

From: Jackie [REDACTED]
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To: sb.members@spps.org
Subject: Hybrid Concerns

I am a Library Media Specialist at Maxfield Elementary School. I have significant concerns about the rushed move to the hybrid model. I have a daughter diagnosed with cerebral palsy and epilepsy. Because of her disability, my daughter is in the high-risk category and my family has worked very hard at following COVID protocols to keep her safe. While I have applied to work from home, I have not heard if it has been approved. Several other staff members have medical issues or their family members have medical issues and we are all very concerned for the safety of our families.

Bringing staff and students back when COVID numbers are rising around the country will contribute to the spread of COVID in the St Paul area.

Besides my own personal concern, I have several other questions and concerns about adequacy, or lack thereof, regarding the district's plan to rush students and staff back into classrooms:

Hybrid Concerns:

- Health and safety of students and their families
- Health and safety of staff members, especially those with medical conditions or family members with medical conditions

Student Related Questions:

- Why bring students and staff back when COVID numbers are rising nationally and Minnesota is bordered on all sides by states with the highest infection rates in the United States?
- Building community is essential to a classroom. Why have students switch teachers now and lose that sense of community the teachers have been building since the beginning of the year?
- Why go from students getting 5 days of face to face virtual teaching from a classroom teacher during distance learning to 2 days during hybrid?
- How will the chemicals used to clean affect students, especially those with asthma?
- Many of our students lack access to affordable healthcare and medical treatment. What is the SPPS plan regarding students and families that lack medical insurance when COVID cases begin infecting students and staff in the school?

School Related Questions

- Across the nation, news reports are replete with school districts needing to revert to distance learning because of public health concerns. This scenario is not a matter of "if it happens", but rather "when it happens". When faced with an emerging public health crisis in Saint Paul, what is the SPPS plan for reverting to distance learning after hybrid has started?
- The SPPS district encompasses a large city. The data show that COVID infections

often vary widely from neighborhood to neighborhood. Currently the 55119 zip code covering the portion of Saint Paul east of White Bear Avenue is a local hotspot with spiking COVID infections. What consideration has been made for locally specific data, such as COVID hotspots?

- CDC data shows that sufficient air circulation is key to containing the spread of COVID in public buildings. Many SPPS buildings fall dramatically short of these guidelines. For classrooms lacking outside-facing windows, what are teachers expected to do? Additionally, with our cold Minnesota winter fast approaching, the option to have a window open is rapidly fading. What is the SPPS plan for air circulation and filtration once winter arrives?
- The increased filtration can put a strain on HVAC system. How will you keep fresh intake air working especially during the cold winter months?
- Given the airborne nature of COVID, every time a toilet is flushed, millions of particles are aerosolized into the air. Most bathroom facilities in SPPS lack toilet lids. How does SPPS plan on addressing this issue?
- Even in pre-COVID times, many of our students have parents and caregivers unable to drop everything and pick up a sick child. If a student has COVID and is actively shedding virus into the air, what is the SPPS plan to protect that student and others in the school? Does SPPS have effective plans in place for the certain eventuality that a student is sick and no one can take them home from school?
- Masks are essential to slowing the spread of this disease. What if a student refuses to wear a mask?

Staff Related Questions:

- How will we have enough time to teach both virtually and physically?
- What if we keep having to quarantine and go through all 10 of our quarantine days? What if we run out of sick days? Will some staff still come to work with symptoms if they have no sick leave left?
- Many SPPS staff are parents of children requiring child care or enrolled in other school districts. What if staff can't find daycare for their kids before November 2? Some staff members are on the wait list for EKC. What do they do if their child's school is in distance learning because of COVID?
- Why are teachers only being given 2 days to setup their classroom for hybrid when Order 20-82 from the state is 5 days?
- Given that there is a small but very vocal minority of people refusing to engage in proper COVID safety precautions e.g., mask wearing, social distancing. What is the process for reporting unsafe working conditions, such as staff not wearing masks? How does SPPS plan to adequately protect those staff members who raise such concerns from retaliation?

Thank you for your consideration.

Jackie [REDACTED]