Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Jeff Ayers <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:43 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns for consideration, 6/29 state board meeting

Hello. My name is Jeff Ayers. I, along with my wife [redacted], are teachers in Rogers, AR. We have numerous concerns about opening school in person in August.

1. COVID-19 will still be active. There is no indication whatsoever that numbers will be going down in the coming weeks. You are planning to send students and teachers into an environment that WILL foster the spread of this virus among the general population, in addition to students and teachers.

2. In an effort to accommodate many new changes, the suggestion that planning times might be abrogated is insane in general and hurtful to families like ours in particular.

3. My wife is nursing our infant son, and will have to pump at work in the fall. Cutting her planning time will make that prohibitively difficult, if not outright impossible.

4. My wife also has asthma. It's currently controlled by medication, but she does not need to be exposed to 25 students every day. She and hundreds of other teachers are at risk in the current environment.

5. Of schools open, there will be thousands of families who WILL send their children to school, regardless of symptoms present, out of necessity. No amount of "recommending" is going to prevent that.

6. I understand concerns about feeding students. This should still occur, but it should happen independently of school attendance.

I urge the board to please recommend NOT RETURNING IN PERSON this fall. The governor has already taken some necessary steps to insure that rural families have access to broadband internet connections. There may be further steps necessary to insure equitable access to online learning (vouchers for internet access for those in poverty, programs to buy and deliver internet-ready devices, and so on). If these are the steps necessary, then we must take them.

Please make the right choice, and urge the governor to make the right choice.

Thank you.

-Jeff Ayers, Rogers, AR

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Peter Horton <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:45 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Safe Public Schools

Gina.

My wife is a teacher in the Rogers Public Schools and my children both attend two different schools in that school district. My concern with reopening schools for in-person instruction in August is that it is fundamentally unsafe to do so. If, as research seems to show, children can get Covid-19 but remain asymptomatic or minimally affected, then that would present an unacceptable risk to both adult educators as well as the families those children go home to every day. The information that we have seen from the district is that masks will not be required, either for children or adults, but only highly suggested. This is a recipe for disaster. Taking that into consideration along with the upward trajectory of current infections, especially in Northwest Arkansas, and the fact that Mercy Hospital is already beyond their maximum ability to adequately care for Covid patients, then we have a public health disaster looming.

It is not safe to return to school without major efforts to mitigate all of these factors. The fact that the Rogers School District has not consulted either their educators or their school nurses before releasing their 'plan' speaks volumes and I find very troubling.

Any return to school without effective safety measures is just normalcy theater which will inevitably result in an explosion of cases and deaths. It is unconscionable.

Thank you

Peter Horton

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Liz Krauft <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:47 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Masks in schools

Hello there,

As most parents do, I have many concerns about my kids returning to school in August. My number one concern is how we will be able to minimize the spread of Covid 19. As a nation, we severely lack in tools beyond wearing face coverings. I urge the Arkansas School Board to require face coverings for ALL students at school and all school sanctioned events. It should be treated as a dress code requirement in each district. Voluntary participation in mask wearing has been low, and sadly that's why we need a mask mandate. Our children, teachers, and all staff deserve to be kept as safe as possible.

Liz Krauft
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Hillary Hoyt <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:48 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: 20-21 school year

Hello Gina,

My name is Hillary Hoyt and I am a lifelong member of Rogers, AR. I am also a single mom. I typically manage Iron Horse Coffee in downtown Rogers but am currently unemployed until my role is again necessary. I am currently looking for employment but not having a plan for next year makes that task virtually impossible. My children's father is a nurse at the VA and their stepmom is a nurse at NW Bentonville. My father just hung his hat as parish manager of St Vincent Catholic Church in Rogers and I know will weigh in on what SVDP school does next year. I write this ALL to say that I am informed from many different perspectives. I will have a 7th grader starting [redacted] and a 6th grader at [redacted] They have different needs and are at an age where I am letting them choose their path. I will say that as a someone who has experienced both public and private education for myself and children...Eastside has far exceeded any education I could have imagined. Both academically and real-life experience. My eyes were opened tremendously at during my children's 2 years there. I could sing of their praises to anyone that will listen.
I am listening to the advice of everyone involved and would like the kids to do AT LEAST the first semester remotely and then reassess over Christmas break. St Vincent did a decent job with their set-up last year but I know it was stressful for many. What's more stressful is getting a job knowing I may have to quit if the decision to close school is made last minute. I worry what will happen when a child or family at any of the schools tests positive. You have pregnant teachers, teachers with health problems or kids or loved ones with compromised immune system. There is so much at stake here. If there is not a clear plan laid out I would the schools to provide Homeschool resources. It may be our only option going forward if the school really believes it can start teacher training in 40 some odd days. What happens when one teacher at those trainings gets sick? We have to be prepared for school NOT being onsite. I hope that we as parents are given a realistic virtual option for our children. I hope teachers well being and lives are considered in the decision. It's not just about me and my kids. There is a community that is about to be in trouble. Ask the doctors.

Best regards,
Hillary Hoyt
[redacted]

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

[redacted] [redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Marjorie Hignite <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:49 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: State Board of Education Questions

Hello,

Thank you for bringing our questions to the Arkansas School Board.

1.
2.
3. Will the waivers be guaranteed to end in one semester or one school year?
4.
5.
6.
7. Can we remove the PPC waiver that takes away all voice from the teaching staff? Teachers
8. should be an integral part of decision making regarding student and staff health and well-being.
9.
10.
11.
12. Why are we waiving class size and teacher class load requirements?
13.
14.
15.
16. How are school districts going to be held accountable for student and staff safety?
17. Accountability should not be shifted from the districts making the decisions to the teachers being left out of the decisions.
18.
19.
20.
21. When we have 30 students in a small classroom, where social distancing is impossible,
22. will teachers be able to require students to wear masks. If the teacher has high blood pressure, diabetes, or COPD will the teacher be able to require students to wear masks? Will school districts provide adequate cleaning supplies, disinfectants, and hand
23. sanitizer to every classroom for the entire year?
24.
25.
26.
27. With the possibility of multiple exposures happening throughout a school year from
28. both family and students, will schools be required to offer Covid quarantine days if students are still onsite at that time?
29.
30.
31.
32. How will exposure be dealt with at a high school where every student can come into
33. contact with hundreds of students a day?
34.

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Sharon Hamilton <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:50 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Health Concerns for Directives to Reopen Schools 2020/2021

As an educator from Mountain Home AR, I am deeply concerned about The ADE's directives for school opening in August. I personally am in the high risk category. I also have fears for my students coming back along with their families. After 18 years in teaching, I would never have imagined that my job, that I love so much, would be life threatening. I have not heard one health care provider that were not a proponent for hand washing, wearing a mask & social distancing for our safety. Please for the sake of our students reconsider our needs.
As my physician said, "schools will become a huge petri dish for Covid 19."
Thank you,
Sharon Hamilton

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Ashley Rosenbaum <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:50 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns about Re-Opening

Gina,
I am writing to express my concerns about re-opening public schools in the fall. I work in Rogers Public Schools.

1) Many teachers have underlying health conditions or take medications that suppress the immune system and some teachers don't have the option to take a leave of absence until a vaccine is created (due to financial reasons). I am concerned about my health and well-being with my underlying conditions and I am concerned about my mother's health, who also works in Arkansas public schools. Neither of us can take a leave until we are safe again, so there needs to be an option for teachers with these concerns. What accomodations are going to be an option for these employees?

2) The statement about staff, parents, and students self-screening before coming to school is not effective. We need to be able to screen students at the door in order to prevent the virus from coming into the school. Some parents will not screen their children and will send them to school sick and some staff members will do the same. They need to be screened at the door.

3) Class Sizes- In some areas of the country, classes are smaller and alternating days they go to school. This would be a good solution for making sure social distancing is possible and minimizing the amount of students in a classroom.

4) Distance Learning- Distance learning is not an easy option and is very difficult for teachers and students but it may be the best option. It isn't convenient to do distance learning but if it saves a life, it is well worth it.

I think it is also important to note that if meetings regarding opening schools are being held virtually, then how is it safe to even open schools? Just some food for thought.

I appreciate you taking the time to hear my concerns for both my health and family's health in addition to my co-workers and students' health.

Thank you,
Ashley Rosenbaum

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Matthew Petty - [redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:51 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reconsider school opening

Thank you for considering my points.

1) What happens when staff and admin get sick? Should we even reopen? I don't think so. We should make sure teachers and parents are paid to stay home.

2) masks should be required. How many teachers can we afford to sacrifice?

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Amber Jackson <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:51 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: State school board meeting parent questions/concerns

Hello,

My name is Amber Jackson and I am a parent of two students attending Fayetteville Public Schools here in Arkansas. I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the upcoming 2020/2021 school year and covid-19.

My district is only 'encouraging' and not 'requiring' face masks for students, teachers and staff. This is absurd as we all know the data surrounding transmission and spread of covid-19. Without mandatory policy where face masks are considered dress code, we know that certain infection and death will occur amongst our Fayetteville school families. This is unacceptable.
1. Make masks MANDATORY STATEWIDE. Include face coverings as part of dress code policy.
2. Develop protocol and procedure regarding enforcement of said dress code / face coverings.

Because it is highly likely we will 'go virtual' again due to the consistent rising numbers of cases in our state, I DEMAND we go VIRTUAL NOW so that we can plan and innovate for how to best virtually educate our students and meet other family needs like food insecurity, virtual connectivity, etc. Employ social workers, crowd sourcing, community resources and engagement. Let's plan! Let's innovate!

Professionally, I am a social worker currently in private practice. I believe our students will be able to mentally, emotionally and psychologically get through these transitions- if the adults take care, out safety first, and then role model how to be flexible and less attached to status quo- let's show our young people how to overcome through innovation, not casually giving up, allowing infection and death to be part of the 'business as usual' approach.

Let's role model for the country how to get this done!!

I have always been so proud to be an Arkansan and my children have been given the best educational opportunities and I am so thankful for the experiences the Arkansas Department of Education has given them. Did I mention my husband is also a teacher? He teachers AP Art at Fayetteville High School. We are so proud to be an educator family of Arkansas.

Please do the right thing and mandate all public school curriculum be virtual and let's start planning!

Thank you for your time,

Amber Jackson
Mother of 2 students
Wife to a teacher
Member of a community that doesn't want to get infected via my teacher-husband and spread it to my clients and other persons. GO VIRTUAL

--
Amber A. Jackson, LCSW

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Heidi King <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:52 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comment foe Special Board of Education Meeting 6/29

Thank you for your time reading public comments.

As you consider the waivers that have been proposed for the upcoming year, please consider each one In terms of how it will meet the needs of children. For example, how does increase class sizes impact the needs of children academically, socially, and in terms of health? Will this action affect all students equally, or will it impact students of color disproportionately? How are the needs of students poverty being met by reducing planning time for teachers? When will teachers plan to meet the needs of both their physical students in the classroom and the students they are teaching virtually?
How does reduced planning time enable a teacher to prepare high quality, differentiated lessons?
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 we need to do things differently both for health and safety and to meet students needs. Waiving provisions that protect students and teachers can't help but decrease the quality of education.

Thanks,
Heidi King
Nationally Board Certified Teacher

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kelly Riley <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:52 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Re-Opening In-Person School

I have a large number of concerns regarding the re-opening of in-person schools this upcoming school year. I will outline a few here. My biggest concern question is why are we planning to reopen in-person school during the biggest surge our nation and our state has seen? Why are we not doing virtual school until things calm down? With that aside, I also want (actually need) to see that when schools do open back up, face masks must be REQUIRED not encouraged. I think class sizes need to be smaller to ensure social distancing. I want proper ventilation in every building. So much needs to be done to ensure the safety of everyone who spends time in the schools. None of this has been done. We cannot return to in-person schools until the surge calms and proper safety measures are in place. Doing so will cost countless lives and, in my opinion, be criminal.

Thank you,
Kelly Riley

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Jacinda Cook <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:53 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerned Parent in Bentonville School District

G. Windle.

I have significant concerns for the return to school this fall.

1. Covid may not be as hard in a general sense on children, however, a lot of grandparents are raising their grandchildren or are their primary babysitters to help out young families.

2. Doctors tell us that masks help out in public, not in enclosed areas such as schools. That's why Covid has been an issue in prisons and nursing homes.

3. Not all teachers are young. Protecting teachers is an absolute must. My father has been a teacher for 36 years and is immunocompromised because of his age. I am not willing to risk the life of my father or the lives of my children's teachers.

4. The sheer population of kids in school. Bentonville Schools are home to thousands of children. How can we be willing to risk the lives of our children just for the sake of a semblance of "normalcy?" Covid kills all ages.

5. We need population protective measures for flu season. Covid and the flu may mutate together and that is an unacceptable risk.

6. Rethink education as a whole. Arkansas is one of the lowest performing states in the nation. This is an opportunity to restructure our education system and provide equal education for all kids.

7. People can get covid multiple times as there are mutated strains already.

8. The state has already had significant trouble dealing with current positive cases. The strain on health professionals (when we don't have enough to care for new cases of covid) that will be placed on the system this fall is irresponsible and preventable.

9. We're playing with fire.

10. Teachers have little to no say and they work very hard to do what they can with the little tools they have to work with. They're already overworked and underpaid.

11. Teachers and kids do not deserve the high stress environment that the second wave will cause. Stress compromises immunity thereby making them all more susceptible to covid.

It is important to finally address school classroom sizes, lack of teachers, length of school days etc. A lot of it is time wasting. School time must be spent effectively, efficiently and teach real world problem solving skills and we're currently not doing that as well as other states.

Don't we want Arkansas to be a leader for right and just reasons?

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kimberly Stewart <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:55 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening Schools

Hello,

I am writing to express my sincere and urgent concerns regarding reopening Arkansas Schools with face to face instruction.

1. The virus is on the rise and it is very inconsiderate and dangerous to force teachers to enter classrooms packed with students. At the elementary level students will not be required to wear masks and there is no possible way to space students 6 fee apart in the small classrooms.

2. My husband is an elementary teacher in Siloam Springs School District and he has considerable medical needs that will make it very risky for him to be forced into this situation.

3. If students are not old enough to wear masks they have no business being in a classroom all packed together.

4. It is a well known fact that young children have no sense of urgency about hygiene. It's difficult to get them to wash their hands on a good day. School during the pandemic will be no different.

5. Parents have the choice to choose virtual school, but teachers have no choice but to be put in harm's way if schools are reopened during active cases rising.

6. Every other business has gone lit is their way to protect employees. Even the pizza delivery guys have been tasked with contactless delivery. Please, please consider the teachers that are being thrown into this without even getting to have real input.

7. I urge you. Please DO NOT open schools until cases are under control and not rising. We very much care about the well being of my husband (a teacher) and what he will bring home to our family.

Thank you,
Kimberly Stewart

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Hayleigh Hawkins <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:56 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School

Good day.

I am greatly concerned about the start of school in August. I feel it would be neat to postpone until after we hit the projected peak to protect our students and staff. I do not believe a return this soon is anyone's best interest.

Thank you.

Katherine Hayleigh Hawkins
Benton county resident and mother of 2

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Gina James <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:56 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns for the upcoming school year
Attachments: 21 school year.pdf

Please find enclosed my email regarding my concerns for the upcoming school year.

Thank you!
Gina James

[redacted]

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

Thank you for your work in leading the state of Arkansas in education. I am reaching out to you to share concerns that I have as a teacher in the North Little Rock School District. I hope that this letter is read by you and your voting members of the board. I appreciate your time.

In light of the fact that the Nashville School District has eight employees and three spouses who have tested positive for COVID-19, I am very concerned about teaching at school on a daily basis with no way to really social distance and without students being required to wear masks. Since those employees tested were all at a workshop on June 17th, it makes me question how many cases we would have during the first two weeks of school alone! This puts all of our staff and students at risk. I feel it is irresponsible to go back to normal, per se, at full capacity, with no way to social distance and only "suggestions" to wear masks.

NLRSD came up with a solution that I feel would be very effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For some reason, they were told by the ADE last week that they can no longer use it. Their solution was to have students come on A/B days, which would be half the students come on Monday/Tuesday, no one in the building on Wednesday for disinfecting, all students and teachers online that day, and the other half of students come on Thursday/Friday. The days that students weren't at school, they would be working on Google Classroom. This would allow our schools to be able to social distance effectively and would also put less students on the bus at one time so they could social distance on the bus. Parents were also given the solution do have their child do 100% online school.

Please reconsider your stance on prohibiting the NLRSD'S plan of A/B days. We honestly feel that this is the best solution in regards to preserving the health of our staff and students other than going all virtual. Please don't put our state's wonderful teachers at risk for the sake of having a "normal" school week.

Sincerely,

Gina James

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Beth Horton <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerns about schools opening in August

Good afternoon. I have taught Kindergarten in Rogers Public Schools for 18 years, and these are some of my concerns regarding public schools opening for in person instruction in August.

1. Masks--Why would we not *require* ALL staff and students (K-12) to wear them when we have scientific evidence that they are THE number one way for us to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19? Even young students, as those in Kindergarten, are more than capable of being taught how to use a mask effectively to help protect all of us.
2. Social Distancing in classrooms--This WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE with 20+ students in a classroom. Therefore masks should be required all day with the exception of during lunch and outside at recess to help protect all students and staff.
3. Subs--How will this be addressed? If we're in the buildings, no one is going to want to sub in a classroom or school known to have had one or more COVID cases.
4. Cleaning vs. Quarantine--Will classrooms/schools be closed for cleaning only before students & staff return after a positive case, or will those directly affected be required to quarantine at home for the recommended 14 days before returning?

I feel extremely unsafe going back into a building where no one is required to wear a mask, especially in my area of the state where cases are increasing daily and hospitals are nearing or at capacity for ICU beds. It is morally irrespsonsible and outright negligent to ask students, educators and support staff to go into such an unsafe situation. It is a recipe for disaster, and lives are literally at stake.

Beth Horton
Kindergarten Teacher
Bellview Elementary

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Danielle May <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening Concerns

Dear Ms. Windle,

My name is Danielle May and, along with my husband, our children (entering [redacted] and [redacted] grades) are in the Siloam Springs School District. We are increasingly concerned about schools reopening in August, particularly with the lack of transparency and guidance provided both by the state and local school district regarding how you plan to provide a healthy and safe learning environment where students, teachers, administrators and staff can thrive and return home to safely interact with family and community members.

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.

Our family has followed STRICT social distancing the past 4 months due to my high risk health factors (I celebrated 11 years of beingcancer free this year and also have asthma and an autoimmune disease). What's the point of that if we are just going to send our kids to a large, enclosed gathering where I'm guessing the majority will not be wearing masks and there's no guarantee of social distancing. In our particular district, a large part of the student population live in homes with poultry and other essential workers who have been unable to socially distance and are routinely exposed to diagnosed individuals. And more recently, seeing the early childhood education centers repeatedly having to close every time someone pops positive, I just don't see how those repeated disruptions are conducive to learning and the "crisis learning" attempted this spring was a joke. Relying on the latest UAMS projections, I honestly don't see this slowing down and believe we are putting our most precious state asset at great risk.

Please do the necessary work to keep our schools safe.

Sincerely,

Danielle and Ben May

[redacted]

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Starrymoon <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:57 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Rogers School District

Dear Gina,
I'm requesting that schools not be opened in the Rogers School District in August to prevent students and teachers from getting sick. The Covid19 is spreading so fast in NW Arkansas and opening schools will put everyone at risk and many will get sick.
Thanks, Sherry Hill, a concerned citizen

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Diane Stinebaugh <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:58 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: school and covid-19

Dear All,

I have grave concerns regarding the 2020-21 school year and beyond. I have just finished my 31st year of teaching. 19 of those years have been in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

1. Putting large amounts of people together in school will spread covid-19.
2. I don't want to get covid-19 and bring it home to my family
3. What will happen when a student intentionally blows, coughs, sneezes or spits on teachers or/and students???? What will be the repercussions?
4. What are the repercussions if staff or students refuse to wear a mask???????
5. How will students be seated at least 6 feet apart?
6. Will class sizes be reduced for social distancing?
7. Will schools provide technology to create videos of lectures, demonstrations that students at home will be viewing?
8. The waver that does away with class size.....please explain the purpose and intent.
9. When will schools close? When the hospitals are full? When a student or teacher test positive?
10. Major local corporations such as Tyson have implemented policies so that employees stay home when they don't feel well and still get paid. What will happen to our teachers who don't have enough sick days to care for themselves and others?
11. How will supplies such as pencils, calculators, rulers, paints, brushes, toys, manipulatives, be sanitized?
12. What about the drinking fountains?
13. What about the teachers who are high risk? How will they do their jobs and not die?

The 2020-21 school year is clearly going to be a hot mess

Thank you for reading

Diane Stinebaugh

Fayetteville, AR

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: brady carman <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:59 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Arkansas School Safety: Covid 19

Ms. Windle,

Thank you for taking my concerns as an educator, and as a parent, to heart.

I teach first grade in Fayetteville with Fayetteville Public Schools. I LOVE my job, and I LOVE that my child is able to attend schools in our district.

I am concerned, however, for several reasons. I will list them below.

1. Density and duration play key roles in community spread. Schools are densely packed, and we are there for long hours.

2. Teachers and staff are being asked to be in precarious roles. We are asking them to knowingly work in unsafe environments.

3. All in or all virtual is problematic, and uses a false binary as the only options.

4. Students are being asked to be more responsible than they ever have been, and their ability to maintain that responsibility has literal life or death consequences for students and staff.

I have more to say, but will leave it at that.

Brady

Sent from my iPhone.

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: poddoc00 <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 5:00 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: AR SBE meeting

We demand community decision making for all public schools in AR for school waivers, re-opening, budgets, and any other decision making processes.

Rev. Dr. Anika T. Whitfield

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Andrea Jenkins <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 5:23 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Concerned educator

Hello. My name is Andrea Jenkins. I am a third grade teacher in Farmington, Arkansas. I hope my concern gets to you in time for your meeting.

Myself, and many other educators I know are under high stress in wondering what kind of directives will be put in place for back to school. I worry about teachers whose health may be compromised as well as my students. We need guidance, now, from the state in order to begin to prepare for this new challenge. I'm afraid of good educators leaving the profession and having an even worse shortfall in good teachers in the state. We need to protect them. Pay is an obvious issue when a teacher wears so many hats and will be expected to wear even more and risk our health and/or the health of our students. Please advise us, yesterday, on what to expect.

Thank you for your time,
Andrea Jenkins

--
Andrea Jenkins
3rd grade teacher
Jerry "Pop" Williams Elementary

[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]

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: Michelle Wolchok <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:07 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Public Comments ADE State Board
Attachments: WolchokPublicComments.pdf

Please accept the attached public comments for the Arkansas State Board of Education meeting dated June 29, 2020 at 11:00am.
Please let me know if you need these comments in another format and I will happily provide that to you.
Thank you.
Michelle Wolchok
[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Diane Zook, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education

Michelle Wolchok
Public School Educator
[redacted]
June 28, 2020

Subject: Request for waiver review

To: Arkansas State Board of Education:

My name is Michelle Wolchok and I have been an educator for 25 years. Currently I teach 4th grade in Fayetteville. I also proudly serve my profession and fellow colleagues as the elementary at large board member of Fayetteville Education Association and am beginning my second term as a Board member of the Arkansas Education Association.

I am writing to you out of concern for the bundle of waivers that DESE has asked that you approve for the 2020-2021 school year in the face of this pandemic. In a rush to make sure school districts have room to operate safely, the proposed waivers as written are so broad that teacher's voices and rights are being cut out of the process. When you really stop to think about the potential impact and how districts would be able to interpret these waived state laws the entire accountability and risk to the upcoming school year has in effect been shifted from the school district to individual educators.

The waivers of Ark. Code Ann. 6-17-204(b), 6-17-2304(b), 6-17-2305(c)(2) are unnecessary and dangerous.

These waivers are potentially dangerous as they cut out educator voices on important decisions. Waiving the process to implement policies through our PPCs cuts out the deliberative policy proposing body. These policies are essentially our contracts. I am concerned that the terms of my contract could potentially be changed at any time during the school year. If this particular bundle of waivers are approved, our district would be allowed to change our contracts at will and we will have no recourse. There is no language that would require policies to expire or revert back. That is wrong and hazardous.

These policies are our contract, and no employee should be required to sign away their rights as a term of employment.

Circumventing the PPC should <u>never</u> be an option. PPC is the *only* way educators are <u>guaranteed</u> to have a voice in the teaching and learning environment of our students and ourselves. All policy changes merit review by stakeholders.

I argue that all personnel policy changes can be done in a timely manner without waiving the laws that govern the PPC process.

We should not throw out our processes for hearing the voice of educators in the face of a pandemic. Indeed, we should use our collaborative relationships to be even stronger together in the face of this pandemic.

The unknown is not a comfortable state for any of us to reside. Educators across our state are anxious and worried. Taking out the established process by which our voices are heard will only heighten our anxiety. We should not allow these uncertain times to remove educators' protections, rights & voices.

These PPC waivers in particular would set a dangerous precedent and they are not necessary for our safe return to educating.

I understand that flexibility and fast action are paramount to executing our plan for safe re-entry to both on-site and distance learning. However, in order to do this successfully we need to come together as a team.

I am asking you to reconsider each of the proposed waivers individually and to eliminate from the bundle those that would deny an employee the right to review, revise or reject personnel policy changes. These policies are our contracts. If it is determined that the bulk approval of 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 consideration and attention to my concerns.

Michelle Wolchok

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Jeff Jackson <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:49 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: School Reopening
Attachments: My letter.docx

Ms. Windle,
Good afternoon. My name is Jeff Jackson and I am a teacher with Fayetteville Public Schools. The attached document has my questions and comments about our reopening process.
Thanks for your attention to this.
Jeff

[redacted]

Good afternoon,

My name is Jeff Jackson and I have had the honor of being one of the art teachers and the department chair for Fine Arts Department at Fayetteville High School for the past 13 years. In those 13 years, I have been humbled so many times bearing witness to the amazing ideas our students develop and the works of art they create to express those ideas. Since the end of this school year, myself, along with many other teachers have had discussions with our friends, parents, colleagues and community members about what this coming school year will look like and all that entails. And believe you me, many of us are a little more than anxious.

After hearing of our districts reopening plan to move forward with the 20-21 school year I sat down and had to start seriously thinking about developing a new lesson plan. A plan that comes in the form of writing my last will and testament. I've never really had to plan for the possibility of my own death or possible bankruptcy from prolonged hospitalization due to a pandemic for the upcoming school year. Have you? Seriously? At this point, I would rather take my chances with a mass shooting event on campus. Let that sink in. So I ask, does holding a daily super spreader event, possible hospitalization, my death or possible death of my spouse or infecting my family fall under "other duties as assigned" for the upcoming school year?

Our country and our community is dealing with something that changes so fast and I feel that we, as a school system, have one chance to get this right or this situation will continue to prolong itself and continue to have catastrophic results. FPS likes to use data to drive its decisions. Well the data is there and it clearly states what happens when large groups of people are put together in an indoor setting. I have no confidence in our districts plan to continue on with the status quo. That's not good enough for Fayetteville Public Schools and not good enough for our teachers and students. Not having answers/protocol for what to do when the first case hits campus is absolutely frightening. What happens when the first teacher/student becomes infected or dies in our district? What do we do if we have tens to hundreds of our teachers out at one time due to being sick? What will you do when a student decides to cough or spit at a teacher or fellow students? Don't think for a minute students won't act out in this manner. We barely have enough substitute teachers to fill a regular Friday. And on the topic of substitutes how do we handle substitute teachers who bounce daily form district to district? Who would want to substitute knowing what we're facing? We can't answer those questions but I guess we are going find out. How many of us will have to get infected or infect our family and community before FPS decides to go fully virtual? What is an acceptable amount of death we are all willing to live with?

Parents in our districts are being given the choice on how they want their students' instruction delivered. Teachers don't have that choice. Teachers have already been instructed to start planning for online instruction. It seems to me that we already know that we are going to have to go online at some point this year, so why not make this year all virtual and let Fayetteville Public Schools lead the state in this new teaching innovation. Tap into the individual talents of what our faculty can do. I have had tough talks with our department on adjustments that we can make to our curriculum that might possibly remove the studio aspects but still focus on Art theory and apply critical thinking skills. Also, our studio classes use shared supplies between all classes which poses a real public health risk. What is the

protocol for properly disinfecting all of our supplies? Will the district supply disinfectants for shared supplies or does that come out of our pocket?

We are a wealthy district. Through innovation, I know we can meet the needs of our students through virtual learning and utilizing our crowd sourcing abilities to meet other dire, important needs of our students and families. Using social workers, organizers and our amazing staff, we CAN go virtual and must make that call NOW. Let's plan, let's innovate!

In closing, I miss my students as much as anyone does, but I am asking that we strongly consider moving to all online curriculum for the start of the year instead of going back to face to face instruction. It will save lives. Thank you for your attention to this. I know Fayetteville Public Schools will do the right thing. I am so proud to be a part of this district. Keep making us proud by keeping us all safe.

Sincerely,

Jeff Jackson

Art Instructor

Fine Arts Dept. Chair

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Michele Linch <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 4:45 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Arkansas State Teachers Association Comments for June 29, 2020 SBE Meeting: Ready for Learning implementation

Dear State Board of Education Members,

I am Michele Linch, Executive Director of the Arkansas State Teachers Association serving thousands of Arkansas educators. First, we are grateful the Division of Education has modeled the process they strongly recommended districts and charters utilize as Ready for Learning (R4L) plans are developed, especially in terms of transparency and engaging stakeholders, including school administrators and teachers. As you can imagine, we have heard from a large number of members from across the state expressing their concerns about the development of their district's Ready for Learning plan. The following themes are prevalent across the feedback we've received:

1. Arkansas public school employees (PSE) have overwhelmingly contacted ASTA concerned that there has been little to no stakeholder engagement while their districts have developed the R4L plans. Educator after educator has contact us shocked they personally or any committees the district has in place, e.g. Personnel Policy Committees (PPC) and other teacher led committees, has not been engaged. The waiver to bypass the PPCs is one we strongly recommended not be allowed because it is research based best practice and people support (or at least better tolerate) what they help create.

   Recommendation: Ask every single district for the communications that show they engaged staff during the development process or the agendas and minutes from the stakeholder groups they engaged in the process. It will be important to check and verify.

2. It is our opinion that flexibility is a must. There will be a time when teachers will be told by medical professionals they or a dependent has to quarantine even though they feel fine or are healthy. Teachers are worried they will miss unnecessary instructional time and sacrifice leave when they want to be fully engaged with their students in any manner possible.

   Recommendation: Every district needs a plan to allow these educators to be with their students virtually while paraprofessionals or administrators facilitate other facets of classroom management.

[redacted]

3. Many educators do not understand why in-person instruction is an option for the fall. Many others express their classroom is the safest place their students can be due to equity and supportive educational home environment concerns. We are in a catch-22.

   Recommendation: DESE needs a "hotline" of sorts for PSE to report unreasonable or unsafe district requirements ANONOMOUSLY with no behind the scenes or under the table conversations by DESE team members revealing information that could identify the PSE reporting. The lack of leadership capacity in many of our districts and schools make for very unsafe and retaliatory work environments. DESE needs to hold districts accountable for their cultures by asking the hard questions and pushing back.

4. Teachers are at different places where their safety comfort levels are concerned. We've heard the desire for clear dividers between desks, a daily PPE kit (as hospitals supply), and face shields (can be reused if proper sanitized) to name a few. And some say they will feel safe simply wearing a mask.

   Recommendations: Districts need to let teachers know the minimum PPE required and then ensure any teacher who needs more, even if it's for his/her own personal need to feel an increased level of safety, access to the requested PPE or allow the teacher to virtually engage with students. Maslow's applies to adults also.

5. Our school employees are now going to be on the frontlines of this pandemic. It's important for districts to not add to an already tough (understatement) situation by having them sign liability waivers. Our attorney is recommending to our members they not sign them, but see #3 recommendation.

   Recommendation: SBE may consider requesting a Commissioner's memo or immediate legislative action on this issue.

6. Given the "frontline" nature of teaching during these extraordinary times, many are concerned about the "what ifs" of COVID-19. Namely, "What if I get the virus?"

   Recommendation: Any PSE who acquires the COVID19 virus needs to be eligible for paid leave.

Thank you for your caring and thoughtful leadership and decision-making during these unprecedented times. There are no clear answers but there is definitely room to improve the process districts are using and ways DESE and SBE can work together to better ensure districts are providing the care, consideration, flexibility, resources, and stakeholder engagement to ensure Arkansas educators and students can be safe and feel safe as they begin the 2020-2021 learning journey that MUST take place for all learners – adults and kids.

If there is anything we can do to help, please let me know. Again, we are beyond thankful for your service and leadership.

Thank you,

Michele Ballentine-Linch, PhD
Executive Director
Arkansas State Teachers Association
225 S. Pulaski, Suite 200
Little Rock, AR 72201
Tel: 877-742-ASTA (2782)
Cell: [redacted]
Fax: 501-400-8276
Email: michele@astapro.org
www.astapro.org

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Brook Sanchez <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:52 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Reopening Concerns...Please read (Public Comments)

Commissioner Key and Fellow Leaders in Education:

I hope you are all well, and staying healthy. I wanted to take a minute and share who I am, prior to sharing my very real concerns as a parent and educator in the State of Arkansas. My name is Brook Sanchez, and I am a teacher and Multi-Classroom Leader on the 6th grade campus in North Little Rock. I have had the pleasure of working alongside Mrs. Saracini, Ms. Hurst, and Ms. Harness in the Arkansas vision for Teacher Leaders throughout the state, and through that been fortunate enough to meet many of you. In addition, I am the Central Arkansas Regional Rep for AAMLE. I am proud to be a teacher in Arkansas, a dedicated leader within my district, and love every aspect of my role as an educator in our state.

All of that said, I am quite saddened by our current situation and worried about the decisions currently being made. When school ended virtually last year due to Covid, I was very vocal that I wanted to do everything we could to get back to face to face instruction. I know that for my student's sake, that is the very best way for me to reach my kids. I have spent a large amount of my summer working with our school leadership team, based on our district's plans, to figure out what exactly that might look like, and how we can do our best to keep our students and staff safe through the process. Until a week ago, NLRSD had a VERY viable plan that would in fact meet those needs and minimize risks wherever possible. This involved 2 options, first, an A/B schedule, with asynchronous face to face and virtual, to shrink class sizes, and included face masks and social distancing; OR parents could choose 100% virtual. Without ANY warning or explanation, everything we have worked for as a district and campus was scratched. We are now (as is EVERY major Central AR district) being only offered 100% virtual OR school as usual, with a "recommendation" for face masks and if possible social distancing. Basically, since face masks only protect those AROUND the wearer, I am now to trust 11-12 year olds to wear a mask for the greater good and social distance based on a recommendation. It has ALWAYS been a recommendation for students to bring pencils and to wash their hands after using the bathroom, but we all know, those things don't happen. Why are 11-12 year olds, or their parents, now responsible for my health and my family's health?

It was very evident, since the wording of the letters was nearly identical from district to district that the changes were done in unison. That is not a coincidence.

It is evident that you are all aware that the pandemic is REAL. That we are ALL at risk. The very meeting you are having is being held via Zoom, "to protect the participants." There are at least 13 adults from the Nashville School District currently sick, due to a meeting of ADULTS, who met for a short time, ONCE. We can assume that they wash their hands frequently and know how to protect themselves. Why is it that it is recognized that the threat is real for those at the state level, but teachers and students are now being told we will meet as usual, with ZERO protections or plans for protections in place? Why are we expendable? As a teacher, my choice has been made for me. I

must either return to work, and send my children full time, OR quit my passion (job,) try to find something else to make ends meet, and keep my own children home to keep them safe. How is that ok?

I am fully aware that there is NO full-proof plan. 100% virtual doesn't work for a large percentage of my students. I also know thinking outside of the box is difficult and time-consuming. However, in this situation, that is EXACTLY what we should be doing. Throwing all caution to the wind and sacrificing our teachers and our students, is unacceptable. If we are expected to return to face-to-face instruction, then it needs to be mandatory that CLASS SIZES are reduced to allow enough space to social distance AND that masks MUST be worn when students are within 6 feet of another student. In most classrooms, we could be able to spread out smaller classes and remove masks when possible. The AB scheduling allows for the smaller class sizes WITHOUT spending more for staffing to decrease class sizes. This option should still be viable. In fact, it is what numerous districts are doing in other states. It allows for us to work with our students face to face at least twice a week, and then allows them to work from home the other 3 days, with digital support. Although exposure is still inevitable, it is greatly minimized.

Please think about the PEOPLE on the front lines. Again, you are meeting digitally to keep yourself safe. Shouldn't teachers and student's be allowed that same right? This isn't political, this is ethical.

Thank you for leading our state during a difficult time and taking the time to carefully read through my concerns. I pray that you will make decisions that put our safety above all else.

Respectfully.

Brook M. Sanchez, M.Ed.
North Little Rock Middle School
6th Grade Science/Science Lead Teacher (MCL)

--
Brook Sanchez, M.Ed. 6th PreAP Science North Little Rock Middle School Sent via iPhone/iPad

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Lesley Allen <[redacted]
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 2:11 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: Request for Waiver Review

My name is Lesley Allen and I am a CTE teacher at Fayetteville High School in Fayetteville, AR. I have several concerns regarding the plans for school reopening. These concerns include the use of waivers to remove the voice of teachers and staff within their districts, the health and safety of faculty, staff, students, and the lack of forethought given to what a school environment is really like and expecting all stakeholders to risk their lives for the education of students.

The proposals that have been set forth in the Arkansas Ready for Learning Model, if approved will render all teachers and staff voices silent. These are our contracts with our school districts and while the waiver is only good for one year, the policies created under them are not. Why would you want to remove our voice in the first place? We are the ones in the classroom and know our students and their needs better than anyone. I have never heard of another profession, filled with highly educated individuals, that are not trusted to do their job without constant regulations.

The Arkansas Department of Education and the Governor of our great state are adamant that we reopen schools for in-person instruction in the fall. Trust me, no teacher wants this more! However, given the current situation, the growth of the Covid-19 virus, coupled with the UAMS projections, the idea of being in a classroom with no windows is terrifying. There are no safety measures that can guarantee the health and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Have you read the health issues of contracting Covid-19? Here is an description from a Reuters article published on June 26, 2020 titled "Scientists just beginning to understand the many health problems caused by COVID-19," it reads:

> "Besides the respiratory issues that leave patients gasping for breath, the virus that causes COVID-19 attacks many organ systems, in some cases causing catastrophic damage.
>
> "We thought this was only a respiratory virus. Turns out, it goes after the pancreas. It goes after the heart. It goes after the liver, the brain, the kidney and other organs. We didn't appreciate that in the beginning," said Dr. Eric Topol, a cardiologist and director of the Scripps Research Translational Institute in La Jolla, California.
>
> In addition to respiratory distress, patients with COVID-19 can experience blood clotting disorders that can lead to strokes, and extreme inflammation that attacks multiple organ systems. The virus can also cause neurological complications that range from headache, dizziness and loss of taste or smell to seizures and confusion. And recovery can be slow, incomplete and costly, with a **huge impact on quality of life**."

If the Arkansas Board of Education does not feel comfortable meeting in person during a pandemic, then why do you expect teachers and students to do it five days a week? I love my job but risking my health, the health of my family and the health of my students are not 'other duties as assigned.' You are leaving some teachers with weakened immune systems or family members who are

[redacted]

autoimmune compromised to choose between health or livelihood. The stress, anxiety, and uncertainty felt by teachers across Arkansas is palpable and I hope you can feel it.

The time we find ourselves in is not a mystery. We have been here before. Please look to our past and do not make the same mistakes we have made before. Please do not silent those in the classroom day-in and day-out. Please know that we too want what's best for students and just as we did in March. We will rise to the challenge to serve them. But please do not force our voices silent or risk our lives, and family's lives, to do our job.

Thank you,
Lesley Allen

Mrs. Lesley F. Allen, MFA
A/V Technology and Film Production Adviser
FHS Communications Broadcasting Team Sponsor
Fayetteville High School
FHS C109, [redacted]
[redacted]

Student Led. Student Produced.

"If you are not willing to learn, no one can help you. If you are determined to learn, no one can stop you!"
~Unknown

[redacted]

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Kristie Calohan <[redacted]>
Sent: Sunday, June 28, 2020 10:35 AM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: for the State Board of Education meeting on Monday

I am an Art teacher in NWA, and have many concerns regarding returning to the classroom during the highest peak of Covid-19 in our area--a HOTSPOT. I do not feel safe to return to the classroom, and am given a possible "volunteer" opportunity to teach virtually--in a building off campus, full of other adults. Neither option sounds very safe, and I don't feel comfortable as they both require being exposed to other people for long periods of time. We teachers are backed into a corner--trying to decide the safest of two very unsafe options. I am a middle-aged, single female without the ability to quit or retire at this point, and so I do feel like I'm being forced to walk into a death trap. It is my hope that the members of your board will conclude that it is highly unsafe to return to the brick and mortar school during the Fall Semester, and it would be safer (and smarter) to start with virtual learning again. There is time, at this point, to come up with a plan to make virtual learning beneficial to all students and educators alike.

Per OSHA, The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards and regulations promulgated by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. In addition, the Act's General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), requires employers to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

Questions

- The very first, and most important, question I have for the Board of Education meeting on June 28, is why are we opening schools when the projections for more Covid-19 cases by mid-September are alarming and catastrophic?

- Per CDC requirements, students should not be having more than one teacher in a day. In Art, I see 1/2 of the school each day, and am told per my district, that students WILL be switching teachers, walking through the building, and are not required to even wear a mask.

- Per CDC requirements, students should be sitting six feet apart, facing one direction in the classroom. My classroom has 8ft. tables, with four students to a table. It is impossible to have all of my students far apart, facing one direction at any given time....especially when I have a class of 28 students.

- Per CDC requirements, all sinks should be divided with plexiglass. I have two sinks in my classroom...no plexiglass. The student bathroom sinks are troughs, and seem not suited for plexiglass walls.

[redacted]

- Per CDC requirements, all students should have their own materials. I teach art. Am I required to provide art materials to all 350+ students? Not being able to share materials, limits all of my lessons to paper and pencil--which really cuts my curriculum and opportunities to the students, who are unable to come up with their own art supplies.

- There is no mandate in my city to wear masks....students are not required to wear masks, but families are highly encouraged to supply a mask to their students. Am I allowed to require that masks be worn at all times in my classroom?

- In between classes (5-10 minutes) the teacher is required to sanitize the classroom? Am I to be the sanitizer--the purchaser of the cleaning supplies--and also the risk-taker in cleaning up Covid-19 germs without proper PPE?

- What happens when a student in one of my classes tests positive for Covid-19? Does the school close?

- Am I going to be asked to sign a waiver that states I won't sue the district when I come down with Covid-19 and wind up in ICU?

- My co-workers, the Band and Music teachers, are going to be assigning students to sing and blow horns. People aren't even allowed to gather in church congregations and sing in the choir...how is this safe to the students and the teacher to be singing and blowing droplets through the classroom out of the end of a band instrument?

- If I am to do screenings and hand washing before and after my class ends.....also, "sanitizing" my classroom between arrival times, how is it expected that I'll be teaching an Art class that is even able to touch on the Art standards....moreover, to make the class interesting to the kids while following the CDC guidelines--making me responsible for their health and safety?

- Will we be earning Hazard Pay...as we are certainly being expected to work in an unsafe environment...?

- Question 1 repeated--why are we being sent back into the classroom at this time, when Covid-19 is out of control in the state and more importantly, in NWA?

Adrienne Williams (ADE)

From: Shelley Smith <[redacted]
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 1:45 PM
To: Gina Windle (ADE)
Subject: SURVEY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES regarding waivers for 2020-21
Attachments: SURVEY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES JUNE 26 2020.docx

I have already sent this email to the board members. Please add it to the public comment also. Thank you.

Dear Board Members.

I am writing to you today to share some very important survey data about decisions being made regarding the upcoming school year. We all know these are difficult times in which we find ourselves, and no decisions are easy.

As the group admin of AR School Employees & Friends on Facebook, a large and diverse group of school personnel, I am always interested in surveying to find out their thoughts on important subjects. There have been lengthy and sometimes heated discussions lately about the upcoming school year, but the common threads that are constantly evident is that most educators have been completely left out of the decision-making process and have no idea how to plan for the fast-approaching school year. They are fearful of the extra work being required of them, with no compensation of course, and fearful for the health of their own families. These fears and frustrations are not being addressed in most districts.

Attached you will find the current results of what is still an open survey that I posted earlier this week. Please take the time to look at it and read the comments that the respondents shared.

As you make decisions about the waivers that have been requested please know that the vast majority of teachers are terrified but do not feel they can voice those concerns publicly. My survey guarantees anonymity for that reason. What are they terrified of? I'm glad you asked. They are scared of reprisals if they question the authority of their superintendents to use waivers as a way to pile on many hours of extra work, scared that they will be forced to come to school when their health or that of a family member is at risk, scared that they will be written up or fired if they refuse to do something they do not feel is safe. You may think that the chain of command for expressing concerns is adequate and fair, but I assure you that it is not. For many there is no recourse if they have concerns or problems. Communication, or lack thereof, is a huge problem all over the state. Please do not assume that you have enough guardrails in place to prevent abuses of these waivers. I would urge you to look very closely at the ones that allow for flexibility in class sizes, additional minutes of non-instructional duties, and most importantly 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." There may be valid reasons for providing the latter but I know a lot of teachers losing sleep over that one because they know this means that superintendents can and will make policies that will not be in the best interests of their staff.

One very common example I can provide is that a large number of teachers are being required to create up to an entire semester of online curriculum for their courses. All of this, with the exception of a very few districts, is expected with zero compensation for the teacher's personal time over the summer. One teacher told me she had to prepare a whole year of online work. All of these are massive amounts of work. I retired this year, but if I

[redacted]

had to do that it would be for 7 separate classes (3 different subject areas) of different ages. In small schools we have 7 preps per day and multiple grade levels. What guardrails are in place to prevent these kinds of situations?

Waivers are very slippery slopes. Please consider the ramifications before approving any that have been requested. Additionally, please provide a safe and private way that can be used by teachers and staff to express concerns and report unreasonable demands to the department of education, perhaps a designated email address only for this purpose. Almost nobody will file grievances because that automatically brands you as a troublemaker. The rules for whistleblowers don't seem to be effective and I'm not sure that the majority of employees are even aware there is such a thing. This situation should be addressed immediately.

Thank you for taking the time to hear me out, and for studying these survey results.

--
Shelley Smith

SURVEY
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

This survey was posted on June 22, 2020.

Responses are still being accepted, so that number will climb. You may view it in real time in the Facebook group AR School Employees & Friends. Shelley Smith is the group admin.

Chart results are current as of 10:00 a.m., June 26th. There are almost 4,000 responses. Also a total of over 500 comments, those attached to this summary are a partial list.

The quoted paragraph below is the introduction to the survey for those participating.

"This survey is anonymous, no one will be able to see names or information of those who respond.

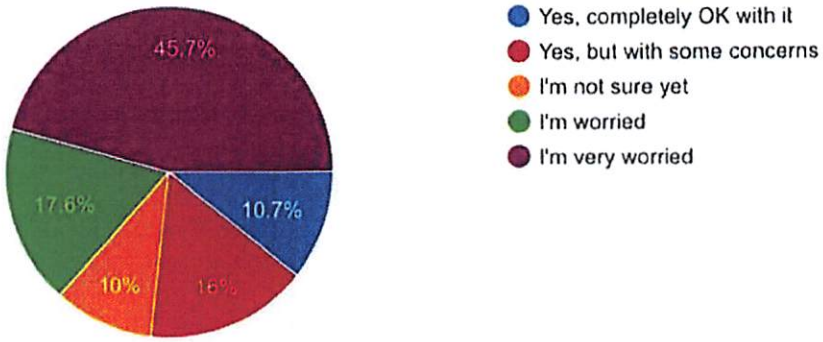
Please choose the response that best reflects your understanding of how decisions are being made in your district to prepare for the upcoming school year. At this point no one knows what the situation will be with the Covid19 pandemic by August or beyond, however plans must be in place to meet whatever challenges arise. Districts across Arkansas are working through this process during the summer. Survey compiled and distributed by Shelley Smith, admin of the Facebook group AR School Employees & Friends."

2020-21 School Year

3,909 responses

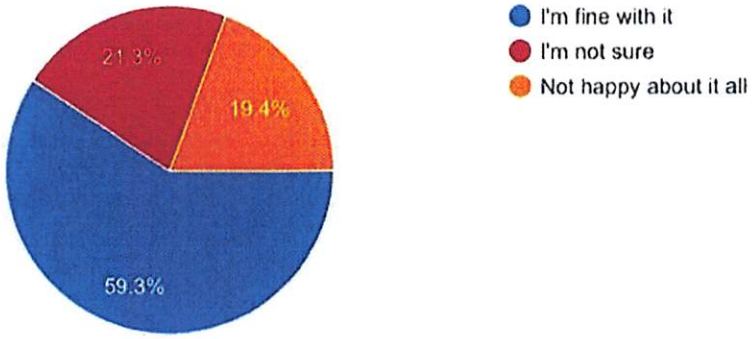
1. Do you feel safe and confident in returning to school for face to face instruction?

3,902 responses



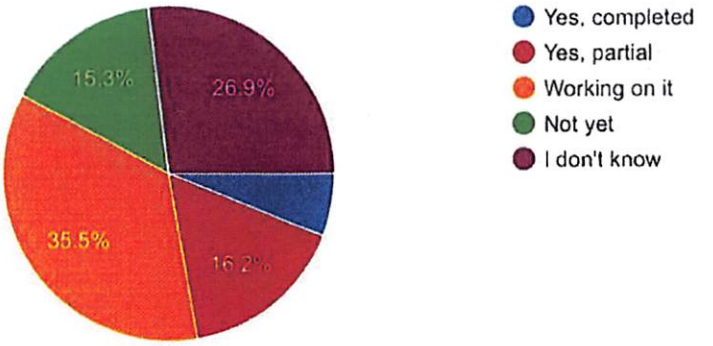
2. How do you feel about teaching your content online if that is necessary?

3,909 responses



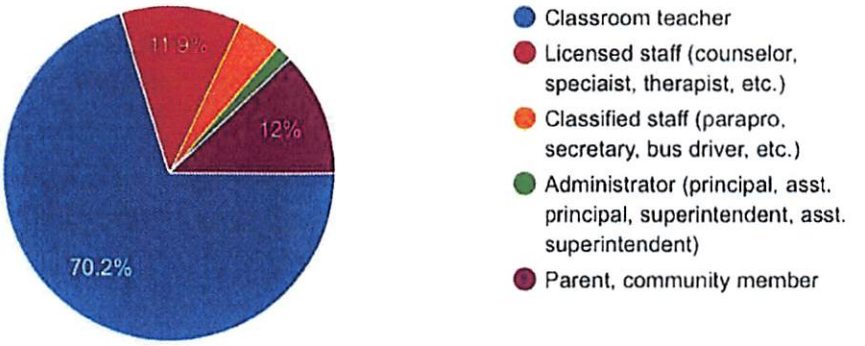
3. Does your district currently have a plan (or at least an outline) in place for how to handle the 2020-21 school year?

3,237 responses



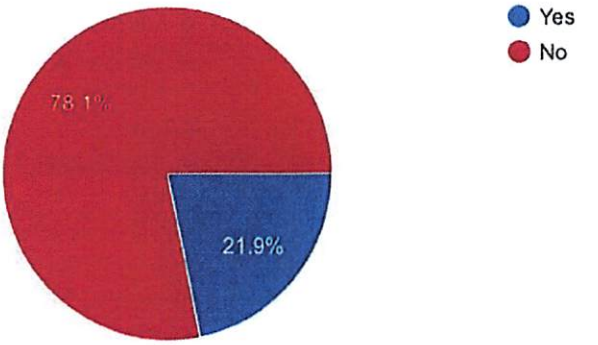
4. What is your position within your district?

3,518 responses



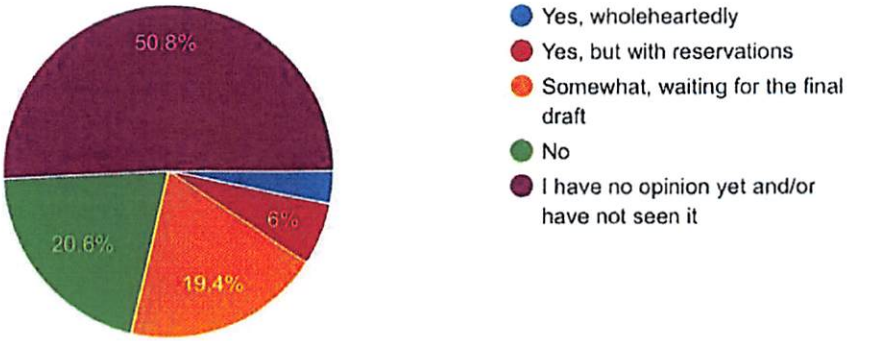
5. Were you surveyed or asked for your input during the decision-making process?

3,300 responses



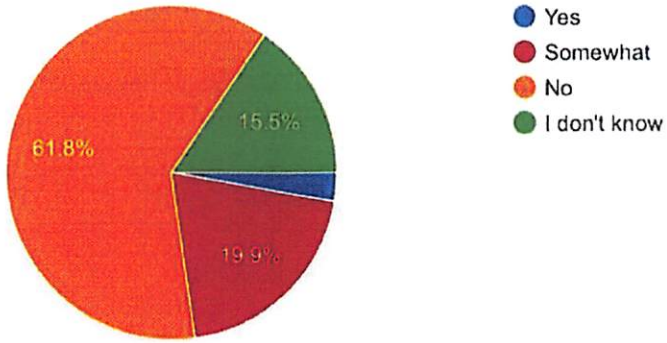
6. Are you comfortable with your district's plan at this time?

3,184 responses



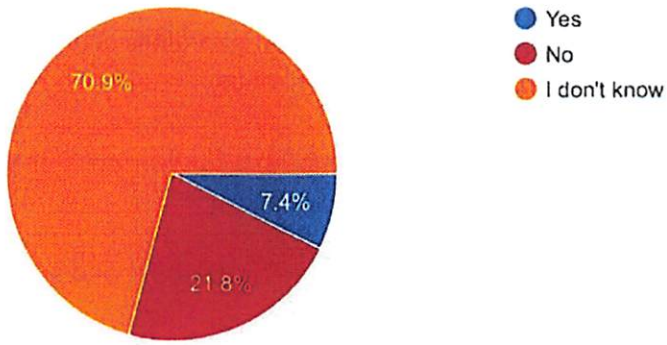
7. Are you satisfied that the plan published by the state department of education is adequate and fair?

3,751 responses



8. Does your district have a policy in place that gives you recourse if you do not feel safe?

3,141 responses



I learned about our district's plan when I read it in the newspaper. Zero communication. I feel like I'm not even part of the group of people being thought about. let alone asked for my opinion. Principal doesn't seem to know anything either. It's frigging ridiculous.

My mask is a courtesy to protect you, so others being required to wear a mask (including kids) is the only way to protect me. If staff and students are required to wear masks, I would feel safer. Moving forward with "business as usual" mindset is very concerning to me.

I don't feel like I have a choice. I can't afford to quit but I am high risk and going back could kill me.

My daughter is highly vulnerable so I'm also worried for her safety!

I'm a SpEd teacher. I'm concerned for the kids who have IEP's.

Our district did a survey but as always the survey didn't allow for true data. The questions are always worded so the data is skewed.

I'm worried about an increased workload, students without internet or parent support, my students getting accommodations and specialized instruction, and sone of the state waivers. I fear Asa is going to force us back to school and we will have to choose between our health and our career. I'm also concerned about how the culture war over masks is going to play out in the classroom.

We are once again being treated disrespectfully. We are not professionals, we are going to be babysitters and lambs to the slaughter. I'm afraid for all of us.

Our district is acting like nothing has changed and we have already been informed that they are not reducing class sizes. We have been told nothing else.

I have questions about the waivers districts can apply for, like lunch, and number of students. Let's get those kids back in classrooms!

I am good with going back to school, but I'm not good with wearing masks.

I plan on this being my last year of teaching with 27 years in Arkansas I just do not look forward to trying to go longer with how things are headed.

When this pandemic began, parents and admin jumped up and said "teachers will be so much more appreciative!" These plans (not that my school has released anything or have we even heard from the superintendent twice throughout this whole thing) sound like teachers and staff are going have have double if not triple the work load!

I just want a plan by July 1st. In place and know what's gonna happen.

I have no idea how to prepare or even how we are supposed to deliver in person and virtual instruction at the same time. How is special education supposed to work???

We should not being having a full class of students daily. In elementary they won't have masks on either. It's only a matter of time before teachers and children get sick and possibly lose their lives. It's irresponsible.

I worry that masks will not be worn by staff or students. I worry the safety precautions will not be enforced. I worry that PPE and cleaners will not be readily available for staff or students.

We don't seem to have enough accurate information to determine how safe it will be to return and I don't think attempting to have school with all the safety precautions in place is feasible.

I am very concerned about what might happen if a staff member is exposed and needs to quarantine- will there be options for extended paid sick leave if someone in their household is sick? I am also concerned about stundents under the age of 10 not wearing masks.

I want to see my kids face to face- online was absolute torture. Almost 70% of my kids had to be chased via email, messemger. zoom, etc before doing their work and what they did turn in was honestly, crap. 30% were angels, read instructions and could probably enter college tomorrow (I teach Jrs). I lost hair and gained weight. If we go to online, either the district needs to hold parents and students more accountable or I will be finding a different job, after 11 years of teaching and a masters degree in my subject area.

School districts, for the first time in a long time, will need rules and consequences in place to make our educational environment safe.

My school did not ask for teacher input on our plan of action. In fact, it was published to social media before teachers were even told about the plan

We must get back to normal.

Too many unknowns. And I know admin is facing a tough situation but many teachers are scared. I'm disappointed that my district has not said ANYTHING to the teachers about their plan moving forward this year. We are supposed to start school July 20, but have not been surveyed or talked to about what we will do when we return to the classrooms.

One thing that has come out is we will be forced to use our sick days before FMLA sets in This is if we have to be out due to the virus. Which is something that was opposite of what was discussed at a previous ccpc meeting We were told our sick days would not have to use our personal days. Also this waiver, that does not recognize the cppc. Pretty much letting the

super.do wjat he wishes to do. We were told if we didn't like the expectations, let them know if we aren't coming back. This comes before we know what the expectations are.
Main concern is for the health of teachers/administrators who are older or have underlying health conditions.

I'm a high school sped teacher and so worried about my kids!

I will be required to teach online. I have internet but don't have the band width to support adequate instruction. I currently drive to town and sit in my car outside of a coffee house in order to get WiFi.

I am high risk. Diabetic and high blood pressure. Also the caretaker of my elderly mother. Am very worried. Also worried about being quarantined if a student or teacher has Covidband having to use my only sick days.

I don't want to wear a mask. They serve NO purpose!!!

Too many people are adhering to the idea that children do not die from the covid-19 virus. Not only is this not true, but they are missing the fact that children are often asymptomatic carriers who can endanger teachers and staff easily. I feel like going back to the classroom this fall is an open-ended death sentence.

I have no info yet. What I do have is kids who will not be able to keep masks on all day, who tend to nose drip and put hands in their mouth or on pens/pencils/etc, and a very poor janitorial service. Just about every teacher in my building has an underlying condition.

I am so thankful our district has taken the time to form several committees of nurses, janitors, teachers, and admin to make a good plan. Principals went to building level leadership for our input to take back to final meetings. They aren't rushing like some districts. Trying to make sure every question is answered.

We should NOT be maxing class sizes at this time, nor should we be cutting teachers lunches and prep periods

I am certain we will spend the greater part of the next school year as distance learning teachers. At this point, I don't feel I know of or have adequate training to successfully accomplish this Trading at the last minute will not allow me time to develop what my kids will need. I feel we are being encouraged to use hyperdocs, but have had no specific training on how to do this. I am EXTREMELY comfortable with my subject (math), but the nuances that go with this subject will be almost impossible to communicate online. Why is the state of Arkansas even considering testing next year? I believe all we will learn from our ACT Aspire scores is the importance of relationships to learning

As an older art teacher with a disabled husband, I am concerned about safety. I will see all students including younger students without masjs. My art room is small We are elbow to elbow. None of this seems safe to me.

I do not trust our Department of Education based on actions they've done over the past several years. My fear is that they are using the Covid-19 issue to further erode traditional public education. The on-line program they are advocating for is questionable & has generated complaints in other states. The ADE has a terrible habit of not trusting educators in AR to do what they are trained, licensed, & well qualified to do.

I think a significant bump in pay and maybe help more with insurance would be nice considering. I'm a speech therapist whose office is a storage room. Not sure how I will social distance with groups of 4. Not sure how any of this will work. I would rather wear a face shield so the students can see my mouth. Do I have to buy it? I'm afraid to wait too long and then there's a mad rush for supplies and everything is gone. I know this is a fluid situation but I would appreciate to hear anything from our district so I can start preparing.

Although we were asked for input in one afternoon zoom session, that in no way means that we were listened to or that any of our suggestions or input will matter. Our admin does what it wants-what they see as best.

C.O.M.M.U.N.I.C.A.T.I.O.N. continues to be an issue in our district. Decisions are still being made and when one little decision is solidified, it is blasted to social media BEFORE teachers are told. Then parents reach out to teachers for answers and teachers are clueless. That happens often in our district even though we have repeatedly voiced our frustrations.

Worried about doing double and triple duty as a teacher this year. It's also hard knowing I also have my own children to take care of as well, if school is not in regular session.

Just wanted to clarify that I'm not happy about teaching my content online because the students I serve in my 1st grade classroom can't be successful in that setting. Poverty, ELL and no help at home. That coupled with the fact my district would not send home technology to our students. despite the fact that we are. 1 to 1 k-12.

Teachers and staff members have family at home that may be vulnerable. We need to remember the whole picture. Also, we have not been told a whole lot. It's June 22, it's past time for school employees to know a plan of action.

Rural areas do not have internet access. Online learning will not work for students in these areas No internet in Southwest Arkansas. Online learning will be very difficult to do

I teach prek and am very worried how this will effect prek. Teaching prek online was not effective in my opinion. Very worried about outcome. Would like direction but my district is not offering any!!! We are a 7A school district and I just feel are being left completely in the dark.

I hope they take into account the fact that many teachers have underlying health issues.

I know our children need equity, they need an education, and they desperately need a safe place where they can feel loved and are fed. But teachers are yet again being left out of this conversation. My district has not asked any of us what we feel safe doing, and they won't until they have already decided. We might get a Google Form, at best, from them I work with some amazing educators and support staff who are incredibly vulnerable to this new virus and in a building as big as ours there is no way to guarantee their safety. Faculty and staff's children and families are also being risked. Even if our kids were able to stay home with a distance learning option we are still coming home to them. We are being asked to serve as frontline workers without any options, plans for PPE, or additional hazard pay. Target is paying their employees who are facing exposure extra. Target. This time we have needs to be spent ensuring equity in online and distance learning, and finding an effective strategy for food distribution for our vulnerable kids. I'm scared for my family and no one seems to care.

I'm self-containted special education. I'm worried that my students will not be able to wear the masks all day. Wondering if I should send them to the other classes. I have one that is already sick so much. I have one that had a heart transplant not coming but brothers will.

Dr. Key stated that districts don't have to follow CDC guidelines and each district makes their own plans. Putting students and teachers in small classrooms with no ventilation, masks, protective equipment, and increased class sizes is going to be a disaster. CDC says you are most likely to catch virus if in close proximity for more than 15 minutes. Teachers and students should not have to return to a school that they do not feel safe in. Please consider how people in confined spaces have been the cases where most Covid transmission has occurred. Until Schools can guarantee that the schools are safe, and following CDC guidelines on- site instruction should not be resummed. Educators are not infectious disease specialists and should not be the ones planning the return to school safety protocols.

In response to question 8, the only plan they have if one does not feel safe is to go home

It appears that we are definitely trying to cater to students and parents. There is nothing in our plan giving teachers options. It also appears yhat as the teacher you will be expected to do all 3 options at the same time. Full time in class, blended with part in class and part online, and full online. It is unreasonable to expect a teacher to prepare for all 3 methods. Also, will teachers get additional pay or a stipend if we have to work from home. Many have had to add internet and it can cost us $100+ per month.

Safety for our children & teachers is a biggy

It's scary. I just keep thinking essential personal. Hazardous duty pay.

How much input has any community member had? As teachers we were not given input. Also, will teachers be expected to teach in person and blended learning students? That is a lot to plan for.

I'm concerned about the ability of districts to change policies and procedures without teacher's input.

Our school only surveyed parents. They did not ask for input from teachers.

Cancel sports - look at the NFL and MLB - college teams...don't let an outbreak happen first. These waivers about classroom size and doing away with planning time are very concerning. If we need more teachers this year, hire them on a one year contract which they know may go away. We must have professional development from the state which better equips us to do blended learning. I feel it is a HUGE challenge that I need resources to meet. I want to meet my students' needs, but I need help with technology and best practices. Some colleges have been teaching remotely for years and having success. Please have some of those people create PD for us at the high school level so we can continue to deliver good instruction. We can't just figure this one out as individual teachers.

What will happen when this turns into a teacher crisis? We are already experiencing a teacher shortage. Also, if a teacher is ill and doesn't have the sick days to miss and not get paid, we will have an even bigger problem. Districts already have an issue allowing teachers to work from home and get paid. I am a teacher and parent, I am the only income for my family. I can't afford to be docked because I get COVID-19 from my job.

I'm concerned that the actual teachers were not involved on how instruction would be most successful in the upcoming year.

ALL students should have reliable access to the internet for free. We are not meeting ther needs of all of our students.

My district shares nothing with teachers. We typically learn things when they post on Facebook for parents.

There has been virtually no communication between the school/district and classified staff. We don't know what is going on or what is expected of us upon return. I have been there 18 years and find it disheartening that not a single attempt to reach out to employees and their families have been done since the sent us home March 13th.

The AAA rule concerning athletes is unfair. If online instruction counts as instruction and as a day of school, athletes should be able to choose blended learning or off-site instruction but attend

practice. I would rather my child be exposed to the same 12 kids he plays basketball with everyday than the 6-700 kids in the building. Makes no sense. All kids should be doing blended or off-site in my opinion and rotate to avoid larger than necessary grouping. We are using humans as guinea pigs, not cool!

We have been told parents can choose virtual or in person but we have not been told as teachers how that will work. Will we be responsible for virtual students and in person students?
I found out about my school's plan, as such, on Facebook. There has been NO communication with teachers about what is going on.

If we are forced to quarantine due to exposure will we have to lose pay and/or use our available sick days?

I feel teachers who are sick or needing to care for family will be punished.

I am not sure those with high risk factors will be protected well enough.

I'm being forced into retirement because my district will not adequately address my health concerns, even I'm 65 and have health issues.

Class sizes really worry me... I'm high-risk and having 22-24 kids at a time is concerning.

Our district will put off to the last moment then copy someone else's plan based on some lawyer's approval.

How will the absence policy change due to Covid?

Very concerned about the lack of at-home resources and internet access for our low income families. We can't teach them if we can't reach them. All the (probably necessary) attendance waivers are going to make it easier for abusive adults to keep their kids out of school and potentially hide abuse. Masks and dividers will not work in elementary and middle school. Testing should be waived again. We all need HQ training for HQ online teaching - and raises. Will we have to use sick days if we are quarantined? What about health-compromised teachers? They can't just suddenly be out of work but these conditions certainly didn't factor into their decision making when choosing a career. It's all so unprecedented, so hard. Praying for the decision makers.

I am concerned about teacher sick days. I am also concerned about the waivers. Teachers worked for years to have those policies in place

I am concerned that my continual exposure to covid, I will not be able to visit my family The students I teach will not wear masks because they're under 10 years old. I feel that the district I work will not adhere to CDC guidelines for social distancing I attending a meeting about tge

predetermined possibilities for next year where only 4 out of 45 people wore masks and I was the only employee who remained socially distanced.

Be8ng in the high risk group, i do have reservations. I'm still fairly sure that we will be seeing a decline in the number of cases by then.

We have heard absolutely nothing from our school on how our year is, or may possibly, going to look. Not even a glimpse.

At my school we the teachers were already sharing classrooms and had packed classes of 25-30. There were classes taking place in the cafeteria. I am skeptical they will be able to enforce any sort of small class size/or socially distanced class size without more construction. Additionally, they keep cutting back electives which makes the elective classes even larger. I am also VERY concerned about how teachers will be treated with blended learning/wholly virtual options. We have been told to prepare our curriculum for blended learning, but we don't know what that will look like at all. If some students are wholly virtual and some are traditional/blended, are teachers going to have to perform double duty? What about the suggestion that students spend some lunches in the classroom? Are we going to lose our duty free lunch? I saw somewhere that ADE would possibly provide waivers to districts concerning teacher duty/extra pay.

I'm trying to just be patient & not go to the "anxious setting" yet. There's still several weeks in which things can develop with the virus, so I think it's premature to get worked up over the "what if's". I trust our district to make the best decisions for students & staff. I do hope the state Dept of Ed considers omitting state testing again next year.

My concern is using my sick days and missing pay if I get sick at school or have to stay at home because someone in my school has Covid19. Also, my husband has severe medical issues and I'm nervous about bringing it home to him.

Masks should be required (not just encouraged or recommended) for ALL students and ALL staff in grades 4-12. ALL visitors in a building should be required to wear masks. Class sizes must be reduced even if that means that students alternate days between face to face and online learning. Students and bus drivers should be required to wear masks.

Really worried about going back in August

Some of the waivers are terrifying to me. If my district were to apply for some of the waivers I wouldn't have a moment to go to the bathroom during the day, much less plan for future lessons They also make school feel like a terrible place for kids. They will have no play time or social interaction. They need that time to develop socially and emotionally I wouldn't want to send my own children to an environment like that.

I was just hired so information is scarce.

I have little faith in my CO staff and whatever the plan is it will not be followed in my building. My principal will not hold anyone accountant for it.

We are in unchartered waters. I really feel like districts are doing the very best they can. COVID-19 data varies so much across the state, I think districts need to make decisions based on data for their county. My county has low cases and is not experiencing a huge rise in cases, so I think we would need less modifications than a county that is a hot spot, with the understanding that if cases increase, so do precautions.

Teachers should not be responsible for sanitizing anything outside of their own workspace. We have custodians for those type things. Just because we are salary, doesn't mean we should be "used" for unrelated duties that interfere with our planning time, etc. the custodians at my school have way too much down time....I'm certain they can find the time.

Concerned about waivers for duty free lunch and loss of planning time.

I feel that the state dept. has simply given a theory to the districts, broad as it is, fit it to your district and get back to us. Wow! what is the deal! So sad, but not enough guidance is given. Districts will do as many have done in the past. That is let's not involve the actual teachers, just grab a few who think they know more than anyone, put their ideas to task and make the situation harder and more depressing for the regular classroom teacher to deal with.
I have so many questions that I don't know where to begin.

As a pre school teacher, I feel that our section of school is COMPLETELY being ignored! When we are also governed by DHS and ABC better beginnings, we have rules from everywhere at it appears at this time that the district and the Early Childhood department at DHS are not talking. Pre School classrooms are build on relationships. We teach social skills as well as introduce academics. We love on children in ways that their parents do, and when a child is sick- we hold them. There is no set your head on the desk or walk to the nurse. We are care givers as well as educators.

In the past, my district has NOT taken into consideration the health, concerns, opinions, or feelings of the teachers or staff when making decisions. They do what they want and tell you what you are going to do. The needs of the students are not considered, it is only how little can we get by with. If it isn't within the best practices they just get a waiver. Instead of trying to follow guidelines they go into everything with, "we will just get a waver". They do not make ALL students follow school rules and many buck the system all the time and get by with it. How can anyone feel safe with so much not being taken seriously With past experiences of this I don't feel safe with what they will expect from me, required with consistency, or that others safety will be put first.

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ARKANSAS)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SALINE)

I, SHARON K. HILL, CCR, a Certified Stenomask Reporter and Notary Public before whom the foregoing proceedings was taken, do hereby certify that the same is a true and correct transcription before the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, State Board of Education, on June 29, 2020 (via livestream); that the said proceedings was reduced to typewritten form by me or under my direction and supervision; and that the foregoing pages constitute a true and correct transcription of all proceedings had in said matter.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I have no contract with any parties within this action that affects or has a substantial tendency to affect impartiality, that requires me to relinquish control of an original transcript or copies of the transcript before it is certified and delivered to the custodial agency, or that requires me to provide any service not made available to all parties to the action.

WITNESS, MY HAND AND SEAL, THIS DATE: July 4, 2020.

SHARON K. HILL
ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT No. 670
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER

Sharon K. Hill
SHARON K. HILL, CCR
Certified Court Reporter
Certificate No. 670

NOTARY PUBLIC ARKANSAS
SHARON KAY HILL
No. 12392310
SALINE COUNTY
My Commission Expires 2-21-2023