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25 **EXHIBIT ONE (1)**

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Mark Stewart [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 3:35 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment for Board Meeting

My name is Mark and I'm a teacher in Northwesr Arkansas. I have two comments that I wish to be considered by the board that I feel have not been addressed in regards to schools in the fall.

1. None of the information provided seems to address any concern for the well-being of teachers and staff at schools. We are the frontlines when schools reopen and everything that has been published seems to be driven by student concerns.

2. I have seen where there is talk about positive cases in schools and what the protocols will be but let's take this a little further. What happens, God forbidding, if a teacher dies mid-year? You're not going to easily find a replacement and it will be a traumatic event for all involved but especially students. How could you hold them academically accountable if that were to happen?

Thank you,
Mark

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Deloras Allen [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 4:03 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Fw: Covid 19 and Music and Art classes

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: "Deloras Allen" [redacted]
To: "Fitz.Hill@arkansas.gov" <Fitz.Hill@arkansas.gov>
Sent: Fri, Jun 26, 2020 at 3:47 PM
Subject: Covid 19 and Music and Art classes

As an activity teacher, I'm very concerned with the safety aspects of Music and Art classes in the Elementary schools. These teachers may see as many as 800 or more different students for 40 minutes each week. Often, these teachers travel to different schools and sometimes in the same day. This could spread the virus to many teachers, students and staff. If the teachers travel to more than one school you have even more people affected. The safest way for one person to teach this many students would be through virtual means like Zoom, Google Classroom etc. In the Arkansas Ready for Learning Guidelines there is no mention of how to safely teach these classes. Please address this issue and consider virtual learning for Art and Music classes in the Elementary schools. All precautions need to be made to ensure everyone's safety during this unprecedented time. Students, teachers and staff need to feel safe when returning to school.
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kelli Lamberson [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 6:54 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Question for the Board

In a zoom meeting today, our district mentioned that teachers will be able to quarantine at home if exposed to the virus for 14 days, but after that, teachers will have to use sick days and personal days for additional quarantine after exposure. They further stated that we will be expected to pay our sub even though we will be working from home and teaching online while quarantined. Please address this issue with the board. Secondary teachers will be exposed to hundreds of students in a school day and there's no way we can keep from having to quarantine if we are exposed and it's unfair to expect us to pay for a sub while we're still working from home.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Chad Jones [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 5:28 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Do NOT reopen please!

Hello.

Our kids attend Greenbriar schools. While the disruption to education due to the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted over 55 million students nationwide, it has been especially perilous for the most vulnerable students. Missed learning time can be especially harmful to students who are already underserved in our nation's schools. At the same time, inequitable access to technology and the internet, a lack of online teaching preparedness, and inadequate resources for families trying to support their children's education is expected to further widen the achievement gap in months ahead without intervention and support. It is projected that students who lack steady instruction during the coronavirus school shutdown could lose between half and all of the academic growth one would expect in a normal academic year. If we reopen schools too early, there is an overwhelming risk of continued disruption to education. Delaying start dates or offering virtual education with the same level of engagement and rigor as in-person engagement allows our students, teachers, staff, and families to remain safe while not falling even further behind.

Thanks.
Chad
--
Chad Jones
Cell: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Rebecca Pittman <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 5:44 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns about reopening public schools

Hi Ms. Windle,
I have three kids in LRSD, and we love our schools and our teachers. My family is extremely concerned about reopening our schools in the middle of the biggest COVID surge we have seen. We feel that sending the kids to school is surrendering to the fact that we will all get the virus, and the immunocompromised members of our family will suffer greatly.

Additionally, teachers will not have the luxury of choice if schools open back up in the fall. They most certainly have immunocompromised family members at home, and maybe they are immunocompromised.

We feel strongly that an online curriculum would be the safest thing for our kids, our families, and our entire community until we get a hold on this virus.

Please consider the safety of the teachers, the students, all of their families and opt for the smartest way to proceed - from the safety of our homes.

Thank you!

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Laura Herold [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 6:20 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE); Warren Herold
Subject: re-opening schools concerns

Dear Gina.

Thank you for opening up the communications for concerns. I know it is after 5 pm. but I only heard about this opportunity this afternoon and was only able to email now. I hope it will still be accepted.

We have two children in the Fayetteville Public School District. Our concerns are that the following need to happen. but are not currently part of the reopening plan:

1. Temperatures need to be taken before entrance. Relying on parents to do this at home is not a safe option. and merely asking the CDC screening questions is not sufficient.

2. Students will need to be distanced. A clear plan needs to be in place for this - on the bus. in classrooms. in the cafeteria. etc.

3. Everyone must wear a mask without exception. This has been proven to keep infection rates down. I can't imagine opening school and expecting teachers to work when masks are only encouraged.

4. We do not currently see specific plans for disinfecting. Areas that are jointly used will need to be wiped down after one group leaves and before the next one enters. UV cleaning of high use areas should also happen.

5. Clarity is needed on what the virtual school option is. so that parents and students can make an informed decision. Would our children be paired with a classroom at their school. so that they have a community there (if virtually?) What does the work look like? What are the expectations? How much flexibility is there in when that needs to take place?

6. Support is needed for teachers who are not able to teach in person. who go home sick with COVID-19. and who are expected to deal with this. We are concerned about a mass exodus of teachers - and they also have a right to safety.

7. Input is needed from teachers about how to deal with this in their classrooms. We are very concerned that teachers we have spoken have clarified that they are not part of the process and have not been communicated with in advance of families. They need to be a part of these discussions. and be compensated for their time.

8. We are very concerned about the waivers being discussed that circumvent teachers' rights to PPC. Will there be expiration dates on these?

9. Schools will likely need to close. What are the long-term strategies to ensure educational equity a vaccine is available?

Thank you.
Laura and Warren

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Becky Garrison [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 7:24 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: CDC guidelines

Why do school districts not have to follow CDC guidelines? What superintendent is a medical expert that can make that decision for their district. As a recent cancer survivor/teacher I am extremely concerned since our district has said that masks are optional for students and teachers. It was also said that we will distance when possible but when not possible, too bad. Why, when we are seeing more cases daily are we just pretending this virus doesn't exist? I realize that we are putting in several sanitizing methods such as foggers and cleaning and I appreciate that But, why go halfway? Thank you for your time.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Holly [redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 7:55 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School waivers

I am a concerned teacher about class size waivers. It is extremely difficult to maintain a personal relationship with 28 to 30 students in a class. How can more students be more beneficial to student learning or connecting to students? If we are truly wanting the best for students and teachers larger classroom size is not it. How are more students going to social distance? It is extremely difficult to get students to talk or interact on zoom, so how can adding more students make it better? Contacting guardians can be a nightmare in low socioeconomic schools, adding more students will take away from students time for feedback and interaction, simply because teachers will be spending valuable time trying to contact guardians who have moved (usually several times) and have had phone numbers disconnected. Please consider these points before voting for waivers. During this pandemic, especially, individualized learning will be important and students will need the support of their teacher's more Do not increase the teacher student ratio!
Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Eric Gamble [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 1:19 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Re-opening Concerns

To whom it may concern,

These represent the concerns of an educator of 15 years and a father of five with three co-morbidities.

I feel that both state and local plans for getting back into the classroom are far too vague to actually do any good. In my district, we have already been told that screening each day would be impossible. This is on top of being told that social distancing would be impossible and that most kids probably wouldn't be wearing a mask.

In addition, the school building ,that I work at, has allowed multiple meetings where teachers have been in small spaces with more than 10 people and many weren't wearing masks.

Most of our districts plans actually instead focus on 'hand washing' and 'deep cleaning'. There will do nothing to stop a respiratory illness that is spread by talking, coughing and sneezing.

I feel like the state is setting up many teachers for illness and possibly death. Further, I feel like a mass adoption of waivers is going erode the voice of educators in the state.

Many school districts are relying on the virtual options for families that want to be safe and are simply going to abandon most efforts that will truly help curb the spread.

We are careening towards massive sickness in the fall and many teachers becoming ill or dying.

Please do something to protect us. Please don't vote to take away the voices of PPC.

Thank you,
Eric Gamble

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Ginger Beck [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Schools Reopening

Hello Board Members,

I am a 19 year veteran teacher, mother of two, and advocate of public education and social justice.

I am writing to implore you to please consider the dire consequences of opening schools amid this rapidly accelerating pandemic. I understand these are unprecedented decisions that are being made in our lifetimes. However the fact remains: we cannot teach if we are dead, and we cannot teach dead children. Churches are finding themselves inundated with cases. Schools with hundreds of children, even if half were to to online school, will be flooded with cases. We can not control who our kids interact with outside of the realm of the precautions we would take at school.

Please, please consider all of our safety. I have quarantined myself and my 4 year old since March. I am terrified that the numbers continue to grow and my family will be at risk. I cannot visit my father because he had a liver transplant last year. I do not want to wait months or a year to see him again.

Again, I know these are tough questions and even tougher solutions, but we cannot risk the lives of more children and those of us who have dedicated our lives to protecting them.

Thank you,

Ginger Beck
Lead Teacher
Hamilton Learning Academy
Little Rock School District

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Anna Beaulieu [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 4:09 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Cc: feanews1@gmail.com
Subject: public comment for 6/29
Attachments: public comment 6-29.pdf

Ms. Windle.
I have attached my public comment for the special State Board of Education meeting on Monday. June 29. Thank you for delivering my comments to the Board members on my behalf.

Anna Beaulieu

[redacted]

June 27, 2020

Secretary Key and members of the State Board of Education:

My name is Anna Beaulieu. I am a teacher and a member of the certified personnel policy committee in the Fayetteville School District. I am also the President of the Fayetteville Education Association, and on behalf of the over three hundred educator members whom I represent, I respectfully submit to you the following comments concerning the streamlined waiver process as presented to the Board by DESE at the June 11 meeting.

I acknowledge that the upcoming school year poses challenges that we have never seen before and that the plan to transition to onsite instruction will require creative problem solving and flexibility. The enormity of the COVID-19 crisis and its far-reaching effects paired with the responsibility to maintain a safe environment conducive to learning has sent a frenetic energy coursing through our school communities, and the uncertainty of the future has created a sense of fear and anxiety among educators that is palpable. To make this school year work, it will take a collaborative effort between stakeholders, where all input is considered and no single perspective is valued over another if we hope to effectively and successfully execute our plan for learning. I do not believe waivers are necessary to achieve the desired results.

Expediency and ease should not be the driving force behind any decisions that we make for the upcoming school year. The approval of this pre-packaged set of waivers assumes that these selected laws, policies, rules, practices – in short, educator protections, present insurmountable roadblocks to the implementation of the Arkansas Ready for Learning model. I argue that we cannot know if these waivers are the answer when so many questions surrounding the re-opening of schools this fall remain unanswered. Districts across the state are releasing their reopening plans to stakeholders, yet many of those plans are still lacking specificity when defining key procedural and structural elements as they pertain to the transition to onsite instruction. It begs the question, how can we know what might stand in our way?

We know that educators will play a pivotal role in a successful transition to onsite instruction. Recent history has shown us that educators are resilient and that they will rise to the challenges of delivering services to their students, be it on campus or off, and of teaching their students regardless the method of instructional delivery. So why would we consider waivers that effectively strip employees of the right to participate in the shaping of policies that are their contract a good idea? If anything, we should be more vigilant about protecting the rights of educators this fall, not less. The approval of these waivers transfers all accountability from the school district to the educator while at the same time denying the educator any recourse should the parties disagree. I fail to see how the potential dangers of this arrangement could possibly outweigh the need to ensure that educators have voice in the co-creation of commitments for the 2020-2021 school year.

I understand that flexibility is paramount when preparing and executing our plan for re-entry to onsite instruction; however, I am asking you to postpone today's vote authorizing districts to apply these waivers until which point you have had enough time to reconsider each of the proposed waivers individually. I encourage you to eliminate from the bundle those waivers that would deny an employee the right to review, revise or reject personnel policy changes. These policies are our contract, and no employee should be required to sign away their rights as a term of employment. If, after review and reconsideration, it is determined that granting these waivers is in the best interest of Arkansas schools, its educators and students; I ask that you narrow the scope of the waivers and include specific language regarding implementation and timeframe so that they cannot be applied outside of the intent.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Anna Beaulieu
French teacher, Fayetteville High School
President, Fayetteville Education Association

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: julee jaeger <[redacted]>
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 4:34 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Fwd: OPPOSE: State Board COVID-19 Waviers June 29 meeting

Please share with the State Board of Ed before the Monday meeting. Thank you!

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **julee jaeger** <[redacted]>
Date: Thu, Jun 25, 2020 at 4:40 PM
Subject: OPPOSE: State Board COVID-19 Waviers June 29 meeting
To: <ddzook@aol.com>, <susancham78@gmail.com>, <charissedean18@gmail.com>, <brett.williamson@murphyoffices.com>, <Fitz.Hill@arkansas.gov>, <Ouida.Newton@arkansas.gov>, <Sarah.B.Moore@arkansas.gov>, <Kathy.Mcfetridge@arkansas.gov>, <Adrienne.Woods@arkansas.gov>, <Johnny.key@arkansas.gov>
Cc: Murry, Greg <murryg@conwayschools.net>

Hi I'm Julee Jaeger in Conway, Arkansas.

I have a child in the Conway Public School District. I'm writing to you as the Arkansas Board of Education. Please oppose the waiver packet at the June 29th meeting.

We are in a public health crisis with no signs of improving. We are having an outbreak here in Conway right now right across the street from my child's school. This is no time to waive protections for teachers and school employees. If you must waive these protections to function, are our schools really safe?

- DO NOT circumvent the Personnel Policy Committees.
- DO NOT shift the risks of COVID19 to school employees. DO NOT remove the liability of school districts.
- DO NOT increase the normal scope of educator duties. If there are additional tasks required, please allocate funds for additional workers who are trained to perform the tasks safely.

Plans to reopen must include the teachers and staff on the front lines. A strategy that moves ahead with brute force can cost lives. There is a very high likelihood of infection at our schools, with potentially severe outcomes. These waivers indicate you're fully aware of the risks but teacher, staff, student, and community safety are not your #1 concern.

Additionally, please verify that schools do not require families to pay money if they choose the virtual learning option for their child.

Our school has indicated that there may be rolling closures as there are outbreaks through the district. This means more students will be learning from home. If we are already planning to close--potentially multiple times--where is the long term strategy to ensure educational equity until we have a coronavirus vaccine? If we don't have a plan to protect everyone at school, we need to discuss delayed openings.

Show me the accountability, show me the safety

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Katie Martin [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 6:47 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Waivers

I'm writing this on a phone, so I will be brief.
I'm absolutely not comfortable sending my child to school where I have no idea how many peoplee he will be exposed to eveery day. However, I don't really have an option because the alternative is some frankensteined mess of online learning. We had some success with the firat two weeks when the teacher was guiding the curriculum, but I gave up when the canned platform was introduced. I just signed in and completed assignments on my own. Now, I feel comfortable with my decision because my child is doing just fine in school and he has ample learning opportunities in his day-to-day life and due to our circumstances he will easily recover when we get back to normal. If you can't say the same for every other child in this district, then online learning should not be an option. I'd much prefer to see smaller classroom sizes. Perhaps more teachers and temp buildings until something more permanent can be worked out. Online learning is going to be a disaster.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kathy Howell [redacted]
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 8:47 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: State Waivers are not good for Clarksville Students

Honorable State Board Members,

These are definitely difficult times which require unusual adjustments. Students MUST be our first priority as you continually strive to show by the leadership you provide.

These blanket waivers remove the person who most closely works with students—the teacher. Teachers are being given no say in how to best meet the needs of our students. I work with Kindergarten and First Grade Students, some of our most vulnerable population. In our building we have around 40% English Language Learners and over 70% free and reduced lunches. These students must have the best we can provide for them. Teachers work with them daily and because of that they are best prepared to know what their needs are and how to meet their needs. By ignoring PPCs teachers (experts) have no input into how to meet their needs.

The pandemic is upon us! Waivers put the weight on teachers, not the administration. Teachers are on the frontline and will face all of the risk upon returning to school. Administration will basically be exempt from all of the risk.

Please rethink these waivers.

Kathy Howell
Media Specialist
Clarksville Primary School
Clarksville, AR.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Theresa Palmertree [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 5:10 AM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: waivers
Attachments: Dear Board Members 2020.docx

See attachment.

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Theresa Palmertree
Dyslexia Interventionist
Trusty Elementary
3300 Harris Avenue
Fort Smith, AR 72904
[redacted]
fax [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Board Members,

When you vote on Monday, please consider all ramifications before voting. A mass approval isn't the answer with so many unknown. Do we really need to start school with so many unknowns? I thought today about the outbreaks in jails, churches, and nursing homes. All places that confine people in rooms with poor air circulation. Now we add schools to the mix?

I thought about communication, or lack thereof, is a huge problem everywhere. I would urge you to look very closely at the waivers that allow for flexibility in class sizes, additional minutes of non-instructional duties, and the ones that state "Changes to policies adopted on or after July 1, 2020, for the purposes of implementing the Arkansas Ready To Learn Model shall take effect for the 2020-21 school year, and are not required to be submitted to the personnel policy committee before the board votes."

I thought today about class size how some schools already have more kids in a class than allowed by putting the kids on the book somewhere else. How many will they have in a class if given flexibility? How does this help the students?

I thought today about the additional minutes of non-instructional duties. How does this help the students?

I thought today about this because I don't see how not informing the PPC improves student achievement. The waiver says the PPC doesn't have to be informed, not that the PPC has to approve the waivers. So even the right to be informed is taken away by the waiver. How does this help the student?

I thought today about all the additional work that would be required since students can't eat in the lunchroom on the part of the teacher. Have you seen a lunchroom after student finished eating?

I thought about the Teacher Excellence and Support System today and if you want to change something this needs a major overhaul. How does this help the student?

The old saying give them an inch and they will take a mile has the potential with some of these waivers. You may think that the chain of command for expressing concerns is adequate and fair. It is not! The district that I work in have many good administrator but not all have that pleasure. It is awful and friends across the state tells the same stories about administrators. Additionally, please provide a way that can be used by teachers and staff to express concerns and report unreasonable demands. Almost nobody will file grievances because that automatically comes with a label of "trouble maker" or "disgruntled employee".

Thank you for taking the time to read. I encourage you to show up at schools that are struggling unannounced and see the real world.

Theresa Palmertree

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: [redacted] Parson[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 10:52 AM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening of schools

Dear State Board of Ed.

I am a mother of two students enrolled in the Little Rock School District. I am very concerned about the reopening of schools among the ever-increasing number of COVID19 cases in our state. I believe opening schools at this time is ill advised; if we closed schools in March for COVID19 when there was a fraction of the number of cases we see now, where is the logic in reopening in our current state? Furthermore, the schools who have announced reopening are not uniformly requiring masks, something which studies have shown can reduce the spread of the virus. There needs to be a state-wise mandate that masks must be worn in public spaces, including any school that reopens its doors. Such a simple act could save the lives of many students, faculty and staff in our state.

Thank you for your consideration.
Mary Parson

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Holley Shinn [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 11:02 AM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Elementary students are not allowed to wash hands before lunch

I'd like to express concern that many of our schools do not allow elementary students time to wash their hands before lunch. This is unacceptable under normal circumstances, but is especially problematic as we return to school with Covid-19 in our communities.

Elementary teachers are required to follow master schedules to the minute. There is no time in the master schedules for handwashing, therefore it does not happen.

Instead of allowing students to wash their hands, schools provide bottles of hand sanitizer in the cafeteria. The CDC recommends hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available. However, schools with plenty of sinks are using this method to save a few minutes.

There are several problems with our reliance on hand sanitizer. To name a few: Hand sanitizer is only recommended for clean hands; it is not as effective; many kids do not use it as they pass the bottle; and children who bring their lunches never even get in the line that passes by the bottle of hand sanitizer.

Our schools need CLEAR directives to include handwashing time in the master schedules before lunch, and any other time it is expected (i.e. upon arrival, after using playground equipment, etc.). This is a healthy habit that we should be teaching our students, and it is the simplest thing we can do to protect our communities.

Schools should be required to apply for handwashing waivers IF their facilities do not accommodate group handwashing in a reasonable amount of time. They should be required to prove this inability based on a ratio of working sinks and students going to lunch at a given time.

Thank you.
Holley Shinn

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: STELLA CAMERON [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Schools starting in August, 2020

Good Morning,

I would like to discuss the starting of schools in the Fall. Under the current conditions of the pandemic, I do not feel that it is safe. Having taught in schools for 40 years, I know that having been around school children all those years, I have caught every illness they have. My school building is 50 years old and it does not have a great system for air ventilation. If you put 30 to 50 people in the room, we are all breathing the same air and will/do catch any contagious disease that exists. I think that we need to wait until the vaccine is developed.

I really want to be at school with my students, but I do not think it is a safe place to be right now. It is very hard on our school children to not be able to return to school. It is equally hard on the teachers to not be able to be with our students, but we have to have safe working conditions. I have stayed at home as much as possible for the past three months, but have been out a few times to make purchases. When I go into grocery stores and businesses (always with a mask), the people that I see without masks and shopping in groups are the young people. I teach in a high school--my students are posting photos of themselves in social media "hanging out with friends" and shopping in areas without masks. It will be impossible for me to make them all wear masks in the classroom. It is too early to call an end to the health crisis right now. We need the vaccine before returning to the classroom in groups with larger than 5 or 6 students.

Thank you,

Stella Cameron
Central High Librarian
[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Lisa Corrigan [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 12:16 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Flush carefully. Study suggests coronavirus could spread in spray from toilet

Dear Ms. Windle,

I'm writing to you with concerns about the reopening of K-12 in the state this Fall. I'm the parent of a fifth grader in Fayetteville and have several concerns I'd like to see addressed in this next Board of Education meeting.

1.) I'm concerned about disabled and elderly custodial staff whose health will be compromised producing extra labor cleaning and disinfecting surfaces in our schools. Especially since COVID transmission is possibly through feces, I'm worried about bathrooms where the toilets have no lids. This is terrible for the children, but worse with elderly and disabled custodial staff.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexandrasternlicht/2020/04/02/why-you-should-flush-with-the-lid-down-virologist-warns-of-fecal-oral-transmission-of-covid-19/#1cda683b6eb8

2.) Concerned about not mandating masks given that mask wearing easily and safely cuts transmission rates. The science around oral transmission is so much better now than it was in March and mandating is the only way to protect teachers, staff, AND students:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/06/13/spate-new-research-supports-wearing-masks-control-coronavirus-spread/

Thanks so much for taking the time to hear these concerns,

Lisa Corrigan, PhD
Fayetteville, AR

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Randi House [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 12:25 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment for 6/29/2020

Board Members,

As we have weathered this unprecedented time in education together, it is now clear to all that face-to-face learning is irreplaceable and that effective teachers are undoubtedly our greatest resource for students. No significant learning can happen without a significant relationship...face to face, and heart to heart.

We understand and appreciate the state providing flexibility for districts to do what is best for students; however, in the process of utilizing these waivers, we encourage district leadership to remember the social, emotional and physical safety of the teachers. Therefore, problems which may cause a district to rely on a waiver should be discussed with teachers and a collaborative process should be encouraged as solutions are created. We encourage DESE to hold districts accountable for how the waivers are utilized as well as provide opportunities for teachers to provide their input as well. After all, teachers who feel supported and valued make the biggest difference for kids.

We thank you for your continued dedication to the students and teachers of Arkansas and we trust that you will continue to protect our greatest resource in education...our teachers.

Sincerely,

Joel Lookadoo, 2020 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Stacey McAdoo, 2019 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Randi House, 2018 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Courtney Cochran, 2017 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Meghan Ables, 2016 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Karen Norton, 2002 Arkansas Teacher of the Year

Amy Braswell, 2002 Milken Award Winner

Kara Davis, 2016 Milken Award Winner

Randi House

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: E. Bartlett [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 1:08 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Comment for Board Members

Hello,

I am wanting to express my shock and disappointment to see my district, NLRSD, is no longer offering an A/B blended option for school beginning in August. As an educator, I feel full-time 5 day attendance during this time of uncertainty and record increases in infections is not only reckless but potentially deadly for our communities. Please explore all options for the safety of children, educators, and our families.

Thank you.

--
Elizabeth Bartlett

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Amber Pinter [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 1:38 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment for 6.29.2020 mtg

Hello. I am a high school teacher and I am concerned about the waivers that are being proposed which my district has applied for. I am also concerned about the safety of our workplace and the quality of education for students during AMI.

My primary concern is that Personnel Policy Committees (PPCs) will not have input in changes made to policies under the waiver. The policies of our districts act as our contract that we are mandated to adhere to. The proposed waiver would give complete power to the superintendent to change our employment contracts at will and at any time during the school year with no recourse or input from the employees of the district. This is especially worrisome given that the policies once in place, do not have a mandatory sunset clause, such as after the 2020-2021 school year. Since the overall reason for the waivers is to allow flexibility for districts during the public health crisis, then it is logical that emergency policies should be tied to that public health emergency and not continue on in perpetuity.

Additionally, I am concerned about the work safety conditions of our schools and other facilities. The CDC guidelines for physical distancing should require split schedules for students or other means to limit class sizes given that most if not all of our classrooms are not built to accommodate the level of distancing which would be needed. This also makes an even stronger case for students and staff to be required to wear masks in the school setting. There are only three actions to protect the health of students and employees: wearing masks, physical distancing, and frequent hand washing. If these cannot be required and accomplished, then we will be in an unsafe work and learning environment, and should no longer remain on-site due to health and safety conditions.

Finally, the curriculum that is used should be determined by the districts, not at the state level. The directive to not teach new material, and then further restrictions on grading policies and attendance greatly contributed to the AMI quarter's quality being undercut. Students cannot be expected to stay engaged when they are not being presented new material, are not gaining new skills and understanding, and are not being held accountable through grades and other types of assessments.

Teachers are the professionals who will implement the policies which are made. They should have input in their creation through PPCs. Teachers should have input on the safety of their physical workplace. And teachers should be able to teach their class curriculum including assessments and grades when students are off site.

Thank you,
Amber Pinter
Fayetteville, Arkansas

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Molly Carman [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 1:53 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Re: opening schools

Dear Arkansas Board of Education,

With our Covid numbers on the rise, spreading in the community in such a way that our contract tracers cannot keep up, it is much too dangerous for us to reopen schools in August. Instead, we should spend the next month putting our money and time into planning for virtual learning in the fall.

Please consider the following reasons that it is not safe to reopen schools:

1) social distancing is not possible in a school. There are too many students in each class for distancing to be feasible. Looking through the CDC guidelines, I only saw a handful that schools could reliably implement without hiring twice as many teachers.

2) there are SO MANY people in a school who are especially vulnerable to Covid, or who live with people who are. Consider janitorial staff, for example: we would be asking them to do * more* work and take on more risk, when many of our custodians are elderly, and have underlying health conditions. This is unconscionable.

3) Virtual learning is hard to do on the fly, but can work really well if people have time to prepare for it. We should be doing that preparation NOW, and putting our money and energy into making sure that everyone has access to WiFi and computers.

4. The best science out today suggest that people contract Covid in situations that are
1) indoor
2) unmasked
3) involve conversation or singing of long duration We could require masks, but the fact is that school puts lots of people inside, sharing each other's air for long periods of time. This simply is not safe, and we need to snap out of the delusion that we can make it safe by just washing our hands more.

Thank you for your time. I hope that Arkansas will make a decision based on what is best for all of the humans involved in our wonderful public school system.

Regards,
Molly Carman

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Chris Goering [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:08 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns about re-opening public schools

Gina,

I'm a parent in the Fayetteville Public Schools and have a daughter heading to first grade this year.

As you know we're experiencing quite an outbreak here in Northwest Arkansas. My wife and I are also from very secluded rural places in Kansas and Mississippi where COVID-19 is much less of a concern, likely more similar to a large part of Arkansas.

I'm very concerned about sending or not sending my daughter to her school in August. I so much want to but am concerned about her safety, the teachers' safety, the school staff members' safety as well as who she is interacting with each day before she gets home (where I'm concerned for our safety and that of our ederly parents).

Concerns:
1) communication -- how will we really know whether everyone at the school is fully divulging whether they've been exposed or been tested and are awaiting results, for example? It doesn't seem like there's anyway to do that.
2) safety -- teachers who feel compelled (or who are forced) to go to school with pre-existing conditions or are in high risk populations shouldn't have to teach under those circumstances. No one should. The basic needs (Maslow) of children and adults cannot be met because it will be impossible to feel safe.
3) public schools -- I'm concerned for the well-being of our public schools and the messages saying right now that they are opening face-to-face is sending to parents who might feel less committed to public schools than we do. I've seen well-meaning and well-educated people suggest that they will homeschool; I find that very concerning.

Thanks for considering my concerns,

Chris Goering
Fayetteville, AR
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Casi Shanks [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:15 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Fall Public School Semester

Gina,

My name is Casi Shanks and I am a resident of Washington County in the Fayetteville school district. I have been following the state's updates on public school plans for the upcoming semester during the covid-19 pandemic. I am concerned about the following:

1. Safety of our students, educators, administration and facilities staff.

2. Our state's current lag in contact tracing procedures.

3. Super-spreading of the virus due to the intrinsic inability to safely mask/distance buildings full of children who are frequently asymptomatic. (We are watching a similar situation here in NWA with the lack of safety precautions in our meat processing plants.

4. The low-income and single parent families who will be the most effected in this dangerous situation

Please keep these concerns at the forefront of decisions made about the upcoming fall semester. The exponential surge of the virus in our state has left our families terrified and looking to the state for guidance and leadership. Many are beginning to lose faith in our current state administration to adequately protect the most vulnerable of our neighbors. We must make sure any decisions made do not transfer risk to these families during an already tryhbf time.

Thank you for your time.

Casi Shanks

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Annelise Mozzoni [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:18 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening Fall 2020

Good afternoon Ms. Windle.

My name is Annelise Mozzoni. I am a recent graduate and just got hired to teach 8th grade English in the Fall. I have an autoimmune disease, which means my immune system is compromised. I love teaching, but I fear that going back in the fall could risk my life at the age of 23. I understand the ramifications for not opening in the fall, but the risk of opening is far greater. You are not just risking older people's lives, but also the lives of young people who hope to dedicate their whole lives to public education.

I hope you are taking into consideration the lives at risk, rather than just the monetary ramifications. We have to look at the big picture, and that is schools can wait. Our lives can't.

Thank you for your time.

-Annelise Mozzoni

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: lori may [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:30 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Schools re-opening

In regards to the Arkansas Public schools re-opening, I have concerns. It does not appear that there are specific steps being taken to ensure social distancing and mask wearing. My wife and I are both essential workers (ER nurse and 911 dispatcher), therefore we depend on our elderly parents to assist with childcare needs. We are not willing to risk the lives of the grandparents, so that our child can return to school. Our child being exposed to hundreds of kids and adults everyday seems extremely risky at this point. I am also a former teacher and am very concerned for the well-being of our teachers, principals and all of the other staff it takes to run a school. I am concerned for their health as well as the added stress of attempting to maintain a safe and healthy atmosphere. We feel like much more needs to be done to ensure the safety of our schools before we will be ready to have our child return.

Lori May

(mother of a student at [redacted] in Fayetteville)

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Heidi Holland [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:32 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Comment for ADE Zoom Meeting

As our state continues to see active cases of COVID-19 rise, it is becoming increasingly clear that the majority of these clusters are popping up in places like prisons and nursing homes. Unfortunately schools have a very similar structure to these institutions, and educators, unable to enjoy summer break, a time meant to recharge our batteries, so we bring our best selves to the communities we serve in August, are instead coming to terms with the grim reality that awaits us this fall: people we love getting sick, people in the community dying, people counting on us to keep kids safe. At this moment it feels inevitable that educators will be celebrated as "Front Line" workers come fall. That is a lot to come to terms with, especially in a profession that has been glorified not for the compensation we receive but for the martyrdom we portray. If you surveyed the vast majority of teachers, you would certainly realize that the people perpetuating the 'teacher synonymous with saint' persona are those people who benefit from our meager salaries, lack of funding, and increasing responsibilities. What other profession is teaching children how to not get shot?
Many educators around the country have been using this pandemic, and the fertile ground it is giving us, to reflect on the old ways of doing school. In the spirit of reimagining public education, this is an opportunity to hear us out and join us in collaboration. Keeping these waivers vague creates mistrust. If we go back to brick-and-mortar classrooms and schools this fall, there will already be an unfair and unhealthy amount of mistrust and paranoia surrounding the virus. Education is the cornerstone of hope, and hope will be an invaluable energy our communities will need this fall. I am inviting you to work with educators this summer to set a new tone for the fall school year: reimagine teachers not as martyrs, but as professionals, with rights, that you can trust and be transparent with about things that impact and matter most to the survival of healthy Arkansas communities.

Sincerely,
Heidi Holland

--
Heidi Holland. NBCT
ELA Interventionist

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Joni Thomas [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:38 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Regarding schools reopening in August.

Members of the board,

My name is Joni Beasley and I am a teacher at a public school in Arkansas. I am writing to express my concerns about the upcoming school year. First, let me say that teaching is my passion and I agree that face to face class is the ideal method of teaching. However, it is not the only successful method of teaching and learning. Even before COVID-19, students in the state of Arkansas have been attending virtual classrooms and students participate in distance learning in brick and mortar schools all across America. The state recognized these classes as valid learning and a great contribution to our students' education. The argument that student's will not get the necessary education they need by distance learning is invalid in my eyes due to programs such as the Arkansas Virtual Academy- K12, which has been educating students across the state for years. In fact, Act 2325 of 2005 even stated that his method of learning was available "to provide an opportunity for students to access an enriched curriculum and additional courses beyond those mandated by the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools." So if the state can support their own digital learning platform and call it enriched, then digital learning should be an adequate form of education during these unprecedented times. I am not pleading for this method of instruction to be permanent or replace the traditional method of instruction. I am asking for digital learning to be established as the temporary method of instruction while we are all fighting to protect ourselves and our families lives from a potentially deadly virus.

Please allow me to take a moment to tell you about myself and my family. I am a 40 year old mother of four children. I have hypoglycemia, ankylosing spondylitis (an autoimmune disorder), vitamin D deficiency, and I am considered obese by BMI charts. My physical health puts me at a greater risk for complications from COVID-19. I have two sons with asthma, and a daughter that has been diagnosed with the same three medical conditions that I have, fortunately she is managing her weight. I have a husband with high blood pressure . I also have a 74 year old widowed mother, who lives next door to me and visits my house on a daily basis. I purchase her groceries and run her errands for her to help keep her safe. My life and my family's life matters to me just as much as your life and your family's life matters to you. I am afraid for my family if I am forced to return into the classroom this fall.

If students and teachers are forced to return to in class instruction in August during this outbreak, we are putting thousands of families like mine at risk for catching and spreading this horrible virus. A prime example of what will happen if we return to the schools was printed in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on Friday regarding the Nashville School District. Eight Nashville District employees contracted the virus from attending a workshop held on campus which resulted in this school district's superintendent and assistant superintendent to both be hospitalized along with six other district employees. The article also said that three spouses of those employees have now tested positive. This spread was from a workshop filled with adults. Imagine what will happen when you place 30 plus children in a classroom with a teacher who will be required to keep face masks on these students and be expected to teach at the same time. You are asking us to risk our lives, our families lives, our students' lives, and student families' lives to teach students while attempting to keep everyone in that classroom masked, sanitized, and distanced. We all know that this will be an impossible task for teachers and an unnecessary risk for everyone involved.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: NSPDK GammaNu [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:42 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Cc: NSPDK GammaNu
Subject: Re: NSPDK Letter to State School Board Members
Attachments: NSPDK Letter to State Board of Education.pdf

Ms. Windle,

Attached please find a letter from the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc. (Arkansas local chapter) Gamma Nu, to be given to Secretary Key and Members of the Arkansas State Board of Directors in response to the proposal of waivers and school openings in the fall.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions
via the information listed below in my signature area.

Thank You.

--
Dr. Carla F. Carter
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.
President, Gamma Nu Chapter 2019 - Present
Kappa Omicron Tau, Regional Co-Adviser 2019 - Present
National Conclave Coordinator 2013 - 2021
National Committee Member for 100th Anniversary 2019 - Present
www.NSPDKSWGammaNu.org
www.NSPDK.org
NSPDKGammaNu@gmail.com
[redacted]

NSPDK Inc Gamma Nu
Little Rock Arkansas
www.NSPDKSWGammaNu.org
www.NSPDK.org

Secretary Key and the Members of the State Board of Education,

The National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Incorporated is a not for profit professional organization for women in the field of education with over 4000 members, 107 chapters in 40 states, representing educators from Pre K to higher education in all capacities from teachers, instructional coaches, specialists, librarians and administrators.

We, NSPDK, Inc. Gamna Nu chapter, the local and only chapter in the state of Arkansas, write this letter to the state school board members and directors as a request to reconsider the planned schedule for opening schools in the fall and to ask for further clarification of what the waivers will entail, as it pertains to the safety of educators, their children and families, should such "duties as assigned" require additional duties that the CDC recognizes as hazardous and/or for essential health and maintenance workers.

We ask for your consideration of the following on behalf of our constituents and members:

1. The teachers and educators that we represent are majority African American and Educators of Color whose communities have already been disproportionally impacted by Covid -19, from high rates of illness and deaths.

2. Many Arkansas school districts also include students whose demographics have been put at risk and have been underserved in health and wellness because of lack of first response to the Arkansas Covid-19 crisis.

3. Without 24-hour self-containment, teachers nor students can guarantee safe procedures are practiced outside the school day schedule.

4. Students and educators can be asymptomatic and/or be carriers of the virus and not be personally impacted but can infect others.

5. Teachers and educators have not been officially deemed "essential workers" and are not open to extra pay for what the waivers may entail for extra duties associated with health and safety of Covid -19.

6. We ask for a fully integrated and transparent plan for the consistent and equitable distribution of safety training, resources and tools for all teachers and students in all schools for whenever schools will open.

Finally, we hope that Arkansas does not need to learn from the senseless loss of life or staggering increases in Covid cases what Houston and cities in Florida have learned, by opening public spaces too soon. We see in Arkansas, a consistent daily increase by the hundreds of those who have contacted the virus from phased-in openings. With less than 40 days left before school is scheduled to begin, and the summer months not even in full swing there is no way to project the numbers of new Covid cases nor to anticipate the precautions needed to maintain the safety of teachers, their families, nor the students. We owe our students not just a quality education but a safe space for their health and well-being without jeopardizing themselves and their families.

To this end we ask for additional options other than a proposed school opening in the fall.

Sincerely,
Carla Carter
Dr. Carla F. Carter
President, Gamma Nu Chapter, Little Rock, Arkansas
National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.
www.NSPDK.org * www.NSPDKSWGammaNu.org

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Rachel Lipsey [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:44 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Fwd: COVID-19 School Opening Concerns - Minimum Safety Standards

Ms. Windle,

I was told to send comments to the board to you.

Thank you,
Rachel
---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Rachel Lipsey** [redacted]
Date: Sun, Jun 28, 2020, 2:00 PM
Subject: COVID-19 School Opening Concerns - Minimum Safety Standards
To: <ddzook@aol.com>, <susancham78@gmail.com>, <charissedean18@gmail.com>, <brett.williamson@murphyoffices.com>, <Fitz.Hill@arkansas.gov>, <Ouida.Newton@arkansas.gov>, <Sarah.B.Moore@arkansas.gov>, <Kathy.Mcfetridge@arkansas.gov>, <Adrienne.Woods@arkansas.gov>, <Johnny.Key@arkansas.gov>

Dear Secretary Johnny Key and the Arkansas State Board of Education Members,

Thank you for your work in leading the state of Arkansas in education. As preparations begin for the 2020-2021 school year and a potential return to campus after the closure of schools in March 2020; I am reaching out to you to share concerns that I have as a parent of an upcoming 9th grader (LRSD), 7th grader (NLRSD), and 1st grader (NLRSD). To make an informed decision about virtual or in person enrollment of my students, it appears that some additional guidance is needed from the Department of Education. Due to the fact that I am being asked to make a decision with haste (understandable, as the school year is quickly approaching) and you are meeting tomorrow (6/29); I hope that this letter is read by you and your voting members of the board. I appreciate your time.

As we all know, COVID-19 has disrupted all of our lives. The relative short-term effects of the virus have disrupted lives of many worldwide and continue to do so. The UAMS model is expecting exponential growth in positive cases until a peak in September 30, 2020; and the long term effects of this virus are unknown; but the short term consequences have left the state with far too many deaths and long term health consequences are shown in several of cases that have been diagnosed (some especially alarming to children). The safety and health of our students, faculty, and staff in our state's schools should be the highest priority.

As I go through FAQs offered from both school districts that my children are planning to attend in 2020-2021, many items are listed "as enforced by the ADE". The following items are of concern for in-person school opening:

- No Mandatory Mask Usage – The school districts hands are tied and say that they can recommend and provide masks, but they cannot require students, faculty, or staff to wear them. As of today (6/28/20), mask

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Amy Matthews <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:46 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Covid-19 Comments

Good afternoon.
As a teacher and parent of Fayetteville Public Schools, the following are some of my most pressing questions about reopening school in August:

1. Can we, as a district, delay the planned August 13 start to school considering our county is in a massive outbreak of Covid-19 and we are almost maxed out in our local hospital capacity? 2. What is the threshold for closing school? How many ill, hospitalized, and/or dead teachers, staff, or students will it take to close schools? 3. Can we start the school year learning from home and return to the physical classroom once it is safer? 4. Will at risk teachers be given the option to teach virtually? 5. Can we change our student dress code to include mandatory mask use? 6. Can we use the city of Fayetteville mask ordinate to mandate mask use in the school? 7. What can I do as a classroom teacher if a student refuses to wear a mask and is making my work space unsafe? 8. How will social distancing work in my classroom's physical space? Will class sizes be limited to accomplish this? 9. How will we support and protect our janitorial staff and other support staff? 10. Will the district/state provide protective gear and disinfecting supplies to each classroom teacher? Will the district supply air filtration systems for classrooms? 11. What will the attendance policy be? Can we take away penalties for students being absent? Can final exam exemptions be based solely on grades and no penalty for exemptions based on being absent? 12. What will be the protocol if a student in my classroom tests positive for Covid-19? Will all teachers and students in contact with that student be subject to a 14 day quarantine? Will that come out of my personal sick leave accumulation? What if a teacher/staff member is positive? What are the protocols? 13. Will you be able to protect our duty free 30 minute lunch? 14. As a parent of FPS students and as a teacher, how can I make a decision about schooling for my own children if I don't know what safety plans will be in place for in person schooling?

--
Amy Matthews, NBCT
English 12 & Creative Writing
Fayetteville High School
Room 3705

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: lisa hinrichsen [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:50 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Safety in Arkansas Public Schools: COVID 19

Hello,

I am the mother of two children in Fayetteville Public Schools ([redacted]), an educator, and a PTO officer. I am alarmed that mask-wearing will not be required in school (with disability exceptions).

The science is clear that mask-wearing, especially in enclosed public spaces, prevents spread of COVID-19. There is reason to worry about reopening schools without such mandates in place. Particularly in NWA, our numbers and positivity rates, which are already extraordinarily high, will increase and hurt the community at large.

Our region in Northwest Arkansas has seen a staggering increase of positive cases, and Washington County COVID test positivity rates have been above 11% for 28 consecutive days. Recent UAMS modeling shows Arkansas' active COVID-19 cases could reach 175,000 by September 27, with around 3,100 hospitalizations by October. The closely watched Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington shows pandemic deaths in Arkansas could reach 1,650 by Oct. 1.

I believe that mask-wearing must be framed as a community-based commitment, a public health resolution akin to decisions to not smoke on school grounds. There are already many regulations for dress codes and safe behavior in schools, and mask-wearing will have a great impact on the health of those that live, work, study, and serve our public schools. Furthermore, our school communities are deeply connected to the greater community in ways that extend this responsibility. We should be encouraging and modeling such responsible citizenship among public school students.

Please help slow the spread of COVID. I fear a mass exodus from public schools, which are essential to our communities and to democracy, if you do not uphold mask-wearing and other scientific facts about preventing transmission. Thank you.

Lisa HInrichsen
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Brooke Edwards [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:53 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Arkansas's Students

Hi,

My name is Brooke Edwards, and I am the mother to two Little Rock School District students.

Please set criteria for reopening on data related to the spread of the virus, not on the school calendar year. And when schools do open, because it is safe, please require the wearing of masks, enhanced hygiene and social distancing spacing until such time as a safe vaccine is available to all Arkansans.

I am concerned about the state's, and LRSD's in particular, plans for reopening schools in August. The lack of mask requirements is troubling. Students conform to dress codes already, and this is more critical than the width of a kid's tank top strap. In some cases, it could mean life or death.

When schools closed across the state in March, there were but a handful of confirmed cases of COVID-19. Closing then was the right, though difficult, decision. Reopening without strictly following CDC guidelines regarding masks, spacing and hygiene, especially with cases growing exponentially, with no sign of slowing, is reckless.

As a parent, I feel put into an impossible situation. Do I send my children into school buildings and hope for the best? Hope they don't being the virus home to me; hope they don't take it to a teacher. Hope they, themselves don't fall ill? Or do I keep them home and struggle to work full time while attempting to help them complete their schooling virtually?

I realize we all want this to be over and for life to return to as close to normal as possible. But that's not how pandemics work. They are highly predictable. Sending students into school buildings will put entire communities at risk, and avoidably so.

My request is that the State Board of Education recognize that we are still in our peak of this global pandemic, and that we must shelve our desire to return to normal until it is actually safe to do so.

Again, please set criteria for reopening on data related to the spread of the virus, not on the school calendar year. And when schools do open, because it is safe, please require the wearing of masks, enhanced hygiene and social distancing spacing until such time as a safe vaccine is available to all Arkansans.

Thank you,
Brooke Edwards

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Laura Patrick <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Keep schools closed

With the virus numbers rising and people not practicing social distancing we need to remain having school online. My sister is a teacher and she has 4 kids in school and my 75 year old mother lives there too so that is too risky for all of them to possibly be exposed. Please think of how it would affect your family as well. It will not keep children from getting an education. If anything it helps to keep distraction at a minimum. Please hear our voice on this.

Thank you.

Laura Patrick

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Debbie Ellis [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:04 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Waivers and teacher/student safety

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to share some concerns I have as an educator in the state of Arkansas. I know you are meeting Monday to discuss and vote on the waivers for this upcoming school year. I know some waivers are necessary, but I feel that teacher and student safety is being overlooked.

Your meeting will be available only via live stream due to the COVID-19 pandemic, yet you are planning to send us back to school in person. We all have heard the pleas for social distancing and wearing masks, however Commissioner Key has stated that these things may not be "feasible". He was quoted in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette as saying, "Requirements for physical distancing may not be feasible in all situations in every school facility or on school buses, but all efforts possible should be made to observe physical distancing." We have all seen information that shows class sizes will not be lowered. How will we distance in classrooms with 25 children? I teach middle school. I may see 150 students a day. How will they be safe? The only way would be with required masks, very low student numbers, and strict social distancing in the classroom.

We have also heard that children are not as impacted by COVID-19 as much as adults. This may be true, but it doesn't mean they won't get it or carry it to adults who teach them. We know early on there were 8 new cases from the same street in Paragould. Governor Hutchinson was quoted in the state paper saying, "You don't know whether it's kids playing together, or a block party that they didn't do social distancing, but eight came from the same street." Does this not cause you to think about what will happen when we all arrive back at school in person? I also personally know of an 11 year old battling COVID-19 today. I have followed a family of 4 from Conway that all had it and were extremely ill, the worst being the 15 year old daughter. We can't just think kids don't get as sick with COVID and open the doors.

We have seen COVID-19 rapidly spread through nursing homes, prisons, and meat plants. These places are not so different from schools. Their purposes are totally different, but numbers of people confined together for hours a day, makes them very similar. Saturday morning I read in the paper about eight employees of the Nashville School District testing positive. The superintendent is hospitalized and the assistant superintendent is on a ventilator. An elementary principal, a technology coordinator, a central office worker, and a maintenance worker all tested positive. Three spouses of these employees also tested positive. School is not even in session and look at what is happening in this one district. We, as teachers are worried about taking this home to our families. I have been diligent about social distancing, wearing masks, not going into my church or restaurants. I have kept my family at home. We have done what we are being told to do. I think you need to look at how to protect your educators and give us a safe workplace. We have spouses, children, and aging parents to care for.

When I visit the drive thru at Burger King, or any fast food restaurant, I see a piece of plexiglass and fresh air between the cashier and me. At my dentist, I wait in the car until I am told to come in. When I enter, the receptionist has a piece of plexiglass between her and an empty waiting room. At my salon, I wait in the car until I am texted to come in. I have my temperature taken and am asked questions as I enter the door and my contact information recorded. Where are all these safety precautions for teachers? If the safety of teachers and students is not feasible, then you should reconsider the return to face to face instruction.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Nancy Alred [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:05 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School opening discussions

I would like to introduce myself as a retired school teacher. I have been retired almost 3 years now. I have been a substitute teacher since I retired. because I love being in the classroom and helping students learn. I wanted to return this year. but now wont be able to because. being 74. I am considered to be in the high risk are for contracting covid19. I know what a school setting is like and how hard it is to have students sit in a classroom and keep a distance from each other suitable for learning, I cannot see a teacher being able to keep a classroom full of students at a safe distance for protection from covid19. If you have never been in a classroom, then you do not know the difficulty this will bring to teachers. To protect students. teachers. and staff from this horrible virus will not be an easy job. If you have one student who gets ill and vomits in a classroom. it splatters a long way. The the airborne droplets will be there. I taught science and one of the things I tried to impress on my students, was how fast a sneeze travels. and how many of their fellow students would be affected by their sneeze. I taught them how to sneeze in their elbow. and reinforced it almost every day. but it was not a practiced lesson. I have been practicing social distancing, not going out and about, and wearing masks if I had to go to the doctor. My daughter is a school teacher. she has underlying health issues that would make it easy for her to catch covid19. No provisions have been discussed to help teachers who face this problem. What about all the students who also have problems that would put them in danger to get covid19. I have 4 grandchildren in public school right now. two who have asthma. They will be high risk. My daughter has worked from home teaching her classes this spring, and her children did very well in their school work at home. She has also managed to go to the grocery store pickup, bring home supplies for her home and mine. along with groceries, clean them and help take care of all of us. I know that it can be difficult for some parents to have their children at home. but I think they would consider their children's health and even their lives first. There are a lot of children who are raised by grandparents in our state and if they were to bring this virus home to them. they would be risking their caregivers. I plead with you to consider starting the school year out with distant learning, until the virus gets at a low level in our state. I know that Act 2325 of 2005 stated that the virtual academy method of learning was an enriched curriculum and is the digital learning platform for the state. then I feel that it could provide adequate learning for a short while. as we work together as a community to get covid19 under control. One of the problems we have right now is that too many people think that this is not real. and no need to worry. I hope that you see the seriousness of the virus and how it could cause a major outbreak in our schools and lose many students. teachers. and staff. Thank you. Nancy Alred

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Michelle Palmer [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:13 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public School Reopenings

Arkansas School Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns about the reopening of public schools this fall in the middle of the Covid19 pandemic. I am a retired Arkansas teacher and have concerns for my colleagues, grandchildren, daughter who is a school employee, and all of the staff and students of every school in our state. My family and professional ties are with the Bentonville and Fayetteville districts. My points below may seem to contradict themselves. This very complicated decision about when and how to go back to school is riddled with problems to be considered.

1. With no mask directive from the governor, districts do not feel as though they can enforce a mask requirement, in spite of the fact that every district regularly enforces often arbitrary dress codes. While it is not a perfect solution, a mask directive from the governor would give some cover to districts who do not want to take responsibility for requiring ALL staff and students to wear masks. If students must be in school, the science is clear on this issue. Consistent mask wearing reduces spread of the virus.

2. The upward trend in identified cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in Arkansas clearly shows that our state is NOT coming anywhere close to the end of the pandemic. To put our children and staff in harm's way without specific and feasible guidelines is irresponsible and short sighted. "Maintaining physical distance where possible" is not specific, nor is it feasible. The hallways at Bentonville's middle, junior, and high schools are shoulder to shoulder. No schedule can possibly allow for physical distancing.

3. Offering virtual school as a choice places the most marginalized students at risk, as they are the ones who will not be able to make that choice and will have to be in school in potentially dangerous environments. Single parent homes, homes where both parents must work at jobs that can't be done from a computer at home, parents who do not speak English; these are the parents who will have to put their kids on a bus and hope for the best.

4. On the flip side, not opening schools for face to face instruction causes huge problems that are not easily solved and disproportionally affect the most marginalized students. However, opening schools to face to face instruction puts all students and staff (and their families they go home to) at risk of exposure, illness, and even death. What creative solutions can be developed to make virtual school more robust and protective of the most vulnerable?

There is no easy solution to this problem. However, I do not believe that the state or districts have plans in place that will keep staff and students safe. There are tough decisions to be made. I do believe that it would be best for kids to be in school for so many reasons. At this time, however, I do not believe that it is safe for them to be there.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Susan Tesoro [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:13 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening concerns

Hi Gina.
A few concerns I have:
1. Why not make face masks mandatory since physical distancing is going to be impossible in the classroom? We all know that strongly suggesting face masks is very different than requiring them.
2. If students get to school and are surrounded by students not wearing face masks, can they switch to virtual?

3. Will there be temperature checks?

4. Will the attendance policy change? Lets not encourage kids to come to school sick.

5. Please justify how it is appropriate for schools to have mandatory dress codes but not require face masks? Mandatory student IDs for safety reasons but not face coverings, which are backed by science, for the same reason.

6. Can virtual students be allowed to participate in school clubs and sports?

Thank you for your help in addressing these issues.

Sincerely,
Susan Tesoro
--
Susan Tesoro

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Gregory Tesoro [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:19 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Covid

1. Are school districts allowed to make mandatory health and saftey protocols (like mandatory use if masks) that are more protective of as student's and teacher's health and safety than those that are simply "strongly recommended" by the ADE and ADH?

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Ashley Yocum [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:29 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Comments - ADE meeting tomorrow

Good afternoon! I am a parent in Centerton and my kids attend elementary and middle schools in Bentonville School District. I am concerned, not just for my family, but more so for the high risk families in my area who will be at risk every day if we reopen schools too early. I know several teachers in our district and in Northwest Arkansas who gave cancer, or have children with cancer. How can we ensure that they are not at risk when we reopen?

Since March, my family has not gone out to a restaurant, visited a museum, went to the movies, went bowling, or even had playdates with friends. We have cancelled our summer vacation. We don't even feel comfortable visiting with our elderly relatives. I just don't see how it is possible to bring 500+ people together in a building safely at this point. We clearly are having an outbreak here right now. Let's not take any steps that would put our students or teachers at greater risk.

My kids did not do well with virtual school at the end of the year, and both myself and my husband work so homeschooling is not an option for our family. We want our kids to go back to school and return to some sense of normalcy, but in an area as heavily populated as ours and with an ongoing outbreak I just don't see how that will be possible this fall.

Please consider regional differences and do not move forward with a "one size fits all" approach to school opening this year. Many smaller rural schools will be able to open safely and maintain social distance guidelines, but that is just not going to be feasible at an elementary school in Bentonville.

Please also share details about how the schools will react when someone does test positive in a school. Will the school close? Just the classroom? How long? What testing will we require before reopening?

Thanks,
Ashley Yocum

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: kashort <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:34 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns about waivers and safe opening of public schools

Good afternoon.

I teach 5th grade in Springdale public school District Arkansas.

1. I'm very concerned about reopening and the waivers being discussed. I am against any waiver that circumvents teachers' rights to PPC regulations.

2. I am also very concerned about the lack of input to procedures from teachers. I believe a strong plan for students and teachers would be one that both educates and involves the public and gives classroom teachers primary input. I believe we could be invaluable as a resource as we see the daily procedures and processes in our own classrooms and schools, all of which are unique across the state.

3. Also, I have not seen a timeline noted for waivers. This concerns me.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.
Kathy A Short

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Sammi Blanchard <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:38 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening schools this fall

Good afternoon.

I have no doubt that you are being inundated with expressions of concern and questions about plans to reopen Arkansas schools this fall.

It goes without saying that our schools and teachers provide so much more than education to our children, families and communities. They double as childcare for working parents, help ensure food security for children who may not be receiving adequate food and nutrition at home, and they provide the environment in which our children grown and develop socially.

I know we cannot possibly know what the COVID-19 crisis will look like at the beginning of the school year. As things stand in Arkansas, and even in surrounding states, the current trajectory is alarming. Many of us struggled with distance/crisis learning at the end of the previous school year.

I know that parents have the option of virtual learning or in Bentonville, "Blended Learning," but the safety guidelines for in person school still feel extremely vague. My child will be entering first grade. She hasn't dealt with the isolation we have been trying to maintain for the sake of loved ones who are at a higher risk than we ourselves are. We feel there is no choice for her but the blended option, because she needs the social interaction that school provides, and as we felt with kindergarten, first grade is such a foundational year for learning to read, write and do basic math.

I am just really worried about her safety, but also, the safety of teachers and staff, especially in a situation where students are only being "strongly urged" to wear masks. And of course, mask wearing for young children presents so many issues—keeping them on, wearing them correctly, avoiding fidgeting with them, etc. I believe masks are a key element in keeping things safer as we continue our lives and we wear them as recommended.

I don't have any suggestions, and I know the task of providing education to our children during this time is daunting to say the least. As a parent, I just sincerely hope that we as a state will continue to look at the situation on the ground and make reopening decisions based on what is actually happening with the virus in our state and surrounding areas.

Everyone deserves a quality education, but everyone must be as safe as we can make them.

I wish you and your colleagues the best as you navigate all of these issues. There are so many things to consider, and I know there are so many moving parts and components on your plate.

Thank you for your time.
Samantha Blanchard

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Darby Wallace <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:40 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Risks to health and lives of students and teachers

Please do NOT ask teachers and students to return to on-campus schooling in August. The increase in COVID cases is just too high to risk the lives of our students and teachers.

We know adult educators in Nashville, AR contracted the virus in the course of doing their jobs and likely spread it to their families.

We know at least 4 football teams have suspended practices and are in quarantine due to positives cases.

Church-based cases are growing. Church lasts roughly an hour one time a week. Students and teachers are together for hours, day after day.

Social distancing is impossible in our already crowded classes and hallways. Will teachers be tasked with cleaning desks between classes? From where will the cleaning supplies come? Our schools notoriously lack adequate soap and paper towels. When will we wash our own hands?

Virtual learning is not ideal. However, it is an option and teachers were able to continue educating students throughout the spring. With time to plan, they can do more in the Fall. At least, teachers and students are not putting each other at risk of contracting the virus, becoming very sick, and possibly dying.

Teachers already give so much of themselves to their students. They shouldn't be asked to risk their lives.

Thank you for taking time to consider what's safe for our students and teachers.

Darby Wallace
Arkansas K12 educator for 26 years

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Christina Hoisington <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:43 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School Board Questions/Concerns

I am concerned that the sick days I have been banking are going to be wiped out by Covid-19 illness. Are employees going to be required to use their sick days for Covid-19? A 14-day isolation period alone represents more than a year's worth of designated sick days.

Masks should be mandatory for staff and students (and anyone in public) PERIOD. While I realize some students will be unable to wear masks because of authentic health reasons, this documentation should be filed with the nurse. Social distancing is not a true possibility in a classroom. There is not enough space for social distancing in class or in other areas of any building.

There is a legitimate concern that waivers allow districts to "do the best they can" within guidelines. Waiver possibilities are frightening as they allow risks to be taken with faculty, staff, and student safety. What recourse do staff have if their safety is endangered?

Tina Hoisington
NBCT: Early and Middle Childhood/Literacy: Reading-Language Arts

Phone: [redacted]

Old High Middle School
406 NW 2nd Street
Bentonville, AR 72712

Where Excellence Lives

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Amanda Heinbockel <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:45 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment for Board of Education DESE June 29th meeting

Johnny Key & Board Members.

I have been an art teacher at LIttle Rock Central High School for the past 7 years.

I am very concerned that your focus as a board has been on waivers rather than protecting our kids and educators. Teaching 150 students virtually is considerably more time consuming than teaching in person. I will be spending extra time making calls home about students having trouble connecting and making extra efforts to get supplies to students who are spread out all over the city. I will be scheduling more one-on-one conferences with students. This is not a time to be waiving laws about class sizes that were put in place to protect our kids. Our kids need our time more than ever.

I am also extremely concerned that your department has signaled that schools should reopen "as normally as possible," and by the lack of leadership on safety precautions including requiring masks. When you tell kids that masks are only "recommended," you set up our students, families, and staff to bear the burden. How can we possibly imagine reopening, when you can't even speak truth to the dire necessity of personal protective equipment?

Finally, I am struggling to grasp how you can legally have a private Zoom meeting about waivers that is not open to the public.

Sincerely,

Amanda Heinbockel

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Lynn Pevehouse <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:48 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Arkansas State Board of Education meeting, Monday, June 28, 2020

To the Arkansas State Board of Education:

I am writing to you in regards to the Summary of Process for LEAs to request waivers necessary to implement the Arkansas Ready for Learning Model.

After reading the waivers. I have several concerns and questions:

1. In the summary. it states that "The following waivers apply only on days, or portions of days. when technology-based approaches are the primary instructional delivery, for specific groups of students that are receiving their instruction primarily through technology-based approaches, or for staff providing instruction primary through technology-based approaches. or if necessary to implement ADH requirements or guidelines."

Doesn't this basically cover all education in Arkansas for the 20-21 school year? All the waivers that deal with duty. planning time, and duty free lunch could easily be construed to apply to both virtual teachers and teachers in the brick and mortar campus. In the midst of a crisis, while teachers are attempting to provide blended learning for students at school and at home. eliminating planning time to make those changes seems counterproductive.

2. Changes to Code 6-17-204 and 6-17-205 are a wild overreach. Why is it necessary to eliminate the need for teachers. through their duly elected PPCs, to approve these waivers? Contracts for most districts in the state have been signed. and this is a major modification to the policies put into place after teachers have signed contracts. To make matters worse. 6-17-205 eliminates the need for these waivers to even be submitted to the PPCs. So not only are the teachers not being allowed to vote on waivers/changes in policy that have taken place AFTER signing contracts, the teachers don't even have to be notified that these changes have taken place! The loss of both of these rights is extremely concerning, especially when there is NO expiration date for these "emergency" waivers. The Arkansas State Legislature has looked into teacher retention. and eliminating the rights of a teacher to be notified of changes and to vote on those changes is not a positive step in attempts to retain teachers.

I also fail to see how eliminating the need to have teachers ratify changes to their policies. or even be notified about those changes. will in any way benefit the educational process.

3. The waivers regarding class size. Code 6-17-812. DESE rules3.01-7.10.1. are also concerning. Is this solely applicable to students who will be enrolled in Virtual academies? I don't understand how increasing class size in online learning is beneficial to the students.

The phrasing at the end of the waiver for DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load is open to interpretation: "or for staff providing instruction primarily through technology-based approaches." This could easily be construed to apply to teachers who are being asked to blend their classroom learning so that it can easily be moved to online learning in case of emergency. If I'm being asked to provide my class lessons in an online. technology-based approach. does that mean that my class size can be waived to go over my current limit

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Veronica Paulson McClane <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:48 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Fwd: Waivers Meeting-Public Comments

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Veronica Paulson McClane** <[redacted]>
Date: Sun, Jun 28, 2020 at 3:44 PM
Subject: Waivers Meeting-Public Comments
To: kimberly.mundell@arkansas.gov <kimberly.mundell@arkansas.gov>

Ms. Mundell,
These are my public comments for the upcoming waiver meeting to be held tomorrow. I am a parent in the Little Rock School District. I am extremely concerned about some of the proposed waivers and how they will impact teachers and students throughout the state. Our teachers need more protection right now, not less. They need more compensation for what they are doing, not less. They need more time to plan, not less. They need less students in their rooms, not more. They need more time throughout the day to adjust and make sure they are able to provide quality education, not less. All of this will require support and constant checking in on what the teachers and staff need. To waive any rights they have to voice their needs is not effective and will lead to massive difficulties down the road.

I think the most important thing this board can do right now is slow down, take a breath, and look at including the personnel policy committees in any and all decisions. Waivers that leave out the voices of the very people you are asking to put their lives on the line to teach our children is not only cruel, but very misguided. It is your duty to include teachers and staff in this conversation. The voices of the people you are putting in harms way are not being heard, and you keep taking those options away at every turn.

Sincerely,
Veronica McClane

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Sarah B. Thompson <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 3:49 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Opening of public schools

Good afternoon. I am a retired school librarian and spent the last 25 years of my career in the Fayetteville School District. I also was librarian in the Rogers School District and Greenland School District. I am a retired member of Arkansas Education Association and the Arkansas Retired Teacher Association.

I have many concerns about students and teachers, but will focus on children and parents in particular.

1. It is good that parents are being asked to decide whether to enroll their children in either online instruction OR face to face instruction.
2. Many families who have privilege will be able to make this decision.
3. Many families will struggle with the decision and may opt for face to face because they must work and cannot leave children unattended in their homes.
4. Some families that may prefer to opt for online instruction may not be able to do so because of lack of devices and/or access to reliable internet.
5. Some families may not receive any adequate information due to the short window of time that the district has provided to make said decision.
6. Some families will show up on first day of school unaware that there was a decision making process at all.

All of these families are worried about the health and safety of their children. All of these families want their children to have the best education possible. *Please remember that there will be children who will fall through the cracks due to uncertainty and situation.* The state and each district must provide clear and reasonable flexibility in order to meet the needs of all families. The state and each district must make every effort possible to reach and inform all families prior to the beginning of the school term.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Thompson

Sarah B. Thompson
(She, her, hers)
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Julianna Tidwell <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:00 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment for Special State Board of Education Meeting

To whom it may concern:

Good afternoon.

My name is Julianna Tidwell and I am a 9th grade ELA teacher in the Springdale School District.

1. My main concern about reopening public schools in the fall is whether or not students and staff will be required to wear masks in the classroom. Right now I know the CDC and the ADH are strongly recommending all individuals 10 years old and over wear a face covering. I am concerned that a strong recommendation will not be enough to ensure an effective reduction of the spray of droplets in the school building. Part of what makes mask-wearing an effective preventative measure is having all people-infected or not, symptomatic or not-wear masks in public settings. If students and staff have the option of not wearing a mask, despite the strong recommendations, I think it would be unwise to allow on-site instruction to resume in the fall. Based on the evidence provided by the CDC in support of masks, I think one of the only ways it would be acceptable to reopen schools in the fall is if masks were required for all students and staff in the building whenever social distancing is not possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Best,
Julianna Tidwell

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Angel Mattes <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:02 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Schools Reopening

Hello.

I am a parent of 3 children in the Bentonville School District, and I wanted to express my concerns about the schools reopening this fall.

1. Arkansas is one of the fastest growing states in terms of Covid cases, and it's clear that our reopening May 1st has only resulted in more cases of coronavirus. If we as a culture of adults cannot safely and responsibly social distance and wear masks, then I do not have confidence in school children to be realistically able to do so.

2. The circumstances that would be required of our schools and staff to safely accommodate returning students during a pandemic would be costly and nearly impossible to successfully carry out.

3. While I appreciate having the choice whether to keep our children home, or have them return to school, but for many working families, this is simply not an option. So many of the children returning to school in the fall will be coming from poor families, who are already at risk for contracting the virus due to other factors.

I implore you to reconsider the plans to reopen schools this fall. Experts are predicting that Arkansas won't even see the peak of Covid cases until the end of September. It is too early to consider reopening the schools. This decision will put lives in jeopardy.

Thank you for listening.

Angel Mattes

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Tracy kindergarten <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:04 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Monday's Virtual Meeting

Subject:
Dear Board Members.
While doing the near impossible task of working out details of the 20-21 school year, I would respectfully ask that the Board consider the safety of a precious resource- your teachers. One of our main jobs as teachers is to make children feel safe and loved. I do not see evidence that there will be resources available in time for this to happen effectively by August, neither do I see this relentless virus letting up during summer months when people are more spread out. Everything that is known about COVID proves that putting a large group of people together (talking) for a long period of time in an enclosed poorly ventilated area (a classroom) is the WRONG thing to do. Because I teach kindergarten, compound that by realizing my students have only been alive five years, and developmentally are not able to stay in one place, stop singing, not come to an adult for physical comfort, wear a mask correctly, not hug a friend or have mastered physical hygiene at a basic, much less surgical level. How much education will really be happening? How much loss of LIFE will there be? To ask teachers to disregard their own mental and physical health and that of their family's to walk into that everyday without any kind of assurances (because of waivers) is concerning to say the least. As you have your meeting virtually please remember why you are meeting that way and please remember: Teachers' lives matter too.
Respectfully,
Tracy DeClue

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Nicole Mozzoni <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:11 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School opening

Dear School Board Members,
My name is Nicole Mozzoni, and I am an employee in Rogers Public Schools.
I am very concerned about opening up in August.
It doesn't seem that there is enough knowledge about transmission or prevention being implemented prudently.

I feel school should be delayed.
Masks should be required if not delayed.
No accommodations have been made for social distancing on the buses. To have children huddled together en route to an 8 hour day where they'll be huddled together again in class, is a complete public health risk.
I know many of my peers and coworkers have health risks. You will be knowingly putting employees lives at risk.
Please decide on the side of science and respect of human life.
A new way to look at education for 2020: Health far outweighs achievement. It's time we all put new eyes on and let our hearts see a safe new day together.
Please delay opening.
My Best,
Nicole Mozzoni
Jones Elementary, Rogers
[redacted]
Sent from my iPhone

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Paul Gattin <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:11 PM
To: ddzook@aol.com; susancham78@gmail.com; charissedean18@gmail.com; brettwilliamson@murphyoffices.com; Fitz Hill; Ouida Newton (ADE); Sarah Moore (ADE); Kathy McFetridge; Adrienne Woods (ADE); Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Safety of teachers

I am writing in response to the many concerns I have regarding the start of the 2020-2021 school year. After reading about the virus cases that were spread at a small professional development setting in the Nashville School District, how do you plan on keeping everyone safe when larger districts meet for our professional development? I do not understand why we are required to have face to face PD this summer. I also worry about the Open Houses districts have currently planned.

The safety of our children is very important but so is the safety of our teachers. What money has been allocated for protection in our classrooms? I have not heard one district purchasing plexi-glass for desks. Just requiring masks will not stop the spread. In larger districts, social distancing will nearly be impossible.

I absolutely love teaching but will not feel comfortable going to school when I know it is not safe. Not only will I worry about contacting the dreadful virus but bringing it home to my family. Please consider more guidelines to make sure school districts are doing everything they can to keep everyone safe. If it means starting virtually, so be it. I am so anxious to get back doing what I love, but I cannot do that worrying every day if I am infected.

Thank you for all you do.
Lisa Gattin

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kelly Simon <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:23 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: SBE comments

Thank you for your time reading public comments.

As you consider the waivers that have been proposed for the upcoming year, I hope you will ask yourself if each waiver serves to better educate the children who are the center of education. For example, how does increased class size enable the teacher to serve students more effectively? Will this action affect all students equally, or will it impact students of color disproportionately? How does reduced planning time enable a teacher to prepare high quality, differentiated lessons? By removing duty-free lunch, teachers lose the much needed break to refresh and rejuvenate before continuing teaching. It is my sincere hope that you will consider each waiver on its own merit and not as a package.

Without a doubt, these times are unprecedented and require sacrifices from all of us, but sacrifices at the expense of a child's education are not sacrifices that serve the greater good.

Thanks,
Kelly Simon
Nationally Board Certified Teacher

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Yina Li <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:28 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Cc: Yina Zhang
Subject: Concerns/questions about school opening

Hi Gina.

My name is Yina Zhang and my son is going to kindergarten this fall in Fayetteville School District. I have following questions in regarding to school opening.

1) Is the class size going to smaller than before for traditional learning? How many students are allowed for each class? Is there a desk spacing requirement (6 feet apart) between each kids? Are they going to take turns to take breaks?

2) Is July 10 the final dates that we have to make decision by? Are we allowed to change decision? After the school starts. are we allowed to change from traditional learning to online learning. if any spikes of cases appears? If the school still opens when there is a spike. do we have our own choices to change to online learning?

3) Are the kids going to take turns to go to cafeteria? Will students be seated 6 feet apart? Will the amount of students in cafeteria be limited to a certain percentage of its capacity? If the cafeteria can not make enough arrangement. is this possible to allow parents to take kids out for lunch and bring them back before afternoon class starts?

Regards.
Yina

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Melinda Smith <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:31 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public School in the Fall

Dear Ms. Windle.
This is a very difficult letter to write. I am a high school teacher in Hot Springs Arkansas. I am of the opinion that all Arkansas schools need to be in online -instruction until we have full deployment of a covid-19 vaccine. Crowded. close contact. indoor spaces are just the sort of "3C" spaces the CDC warns about. UAMS models project that our COVID peak in September will be catastrophic. Long term effects of covid on children have not been fully appreciated or researched. We know what it does to adults in the short and long term. I did not come to that conclusion lightly nor without serious considerations of the numerous downsides that the removal of in-person instruction will have for the community.

That being said. I am aware our Governor and state leaders have declared we are "open for business" death be damned. Therefore I implore state officials to look outside of Arkansas so that they can discover serious. thoughtful and careful reopening plans that are based on science not economic or political expediency. Take a look at Hamilton County School District in Chattanooga TN for example which ties the stages of opening to infection rates and makes masks and social distancing mandatory not "if feasible.' There are many states finding creative compromises instead of finding ways to coerce teachers to work in unsafe and unproductive environments and silencing educators voices through the waiver process.

Taking away teacher planning. removing what little accountability there is with the personnel committees and school board input process fails to inspire confidence in the state's "solution." We are most definitely. "NOT READY."

Sincerely.
Fearful Teacher

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Holly Howard <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:31 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: AR School Reopening

To whom it may concern:

I write to you today not just as a teacher but as a human being. My concerns are real, serious, and worth consideration. I have worked as a proud Arkansas public school teacher for thirteen years. While Arkansas public schools can sometimes get a bad rap in the nationwide discussion of education, I have fought vigorously to defend our state's educational system. After watching my mom serve as a special education teacher in Arkansas for thirty years, and my work in three different Arkansas school districts, I have hope that we are moving in the right direction.

My concerns I'd like to share with you today are not about the quality of education or the design of the curriculum covered in our classrooms. Today, I write to you, quite frankly, to plead for our lives. Teachers are trained to put the health and safety of our students first, and I have done that diligently for my entire career. However, it is time for teachers to stand up and express concern for their own health and safety.

COVID-19 is presenting our country with challenges we've never thought possible, and the problems we face are unlike any I could have ever imagined—even in the most obscure creative writing assignment I could ever have created. Parents are currently leading the fight for the health and safety of their own children, and school districts seem to be catering their plans and decisions to please parents. We understand that Arkansas parents struggled for weeks to homeschool their own children after schools shut down on March 13; however, Arkansas teachers fear the struggle ahead of us that could last for months.

I currently serve as a teacher representative on our district's reopening task force, and I have heard from hundreds of teachers in our district who are expressing life or death concerns. The number one concern I have heard from teachers is the state's decision to change the language from requiring facemasks to "strongly recommending" them in the buildings. Science has proven that facemasks drastically reduce the chance for transmission of COVID-19 and not requiring them defies all logic. Teachers and students are already taking a risk entering the building and not requiring masks only exacerbates the anxiety teachers are facing about the upcoming school year. While I realize there is a group of Arkansans who vehemently believe that requiring a mask violates their freedoms, the lives of teachers are not expendable and neither are the lives of students.

I read in the Arkansas Gazette this weekend that COVID had been transmitted among multiple members of the Nashville School District Central Office. I have worked for a district of a similar size in the past, and if the disease can spread that heavily through a small office, imagine what will happen in larger districts. I work in a building with almost 4,000 students and almost 300 staff members. Students cross paths with thousands of students each day in the hallway, and our classrooms are not large enough to adequately social distance students' desks at the recommended six feet.

Right now, it feels as if the ADE/DESE is sacrificing the lives of teachers and students in order to pacify parents who are eager to send their students back to school and to maintain the Arkansas economy. The reality is that UAMS and other medical professionals project that our spike in the state won't occur until September, a month after we return to schools. Instead of trying to stave off panic, the state should be focusing efforts on ways to support parents, our less vulnerable students, and teachers in the inevitable reality that we must return to digital learning as a state.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Brenda Robinson <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:37 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Waivers

State Board of Education Members.
As you discuss the waivers to implement the "Arkansas Ready For Learning", I am an educator and want to share a few concerns with you.
1. The PPC is the only way educators are able to have a voice and a seat at the table to discuss the teaching and learning environment. Educators are often left out of the conversations and decisions that impact teaching and learning. Bypassing the PPC should never be an option.
2. The re-opening of school for the 2020-2021 school year must be rooted in the health, safety and equity. These waivers will shift the risk of accountability from school districts to school employees.

Thank for your time and consideration.

"Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it"- Maya Angelou

Brenda Robinson
NEA Director-Arkansas
NSPDK Gamma Nu Epistoleus

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Janelle Potts <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:42 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: masking

As a family physician and parent of a child in the Rogers School distract, I support mandatory masking for older children and staff. Younger children may do better with face shield but that would be better than nothing.

Please make school safe to return in the fall.

Janelle Potts
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Heather Clifton <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:42 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: State board questions

Why can't decisions for online/traditional be evaluated by parents on a monthly or quarterly basis? Locking us in to an entire semester is difficult. Can more details regarding traditional schooling be send out before the deadline? Regarding masks, recess, lunches, activities, etc. How will masks be enforced?

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]