

January 11, 2021

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in workshop session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2021. Pursuant to Public Act 101-0640, the Board 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.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Rob Lang, Assistant Superintendent for Staff Services; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Mark Staehlin, District Controller; Jim Kolodziej; Director of Physical Plant and Operations; Janice Schwarze, North High Principal; Ed Schwartz, South High Principal; Student Board Members Zoe Boyd and Sam Bull; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

The following was physically present at the Administrative Service Center: Hank Thiele, Superintendent.

There were no visitors.

#### **1. STUDENT PERSPECTIVES – SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL**

South High Snowball participants Mimi Akintunde-Nieves, Dyanna Boone, Anna Phifer, Natasha Sanchez and Teagan Smith shared how they adapted Snowball activities during the pandemic. Activities they spoke about included Halloween themed goody bags, a presentation by Dr. Walsh-Rock, a Zoom event where students picked up t-shirts and supplies in advance and wrote thank you letters, and delivery of “Tidings of Comfort and Joy” goody bags to classmates.

The Board thanked the students for sharing how they made things work under such unique circumstances.

#### **2. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

Student Board Members Zoe Boyd and Sam Bull both shared students were excited to be back in school in-person the previous week, but understood the need to return to Fully Remote Learning. Both commented they are anxious to return to In-Person Learning.

Member Boyd made note of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” being released virtually, the virtual holiday concert and art show, the Black history play in February, and the spring musical. She also acknowledged the emotional support provided by the history and social studies teachers after the insurrection at the capitol.

Member Bull noted activities of clubs, including National Honor Society (NHS) and German Club assisting at Feed My Starving Children and NHS raising nearly \$5,000 for the Salvation

Army as bell ringers. Member Bull shared he spoke to former Student Board Member Hailey Grubich who inquired about the status changes to the traffic flow on Main Street with regard to pedestrian safety. Dr. Thiele shared the traffic work is ongoing and the Village has applied for some grants.

### **3. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Thiele stated over the course of the day Public Comments advocating for a return to In-Person Learning were submitted via the online Public Comment Form; the comments are attached.

### **4. SUPPORTING STRUGGLING STUDENTS**

Sara Courington, South High Associate Principal for Student Support, reviewed the three areas where students are provided support – academic, social/emotional and post-secondary. She emphasized this begins before freshmen arrive in the District and the supports are adapted as students grow and change. Erin Ludwick, North High Associate Principal for Student Support Services, shared the tiered approach to supporting students, with most supports starting at the teacher level, then moving to parent, counselor and finally building level teams. David King, North High Counseling and Student Services Department Chair, provided information on academic supports, which include peer tutoring, staff office hours outside of the school day, virtual resources and STRIVE. He also spoke about Support Groups, Depression Literacy and Crisis Processing Groups, which provide social/emotional support. Post-Secondary supports are provided through Focus, Discover You, the College and Career Center and evening events, according to Mr. King. Dr. Vince-Walsh-Rock, South High Assistant Principal for Counseling and Student Support Services, shared how the Counseling and Student Support Staff at both buildings began last March to provide additional resources and services to students, families and staff and these supports are differentiated based on individual needs.

The Board expressed their gratitude for the Counseling and Student Support Services (CSSS) Department and all they are doing to support students and families. Dr. Thiele thanked the Board for the additional resources provided by the Board over the past five years to the CSSS Department.

### **5. RETURN TO IN-PERSON LEARNING**

Dr. Thiele stated students are in the building for In-Person Learning four half-days per week when community metrics are at a safe level, which for District 99 are 9% for the general student body and 12% for the cohorts. He noted currently 28% of North High students and 45% of South High students have opted to be Fully Remote through Spring Break, with students of color more like to choose Fully Remote. Dr. Thiele shared the District is investigating testing, and that school health personnel are in Group 1a for the vaccine, and all other school personnel are in Group 1b.

Board members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of increasing the metrics used to determine when In-Person Learning can occur. Dr. Thiele explained the rationale for the current metrics.

Dr. Thiele stated at the next Board meeting he would like the Board to vote on the metrics he is recommending, which may or may not be different from the current metrics, after reviewing with the Administrative Team what was learned last week, when students were in-person.

**6. 2020 SUMMER SCHOOL REPORT AND 2021 SUMMER SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Tim Tilton, North High Dean and Summer School Director, provided an overview of the Summer School Program, which was Fully Remote. He shared 250 students participated in the Academic Program, 55 students in Driver Education and 32 in Credit Recovery; eight students were able to graduate after completing coursework; there were two sections of AP Chemistry Prep; and 60 students took Consumer Education.

Dr. Lang presented the recommendations for the 2021 Summer School Program, which included salary increases of CPI-U (2.3%) for the teachers and Director and no increase in tuition. He shared Tim Tilton has decided, after 12 years, to no longer serve as the Summer School Director, but will mentor the new Director. Rob Lang added the default position right now is that Summer School will be in-person.

**7. PROPOSED 2021 SUMMER SCHOOL AND SUMMER CALENDAR**

Dr. Lang stated the calendar proposed for Summer 2021 is similar to previous years, with July 5<sup>th</sup> off in observance of the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday.

**8. DISPROPORTIONATE DISCIPLINE DATA**

Karen Taylor, South High Associate Principal, explained discipline data is disproportionate when one group of students receives discipline at a different rate than another group. She stated students of color, compared to white students, are disproportionately disciplined in District 99; with District 99 being in the top 20% of districts in the State with discipline related racial disproportionality. Dr. Taylor shared our schools are focusing on fostering a sense of belonging, where all students feel they are being treated fairly, and when infractions occur, the focus is on restorative practices.

Kelly Zuerner, North High Associate Principal, stated the D99 Discipline Committee, comprised of the Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services, the Associate Principals for Staff and Students, and the Deans, is using wrap around support when discipline issues occur. Ms. Zuerner explained the PATH program was created to limit exclusionary discipline, which removes students from the school, and helps the offender accept responsibility for their actions and repair the harm.

Dr. Thiele stated the challenge in District 99 is who is sent to the Deans' office; students who have been sent to the Deans' office leave with the same consequences.

Dr. Taylor and Ms. Zuerner both highlighted Deep Equity and staff professional development as part of the work to resolve the disproportionality in the discipline data.

## **9. T99 BUILD OUT**

Lisa Bollow, Director of Special Services, stated there will be a drastic increase in the number of students needing the T99 Program. She noted the build out will allow District 99 to serve students in our community and allow them to practice their skills in their home community. Ms. Bollow stated the savings over the next six years will be \$1.1 M by having the space to keep students in District 99 instead of outplacing them in private transition programs.

Carolina Schoenbeck, T99 Coordinator, reviewed the proposed changes to the existing T99 building. Mark Staehlin stated the cost estimate is \$985,000 for the build out, with no expansion of the footprint. He stated the funding source would be the interest on the MFP bonds, which is currently \$1.15M. Mr. Kolodziej shared this would be brought back to the Board in two weeks, and if approved, work will be done this summer, with the facility ready for students in the fall of 2021.

## **10. MASTER FACILITY PLAN PROGRESS**

Dr. Thiele noted the contingency is down based on additional asbestos removal (\$200,000) and changes to the law regarding fire alarms (\$250,000); the fund remains above the \$1M needed going into this summer. Pictures of the South High Auditorium and Commons and the North High Commons and Main Hallway were shared.

## **11. CLOSED SESSION**

Member Fuller moved and Member Pavesich seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned to Closed Session for the purpose of discussion of the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor in a park, recreational, or educational setting, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) and litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the District has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, or when the District finds that an action is probable or imminent, in which case the basis for the finding shall be recorded and entered into the minutes of the closed meeting. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Fuller, Pavesich, Pavinato, Vazquez Drexler, Davenport, Nicholas and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

Dr. Thiele announced the Board would not be taking any Action, except Adjournment, after coming out of Closed Session.

The meeting adjourned to Closed Session at 10:00 p.m.

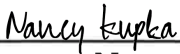
**12. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION**

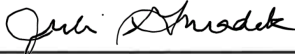
The meeting was reconvened in Open Session with the following members of the Board of Education in attendance: Nancy Kupka, President; Michael Davenport, Vice President; and Members Sherell Fuller, Dan Nicholas, Terry Pavesich, Rick Pavinato and Joanna Vazquez Drexler.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent; Rob Lang, Assistant Superintendent for Staff Services; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

Member Davenport moved and Member Pavesich 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 11:05 p.m.

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Nancy Kupka, President

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Juli Gniadek, Secretary

**Public Comments Submitted via Google Form  
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Jim Devitt	<p>It is CRUEL this board is playing PING PONG with our children! It seems like we are about the only district not going back. Hanks excuse about other districts going back has always been "They are not as large as us". Well, how do you explain Chicago Public Schools going back? It has been shown time and time again that the "science" behind the metrics is flawed, yet it is the only thing the board looks at... One single number, which includes false positives, "probables" and multiple positive tests from the same person...how is this "science". Another child tragically dies this month; how many more are going to have to suffer the same fate before this board opens their eyes and sees the truth!</p> <p>I ask that you reconsider the hard line metrics that you are currently using to determine if/when are kids return to hybrid learning. I his weeks numbers were skewed due to a lower testing number with the holidays, as well as the healthcare workers now getting vaccinated. This will most likely continue as more and more are vaccinated, but resulting in a higher positivity rate due to lower testing. Also, a large portion of the positives in the last rolling averages are for nursing home residents. Why are our children being punished for positive numbers that have no bearing on school?? CPS, Hinsdale, Wheaton, and many more returned to hybrid/in-person. D99 should be among them. This back and forth is terrible for our kids. Please re-evaluate this hard line at the numbers in the community and realize that report after report is showing that school transmission is not where it is happening. Our kids need to be back in school for more than one week here and there. Thank you.</p>
Amy Goray	<p>I am continuing to submit my own and my daughter's frustrations with District 99 not stepping up to the plate as other districts in DuPage county have to get kids into school in a hybrid fashion! There are reasons beyond measure to get kids back in classrooms safely who want to be there and can be there. I have been hopeful but it is getting harder with each passing month and still our kids are isolated in their remote rooms. Please take a look at the data for schools and how safe they truly are! It is becoming a matter of life or death the longer this nonsense continues. Thank you for your attention in this matter. I would like DGN to use the positivity rate of ONLY OUR students who are actually attending school to determine if we go to school or are remote. What these 5 zip codes percents are at are pretty arbitrary and there's no reason for our kids not to go to school if there are no issues with our own kids. I believe Benet does it this way and from what I understand - have had a successful first semester ALL in school.</p>
Amy (Elizabeth student) Laverty  Becky Schenk	<p>My daughter is a freshman and has LOVED the small amount of time she has had at DGS. She's hopeful that the board will allow school to continue in person as other districts around the area have. She enjoyed every moment even wearing a mask and a face shield. Waiting in the cold for the bus, riding the bus, walking in the hallways, actually being in class, meeting her teachers in person...she says to me: Mom, I am just soaking it all in as much as I can since I am not sure when and if I will be back. All my daughter wants to do is be a freshman, a freshman who wants to go to school. Obviously, with safety protocols set, but it can be done. If you look at the other high schools in the area besides DGN, kids are going to school. Please stop taking it away from them, being stuck in the house is not good for them. These kids need interaction, they need socialization, they need to get out of the house, and have some what of a normal high school experience. The Glenbard school district has had multiple suicides since school has started. These poor kids don't know how to handle this kind of situations. I have had parents I know that have committed suicide as they lost hope and was struggling and add that to a teen that is already struggling. We need to be part of the solution not the problem. Please board members, reconsider your stand on kids going back to school. Let's give these kids a chance to see what high school at DGS should be like. Thank you.</p>
Kristina Malon  Cherie Spinoso	<p>Dr. Thiele and District 99 Board, Please re-think which metrics are being used to determine whether students will be in-person or remote. If you took into consideration the lower numbers of people tested during the time frame used for this week, our positivity rate was under 9%. It seems to me that our superintendent is using a very rigid set of metrics without the willingness to more broadly examine the numbers and what they actually mean. It's quite clear that other local schools are returning to hybrid/in-person. Why are our district 99 kids being punished? How many statistics regarding the negative effects of remote learning on kids so you have to hear until you are willing to become more flexible? Why does it seem no one in charge is listening to their constituents? Please reconsider your methods and get these kids back in the building like they were last week. To bounce them back and forth between remote and hybrid is cruel and unnecessary.</p>

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Paula Duellman	<p>As a health care professional I am fully aware of the seriousness of this pandemic and how severe Covid can effect someone. I have seen the various spikes in Covid cases with the elderly population. It is essential for healthcare workers to continue to provide services both in the home and community to those at need. I strongly feel it is also ESSENTIAL for students to get the necessary services that include attending in person school daily. Use what CDC and IDPH say for good not to harm!!!</p>
Kathryn Martin	<p>I'm concerned with the methodology being used to decide if we are hybrid or remote. The week to week variability does not permit teachers to properly plan and is having a significant impact on the students who are so excited to be in school but then have that taken away so quickly. With all the stress on student mental health, I think now is a good time to pivot off the initial methodology. Looking at what is happening in our school district and going remote if we are having a surge in COVID with students or teachers seems to make more sense now. Other districts, including 58, operate in this manner. There are many articles now that prove that spread doesn't happen in the school as long as precautions are taken, which the district has done a great job with. Again we need to look at new data, proof that hybrid works at other schools, our success with it, and provide a consistent experience for the kids. My students came home so excited after the first in person day. Please reconsider the methodology and adjust. It makes no sense that an 8th grader in my house is in school, but my high schoolers cannot go in. Thank you.</p>
Kate Benton	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the use of community metrics as hard "cut-offs" in determining the safety of in-person learning for District 99. This is not an appropriate policy. Test positivity rates are subject to many sources of error and artificial variations (e.g., fewer tests performed over weekends, holidays, etc., multiple testing of the same person). Illinois is the only state not separating out probable cases from confirmed cases, adding a significant source of additional error and likely over-inflating our level of risk. As more people get vaccinated in the state, the test positivity rate may become even less reliable since many individuals who are tested routinely (such as health care workers), will no longer have any need to be tested. This is a good thing! However, it is going to lead to even higher test positivity rates because it will leave a higher percentage of individuals who are symptomatic being tested vs. those being tested routinely.</p> <p>The CDC has stated that the test positivity metric and other measures of community burden should NOT be used as measures of burden within the school. The CDC guidelines DO state that consideration should also be given to the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies being implemented. At D99, we are not allowing for any consideration of the mitigation strategies, nor can we evaluate them when we have not been able to keep the schools open for more than 1-2 weeks TOTAL! Why is Dr. Thiele being permitted to pick and choose which guidelines he wants to follow?</p> <p>Many other DuPage County school districts are opening their doors later this month for in-person learning, some with the support of saliva testing. Why can't we be doing saliva testing? Are you aware of any other districts using cut-offs in the manner in which they are being applied for our district? If not, that should be telling you something. The decision-making and planning for our district is flawed and nonsensical, and it will likely eliminate any real chance for sustained time in the classroom for our students.</p> <p>School board members, we need your support! Please look at the science, the actual verbage of the CDC guidelines, and the mitigation strategies available. We need common sense approaches. The plan being followed by Dr. Thiele MUST be modified immediately, or another semester will slip away from our kids. We can't get it back. The kids are counting on you! Please don't take the path of least resistance and keep the status quo.</p> <p>Kids were so happy and focused last week when they were hybrid. This week will be a horrible struggle and the numbers do not warrant the kids to be home. Please reconsider how this is evaluated.</p> <p>I would like to encourage the board to open up DGN and DGS. From what I have read, several DuPage county high schools are doing so. As an individual who works with teens, I am terribly worried about the effect this is having on them, especially in terms of mental health. The recent suicide of the senior at Glenbrook North should give us all pause. I have a friend who recently pulled her DGN junior and have heard from others investigating other options. I feel that we are failing our youth.</p>
Mary Spano	
Beth Bakker	

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Amy Rogers

D99 needs to be following the hybrid model that was approved on 12/14. If metrics are indicating a shift to remote may be needed, those should be reviewed by the Board with an emergency meeting. The resolution you passed in August giving Dr. Thiele authority to implement your plan did not give him authority to substantially deviate from that plan. The metrics that Dr. Thiele is using to decide hybrid vs remote should not be evaluated weekly as those numbers can be influenced by a number of factors - number of tests done, demographics of those being tested (ie nursing home residents, not school age children), to name a few and need to be considered with other indicators as to whether it's safe for kids to be in school. If it was going to be so unsafe for kids to be in school this week, why were they allowed to be in school on Friday? Looking at his metrics in isolation does not give the full picture of the situation. Was there an outbreak of Covid in D99 last week? How many positive tests were reported from D99 students and faculty? Other schools in the area have their kids in the schools this week (D58, Hindsdale, Wheaton/Warranville, CPS). If it's safe for other schools to be in session, looking at the same data, why is it not safe for D99? Further, the CDC does not recommend using the measure of community burden be used to decide whether schools should be in session for in person learning. You have the responsibility to educate the kids that want to come to school and are comfortable in doing so. Parents have made that choice for those kids and done their part, now do you part and get these kids back into the school this week!



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year of high school now – not just in social and interpersonal experiences but in critical learning for my future. I wasn't able to teach myself Chemistry last year and cannot easily learn Physics over zoom. Last week, for the first time, while being in the room with my science teacher, I could understand what he was teaching me. I also had a real connection with my other teachers for the first time all year. My friends and I all agreed how much we enjoyed being in the school not only to see each other, but we were able to have fun in the classroom rather than sit in front of a screen for 7 hours not learning. My teachers even spoke of how great it was to have people to teach face to face to make real relationships. And now you have taken that away from us. Why? One of my teachers even said he didn't understand why. He said we are basing decisions on a number and that kids aren't as susceptible or at risk and that we need to be in school to learn. He is basing that on science.

Most of my friends and classmates are so angry that you keep playing with our lives and act like we are going to go back. We were finally going back for the first time since March, and this seesaw of being in and out is heartbreaking. Multiple teachers or staff will talk about going back in a week which gets our hopes up. We go back for a few days and you change your mind. The worst part is going back and forth without consistency. Most have given up on coming in person at all since it is such a hassle to go in for a week then the schedule changes completely. I know you don't personally hear all the frustration from students and this is because we feel like speaking up is pointless.

I have friends in so many other nearby towns – even here in Downers Grove - and they are in school. Hinsdale, LaGrange, New Trier, Bolingbrook, etc. They get to have some kind of high school experience. A year of sitting in my room, listening to someone on zoom is not learning. It is not High School. It is not preparing me for college or my future. Not to mention what it is doing to our mental health and learning habits. I have a cousin who is a freshman and it hurts me to hear all he says about his experience coming to our school. Not only have the freshmen missed the opportunity to experience all that DGN has to offer, they don't get the chance to make any new real relationships with peers and teachers. He struggled all last semester, similar to most, because he is stuck behind a screen unable to learn properly. I have tried to assure him of how much I love my school and all of the glory it was before covid, but he, amongst others, will not understand in this remote setting. To counter that, I spoke to him about how the hybrid schedule went for him. Just as I expected he said "I actually had fun in school for the first time in a while". I don't understand why we are now being put back in this isolated situation when so many of us had the best time with hybrid. As we are back once again in remote, our motivation and determination is deteriorating and it is depressing and lonely.

I have been to visit my family in NY and Florida and life is moving forward with safety measures. They are not just hiding at home until the virus is gone. It is frustrating to see that kids in other states are getting opportunities denied to us in Downers Grove. They got to have football games. They get to participate in clubs. How will I be able to compete on college applications? We are already being given almost 8 weeks less of learning this year by being remote. 2 months less of what others are getting. In Florida, my niece is in school full time. They aren't shutting down over a random number. They are wearing masks and washing their hands. DG is asking us to wear shields – a step beyond any other school even. I am not afraid in school. 99% of our area hasn't had the virus or has fully recovered from the virus. I understand some are not comfortable with certain situations, but then they have the ability to opt to stay home. But like I mentioned previously, I know many who have chosen to stay home to avoid the annoying inconvenience of the schedule changes. This is disappointing and unfair to those who could have experienced a much better learning environment in person.

There are already rumors that we will stay remote for the rest of the year. I believe this will be catastrophic not only for me but for my peers as well. It really is upsetting what we have already gone through since the Spring and closing the school just adds to that. The data already shows that we aren't learning.

Lily Freebery

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I would like to express my disappointment that we are, yet again, learning remotely after only one week back in the classroom. Every high school in the surrounding area is back in the classroom. Even Chicago public schools are going back. There is NO reason we should be the only closed school. I understand the numbers you are using. I think it's time you reevaluate the process you are using to allow the students to be in the classroom. The CDC, Dr Fauci, and The American Academy of Pediatrics all say our students should be in the classroom learning. Why are you disregarding all of this information when making your decisions? It makes absolutely no sense at all. You have the power to allow our children to go back to school, please use it and get them back in the classroom! As I have explained to you in a previous email, my son had the worst academic semester he's ever had last semester. His GPA has now been lowered significantly, which may well prohibit him from going to the college he was planning to attend. The superintendent and principals answer to this is that it's okay because colleges are lowering their admission standards. I'm not sure what colleges they are referring to, but it is NOT the school my son has dreamt of attending. This out of state school is not lowering its admission requirements, and sadly my son may not be able to attend because he was forced to spend an entire semester "learning" from his bedroom. REMOTE LEARNING IS NOT AS EFFECTIVE AS IN PERSON LEARNING!!!!!! As hard as the teachers may try, it does not work. The students are sad, lonely, anxious, and disinterested when they have to spend hours alone, in front of their computers. PLEASE DO YOUR JOBS AND GET OUR STUDENTS BACK INTO THE CLASSROOM ASAP.

Kathy Stopka

I tired of watching my kid and all other kids sitting in front of a screen watching life go by. I tired of the same response from the board. This is not working. Get these kids back in school. This virus does not have the same affect on these kids. But sitting home with no activities, no social events, no sports and no interaction with friends is affecting them more than the virus could. Let our kids live. Other schools are doing it. You haven't given this a chance to work. Give parents the option, stop making the decisions for our kids. If remote parents want to keep their kids home they have the option, give us the same option

Concerned Parent

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I urge the Board to fully understand how you have allowed our entire community to be controlled by one persons interpretation of misrepresented data. I have researched extensively the IDH site, the CDC site, the DH site and I do not find a single statement that says you close schools if positivity rate is over 9%. In fact, I have found numerous recommendations countering our plan. The CDC site says this: "Each STLT should decide the most appropriate indicators to reference when deciding to open, close, or reopen schools. CDC recommends the use of 3 core indicators. These core indicators include two measures of community burden (number of new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 14 days; and percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days) AND one self-assessed measure of school implementation of key mitigation strategies.....the two measures of community burden should be used to assess the incidence and spread of SARS-CoV-2 in the surrounding community (e.g., county) and not in the schools themselves. Currently, CDC does not recommend using these core indicators as measures of burden within the school." DOES NOT. It suggests removing numbers that don't impact you. Like nursing home outbreaks - like we currently have in DuPage. The Illinois Dept of Health in fact lists on their dashboard for school opening a metric to consider is actual new cases (not positive tests - there is a difference) and look at more than 20% increases week after week for 2 consecutive weeks. It also suggests looking at cases of kids. If you look at the dashboard - both of those metrics in fact say our risk in DuPage is MINIMAL. If you look at the rubric for opening schools there are 15-20 suggestions - and NONE propose 9% positivity. There is a suggestion that if you are over 10% you might be a high risk community. But again, propose looking at the details in those numbers. Which we are not. District 99 is being told that we have to stay remote because this is the plan you agreed to. That Hank has all the power you granted him in August and so we cannot change that. I would strongly suggest that the world has changed significantly in what we know about the virus since August. Just today there are now statements that we no longer need to deep clean as we have been. The data of schools in person since spring of last year, have provided almost a year of lessons learned. Since Hank made a major change to the remote plan for 2021, I would say he has already veered from the authority you gave him in August. So whatever formality is required to look at the metrics we are using to destroy our children - I implore you to invoke it. It is smoke and mirrors whatever you have been told. It was 3 hours of pretty powerpoints. Now is reality. 50% of Dupage is in person or hybrid. Are we saying they are in violation of some non existent rule? Last week the Illinois State Superintendent wrote to her team to begin to formulate plans "to mitigate learning loss, consider a longer school year, before-/after-school programs, and summer learning opportunities. Begin planning now to reimagine the school calendar and expand the school day to ensure students receive every opportunity to grow. The pandemic continues to take a toll on our students' mental well-being. I encourage you to invest in greater access to supports and resources for students' social-emotional health." The problems are real. They are potentially lifelong. And rather than looking for the path forward - District 99 continues to demonstrate that all we can come up with is to hide. That our Administration - that you the Board - have no vision - and no interest in doing what's best for those children who need to be in person. Do your job. Demand additional metrics. Call an emergency meeting and vote to get your voice back if that is what is needed. Do your job. Provide D99 children with a quality education. Open schools. And DO NOT look at anything other than MAJOR outbreaks or superspreader events (not because 5 kids are sick) when deciding to close them again. Thank you.

Sandi Boll

**Public Comments Submitted via Google Form  
January 11, 2021 Board Meeting**

Hello. Happy New Year. I am writing to express my opinions that after having this time back from break I believe your metric needs to be re-evaluated. The numbers are consistently trending down and despite the numbers being high the trend needs to be looked at. CDC states that cases per 100,000 and the positivity percents are NOT good return to school indicators as we have seen this week. With the numbers dropping significantly the children should be in school this week. I don't understand how the long term care facilities and over 60 population should be counted in this important decision. Let me explain what has happen not only in my home, but hundreds across the district. My children got up at 5 AM last week, everyday. Went for a run. Came home and made breakfast. Showered and ready for the day. A great start to the semester. Every day was increasing happiness, motivation and engagement. Then Friday hit. They came home threw their backpack down and one ran into her room and cried and the other went to sleep. The life was sucked out of them. This morning, they didn't want to get up, they didn't eat, they didn't shower. One class was missed for no reason except she just couldn't do it anymore. That is what moving remote after one week did. Then to see numbers trending down again. That 9% needs to be flexible. This is not fair. Once again schools around us are back in session while we are not. Hinsdale, LT, Wheaton/Warrenville. How can you fiend an insane amount of money approved last meeting for another online tutoring service. The teachers aren't enough? Resource isn't enough? Or maybe, just maybe online learning IS NOT WORKING. No amount of fancy online 24/7 tutoring is going to change that. You may not care, you may give great lip service that you do, but actions speak louder than words. Let me also tell you, all the positive youths are sitting home for nothing. They can't spread it and they can't get it. This is confirmed by the dupage health department and my personal physician. What a disservice. How many covid positive students are there? Teachers? Surely enough to give this consideration. Why didn't you wait until Monday and your health department meeting? Maybe they would have told you numbers are trending down and would have suggested returning. This game with back and forth put my children ;and plenty others in the da my e boat) back 10 paces in regards to motivation and interest. Next time I think Hank and each board member needs to walk into each classroom and look each student in the eye to tell them they won't be back in school AGAIN! Maybe you all need to see that spark die, the shoulders slump, the possible tears in the eyes. Maybe then you will truly listen to them and prioritize them.

Carrie  
Swenson

These kids sharing for snowball. Seem so happy and excited!! Why? Because they were with peers. They were involved in person with peers and teachers. If that doesn't speak 1000 words I don't know what is. Maybe the results would have been different if it allowed was remote, alone in a room. Wake up board members.

Anonymous

The students who were asked about their mental health and their opinion of others do NOT fully represent the student body. They were allowed to participate in their activities, even though remote, whereas other students (football, wrestling) have not. Ask some other kids how they are feeling. These four students are NOT fully representing the population.

Heather Kelly