his nose covered with his mask. His mask was covering his mouth, but it was fully under his nose the entire time. I contacted the office to notify them that they need to review their safety protocols with their staff immediately. The office staff was very supportive and concerned about this breach of protocol. This is a perfect example of how quickly safety protocols can unintentionally be not followed. The result of not following these protocols will most definitely result in community spread amongst our staff and students. I was so disappointed to witness an employee unsafely wearing his mask while in contact with possibly dozens of parents today. If D99 can't be hyper-viligent with something as simple as mask wearing, then I am extremely worried about all the other complex safety measures that are required to provide a truly safe environment for our teachers, staff, and students.</p> |

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| JENNIFER BLACK | I'd like to know the intention for the kids that are supposed to go to ICD and additionally for the kids with 504 plans. For ICD there is no way to learn those skills with one hour of classroom time. They need to be at school. For my student who also has a 504 plan, the spring was a disaster as my child did not receive his accommodations except for one exceptional teacher that went out of her way. He is not self motivated, my husband and I both work full time (through COVID we are actually busier than usual) and it was a miracle he finished the semester. I had to hire a college aged tutor to get him through his school work to pass. I won't have a tutor in the spring to get him through his school work while I'm working. He needs time in school to get assistance from his teachers. |
| Dianne Fleener | Our family is in favor of the Board accepting the proposed Hybrid Plan for the upcoming school year. |
| Kris Stevenson | We would like to thank the staff, administration, board members and others who have poured themselves into a plan to return to school which takes into consideration both the physical and mental well-being of staff and students. Given the current information, we are comfortable and confident in sending our daughter to DGN under the hybrid plan. As an incoming freshman we believe that even limited time on-campus and in-person will be greatly beneficial to this important transition. That being said, we acknowledge that this is the more difficult plan to enact and we are so appreciative of the additional work which staff are willing to take on to make it a reality As a former high school educator (Krls) I can hardly imagine the many adaptations these administrators, teachers and school staff have made, and will continue to make in the days and months ahead and would simply ask that their voices and recommendations continue to be heard. Todd and Krls Stevenson |
| Leslie Opila | Hello, Thank you to the Dr. Thiele, the administration staff, and Board of Education for their ongoing tireless work to assure our children continue their education in an effective and safe way. I am writing to support the hybrid plan. The flexibility offered in the this plan gives students an opportunity to have face to face time with teachers and some of their classmates as well as the option to chose 100% online if preferred. The hybrid plan meets my children's needs and I want it to be approved. I appreciate all your time and effort as you work towards approving a plan for this school year. |
| Zachary Goodman | I believe that due to the risks of COVID-19, school should start fully online and be online until the end of 1st semester. I believe the risk to our children, teachers, staff and custodial workers is too great to have on-site classes. Once the 1st semester is over, the district should then reassess after the first semester. |
| Jennifer Bender | I would like to have the children back in school as much as possible. |
| Marie Ward | We thank the district for coming up with the hybrid plan. We feel it is a very good plan to allow our students back safely, balancing the need for engagement, and monitoring CDC guidance. The CDC has recently come out and said they are recommending students return as well. My family is looking forward to our student returning to sports and class activities. |
| Kelly McCaig | We need to have some in person learning. Especially the freshman will fall apart without it. |
| Kristina Paschall | I am writing to indicate 100% support for the hybrid model. My child needs the interaction in person at least part time with other students. This is very important for mental health of many students. Please, so many are motivated to make this work, so let's trust everyone to do so. Our kids are strong and I know they can do it if they know the alternative is not to be in school at all. Many of us have been in situations at work where we needed to find a way, and despite years of working another way, everyone has worked together and we have kept our employees safe. When you have to adjust, you do. This is true of many organizations. Schools and physical attendance to the extent possible is essential. Isolation is just not sustainable. We will do whatever it takes to make hybrid possible for students and teachers. A large community is here to not only listen to rules but help District 99 in any way possible. We are all in this together!!!! Thank you! -Kristina Paschall |
| Kristen France | I am in full support of the hybrid model. The hybrid model will allow students to have much needed in person time with teachers and staff, while allowing for a remote option for those that need it. |

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| <p>Maria Lifka</p> | <p>I will have 3 children at DGN for the 2020-2021 school year (9th grade, 11th grade and 12th grade). I am in favor of the hybrid approach to start the year. One of the main reasons I feel this way is that when the district moved to 100% remote learning in March, one of my children struggled to stay engaged. This is a child who would normally not be considered "at risk". This child is on the high honor roll, takes honors and AP classes and is a dedicated student from a two parent household and is not socioeconomically disadvantaged. If this child struggled, I can't imagine how many others did and will continue to as well. There is something to be said for having to get up and be in school in person at a certain time. It makes students more accountable and allows them to be more engaged.</p> <p>I definitely worry about the health and safety of the students, faculty and staff, but I participated in the Parents' Club webinar last week and felt more comfortable listening to Principal Schwarze describe the safety measures that will be in place. I think we are all realistic enough to say that it is highly likely we will be 100% remote during the school year at some point, but if we start with the hybrid approach, it gives the students the opportunity to meet their teachers and at least half of their classmates in each period. I think this is particularly important for my incoming 9th grader who is coming from a small private elementary school and is completely new to DGN. Those who are not comfortable sending their children have the option to elect 100% remote learning, so I feel like that, along with the hybrid option, offer solutions that will work for different families' situations.</p> <p>Thank you for all your time and effort, and thank you for considering my comments.</p> |
| <p>Amy laverty</p> | <p>I hope students can return to school in person every day/morning for in-person instruction as Freshman/Sophomore, Junior/Senior A-L then M-Z afternoons, and give those who want 100% remote that option as well...In person learning as much as person learning as possible...Thanks!</p> |
| <p>Melissa Infusino</p> | <p>Please vote hybrid. I do not agree with 100% remote. I believe the children will do better with hybrid and being in school 2 days a week.</p> |
| <p>Bethany Dobbertin</p> | <p>We prefer FULL in person schooling for the 2020/2021 school year. If that is impossible we feel strongly that they must have as much in person learning as possible.</p> |
| <p>Dan Paschall</p> | <p>I believe the hybrid model is the best option for our kids and community. This allows our students to stay safe while having some face to face time with other students and teachers. Motivation slips when only doing zoom calls 30 minutes a day.</p> |
| <p>Lakesha Giles</p> | <p>What would a typical day look like for a Freshman attending the hybrid model set in place and how many projected hours will they be onsite? Also how will lunch and physical education be structured?</p> |
| <p>Dan Kardatzke</p> | <p>I'm in favor of the hybrid model as my son did not learn as much in his math class without the in person learning. My son is looking for some level of social interaction and needs a sense of normalcy as he continues into his Sophomore year now. Our kids need to be trusted to follow the rules and are in severe need of some level of an in person experience to continue their high school education.</p> |
| <p>Colleen Loftus</p> | <p>I would like to register my support for the hybrid model.</p> |
| <p>John Basco</p> | <p>The short-sightedness of the decision to send our students back to school at this time is unconscionable. While the very limited science indicates that young people may be at a lower risk for contracting the virus, the remaining population is not. By limiting the quality of education offered to students who opt out, you are forcing families to choose between the health of their community and the development of their children. The core function of this board is to serve both those needs, education and community. Sadly, this decision serves neither.</p> |

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| Debbi DelRe | <p>I am a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner and over the past 4 months have seen the detrimental mental health effects that social isolation and lack of social interactions has had on people of all ages, particularly the 13-21 year old age group. I am hopeful you will take this into consideration and allow DGS to offer a hybrid model for learning for the 20-21 school year for those wanting and needing to be back within the walls of the school even if it's for limited hours each week.</p> <p>My daughter (class of 2022) has had incredible academic success at DGS and has been recognized as a student leader by faculty and her peers during her first two years at DGS. I have watched her go from being bullied in middle school and struggle with anxiety and depression to being a thriving, happy individual. I attribute her success, as does she, to the environment created within the walls of DGS over the past two years. Being able to form relationships with her teachers and peers has been a major factor in her academic success and social well-being.</p> <p>While Covid-19 presents many challenges for the full reopening of our school, a hybrid model would offer the best compromise to be able to meet the safety, academic, and social needs of students and staff. An all-remote learning model has the potential to hinder each student's success in multiple ways. The students need to be able to have some live human interactions to foster these relationships.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration on this critical matter.</p> |
| Dawn Fenner | <p>Dear Board</p> <p>I ask you to strongly consider hybrid learning as an option for students this fall. I know my son learns better in person. Even if that was just a couple days a week, it would be beneficial. Thank you for your consideration.</p> |
| Kandi Whitacre | <p>I want to let the Board know that I fully support the Hybrid Model for the 2020-21 School year. I believe the plan not only meets but exceeds the requirements established by the state for reopening school. During this pandemic the company I work for has been deemed essential, and all employees have been at work the entire time. We have followed the state guidelines and have remained not only open but healthy. My youngest child will be a junior at DGN, my two older children graduated from DGN, and I have complete confidence that the leadership will do their absolute best to keep all students and faculty safe. This plan offers both Hybrid and Remote Learning Only which allows for the parents of students to choose what is best for their family. Thank You</p> |
| Karen Kardatzke | <p>We would like to move forward with hybrid learning model this fall. Our kids both prefer attending at least some in-person learning to build relationships with their teachers and feel a bit of normalcy in a safe environment. Both kids take honors math and it was difficult to learn these topics remotely. We understand that the curriculum can't be at 100 either way, but we want to get these kids in-school even if it's just a few weeks to start off the year. We believe it will set them up for better success under the circumstances.</p> |

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Comment to the July 27, 2020 meeting of the District 99 Board of Education

I extend my thanks to the D99 administration for the great deal of thought and effort they've put forth to creating a plan to try to put our kids into the classroom under the complex guidelines set forth by ISBE, CDC, IDPH, et al.

That said, I would like to encourage the School Board to reconsider implementing the Hybrid Plan, and instead choose a full remote learning plan for all students. My rationale is threefold:

Firstly, a 100% remote learning plan will be far easier (and less costly) to implement than a hybrid plan which cycles through 3 modes of instruction (in-person/remote/independent study), requires cumbersome social distancing, bussing, and sanitation programs, and in the end nets only one hour of in-class instruction with each teacher per week.

Secondly, any plan that puts hundreds of students and staff into the building at once creates the potential for virus exposure to increase exponentially, risking their health and safety, and that of their families. My fear is that students and staff will fall into a non-stop cycle of exposure and quarantine which would be far more disruptive than a consistent distance learning plan.

Finally, a remote learning plan with an option to phase in in-person learning at a later date will give us the opportunity to observe what happens in surrounding districts who pursue more aggressive in-person learning plans, and let that inform how we move forward in D99.

As the parent of an incoming freshman, who is an enthusiastic learner, and excited about going to DGS, it is hard to express just how conflicted I am about the start of this school year. That said, the costs, complexity, and risks associated with a hybrid plan which nets one hour of in-person instruction per class, per week, are simply not worth it.

I will choose to opt out of the hybrid learning plan if it is implemented, and choose full-time remote learning for my child.

Sincerely,

Veronica Svatos-DeLuca

Veronica
Svatos-
DeLuca

Chris De Alba

Just split the in person classes by years not last names, if I have to risk my health to go back to school I might as well risk it with people I actually like. I don't plan on going my senior being split with my best friends. Believe it or not our peers are the reason we are able to get through the day. I hope you understand that It makes just more sense, even for the incoming freshman if they just go with the sophomores instead of going with the juniors and seniors they'll probably feel a lot less intimidated. As a senior I feel like I have the right to end my final year with the same people I started this whole journey with.

Shija George

My family would like to have an option of the hybrid model of reopening school. This allows flexibility for all families to have a choice. It allows for the students to have a 'change' from the online routine. A student will be able to meet and interact in person with some of their friends and teachers which is necessary to stay engaged. My daughter is an incoming freshman and has been excited about high school. She prefers the hybrid model of school.

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| Nicole Johnson | Please know many of us have zero fear. Zero. Even if we get it. We understand and have experience of this virus and it's nothing that should keep these children out of school or sports. I was an aide in a low income neighborhood and I can tell you first hand children will be neglected and it's way worse than a week- 2 week illness. There are also those of us that work that are wondering if we can keep our jobs. Right now camp outweighs my income. That's without virtual teaching. Please consider risk vrs benefit (and not what's quoted on CNN) too many parents saying we will be sending our children to die... that is absolutely not true. If you do not open many of us will require medical facts. Not fear. FACTS. |
| Dale Emmet | Please consider this creative and practical solution in making your decision about school this fall: All classes should be online, but school buildings could still serve an important purpose for the kids who need them... most. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/20/opinion/coronavirus-reopen-schools-economy.html |
| Mickie Moore | The hybrid learning model makes a lot of sense. In person connection between teachers and students is critical, and after reviewing the hybrid learning model in detail, I believe you can implement this plan while keeping everyone safe. There are numerous benefits to having the kids in school learning in person when it can be done safely using masks, shields, and other social distancing protocols. The fully remote has limitations and should only be used if absolutely necessary to keep everyone safe. |
| Andrea Knudsen | After review of the proposed hybrid plan for the 2020-21 school year and participation in Mrs. Schwarze's ZOOM meetings last week, our family supports the plan as presented to the board. We are grateful to DG99 for creating a plan rooted in science and available COVID-19 data, and we feel as confident as we can that the hybrid plan ensures safety of students and staff. If this plan fails to be feasible once implemented, or if staff finds it unacceptable, we will defer to remote only. This is our son's senior year; of course we would prefer he have the opportunity to fully immerse himself in his studies and to celebrate the year's milestones to their fullest with his friends and classmates. But we acknowledge that is not realistic in the midst of this pandemic. We are grateful to everyone trying to balance myriad needs and opinions, and stand by you as you prioritize our community's health and safety. |
| Hannah Workman | <p>Dear School Board Members,</p> <p>I am an incoming Junior for DGS and I would like to share my opinion on the school plans for the school year of 2020-21. I struggled with online learning during the pandemic, I feel that I didn't retain any information during the Remote Learning period and I struggled with keeping up with the Zoom and/or Google Meet sessions for each class. I missed being in class and learning as much as I could. I know Remote Learning was rushed and it wasn't the best planned out since it happened so quickly, but learning online was NOT the best experience for me and I was overwhelmed and I had gained very little knowledge from my classes during that time. This isn't an ideal situation for anyone but the best way of beating the virus is not shutting down everything until there is a vaccine or cure but to find a way to make our normal lives adjust to this situation so we can grow to deal with similar situations. We have to adjust our lives to still keep everyone safe but not completely shut down and wait for something to happen. We must progress and work through these hard times because how will we learn if we don't try?</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, Hannah Workman Class of 2022</p> |
| Linda Bodem | I am writing today to voice my support for the Hybrid Plan. As an educator myself, I understand the importance of teachers meeting their students in person to develop a relationship and learn about them as a person and as a student with individual learning needs. I am all for giving families a choice. Some families will chose remote learning since that is what their family feels comfortable with. Other families, like mine, are eager for their children to get back into the classroom. We should be allowed that choice! The ISBE has said acknowledged that children learn best with in person instruction. Those of us that understand the benefits of in person instruction and are willing to accept the slight risk should be allowed this option. |

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| Beth Schuller | <p>I am in support of the hybrid plan proposed by the District 99 Administration. I feel that any in person connection that can be made between students and teachers is an essential and important factor in this very destabilizing time; even if the face to face time is short lived due to more outbreaks, I feel the advantage to the students of being with their teachers is incalculable and the effect on their motivation will be evident. I thank the Administration for the endless hours they have spent on this plan and applaud their heroic efforts in attempting to please many factions while keeping safety and education top of mind.</p> |
| Jennifer Hagstrom | <p>The hybrid plan allows for the option of remote learning for those who choose while allowing families who are comfortable and see the benefit in in-person instruction to pursue that option. Under the circumstances, it is the plan that meets everyone's needs until we can return to more in-person instruction. Please allow families the choice.</p> |
| Karoline Kellam | <p>I would like to voice my support of the hybrid plan as outlined at the last school board meeting. I have reviewed the plan, and have read all of the guidelines from the CDC, IDPH and ISBE, including the most recent 100 + page document published last week. This is a difficult situation and there is no one right answer as individual families all have different situations and concerns. I have seen a lot of comments on social media from people who feel very strongly that schools should be 100% remote. I want to make sure that you, as board members, know that while those individuals may be more vocal, they do not represent the feelings of everyone. I believe that the proposed hybrid model adequately addresses the safety of students and teachers while allowing students some much needed in person time. While I wish it could be more time in schools, I appreciate that between the construction and sheer number of students it is not feasible to do safely at this time. I think that the administration has done an excellent job of trying to safely offer the most options to all, factoring in the option of 100% remote learning for those that do not wish to attend in person. COVID-19 is not going anywhere anytime soon and we need to find a way to safely continue living with it. While this plan may not be perfect, it does provide a way to safely return to school on a limited basis and allow for critical in person interactions between students and teachers. I respectfully would ask you as members of the D99 School Board to vote in favor of the hybrid plan which allows for everyone to make the best choice for their families.</p> |
| Beth Renchin | <p>Today was my daughters senior year pictures. I asked her if she was sad and her response was yes. Not because it is her senior year but because "this" is her senior year. You only have four years in highschool to prepare for college or your next stage. How is she going to be prepared academically, socially and emotionally if she is stuck at home remote learning. How sad will it be to have a senior year with no football season or homecoming dance. And now to take away a few hours she could be at school learning and preparing for next year. She may be 16 but has been working since March 14th. She is an essential worker. Goes to work every day and puts on a mask just as both her parents do. We need to do what's best for these kids. We need these kids back in school.</p> |
| Dawn Matune | <p>I am asking you to enact in person school this fall. We do not know the ramifications on the mental health of our children from this time, but do know that school provides the social supportive environment that they need. My kids are asking to go to school and understand that certain health measures will be in place upon their return</p> <p>Virtual learning was short of a disaster this Spring and not a scenario I am eager to repeat. Many children, mine included, get lost and retreat in a virtual environment and NEED direct face to face instruction and guidance to learn. I would find it very difficult to establish rapport and trust as a Freshman coming into high school with so much new and feel that for them in-person learning is vital!</p> <p>Those that feel that this isn't the route can opt otherwise. I hope you vote in person for all those who need this and do not dismiss it as a viable journey in our students' educational career.</p> |

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| Janet Hahn | <p>The one thing we can all agree upon is doing what is best for the students of our district. Unfortunately, what is best for them is also not possible given the current pandemic. We know the students are missing out on the social interaction with teachers and peers. However, even with the hybrid plan, socialization will be compromised. Students want to return to school to be with their friends but they will not be with their friends the way they remember. Students looked forward to having lunch with their friends, congregating in the hallways and participating in physical activities. All these things will not happen even if masks are worn. What happens to the student with ADHD that cannot sit still and needs to pace? How is one to see if a student is smiling or angry if their facial expressions are hidden by a mask? How are services to be delivered if 6ft social distance must be maintained? Rooms are going to be desks only. The comfy couch, the soothing fidgets, and the calming touch on the shoulder that says, "It is going to be ok" or "You are doing a great job" will only be figments of the imagination. How will the absence of these reinforcements and accommodations meet the needs of our students?</p> <p>What happens when the first student comes to school sick? Do we assume every student that is sick has Covid? We know students and teachers get sick. How will this be handled without assuming the worst or having to take further precautions?</p> <p>If remote learning is so bad, why are alternative education services like homeschooling and online education viable educational options? Remote learning is not ideal but it is the safest means of educating students during this unprecedented time. Sure we have many illnesses out there that do not put the world at a halt; however, we also take precautions not to spread those illnesses the best we can. Some people think we cannot protect ourselves from everything and illness is part of life. Ironically, people still eat healthy and exercise knowing they are going to die anyway. We still need to take care of ourselves to prolong life. This pandemic is no different. The risk is high and we do not know who will get it, who will recover, and who will die from it. Why are we jeopardizing our lives to provide social interaction that is compromised anyway? We are not returning to school the way we did pre Covid. Everything is different now.</p> <p>Why are we wasting time debating going back to in person education or remote learning? We are not all going to agree and there is no fail proof plan that will provide the proper education our students need and deserve. How is the teacher going to be able to accommodate the remote learner while teaching students in a classroom? What happens to the teacher that has their own children learning at home without him or her? We should be spending this time perfecting remote learning so our students can receive the best education they can given the situation we are in. Remote learning is not easy for anyone, but if we have a good solid plan to educate our children while at home, we will be providing a safe, healthy alternative. We need to stop the debate and develop strategies to meet the diverse needs of our students. It won't be easy, but we know nothing in life is easy that is worth it.</p> <p>As a parent, educator, and citizen, the safety of our students, teachers and community are of utmost importance.</p> |
| Bethany stachura | <p>With an incoming Freshman, any hopes for normality are clearly out the window. So as we move forward with continued challenges, I think it's so important to maintain and utilize facts over emotions. Fortunately, we all have access to this data. My decision for my child is not only based on these facts but what is best for him as a student. . In classroom learning is critical. For reasons beyond just the textbook. I think choice is imperative right now. For families not comfortable, they should absolutely be given a choice to e-learn. For those of us that feel our students are better served in classroom, within reason, should also have that choice. Please make Hybrid learning available. Thank you for your time.</p> |
| Barbara Percy | <p>I he following, I am sure, is too long to be shared during Reception of Visitors, but I would like to send this for the board to review as it warns of the severe consequences to childre if the schools do not reopen for in person daily classes in the fall: CDC sides with President in reopening schools to daily, along with Academy of Pediatrics</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/100002938774447/posts/3080494305391832/?d=n</p> |

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| Amanda Mills | <p>We support the hybrid model. We must forge a path forward with the reality we have, not the one we want. We believe our educators have created the safest and most flexible way for the students in our community to do in-person learning. We need to continue to provide an environment and curriculum that supports ALL students to develop knowledge, understanding, and skills to manage their own health and wellbeing and to support that of others. If some kind of in-person learning is not provided, then student welfare for ALL students is not provided. An online-only system isn't built for ALL students especially those who need to see their teacher, those who depend on in-person supports to keep them on track. We need to push for things to get better.</p> |
| Deborah Koncel | <p>As a parent I am writing in support of the hybrid plan proposed for the return to school. The plan provides safety measures for both students and staff as well as provides an option for families and staff that require or request remote learning, particularly for health reasons. Students need the opportunity to establish relationships with their teachers and fellow students; in person learning provides more direction and motivation, both of which were significantly lost during remote learning last semester. My son shared that it was harder to keep a relationship with his teachers through a screen and email. He stated that E learning was very easy and disorganized and feels that the hybrid learning will provide better organization and focus, especially important with the start of the new semester. Additionally, the statistics for the rate of infection are monitored closely, if there is truly a change in infection rates, both students and faculty will be better prepared for a transition to fully remote since they will be doing this as part of the hybrid model.</p> |
| Abby Goodman | <p>As a senior this year, I want nothing more than go back to school and to be with my friends and teachers in person. However, for the health and safety for all students, staff, and my family I believe it would be best if the school year began with online classes.</p> |
| Pam Harkness | <p>Hi. I've been thinking about this hybrid option and wondering why these kids can't go for five half days a week with self remote learning the other half of the days. For example, group A would go to periods 1-4 and group B, 5-8 then next day, group B goes 1-4 and group A, 5-8. It would alternate throughout the week. The students would do assignments and quizzes, etc remotely (on their own). I'm a teacher aide at South and would be willing to be there for support for e-learning times when kids have questions and the teachers are teaching other classes. I'm sure you thought of this, maybe it's just too complicated. But I feel the students need to get back to a normal daily routine.</p> |
| Maggie Camporese | <p>While the D99 staff, students, and community appreciate the Board calling a special meeting tonight to discuss our reopening plans more thoroughly, it should be acknowledged by the Board and Administration how disappointing it was for all 4500 YouTube viewers watching the July 20th meeting to see Board members literally falling asleep and making jokes about how tired they were while discussing the single most important decision they will make during their tenure on this Board of Education. Our reopening decision in the face of a global pandemic should weigh as heavily on the Board as it does on the staff and community, so I am hoping that tonight's meeting - one that will help determine the outcome of so many people's lives for the foreseeable future - will be more professional and substantive. Please recognize the gravity of your decisions tonight, as again, this will undoubtedly be the most important discussion and decision you will have to make while in your elected seat, and if you are incapable of doing so in the manner in which this current moment deserves, then with all due respect, you do not deserve a spot on the D99 Board of Education. Thousands of families are watching you right now, at the edge of their seats, because the health, safety, and fate of the entire community is in your hands right now. You owe it to all of us to act accordingly.</p> |

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| Albert Miranda | <p>At the last board meeting, I submitted facts/data from the DuPage County Health Department & Centers for Disease Control, CDC, to which a school board member replied twice “not true”. I emailed all school board members the links and screen shots of the data.</p> <p>The data can be found at www.CDC.gov along with their report titled “The Importance of Reopening America’s Schools this fall.” This is a direct quote from the CDC: “... as of July 17, 2020, the United States reported that children and adolescents under 18 years old account for under 7 percent of Covid-19 cases and less than 0.1 percent of Covid-19 related deaths... So far in this pandemic, deaths of children are less than in each of the last five flu seasons, with only 64.”</p> <p>To restate that another way, if a child gets Covid-19 the chance of NOT dying is 99.9 percent which is also the same percentage for the age group 18-24. Per the current CDC data, Covid-19 is not more deadly than the flu in this age group. There are age groups and certain pre-existing conditions where the recovery rate is less and therefore each individual needs to make decisions based on their circumstances. There is a 100% chance that some children will get an infectious disease whether in or out of school, this was a fact before Covid-19 and it will always be a fact. The school board has never had the unattainable goal of eliminating sickness in children, families or others and cannot adopt this unreachable goal now.</p> <p>No individual should be forced to return to school, but no one should be forced to stay home either. One of the many possible solutions is for students who choose not to attend in-person school to log into their classroom through a secure camera feed at their class time. Teachers who do not want to teach in the classroom could teach remotely and/or from a secure area in the school.</p> <p>The choice whether or not to return to in-person school learning should be the decision of each parent, student, teacher and administrator based on the facts of each individual’s situation.</p> <p>Will the school board/administration give students and teachers the choice whether or not to attend in-person learning?</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> |
| Kristine Miller | <p>Our children need to go back to school in person for their mental physical, social well being. Follow the science! The students are already behind 35% in reading and 50% behind in math. If we continue remote learning who knows how much further they will be behind. Thank you!</p> |
| Kathleen Ramsey | <p>Since both my husband and I will be at work (as educators), we hope you will keep the original plan for the hybrid model for District 99.</p> |
| Eileen Haverty | <p>Please vote to support at least some in-person learning for the upcoming school year.</p> |
| Jananne Clemens | <p>We have three juniors at DGS this year. The proposed plan for the school year does not really allow a remote option for those who have serious anxiety about returning to the school building. While the students are physically in each class for an hour per week, it is an extremely important hour. The plan would have those who chose remote only to completely miss this learning opportunity. Their anxiety levels are already high enough without being forced to return to the building. We need an option for that hour of teaching to be available remotely for all students not just for those with a medical excuse.</p> |
| David Rutkowski | <p>Please put priority on coming up with a way to get students physically in class safely - make the Hybrid solution work. Remote/Virtual should be an option for those who are higher risk, and as a last resort only if we get uncontrollable outbreaks in the schools. Let's try to not start the school year virtually.</p> |

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| Lisa Falconer | <p>Our family supports the Hybrid plan after attending all available meetings and reviewing the proposed plan and current research regarding the virus and local levels. We are asking the board to vote NOT based on their personal views but on local virus levels and input from parents, students, administration, support staff and teachers. As of late last week, only approximately 100 families elected a remote only option and DuPage county virus levels do warrant remote only at this time. It is very important for students to start the year strong and the Hybrid plan sets them up for the best chance of success since more frequent in person instruction is not available as an option. Finally, please correct an inaccurate statement from the last board meeting. Not all companies are working remote at this time as was stated by a board member. Many parents and students are safely working in all types of work environments with proper protocols in place. Thank you for the opportunity to comment!</p> |
| Paul Miller | <p>I am concerned with which class will be held virtually or on site. There are certain classes that require face to face interaction with the teacher. Those would be the sciences and math to name a few. How will those classes be handled. Also, the messaging to the students last semester was very poor. Basically, informing the students that their grades were frozen as of March was the wrong message to send. Many students completed the minimum required work. If most of the classes are to be virtual, the students should be held to the same standards as if they were in school.</p> |
| Amy Goray | <p>I support having a hybrid model for school and getting the kids into the classroom for a portion of the week. I think we need to at least give this model a chance. With safety measures in place, it can be done. And those that do not want this can opt out to full remote learning. The social and emotional aspects of our kids learning must be considered as well - many kids are falling farther and farther behind without that direct contact with their teacher and classmates that a room setting provides. Please give the hybrid model a chance!!!</p> |
| Matthew Joyce | <p>I think that the board has taken great steps to insure our students will be safe upon returning with a hybrid model. I would like to see the Hybrid model that was proposed in the last meeting voted on and approved to move this forward for this upcoming school year.</p> |
| Aaron and Lisa Folkening | <p>Our family is in support of the hybrid model of learning proposed by District 99. We feel that this model was developed with the safety and well being of our children in mind. If the health department and district feel that this model becomes unsafe for our children, we understand and support that we may need to go to the remote learning plan. Thank you to district 99 staff and administration for the many hours of time and planning to put this model into place....we know they have the best interests of our children at the forefront.</p> |
| Jennifer McCann | <p>Please offer a hybrid learning option for next school year, preferably 2 full days. For a child with ADD, remote learning is terrible.</p> |
| Beth Renchin | <p>I oday was my daughters senior year pictures. I asked her if she was sad and her response was yes. Not because it is her senior year but because "this" is her senior year. You only have four years in highschool to prepare for college or your next stage. How is she going to be prepared academically, socially and emotionally if she is stuck at home remote learning. How sad will it be to have a senior year with no football season or homecoming dance. And now to take away a few hours she could be at school learning and preparing for next year. She may be 16 but has been working since March 14th. She is an essential worker. Goes to work every day and puts on a mask just as both her parents do. We need to do what's best for these kids. We need these kids back in school.</p> |
| Maryann Flock | <p>I urge the board to open school under the hybrid plan. I would also request more face to face or synchronous time than what the hybrid plan allows. Students need to interact to stay motivated. Students & staff with underlying CoVid issues or fears can be active fully-online, but many many students need to be present. Prin. Schwarze, Dr. Thiele, other admins, teachers, and staff have read the science and data and devised a model that is safe for our students. Please give the students a chance.</p> |

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| Robin Rutkowski | <p>Our current DGN student luckily can have success with a remote learning situation though we all agree the ideal is in person when safety allows. I support the hybrid plan as it allows families to follow the path that is best for their student. It seems that it would be simple for a willing "in classroom" student to send live footage of teacher in classroom through iphone which would fill in a perceived disadvantage remote learning students may have. I understand there are regulations potentially but mentioning nonetheless.</p> <p>I am anxious to hear if the teachers' voices have been heard and incorporated into the plan. Being on the front line, I trust they know what they need to be effective teachers and their concerns need to be addressed.</p> <p>I am concerned for students who are in tracks with special services. Remote won't work for those in special tracks and I would hope a plan that is different than the rest of the school might be worked out, perhaps allowing them more half days than other students. Perhaps it seems unfair, but for students like mine was, the life of a typical student seemed unfair to him at times. Sounds as though there is a plan developing to support students struggling in new format, so maybe a separate plan could be made for students in these tracks that could allow them additional half days, numbers allowing.</p> <p>Finally if there is any way to get systematic Covid testing at the school, that would be a phenomenal way to get ahead of spread. I imagine that would be somehow through the state, but imagine what a game changer it would be to increase testing, early warning for our community and the ability for the scientists to study spread among this age group. Parents could opt their student out. For others, emails could be sent out ahead of time or passes handed out in class so students could get tested before or during the school day. This is something that I understand the school itself cannot institute, but perhaps the school could direct how the community could call on the proper authorities to help get this rolling if deemed desirable.</p> <p>Thank you for all you are doing in these highly unusual times.</p> |
| Heather Pleune | <p>I feel strongly that we should implement the hybrid learning option for our students when we are able to do so. Having this time in the classroom is essential to motivate my child to do her best and connect with her teachers. She is an A student who struggled significantly with remote learning and needs any amount of physical contact and presence we can offer her. Thank you.</p> |
| Maryann Flock | <p>I urge the board to open school under the hybrid plan. I would also request more face to face or synchronous time than what the hybrid plan allows. Students need to interact to stay motivated. Students & staff with underlying CoVid issues or fears can be active fully-online, but many many students need to be present. Prin. Schwarze, Dr. Thiele, other admins, teachers, and staff have read the science and data and devised a model that is safe for our students. Please give the students a chance.</p> |
| Dr. Todd Bowers | <p>Thank you for the chance to weigh in. I am reading CDC info daily. They recommend school be in person. The data is clear. The risk is small. Please continue your great work as educators . Do not be motivated by fear. Press forward with some courage to meet in person. You all know the relationship with a student is critical for growth. Also, the passion a teacher shows in person ignites the desire to learn. This is not going to be conveyed in a zoom call. Do not be swayed by media and the hype. The strength of education is why we live here. Please do what you do so well! If you believe in masks, trust them, if you believe in distance, trust that it will work. We trust in you making a courageous and bold choice. Meet In person with my kids at DGN.</p> |
| Wendy Nystrom | <p>I fully support the adoption of the hybrid plan, and am very appreciative of all the work that went into it. I very much would like my freshman daughter to start to get a little sense of what DGN is like, and I would like my senior son to be able to have any amount of in-person school his final year. My kids will have no issues wearing masks and following the rules, and they understand and support the science behind them.</p> |

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| Corelyn Peterson | Our household fully supports a hybrid model learning plan for the beginning of the school year. With the precautions the school has proposed and for the mental health of the students, we feel going back part time in person is th best option. For those that oppose, they already have an option to choose remote learning. Though these community members may be most vocal, I do not think they represent the opinions of the entire community. I hope, based on other school districts plans, that our board would follow suit with a similar agenda. |
| Jennifer Murray | Hybrid or All day every day |
| John Carbon | I think it is imperative to get the kids back in school for in person learning, even if it is only 2 or 3 days a week. As a parent, I am supportive of the controls (masks, shields) that the district is using to help ensure the safety of the kids. I do not understand why any parent would object to a simple solution that allows our children some semblance of normality during this time. I commend and applaud the efforts of the Board to seek solutions in getting the kids back in school. |
| Jill Meyers | <p>I understand the need to social distance - BUT - our kids learn more effectively IN CLASS. Remote learning does not replace the structure a classroom gives. In the higher level classes of Dist 99 - we need to give the kids the best opportunity they can have to learn. I just can't wrap my head around how they will be able to teach and learn classes like Physics and Calculus.</p> <p>I think the proposed plan that has been presented is excellent. It gives the kids very minimal amount of time in the school - while still giving them an opportunity to form a bond with their teachers. The kids need this time for connecting with their teachers, classmates and also for lab/hands on time in the classroom -- all with reduced numbers in the room.</p> <p>Everyone will have a choice - if you choose to stay home - you can! Sign up for the remote plan. But those that want/need to be in the classroom setting - can sign up for the hybrid - we should have this choice too. Please don't take this choice away from those that want that.</p> <p>Please give each family the choice to sign up for the hybrid model or the remote model.</p> <p>Thanks. Jill</p> |
| Mary Hopkins | I tully support the HYBRID learning model. I appreciate all of the efforts from CSD99 during this pandemic and recognize there will never be one solution everyone will agree upon. I find the hybrid model very well thought out and am very thankful for the option given my child's participation and academic success is dependent upon in person learning. |

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| R | <p>Comment to the July 27, 2020 meeting of the District 99 Board of Education</p> <p>I extend my thanks to the D99 administration for the great deal of thought and effort they've put forth to creating a plan to try to put our kids into the classroom under the complex guidelines set forth by ISBE, CDC, IDPH, et al.</p> <p>That said, I would like to encourage the School Board to reconsider implementing the Hybrid Plan, and instead choose a full remote learning plan for all students. My rationale is threefold:</p> <p>Firstly, a 100% remote learning plan will be far easier (and less costly) to implement than a hybrid plan which cycles through 3 modes of instruction (in-person/remote/independent study), requires cumbersome social distancing, bussing, and sanitation programs, and in the end nets only one hour of in-class instruction with each teacher per week.</p> <p>Secondly, any plan that puts hundreds of students and staff into the building at once creates the potential for virus exposure to increase exponentially, risking their health and safety, and that of their families. My fear is that students and staff will fall into a non-stop cycle of exposure and quarantine which would be far more disruptive than a consistent distance learning plan.</p> <p>Finally, a remote learning plan with an option to phase in in-person learning at a later date will give us the opportunity to observe what happens in surrounding districts who pursue more aggressive in-person learning plans, and let that inform how we move forward in D99.</p> <p>As the parent of an incoming freshman, who is an enthusiastic learner, and excited about going to DGS, it is hard to express just how conflicted I am about the start of this school year. That said, the costs, complexity, and risks associated with a hybrid plan which nets one hour of in-person instruction per class, per week, are simply not worth it.</p> <p>I will choose to opt out of the hybrid learning plan if it is implemented, and choose full-time remote learning for my child.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Veronica Svatos-DeLuca</p> |
| Susan Helsdon | <p>After review of the proposed hybrid plan for the 2020-21 school year our family supports the plan as presented to the board. We are thankful for the time and effort made to create this plan and feel it is based in science and utilizes current data. We also understand that, within this world, things can change. Should the need arise, we would defer to remote learning. Our daughter is in her sophomore year and prefers the structure that school provides as well as the opportunities for after school activities (marching band, theater, etc) with friends. We have been honest with her about what is realistic in this world, and how we can all do our part to keep everyone healthy and safe. Thank you for taking the time to balance the needs of the community with the safety of all those involved.</p> |
| Kevin Stephens | <p>I have a freshman and a senior at Downers Grove North High School this year. I am writing in support of a hybrid model with the in-person plan for the 2020-21 school year. Thank you.</p> |
| Pete Hopkins | <p>I support the Hybrid learning model.</p> |
| JOANN PURCELL | <p>I am in support of the District's hybrid plan for starting school. As a teacher and parent, I know this will be best for both my students I have yet to meet and my daughters who both want to be in class with their teachers as much as possible.</p> |

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| Suzy Ennis | I am fully in support of the hybrid learning schedule for the 2020-21 school year. The administration has put together a thoughtful plan that puts the needs of our students and teachers first. I feel it is important for students to start the year in person so that they can build relationships with teachers and start the year strong, especially since we may be forced to move to fully remote learning in the future if COVID cases increase. The disruption to in-person learning has taken a toll on everyone and providing students with a safe in-person learning environment will give them a sense of community and stability that is desperately needed at this time. Thank you for your time and consideration. Suzy Ennis |
| Kate Wolkow | I am fully supportive of the Hybrid plan as presented. I would prefer 4 half days of in person instruction. I do not believe the justification of lack of busing and requiring teachers to wear masks all day are sufficient answers as to why a 4 day half day in person hybrid plan will not work. (We are asking our elementary teachers and students to wear masks all day!) The district should work with the village to ensure that every student who wants a parking pass (even if having to park on adjacent side streets) receives one. |
| Jeanine Bulthuis | I fully support a hybrid schedule beginning this fall and would prefer the kids be at school at least 2 full days a week. It is important socially, emotionally and mentally for the students to be back together in school. Please take into account the mental well being of the students. Thank you. |
| Michelle Palenik | I would like to see my son back in school from the beginning of the 20/21 school year. If it means starting Hybrid, that's a good start. Thank you. |
| Kathy Martin | I appreciate all the hard work every one is doing on getting the hybrid plan right. I appreciate the flexibility provided with the option for families to select full remote if they desire such. The hybrid plan as originally presented offers little face to face instruction time. I am proposing a plan where A-L attends in person full days on Tuesday and Thursday and M-Z attend in person full days Wednesday and Friday. Monday's alternate universe person. Lunch is eaten at desks. If student isn't in person, they are on Google classroom listening & seeing the lesson live online. The proposed schedule is unnecessarily complex. This complexity inhibits students from being successful in an already challenging situation. Students need more in person instruction. Please see the latest study released by the CDC confirming in person instruction is critical for many reasons: social emotional, prevent slide in learning, addresses needs from lower income families plus more. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools.html In addition, many districts around us are doing the schedule I proposed. I challenge us to ask why DG has to be different? Those reasons and data Backing them need to be shared with the parents. Thank you for addressing this proposed option. |
| Cherie Spinosa | I am writing to ask that district 99 keeps some form of hybrid learning plan with in-person instruction for students. I believe the schools can keep students safe with the plan they have developed, and I like that you are also giving students a remote choice should they need it. Face to face instruction is vital; nothing is as effective. If we take that completely away, most students will pay a heavy price. Please go forward with a hybrid plan. Thank you. |
| John Zdenek | We prefer the hybrid model for the school year as the best option for our student. Thank you |
| Tony Myers | With an incoming freshman, as a family we are 100% for a hybrid model. We feel it's in the best interest of the students and teachers to build a personal face to face relationship first, before moving into remote learning(if and when that happens). If remote learning is started, then these kids won't get the opportunity to build know their teachers more than being a face behind a screen. Not having face to face interactions is a detriment to learning. We have faith and confidence in the school to make it a safe environment for our kids. Please vote on the hybrid mode to start the year. Thank you. |

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| Nicole Stopoulos | <p>I am a parent of a rising junior and want to express my support for the return to school plan that has been presented. I am grateful for the diligent work that has been put into the plan and believe it addresses the needs of all students and families while emphasizing the health and safety of students, teachers and administrators. The choice of an all virtual option provides those with health concerns a viable alternative for learning. I believe the hybrid option provides a safe and effective option for returning to in person learning for those that desire it.</p> <p>Thank you to the task force and all involved in developing this plan.</p> |
| Mindy Werner | <p>I'm a DG58 teacher with a son in high school in 99. The number of reasons and need for any in school learning far surpasses getting coronavirus for those who are not medically fragile. I agree that we need remote learning for some but the majority of these students need in school learning for their developmental, emotional and state of well-being. They can wear masks and or face shields. They are all out playing unorganized sports all summer or even worse... paying for club teams (the Economic gap is widening). These kids will be exposed to the virus and or get it without being in school so let's improve their lives and motivation to keep at it both academically and emotionally.</p> |
| Mike Reichert | <p>We strongly feel that our child needs to get back to school face to face. The e-learning process at the end of last school year did nothing to further our Child's education. We agree with the CDC recommendation on getting our children back to school. The mental repercussions of "hiding" from this are starting to become evident in the way our child see's the future. We need to stop fearing this and understand that the good of education out weighs the bad.</p> |
| Robert Gee | <p>I believe the kids need to be back in school. The CDC also believes that it is possible and can be safe. I have seen many doctors talk about how important it is to have the kids back in school. It's my belief that the benefits out way the risks. We need to give our kids the benefit of the doubt that they can follow the rules.</p> |
| Annelise Spinosa | <p>I will be a senior at Downers Grove North and I am writing to ask that if we do in person learning, it be split by grade levels instead of by alphabet. This would enable me to see my friends which is important to me since this is my last year at North. Thank you for your consideration.</p> |
| Kate Scheck | <p>It is vital that these kids get back to as much IN PERSON learning as possible. Remote learning is a worst case scenario and should be used as sparingly as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration on this topic!</p> |
| Brian Kittinger | <p>As we come closer to the beginning of the school year, my thoughts towards returning to school have shifted from ambivalence to feeling strongly that a remote beginning to the year is the best choice. When I think of all the reasons for going back to school - establishing relationships with our students, the mental health benefits of our students and teachers, trying to establish "normalcy" - I keep coming to the same conclusion that those are all great if we had our old normal. The new guidelines and expectations are the furthest we could have from normal and I fear will only exacerbate mental health concerns that we are attempting to take care of by returning to school. This is not obviously without risk and negative impacts (both seen and unseen) as well but I feel increasingly stronger that this is the best choice we have at this time. Thank you for your time.</p> |
| Tracy Paskiewicz | <p>I would like to thank the board, and all parties involved in the endless hours of work to determine the best possible ways for our children, and the District 99 staff to begin the start of the 20/21 school year. The hybrid is not only a great compromise for in person learning, it involved a lot of planning and coordinating and our family supports this model.</p> |
| Cindy Maquet | <p>I want kids back In school full time</p> |
| Dawn Burrows | <p>Our family supports the hybrid learning plan that the D99 staff has worked so hard to develop. As a parent of an incoming freshman, I feel that safe, in-person learning is imperative for my student to have the best start to his high school career. I feel that D99 has created a plan under the hybrid model, that is both safe and beneficial to my student.</p> |

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| Vince Spinosa | <p>First I would like to thank the board and administration for their efforts to provide solutions for a productive school year. It is my opinion that the students should go back to in person learning. If this is not possible, I would like to have as much in person learning as we can. I do not want all remote learning.</p> <p>I would also like to see it split by class level not alphabetical. My senior should be able to see more than half her friends.</p> <p>I am confident that the board and administration can find a way to keep both the teachers and students safe with in person learning.</p> |
| Carrie Casella | <p>I urge the Board to vote for the hybrid model. I believe parents should be given the choice to send their children to school or keep them home, and the hybrid model is the choice for our family. I think the district has come up with a well thought out plan to keep students and staff safe, and I believe it is vitally important for students to establish relationships with their teachers at the beginning of the school year.</p> |
| Gretchen Mungan | <p>I read the hybrid plan awhile back. I will not be sending my child back to a classroom with no mask on. Otherwise the plan is as good as it can be but we plan to be out the first 9 weeks.</p> |
| Christine Waden | <p>I urge the board to vote in favor of the hybrid plan for the 2020-21 school year. This gives families the ability to choose 100% remote learning, but also allows those of us whose students want to take advantage of in-person learning to do so as well. Win-win.</p> |
| Rebecca L Schmakel | <p>If I had to choose between a full remote learning or hybrid plan for my children this school year I would definitely choose the hybrid. Although I would much rather have them in person all day every day. The remote learning had a huge impact on my youngest in the Spring. He went from a straight a happy student to struggling in every single class and being depressed and frustrated and showing huge signs of anxiety all day every day. The amount of emails that he received from teachers at all hours of the day-and-night regarding new assignments upcoming assignments late assignments not finished assignments assignments not completed her looked at was extremely overwhelming for not only him but for me as well. Now that school is approaching and a plan has been temporarily put in place my son is already depressed and showing major signs of anxiety of going back due to the remote learning portion. Instead of enjoying his summer like a child should he has fears of already failing before starting. This year he is supposed to be in 2 honors classes Spanish 2 and the avid program and he is extremely worried about his success in all of these classes. This is a child whose social and emotional well being has been completely swept out from under him during covid. He misses school, his friends, and sports. He is a child who needs socialization and hands on learning he does not learn from a screen. To watch a child go through depression is heartbreaking as a parent, especially when they were never signs of it before. I believe that sending a child to school should be the families/child's choice and what's in their best interest. This virus is not prevalent in children and those that have tested positive for it show minimal or no symptoms. At some point we need to go about our lives again and those that are more at risk or have underlying conditions should take precautions. I truly believe that the long term effects of this dor our children is much more detrimental to their well being then any possible benefits. Let them go back to school and let them play their sports!</p> |
| Vikki Ragnini | <p>My daughter was not succesful at remote learning in the spring. Instead of a positive school year we got frustration and feeling like a failure. I don't want my child to associate school with negativity and being present physically with her teachers is crucial to her positively north experience! Please vote to have the students back into their normal learning environment... at least a few days a week.</p> |

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| Jason Booker | <p>I thank you very much for your time. I am a concerned resident of Downtown Downers Grove on Warren Ave, and high school counselor. I though not a D99 employee, I have been a counselor for 10 years and am currently the lead counselor at my school.</p> <p>My educational philosophy is twofold. Data should drive decision-making, and student needs should come first. The scientific data clearly indicate that reopening schools will increase the risk of spreading the virus in our community, putting the long-term health of students, parents, teachers, and residents at risk. While our community can debate what constitutes an acceptable level of risk, it is irrefutable that the hybrid model presents greater risk to stakeholders than remote learning.</p> <p>Regarding student needs, strong health supersedes any other student need one can name. High achievement will not take place if students are forced to miss extended instructional time due to widespread or long-term illness. Worse, achievement is impossible in the unlikely but worst-case scenario of irreversible loss of life. A preventable death in our school communities would have a traumatic effect on the social-emotional health of our students. Therefore, due to the potential tragic consequences of the hybrid model, remote learning seems to better address student needs for emotional health and personal safety.</p> <p>Please deeply consider the scientific data and needs of students when voting on the educational model for this fall.</p> |
| Todd Wenger | <p>I feel that the hybrid plan developed by the administration represents the best alternative for allowing in-school learning in the safest possible manner; I support the Hybrid Plan.</p> |
| Dianna phiferp | <p>I am in support of the hybrid plan for the reopening of school in the fall because it will give students an opportunity to communicate and check in with teachers on a regular basis so class instruction is clear, because a fully online situation made coursework confusing and not beneficial towards becoming more educated. As a rising senior student, I would like the ability to learn the material each class was intended to include, instead of having makeshift lessons that were just easy enough for us to figure out by ourselves. I don't intend to just "get through" my senior year by just passing my classes, I would like to actually learn something and prepare for college level coursework. Although the hybrid plan is not the ideal situation it does imitate a college-like schedule with the indepedent work it will include, which will help all levels of students prepare for life after high school. The hybrid plan will give students the ability to have a somewhat high school experience as well, since it will take a long time for things to get back to normal completely this hybrid plan will help by being able to see some other students and especially let seniors just be in the building at some point to finish this chapter of life that just isnt quite complete. Thanks so much for your consideration.</p> |
| Elizabeth Foreman | <p>We support starting the year with hybrid learning and moving to completely online as necessary. Not surprisingly we still have safety concerns because this is an unprecedented time and pandemic and we understand circumstances may change requiring the school format to change. Clearly the teachers, administrators and staff have done extensive information gathering and careful planning. The face mask and face shield combination, limited classroom size/6 ft distance in classrooms, and benefits of in-person relationship building between students and teachers in first weeks of school provide us with enough of a comfort level in these dangerous times to proceed with the hybrid approach.</p> |
| Christina Coyl | <p>I know that things are constantly changes. However, there has been a big increase in cases in the age group of 10 years to 19 years old. There is also been an increase in the younger age group as well with 2 deaths just in the past week. There are 4 counties in the state of Illinois, LaSalle and Peoria are 2 of them who have seen big increases in cases. Our positivity rate has been on the rise in the last week, Dupage County sits at 6.1% as of today which was 4.5% last week. Do I want my kids back in school? That's a tough questions since I know they do better while in school, but it's not worth putting his life and all of their families health at risk. You said last week at the board meeting there are risk with everything, but would you put yourself and other peoples lives at risk if you can avoid it? I know I would. It is not just the students who are being impacted by your decision, it's students, their families, teachers/staff and their families, bus drivers and families and support staff and their families in the building. Please vote for remote learning and if you don't please let there be an option for remote for students without penalty. If there is an option for students who have medical problems then there shouldn't be an issue having those available to other students as well. Please remember that your decision is dealing with the health of many individuals. Thank you for your time.</p> |

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| Jennifer Sevcik | Personally, my sons and I support the school districts hybrid plan, as long as the majority of the staff and teachers are in favor of it. If the teachers, faculty and staff feel somewhat comfortable then my boys will be there with their masks and are looking forward to seeing them. |
| Todd Pleune | The hybrid approach is well thought out and should go ahead to maximize the learning of our students. The in-person connection between teachers and students is critical and this is the best framework to start with face to face participation and potentially expand it as things get better. |
| Beth Adamo | It is my sincerest hope that the board votes to approve the Hybrid Learning model as suggested & diligently researched by our administration. This offers wonderful solutions for both those interested in hybrid learning & those who wish to choose 100% remote. It gives each family the opportunity to make the right choice for their situation. Knowing at some point we may need to go 100% remote, this model gives teachers the opportunity to meet their students, explain the syllabus & what is expected in the class. It creates a foundation for learning that is essential in the beginning of a new school year. This model works to ensure the safety of teachers & students alike. Thank you for your hard work & dedication to making the right choices for CSD99! |
| John Miller | I ask the Board to please approve the hybrid plan as presented by Dr. Hiele for in person modified classroom instruction and improved remote learning on days when students are not in person. The National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, AASA the superintendents association and the American Academy of Pediatrics produced a joint statement stating (this is a quote from the statement): "Educators and pediatricians share the goal of children returning safely to school this fall. Our organizations are committed to doing everything we can so that all students have the opportunity to safely resume in-person learning." The CDC also recently released new guidance promoting safe in person education. If some parents do not want to send their child to school in person then the plan provides an alternative for them to keep their child at home. Me sending my child to school does not affect them keeping their child at home so both can be accomplished. Thank you and please approve the hybrid plan for in person learning. |
| Jennifer Peckenpaugh | After tuning in to both last week's board meeting, and Mrs. Schwarze's presentation to DGN parents regarding the hybrid plan, I am now confident that this is the best option for my high school children. It has been well thought out, and now contains a component to keep potentially health compromised staff safer. When Mrs. Schwarze mentioned that there will be zero tolerance for mask non-compliance, it made me feel more at ease. I like the idea of my kids having the opportunity to establish relationship with, and learn expectations from, their teachers in a limited in-person capacity while they are able. |
| Colleen Halloran | First of all, I want to begin by thanking the teachers, faculty, and staff for their dedication over the past months. I am proud of the way D99 has handled such an unprecedented scenario. I will have a senior at North this year, and like his senior classmates, he has looked forward to senior year to take advantage of the wide range of elective courses the district offers to help our upperclass students begin to identify areas of interest for college or life after high school. By senior year, many of these classes are hands-on or lab learning. Supporting a hybrid model of delivery allows these students to gain the full value of the experience, if only in person a small portion of the time. Next, the mental health of students must be considered as heavily as the physical health of our students. A hybrid model will provide the ability for teachers to check in and engage with students, and allow students to have an outlet to engage with same age peers and work directly with their teachers. Finally, those students with special needs require direct contact and support from teachers that cannot be accommodated in a remote only setting. With that, I have two questions and one overall request: (1) Will the district allow for recording of lectures so that students with special needs can go back and view those lectures for additional assistance? (2) Is the online learning going to fully meet ISBE state standards as it seems difficult to meet standards where hands on learning is called upon. My request is to please consider providing the option of hybrid learning to those families that accept the risk and most of all accept the responsibility to commit to keeping our learning community as healthy as possible and to take this option seriously. Thank you. |
| Jill Dvoracek | I'm not sure what changed since the last meeting, but we need options. Most of these kids need to be in school at least part time. Most need that face to face time with teachers. Not all kids work well remotely, just as going face to face doesn't work well for family either. Which is why it was nice having the option. |

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| Dana Larson | I would like to commend all those who worked on the hybrid plan for this school year. It is well thought out and is a great plan to be as safe as possible, while still having live interaction between students and teachers. I think it's important to have that interaction, even if a full remote schedule is needed later in the year. In my opinion, the hybrid is the best way to proceed. |
| Toni Rapach | I fully support a hybrid learning model for the upcoming school year. Thank you! |
| Ruthilah Bodley | Why will "in-person" hybrid classes not be available via live or video posts for students who do not attend? |
| Ruthilah Bodley | Why is there a distinction in services provided based on the reason a student or family chooses not to attend in-person classes? |
| Laura Henkel | Looking at the DuPage County Covid-19 dashboard, the curve we are seeing now looks very similar as it did when we shut down the schools in March. As much as I want my children in school, I believe we should start remotely for the first month at least and believe all effort should be put into doing that to the best of our ability. |
| Natalie Stellato | While it is of the utmost importance to ensure the safety of every child, teacher and staff member in District 99, it is also imperative that our children get back to some semblance of in-person learning. The board has worked extensively to provide a viable hybrid model to the best of its' ability that meets the requirements the CDC has set forth. This model should not only be taken into advisement, but considered and reviewed at great length. To go back to remote learning solely, I believe, is detrimental to the students' psyche, education, and social/emotional well being. We are a people of great innovation and boundless creativity...there has to be a way to marry the health guidelines required for containing Covid 19 and continuing with the pursuit of our children's irreplaceable education. |
| Deb Rosenberg | My family supports the hybrid plan presented to the board. We are happy that District 99 has created a plan rooted in science and fully support the current plan. Thank you. |
| Ruthilah Bodley | I am disappointed at the declaration of Dr. Hiele last week that "we are treating the school as though Covid-19 is in the building and we are keeping everyone safe from it". To that, I ask, what will be done when a case of CoVID-19 is in the building? Remove all students and staff? Because THAT is the way you would really behave the virus were active in the building. |
| Ruthilah Bodley | Why are the teachers not involved in designing the best format for teaching? |
| Ruthilah Bodley | How will keeping students in small groups prevent the spread of the virus from one group to the next when teachers are being exposed to multiple classes in a row with no time to clean/sanitize inbetween? |
| Christine petras | go Hybrid, my daughter needs the school |
| Ruthilah Bodley | How will items brought from home being dealt with in the classrooms? Coats? Backpacks, books, personal items? |
| Ruthilah Bodley | Please walk me through the interaction between a teacher and a high school student who takes off their mask in the classroom. |
| Melissa Hanley | In regards to your directives about a hybrid approach for back to school, we, as a family were pleased with how thoughtful your approach was to the kids and staff safety. We see you trying your best to do what is physically possible for the good of all. Our student was willing to comply with your requirements. I hope when you vote you know there are those of us who wish you to maintain your position. |
| Ruthilah Bodley | What efforts will be taken to ensure that students who do not attend the in-person portion of learning will not receive a unequal educational experience? |

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| Jeff Lifka | There has been a lot of information shared online in social media regarding the proposed plan of hybrid learning. For those wanting to have full-time remote learning from the start of the school year, they have the option to opt out of hybrid learning immediately. This plan presents the best possibility of providing both options to consider for students, parents, and families: those who want to be in school twice per week and those who don't. It should not be a one size fits all plan at the start. Provide students, parents, and families with the choice initially. Students need to be in school for many reasons. Should full-time home learning be required due to health directives, etc., at some future date, fine, but at least give this hybrid option a try to engage students personally in school. Everyone needs this, and if some feel otherwise, they may opt out at the start. Thank you. |
| Dr. Todd Bowers | Thank you for the chance to weigh in. I am reading CDC info daily. They recommend school be in person. The data is clear. The risk is small. Please continue your great work as educators . Do not be motivated by fear. Press forward with some courage to meet in person. You all know the relationship with a student is critical for growth. Also, the passion a teacher shows in person ignites the desire to learn. This is not going to be conveyed in a zoom call. Do not be swayed by media and the hype. The strength of education is why we live here. Please do what you do so well! If you believe in masks, trust them, if you believe in distance, trust that it will work. We trust in you making a courageous and bold choice. Meet In person with my kids at DGN. |
| Elizabeth & Robert Grogan | We feel it is extremely important for the students to return to in-person learning. It is essential for their education and mental health. You have put together a safe plan and a good way to start. As we move forward looking for opportunities to safely increase in-person contact would be ideal. We urge the board to vote for the plan to have at least some in-person learning at the High Schools this Fall. Give the students a chance to prove they can rise to this and keep themselves and staff safe while returning to the classrooms. |
| Amanda Yoch | I support the implementation of the hybrid plan. My daughter will be a junior this year and desperately wants to return to school. I understand that safety is the number one priority; however, I feel that with safeguards we can provide a safe environment for our students. I have no issues with my child being required to wear a mask or take other safety precautions such as temperature checks. She understands this as well. My daughter has expressed that it is difficult for her to learn exclusively online and finds it difficult to stay engaged and motivated. She has also told us about of the amount of cheating and lack of participation in zoom among her classmates. My concern is that exclusive online learning will not provide the level of engagement necessary to maintain the academic rigor necessary for the students to be college ready. Thank you for considering the opinions of the community. |
| Kristen Stanton | Hybrid Learning is preferred especially for incoming Freshman |
| Bonnie Hagen | I thank you District 99 for opening up comments on this very important issue. As a retired D99 employee, I spent many years working with students in the guidance office and believe strongly that students need some type of direct interaction with faculty during the school week. This issue is also very important to our family as our grandson is a senior at North. Please consider allowing a hybrid option for parents to choose should they wish to do so. Thank you. Respectfully, Mr. and Mrs. Terrence and Bonnie Hagen |
| Patrick Stanton | Hybrid Learning |
| Stacey Bretwisch | Good afternoon! I am hoping you will please consider some sort of hybrid model of education for the start of the school year. If nothing else, the kids and teachers need to meet each other and establish some kind of relationship at least for the beginning of the year. Thank you for your consideration. |
| Joy Bullard | I support the hybrid schedule for the fall. |

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| sandra gallwas | I fully support the hybrid plan versus the all remote plan. I strongly prefer the kids have the ability to have some personal interaction with their teachers in a safe and well thought out environment. The hybrid plan appears to have taken precautions very seriously. Parents and students who prefer the remote plan should have that option but that should not limit other students' options. |
| Sarah Thompson | I feel DGN has spent a lot of time formulating the best possible plan for the fall. I am in support of the hybrid plan. |
| TJ Rapach | For the sake of effective learning and student well being, I fully support a HYBRID learning model for the upcoming school year. Thank you! |
| Michele Joyce | I appreciate all the research that was done. I agree that the hybrid is a good model to start with before going back to full days. |
| Maggie Camporese | While the D99 staff, students, and community appreciate the Board calling a special meeting tonight to discuss our reopening plans more thoroughly, it should be acknowledged by the Board and Administration how disappointing it was for all 4500 YouTube viewers watching the July 20th meeting to see Board members literally falling asleep and making jokes about how tired they were while discussing the single most important decision they will make during their tenure on this Board of Education. Our reopening decision in the face of a global pandemic should weigh as heavily on the Board as it does on the staff and community, so I am hoping that tonight's meeting - one that will help determine the outcome of so many people's lives for the foreseeable future - will be more professional and substantive. Please recognize the gravity of your decisions tonight, as again, this will undoubtedly be the most important discussion and decision you will have to make while in your elected seat, and if you are incapable of doing so in the manner in which this current moment deserves, then with all due respect, you do not deserve a spot on the D99 Board of Education. Thousands of families are watching you right now, at the edge of their seats, because the health, safety, and fate of the entire community is in your hands right now. You owe it to all of us to act accordingly. |
| Leah Thulin | Please do everything you can to ensure that our students are in school, in person as much as possible. |

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| David Leatherwood | <p>I would like to ask the board consider full time school in the fall for all students who want in person learning. I would respectfully ask that that members research the data and the facts regarding Covid-19. I would also ask the board to look at how poorly kids perform under remote learning and how e-learning as a whole has not been successful. Below please find studies, statistics, and data relating to both the safety of and the need to resume in person school this fall.</p> <p>“It is critically important for our public health to open schools this fall,” said CDC Director Dr. Robert R. Redfield. “The CDC resources released today will help parents, teachers and administrators make practical, safety-focused decisions as this school year begins. I know this has been a difficult time for our Nation’s families. School closures have disrupted normal ways of life for children and parents, and they have had negative health consequences on our youth. CDC is prepared to work with K-12 schools to safely reopen while protecting the most vulnerable.” The CDC supports the reopening of schools and have provided guidelines on how to proceed safely. https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0723-new-resources-tools-schools.html?fbclid=IwAR00tv-RQJgo-HVBZ3vO61tOzETCzrSopmKuh6pqNvk3htQHOO3o9-8bmdo</p> <p>The data demonstrates that children and young adults are at extremely low risk to become seriously ill or die from the virus. The virus is primarily risky for the elderly (those over 65) and/or those individuals with certain co-morbidities. https://www.acsh.org/news/2020/07/14/coronavirus-covid-deaths-among-children-and-reopening-schools-14909?fbclid=IwAR0tsM0-cqWCj4lzMFe09CpuFLVrdB03TGDalZISS8mbUpB7X3TxWQjFrQ</p> <p>The Hospital for Sick Kids, the preeminent children's research hospital in Canada, has provided detailed guidelines as to how to safely reopen full-time in person classes for the fall. The guidelines go into detail on the reasons that kids should return to school, and why it is unnecessary and detrimental to the physical, mental and developmental of children to wear masks. http://www.sickkids.ca/AboutSickKids/Newsroom/Past-News/2020/covid19-recommendations-school-reopening.html</p> <p>Researcher are finding that children 18 and under do NOT transmit the virus to their parents or other adults. https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/blog/hunting-down-covid-19/</p> <p>The UK has found no known case of student to teacher transmission as t here has been no recorded case of a teacher catching the coronavirus from a pupil anywhere in the world, according to one of the UK’s leading epidemiologists and member of the government’s Sage committee advisers. https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/no-known-case-of-teacher-catching-coronavirus-from-pupils-says-scientist-3zk5g2x6z?fbclid=IwAR3R5PdXWFIJJCpm1MwyrvDEMBO16aDcyLGscyQJ3fsvAoTi-zKseJiPctM</p> <p>The head of CDC just came out and said that he would definitely send his kids to full time school.</p> |
| Kelly Saranecki | <p>I want to say how much I appreciate all of the thoughtful planning that has gone into getting our kids back to school safely. I am very much in favor of giving parents a choice between a hybrid model and a remote-learning model. If approved by the board, my family will be starting the year on the hybrid schedule.</p> |
| Marnee Fieldman | <p>We fully support the hybrid learning plan presented by the Administration at the previous Board of Education meeting. Please implement this plan as it a good balance of providing for effective education and the health and safety of students, teachers and staff.</p> |
| Kathleen Doyle | <p>I am wondering why it is necessary for our high school students to wear both a face mask and a face shield. Having them wear a face shield over a face mask seems completely unnecessary and overboard. Every person in the medical field who I have mentioned this to also feels that having our students wear both is not necessary.</p> |
| Erin Flinker | <p>We believe the benefits of in-person learning greatly outweigh the risks of the virus. Our family would absolutely choose in-person learning (tull or a hybrid model) and comply with whatever protective measures are deemed necessary to get our children back to school. Families who disagree or feel that they are at a higher risk should be provided a remote learning option.</p> |

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| Brenda Bruno | <p>I would like to express my preference that students and teachers return to the classroom for in person learning 5 days per week/full days. Masks will be worn and other precautions are going to be taken, and people will be required to socially distance. We must think about the long term social, mental, and educational impacts/problems that are exacerbated if children are not allowed to return to school for in person learning. The hybrid schedule that was proposed is inadequate and will not help our high school students to succeed. The hybrid schedule should allow for full days on site for those days when kids are scheduled to be in school. I don't understand why half days are necessary. And late start Mondays should not be part of the schedule if students will only be at school 2 days per week in person. This is disruptive to everyone's schedules and it robs the kids of valuable classroom learning. They already lost months of learning with the inadequate spring e-learning.</p> <p>If kids are not allowed to return to school for in-person learning, at a minimum, the e-learning should include full days of classes taught via zoom meetings by the teachers. Each subject should be taught via zoom for the full amount of the class. There is no substitute for the lectures and in-classroom instruction that teachers provide. Teachers should have already developed lesson plans, so it should be easy for them to teach each class as they would have taught them when on-site. With modern technology, there is no excuse for not providing kids the benefit of in-class lectures that they would have had in person in the classroom. I don't understand why teachers would not be expected to teach via zoom meetings. Most kids do not learn well through just reading books and completing worksheets and assignments. They need the interaction with their teachers and other students that zoom meetings can provide. The homework and reading is a supplement and not a replacement for in-class learning and lectures/discussions.</p> <p>The third option is to allow kids who want to return to school for in person learning 5 days per week to do so. This virus isn't going away anytime soon and a vaccine won't be fully effective for years (potentially), so we must learn to live with this and understand the protection and precautions that are necessary to keep everyone safe. Teachers can teach via zoom if they cannot teach in person, but the important thing will be that in person learning will occur. We owe it to our kids.</p> |
| Therese Larkin | <p>https://www.wsj.com/articles/cdc-issues-coronavirus-guidelines-for-reopening-schools-11595612205?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=1</p> <p>My husband, Paul, and I fully support the return of in-person education. We feel that our children's education has suffered in the absence of the classroom.</p> |
| | <p>Strongly prefer hybrid learning option</p> |
| Sharon Bowers | <p>I am a nurse at a local suburban hospital , I have been at work through this entire pandemic . Our July inpatient Covid numbers are the lowest they have been in 3 months . We are doing a good job here in the suburbs . The CDC is recommending in person learning. I have an incoming Freshman and a Senior . I appreciate all the work that has gone into the hybrid model and believe that the kids should definitely be back in person as proposed . This hybrid proposal is excellent and well thought out with every precaution in place . Those who want their children to go fully remote should do so but the rest of us parents want our kids back in school . School is ESSENTIAL , teachers are essential just as nurses and store/restaurant workers are essential. Our students are already behind. They need to meet with their teachers in person , this is crucial . Remote learning is only as good as the support the kids have at home . Some kids will do fine with this but many will not . Depression is skyrocketing . Please pass the hybrid model that the district has proposed and let the kids go back to school! Thank you !!</p> |
| martin gallwas | <p>I strongly support the hybrid plan versus the remote learning plan.</p> |

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| Peggy Delaney | <p>I am extremely grateful that our administrators and the board are taking thoughtful consideration into how to return safely to school while still working on how to provide remote learning to families who need (or want) to minimize COVID19 exposure. I fully know staff and all personnel in D99 are working diligently to provide a safe environment. With that being said, I want to share my experience while picking up my sons chrome book today at NHS. The school did a wonderful job with marking the floor for 6ft distancing. They had hand sanitizer available, and staff adhered to maintaining 6ft from parents and children. However, the entire time I was interacting with the gentleman who was gathering my sons chrome book, not once was his nose covered with his mask. His mask was covering his mouth, but it was fully under his nose the entire time. I contacted the office to notify them that they need to review their safety protocols with their staff immediately. The office staff was very supportive and concerned about this breach of protocol. This is a perfect example of how quickly safety protocols can unintentionally be not followed. The result of not following these protocols will most definitely result in community spread amongst our staff and students. I was so disappointed to witness an employee unsafely wearing his mask while in contact with possibly dozens of parents today. If D99 can't be hyper-vigilant with something as simple as mask wearing, then I am extremely worried about all the other complex safety measures that are required to provide a truly safe environment for our teachers, staff, and students.</p> |
| Tracy VanHoutan | <p>Dear Board members, with CDC guidelines in place for the opening of in person learning or hybrid models, I believe the Board should make every effort to make one of these choices for reopening school this fall. As long as these guidelines and any extra precautions are followed by administration, students and staff, I believe a path to in person learning exists and it would be a detriment to our students to go the full remote learning route. Thank you for your service during these incredible challenging times. Warm regards,</p> <p>Tracy VanHoutan</p> |
| Jennifer Adelman-McCarthy | <p>I am wondering what precautions you are taking for families that are at high risk. My incoming freshman's dad is a transplant patient so we need to be extra cautious when it comes to any possible exposure.</p> <p>Jen</p> |
| Michael R. Scheck | <p>Please confirm "in person education and training" of our '20-'21 student population is deemed "essential". Some banter has continued about on-line learning being developed, being used as a full replacement, partially used, and 'fully continued' for all of the curriculum. The "in person" learning, structure, and leadership given in classroom is the most crucial aspect of a high school education. The PPE standards will be followed, and collectively, we can strive follow the leadership teams needs during 2020-2021school year. We appreciate your high concern as to this type of structure. Thank you.</p> <p>Michael R.</p> |
| Cherie Spinosa | <p>I am writing to ask that district 99 keeps some form of hybrid learning plan with in-person instruction for students. I believe the schools can keep students safe with the plan they have developed, and I like that you are also giving students a remote choice should they need it. Face to face instruction is vital; nothing is as effective. If we take that completely away, most students will pay a heavy price. Please go forward with a hybrid plan. Thank you.</p> |
| Gregory Kus | <p>As a parent of an incoming Freshman and a Junior at DGN, I and my children are fully supportive of the Hybrid Plan that is being proposed. It gives all of the students a choice to be in-person part time for a hybrid plan OR fully virtual. It sounds like many students and teachers prefer to have time in person. This would tremendously benefit the students, especially Freshman, to establish relationships with their teachers and other classmates. It will provide a solid foundation for the rest of their education, especially if school needs to transition back to fully remote later in the year. The health precautions follow all of the IDPH guidelines and beyond. I ask that the Board approves the DGN Hybrid plan and give students a choice to have in person education with their teachers.</p> |

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| Veronica Svatos-DeLuca | <p>Comment to the July 27, 2020 meeting of the District 99 Board of Education</p> <p>I extend my thanks to the D99 administration for the great deal of thought and effort they've put forth to creating a plan to try to put our kids into the classroom under the complex guidelines set forth by ISBE, CDC, IDPH, et al.</p> <p>That said, I would like to encourage the School Board to reconsider implementing the Hybrid Plan, and instead choose a full remote learning plan for all students. My rationale is threefold:</p> <p>Firstly, a 100% remote learning plan will be far easier (and less costly) to implement than a hybrid plan which cycles through 3 modes of instruction (in-person/remote/independent study), requires cumbersome social distancing, bussing, and sanitation programs, and in the end nets only one hour of in-class instruction with each teacher per week.</p> <p>Secondly, any plan that puts hundreds of students and staff into the building at once creates the potential for virus exposure to increase exponentially, risking their health and safety, and that of their families. My fear is that students and staff will fall into a non-stop cycle of exposure and quarantine which would be far more disruptive than a consistent distance learning plan.</p> <p>Finally, a remote learning plan with an option to phase in in-person learning at a later date will give us the opportunity to observe what happens in surrounding districts who pursue more aggressive in-person learning plans, and let that inform how we move forward in D99.</p> <p>As the parent of an incoming freshman, who is an enthusiastic learner, and excited about going to DGS, it is hard to express just how conflicted I am about the start of this school year. That said, the costs, complexity, and risks associated with a hybrid plan which nets one hour of in-person instruction per class, per week, are simply not worth it.</p> <p>I will choose to opt out of the hybrid learning plan if it is implemented, and choose full-time remote learning for my child.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Veronica Svatos-DeLuca</p> |
| Kerry Finley | <p>In my opinion, it's more of a benefit for our kids to have in-person learning - emotionally, academically and socially. In the long run, not being in school will do more harm than good. I wholeheartedly support as much in-person instruction as possible. Thank you.</p> |
| Carmen Lira | <p>I support the hybrid plan that you have outline. I consider important that the Students get to see their teachers in person (at least once a week) --- face-to-face communication is important, and most importantly since our daughter will be a freshman this year (and being a new school, new teachers, new ways of working). We appreciate all you are doing to ensure students, teachers, and staff, have a safe return to school in this hybrid plan. Thank you for providing the 2 face shields and the 2 fabric facemasks.</p> |
| Kate Urban | <p>I support the proposed hybrid model and appreciate the work and effort that went into planning it.</p> |
| Pam Brandt | <p>What can be done to avoid having students sit through study halls & resource center periods? These are times of possible exposure with no benefit.</p> |
| Aliceth Gonzalez | <p>Dear D99 board, based on the current situation with covid-19 not only in the state of Illinois but everywhere in the US, I do not think our kids should be put at risk by attending to school in person. The number 1 priority of us parents is keeping them healthy and safe. For me and my kids, the experience with remote school was extremely positive, which is why I would opt for fully remote instead of hybrid, or fully in person. Thank you for your time and dedication to keep our kids and community safe.</p> |

**Public Comments Submitted via Google Form
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| Agatha Piwcewicz | I would like to know if fees for school year 2020/2021 will be reduced due to COVID-19 |
| Aliceth Gonzalez | Dear D99 board, based on the current situation with covid-19 not only in the state of Illinois but everywhere in the US, I do not think our kids should be put at risk by attending to school in person. The number 1 priority of us parents is keeping them healthy and safe. For me and my kids, the experience with remote school was extremely positive, which is why I would opt for fully remote instead of hybrid, or fully in person. Thank you for your time and dedication to keep our kids and community safe. |
| Paula Duellman | Supporting the District 99 Hybrid Schedule for 2020-2021 school year |
| Danielle Ciardullo | How can individuals handle unique situations? Such as having a family (household) member currently undergoing chemotherapy sessions; with a student at home? Having a child go home after school to someone with no immune system can jeopardize a life. |
| Agatha Piwcewicz | It is known that result of social separation and for long period effects student emotional and physical health. Depression, anger, anxieties, suicides cases are higher. Is this situation being looked at and consider for extra counseling? |
| Eleanor Thompson | I thank you for all of your efforts to develop a plan that works for all families in District 99. I am concerned about a lack of sufficient information about supports for students with IEPs, both those that participate in contained classrooms and those that have co-taught classes. It is difficult to make an informed decision as a parent about whether or not to send a student to school without understanding how supportive services will be provided. Please provide more information as soon as possible regarding how students with special needs will receive the services they need, especially if they choose remote learning. With less than a week for parents to make a difficult decision between less than ideal options, having this information is critical. Thank you. |
| Danielle Ciardullo | How can individuals handle unique situations? Such as having a family (household) member currently undergoing chemotherapy sessions; with a student at home? Having a child go home after school to someone with no immune system can jeopardize a life. |
| Danielle Ciardullo | How can individuals handle unique situations? Such as having a family (household) member currently undergoing chemotherapy sessions; with a student at home? Having a child go home after school to someone with no immune system can jeopardize a life. |
| Wendy McArthur | Will iPads be provided for the students |

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| Erin Reichert | <p>As a parent of our daughter, a Senior at DG South High School, we strongly recommend our children get back to in-person learning, beginning August 17th. I have several reasons but Facts must drive my decision so I must convey the recommendation from the CDC as noted below from July 23, 2020.</p> <p>The best available evidence indicates if children become infected, they are far less likely to suffer severe symptoms. Death rates among school-aged children are much lower than among adults. At the same time, the harms attributed to closed schools on the social, emotional, and behavioral health, economic well-being, and academic achievement of children, in both the short- and long-term, are well-known and significant. Further, the lack of in-person educational options disproportionately harms low-income and minority children and those living with disabilities. These students are far less likely to have access to private instruction and care and far more likely to rely on key school-supported resources like food programs, special education services, counseling, and after-school programs to meet basic developmental needs.</p> <p>Aside from a child's home, no other setting has more influence on a child's health and well-being than their school. The in-person school environment does the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•provides educational instruction;•supports the development of social and emotional skills;•creates a safe environment for learning;•addresses nutritional needs; and•facilitates physical activity. <p>I also ask that as you make your decision, I would question the Faculty and Teachers who are so concerned about coming back to in-person education why they are okay with wearing a face mask and going out to dinner, shopping at grocery stores, Target, the Mall, etc. with many people around them but do not feel safe in a classroom with all students wearing face masks and teaching at a 6'+ distance?</p> <p>We must get back to normal!</p> <p>I realize this is a very important decision for you all to make and appreciate your support. Please think of how your decision will impact the success or failure of our children's education in the long-term.</p> <p>Thank you!</p> |
| Danielle Ciardullo | <p>How can individuals handle unique situations? Such as having a family (household) member currently undergoing chemotherapy sessions; with a student at home? Having a child go home after school to someone with no immune system can jeopardize a life.</p> |
| Vikki Ragnini | <p>My daughter was not successful at remote learning in the spring. Instead of a positive school year we got frustration and feeling like a failure. I don't want my child to associate school with negativity and being present physically with her teachers is crucial to her positively north experience! Please vote to have the students back into their normal learning environment... at least a few days a week.</p> |
| Johnny zetera | <p>For the registration thing doesn't let me work and it saying needs a code</p> |
| Susan Carbon | <p>I support the proposed hybrid model for some in person learning and some remote learning this Fall at North. It seems to have been well thought out and takes into consideration the needs of students and teachers both. I hope that the board will approve this plan.</p> |

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| Jonah Sprandel | <p>Dear District 99 Board of Education,</p> <p>As a senior at DGS, here is a concise list of the things I believe are most important:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please come up with a future plan. If Covid-19 cases and deaths exponentially rise in the fall (parameters should be determined beforehand), we need to have a plan of action ready to take so as to keep the community safe. I believe we should also have a plan ready to gradually increase in-person learning if Covid-19 cases and deaths stay under control so that less of the 2020-21 school year education is sacrificed due to remote learning. 2. Please consider increasing the time per class period per week. Non-lunch class periods usually have 238 minutes per week, and this year it will be only 110 minutes per class period per week (including the online time). This amount seems unreasonable to complete an adequate amount of learning, especially for rigorous honors and AP classes. 3. I do not believe it is a good idea to trust students to take assessments "in good faith" during remote learning as stated in the reopening plan. |
| Sally Nosich | <p>I completely appreciate the tough task that the board and school administrators are up against with reopening schools- some people advocating for full remote learning, some wanting their kids back full time, and some wanting the hybrid model for their kids. The reality is, however, that this pandemic is real and it's here. There is so much that is unknown and people are dying at an alarming rate every day. Results of testing are uncertain and from all indicators things are only going to get worse. While I realize you have worked very hard to provide the safest possible solution with the hybrid model, it is still not close to being safe. People are likely to get sick with Covid and possibly die. Wouldn't it be safer to open when there is more reliable information about disease detection and how to treat it? Do we need to be on such a regimented time schedule? How is District 99 going to react if students and teachers get COVID and die from it due to reopening too soon? While this is an unpleasant scenerio, it is fairly likely given the information or lack of information at hand.</p> |
| Pamela BeLow | <p>We will be doing remote learning.</p> |
| Jewels Renee | <p>Has the district looked into a Learning Management System LMS such as Canvas or Blackboard to teach remotely? Most colleges use LMSs. They are very effective and will provide a full learning experience for students.</p> |
| Laura Smith | <p>I am the parent of an incoming junior and I hope the board approves the hybrid option. While high school is a place of learning it is also a time where children start to gain their independence and prepare for their post high school life whether that be college, vocational school or out in the workplace. Being face to face with their peers and teachers helps forge their skills for them to be successful by helping gain confidence and learn how to advocate for themselves and not rely on their parents. This pandemic is scary but kids are also exposed year round to many other illnesses that if left untreated can also have devastating consequences such as the flu, strep or mononucleosis. I feel District 99's hybrid plan takes into account the circumstances we are in but also tries to add some normalcy for the students. This isolation of only elearning can also be put students at risk for anxiety and depression which can follow them for years. Please pass the hybrid plan.</p> |
| Matthew Joyce | <p>My concern with what Nancy Kupkaka presented was that none of the data sources are reliable. All have noted over the last 2 weeks that their numbers have been skewed to a gross reporting of false cases, and many misdiagnosis and purposefully misreported. The figures or statements about how people with different illnesses will have potentially more severe symptoms. This true with any virus or bug. It is time to get our kids back in school.</p> |
| Lisa Kerr | <p>My family with two incoming seniors at DGN would like the Board to approve the Hybrid plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Thank you</p> |
| Mike Casella | <p>The kids need to be back in school. Protect the older teachers, but the kids will be OK.</p> |

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| Marybeth Senser | <p>My name is Marybeth Senser, and I am a science teacher at DGS.</p> <p>The fundamental question on the table is: are the incredibly important social, emotional, and academic benefits of in person instruction worth the increased risk to the health and lives of our students, staff, faculty, and all of their families? To find my own answer to that question I wanted to see the evidence on how much risk we are taking in blunt terms: how many people could potentially die due to a decision to return to some form of face to face instruction? I don't mean to be dramatic but we have to remember that those are the stakes in this unprecedented situation. In my calculations, I utilized DuPage county statistics primarily from the John's Hopkins COVID tracking website including measures like average number of positive tests per day, local fatality rate, how the rate of transmission of infection changed after shelter-in-place and again after economic reopening this summer, among other statistics.</p> <p>Based on the best information I was able to find, my calculations indicate that reopening schools could potentially cause a death in our DGS community somewhere between once every two weeks to once every seven months. (I know that's a wide range- there are a lot of unknowns in making the prediction).</p> <p>Even if the risk of transmission for each individual person is low thanks to the robust safety measures proposed, a small risk multiplied across thousands of people every day will still likely result in serious illness and death in a few rare cases. As desperately as I want to be in school with my kids, one hour per kid each week is not worth losing one or more human lives. I believe now that going remote is the only truly responsible choice.</p> <p>Details of my calculations, including sources, are listed below. You don't need to read them aloud at the board meeting since I know not everyone is as much of a data nerd as I am, but I would like them included in the minutes, if possible, for my fellow data nerds to peruse if they choose. Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Average new positive tests per day in DuPage county, averaged over the last 7 days (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map): 94 people Likely actual infected number, 6x higher than shown by testing due to high numbers of asymptomatic infections (https://hartfordhealthcare.org/about-us/news-press/news-detail?articleid=26868&publicid=395): 564 people County population: 931,743 people % of population testing positive each day: 0.0605% number of people scheduled in DGS building per week: ~4,000 people number of new infections in the DGS community per day: 2.421 people</p> <p>Spread of disease: R value describes when one person is infected, how many people they, in turn, infect. Societal factors like strict shelter in place orders decrease the R value. Reopening schools in person would increase the R value, at least within our CSD99 community. R in DuPage county dropped by about 1 during the shelter in place from late March through the end of May, and have risen by about 0.5 in the last month as things have started to reopen</p> |
| Jewels Renee | Do teachers and staff have a "Choice?" |
| Wendy McArthur | Will iPads be provided for the students |
| Anne Reilly | I am in favor of the hybrid model for district 99 |
| Jennifer Locker | I am in support of the hybrid schedule. |
| Carrie Swenson | Some board members are not looking at the parent numbers that support in school. The numbers clearly say we want to be in school. You can't deny that and you were voted in by this community. You are not listening to the parents and community. |

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| Karen Monroy | I thank you for your input in working to create an environment that maximizes student learning while also ensuring the health and safety of the students and staff. I believe that Dan made good points, but I'm concerned that he doesn't quite understand the nature of this unique threat. If I decide, as a parent, to allow my child to play football despite the risks of concussion, I am not placing other students, whom do not play football, at greater risk of a concussion. However, if a student does not practice the recommended CDC guidelines, it may be too late before that problem is rectified. My child may already have been exposed to COVID-19, and there was nothing that my child or I could have done to prevent that. I have seen too many people who are not social distancing... to believe that practicing of recommended safety measures will suddenly be followed by 100% of the people 100% of the time in the school setting. |
| Lynn Golminas | Cases are up, but deaths are down, so kids can go back to school for in person classroom learning. Let concerned staff do the remote learning. I am a teacher at an elementary school in Downers Grove with a BS in chemistry, and I feel it's the death rate that we need to be focusing on, not the number of cases. It is actually good that cases are going up and deaths going down b/c then we are achieving herd immunity. This disease was spreading before the lockdown. Now experts are saying young people aren't getting covid and aren't spreading it, and are most likely getting it from their parents. Need at least hybrid model or more in person at school. I'll email you a CDC graph with the nation's death rates |
| Michele Joyce | Listening to this is a bit ridiculous. Nancy never talked about recovery rate only catching! They talk about trips and school shootings are not a community event, really? If a child is killed on a trip it will effect the whole community. A school shooting happens it doesn't effect the community? It affected the whole community when Beth Dunlap was hit and killed. This caused major anxiety for kids yet you were ok with sending them to school, but this year it isn't fair? Saying you are helping the least is over stepping of your job. You are to be reflective of the majority. |
| Lynn Golminas | Schools in Europe have gone back to in-school learning last April and May, and they have had no spreading of covid. |
| Anonymous | One board member spoke innaccuratly about AP and honors students. And also SAI and ACI situations. She is out of touch and wrong. Some board members are very mis informed. They are too conservative |
| Anonymous | Please don't take the choice away, I am a certified virtual teacher and your teachers can not do this. Don't experiment with my children in a remote model. |
| Kelly Petring | I think you need to re look at the hybrid model and not have students who struggle with online learning only in school for 2 half days. Is there a plan in place for students who need to be in school based on last semesters remote learning who could be at risk? We need to figure out a better plan for those type of kids... 2half days will not work for families and especially students who struggle. |
| Carrie | So special needs children get in person learning? Interesting that they have the choice. |
| Lynn Golminas | You cannot go full remote. How are the kids suppose to do their science labs? |
| Elizabeth Esposito | This is in response to the comments by one board member regarding AP level students and College Board testing. Yes, I have an AP level student, who is able to motivate herself to learn. It's not a question of whether or not the struggling student or the advanced student need in person learning and assistance. Clearly there are reasons why each student is the way the are, and you should not make an assumption that a smart student can learn something like AP Physics on their own. That is clearly delusional. Many students are AP level because of their teachers, their desire to learn new things, and their need to be challenged! Secondly, just because a school is not going to take ACT and SAT test scores into account for applications does not mean they ALL are following the same suit. Not every school is disregarding test scores. The Seniors need to take the SAT test, and if this is not going to happen in our district, then you need to let the parents know so they can make other arrangements while there are openings in alternative locations this fall. |

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| Andrea Knudsen | I'm listening to the board's response, and I'm VERY CONCERNED that the majority of the board is making decisions based NOT on the proposed PLAN but on their own opinions and fear. They are not listening to Dr. Thiele, not listening to the community, not listening to staff, not listening to students. There unlikely will NOT be a chance to ramp up from remote anytime soon. This plan provides an opportunity, likely brief, for students to benefit from in-person learning. The plan also leaves room to best serve the most in need without penalizing the majority of students. Please take all of these points into consideration. |
| Anonymous | Video meetings freezing? A problem with remote learning go figure. Shocker |
| Carrie | the board member that requested guidance from the dupage health department, they have provided this. We are able to easily accomadate their guidelines. easily. or we would not be considering hybrid. The health department tell us this is what needs to be done. Back in school. They all say go back to school. All the experts, which board members are not, say we are ok. |
| Julia Tamasi | I would like to ask the board of education to consider voting in favor of the hybrid model for the 2020-2021 academic year. Students would have the opportunity not only to meet their teachers in person but to be able to do hands on activities such as labs. The students would benefit from the in person learning. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and get answers but also to interact socially with other students and faculty. |
| Sally Nosich | At the parents meeting the other day, it was explained that the hybrid model is supposed to be in place for 9 weeks and then we would go to remote. It did not seem like anyone on the Board was aware of this. |
| Hannah Catherine | Respect the MAJORITY please. By going full remote, you are NOT giving people a choice. I hose that are THAT concerned can stay home. What about the kids without proper technology and resources? People with access to drugs, or in situations where drugs are often used? Students with drug problems, abusive parents, students with mental disorders, learning disabilities, physical disabilities? Respect what the majority is asking. And if you're not going to then why even ask? |
| Lynn Golminas | Cases are up because more testing is being done, and remember, before the shutdown people think they had it, and were not tested. |
| Quinn Kelly | As a student I think it is really important that we establish a high quality, real relationship between teachers and students at the beginning, so that regardless of what happens we already have an outline to follow that we know has been established well. The only reason last year worked well was because we had already had our whole class set up at the time we had to leave. If we had to do the whole school year online the learning would not have been as high quality. |
| Tina Michaels | I am in full favor of the proposed hybrid model starting this fall. Please consider this well thought out plan. |
| Kimberly Workman | How does that then impact families if half of their children are going back full time as some of the elementary feeders schools are doing and then high school stays home? High risk of transmission that way too. |
| Susan | You can not let some in special needs who many are pre-existing conditions. And tell the majority all want to go back. I hat is not fair and I will fight this legally every step. |
| Lisa Kerr | I feel the hybrid model should be approved. The DGN and DGS administration put a lot of time and thought into this model and parents support the model. If they move to 100% remote learning, the social isolation will result in mental health concerns and an increase in suicides which would likely outnumber COVID19 complications in District 99. Deaths Of despair and domestic abuse are safety concerns that need to be addressed. |

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| Gregory Kus | <p>It might be good to have some additional counterpoints and discussions from people who do support the hybrid model. It is clear that some members of the board do not want to offer a hybrid model based on the feedback so far. It seems like much of the discussion so far is dominated by NON-hybrid and recommending remote learning only. I appreciate some of the commentary requesting when is it "safe enough" to return as the directive - and to focus on the Downers Grove community vs a broader DuPage county or regional metric. It would be good to balance both sides of the opinion. I am concerned that people with the loudest voice will dominate the conversation and the thoughts. If we do not return now, at least temporarily, we will miss the opportunity for students to meet in person. Cold/Flu symptoms are very similar to COVID and at that point - in October/November and beyond, there will be more and more students with a potential for symptoms.</p> |
| Constance Vanni | <p>I think the Board needs to broadly query the community of parents to understand what a broad segment of the District 99 population is wanting. I believe that a Hybrid approach should be tried--you cannot make a decision based on what you *think* might happen. In my opinion: Hybrid will give students a sense of personal accountability to their teachers, and that accountability will drive them to put in more effort on their work. Full remote learning in the spring was NOT successful for my children, and I have no wish to return to it as the mode of access.</p> |
| Jen Morrison | <p>Listening to Nancy, totally don't agree with her on needing remote! These kids need to go back in the classroom. I cannot express the mental health and developmental problems that these kids have already experienced. My daughter an AP student will have no motivation for remote. She needs in class! How are you going to do labs? Hand on learning? Remote learning will give these kids way too much free time! And I saw so much depression last spring I can only imagine how it will be in the fall. Remote is not going to work!!! They will fall so far behind other schools!</p> |
| Karen Monroy | <p>It seems to me that statements by Board members (whom are confident that this virus will "rage again" within the next couple of months after schools open up) indicate that the hybrid model is not the best model at this time. Let's err on the side of what is safest, as opposed to engaging our students in an experiment for which we are confident will end up in a certain percentage of infections and possible fatalities for the students, staff, and their respective family members. I agree with the Board members who are in favor of a mostly Remote Learning environment, while providing students who need extra guidance the opportunity to safely meet in person. By opening the school with the most restrictive measures, we will avoid a situation for which the virus "rages again." Thus, giving us a possibility of fully opening prior to the end of the school year.</p> |
| Karen Monroy | <p>It seems to me that statements by Board members (whom are confident that this virus will "rage again" within the next couple of months after schools open up) indicate that the hybrid model is not the best model at this time. Let's err on the side of what is safest, as opposed to engaging our students in an experiment for which we are confident will end up in a certain percentage of infections and possible fatalities for the students, staff, and their respective family members. I agree with the Board members who are in favor of a mostly Remote Learning environment, while providing students who need extra guidance the opportunity to safely meet in person. By opening the school with the most restrictive measures, we will avoid a situation for which the virus "rages again." Thus, giving us a possibility of fully opening prior to the end of the school year.</p> |
| susan | <p>remote learning teachers needed to be back in the classrooms and not at home teaching. out of 18 teachers, we had 3 teachers actually do anything. this is wrong taking our choice away. please do not do this.</p> |
| Kathy Martin | <p>During the board meeting tonight no one was equipped to discuss the data in Downers Grove. As you were discussing it, I pulled up the Du Page County Health website. Please do not let board members speak About data if they don't come prepared with data. Otherwise it is opinion and speculation. In addition they must come prepared with a recommendation on what the numbers need to be when we go back to full school and when we go full remote. This is way to wishy washy. The data shows the kids should be back to school. Don't let Nancy bully you. The community wants hybrid or full time back to school.</p> |

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| Vikki Ragnini | My daughter was not successtul at remote learning in the spring. Instead of a positive school year we got frustration and feeling like a failure. I don't want my child to associate school with negativity and being present physically with her teachers is crucial to her positively north experience! Please vote to have the students back into their normal learning environment... at least a few days a week. |
| carrie | As we hear a distracting dog in the background, this speaker is quoting media that is not vetted and very one sided. we all can find articles that support others. |
| carrie | I am sorry for this speaker, but luckily giving a choice would mean she could be remote and safe in her mind. |
| R Johnson | Have teachers not gone out? Have they sat at home since March? I see teachers at stores, restaurants, getting hair done! How can they do this but not want to go back to work! I don't understand this! Remote learning was horrible! Nurses, doctors, grocery workers all worked at the height of the virus. The hybrid model seems super safe. These kids need structure and need to be in school mental!!! |
| Owen Thulin | I think we should not do remote learning and go to school |
| Todd Hanson | My wife and I have 2 students at DGN and favor the hybrid plan and returning to full day in person high school as soon as possible. In person schooling is fully supported by medical and government authorities and there are relevant guidelines available. There is an option for fully remote learning, by choice, for parents who want to keep their kids at home. The choice for in person learning should not be taken from the rest of us. |
| carrie | if you bring in some students for what ever reason plan on a lawsuit from many. Not at all equitable or fair |
| carrie | Nancy needs to stop contradicting herself and is speaking exactly to what Hank has done! She makes no sense. You are out of touch. |
| Melissa Theisen | In terms of equity, how can only "some" students be able to attend school and work with teachers in person and others not? Who gets to decide which students are "eligible" to work with teachers? How does this decision demonstrate equity for our students? |
| Lina Moy | I believe for now with covid on the rise the school should begin with e-learning then move over to a hybrid when the numbers have lowered |
| Aliceth Gonzalez | Dear D99 board, based on the current situation with covid-19 not only in the state of Illinois but everywhere in the US, I do not think our kids should be put at risk by attending to school in person. The number 1 priority of us parents is keeping them healthy and safe. For me and my kids, the experience with remote school was extremely positive, which is why I would opt for fully remote instead of hybrid, or fully in person. Thank you for your time and dedication to keep our kids and community safe. |