

## Please do not resume close contact fall sports

Sarah Pohl <pohlwoman@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

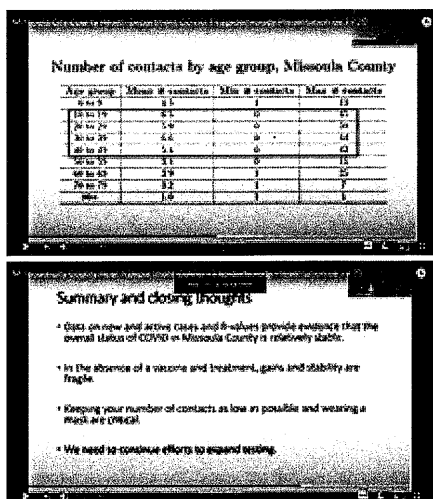
Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 11:17 AM

August 21, 2020

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees:

I urge you to see the contradiction of promoting a hybrid model and simultaneously resuming close-contact fall sports. It is my understanding that we chose a hybrid model for two reasons: we know most students learn best when they're in person, but at the same time we recognize the importance of significantly limiting contact with each other (students will have two classes every three weeks in high school). I do not see our decision to resume soccer and football congruently reflecting the reasons that we chose a hybrid model. If we are trying to limit student contacts with each other, why are we endangering all students, especially our student athletes? How much safety are we willing to risk and at what cost? I urge you to consistently apply the central values driving our decisions to structure school the way we have, to our decision to resume soccer and football. If we want to keep our R-value low, we should not make decisions that we know increase a student's number of contacts.

Please see information from the Missoula Epidemiology Situation Unit Press Conference on August 19, 2020 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ntlrX6QnO1E&feature=youtu.be>) about contact rate and the spread of the coronavirus (clip 20:00 to 28:00) as well as the summary and closing thoughts by Erin Semmens (33:00-34:00). I have pasted screenshots below. Kristie Scheel, PMQI Coordinator notes, "The importance of maintaining a close circle of contacts cannot be overstated." As a "forward thinking" organization, MCPS should learn from examples like Clemson, Ohio State and the dozens of other football teams that have student athletes who have tested positive. We should be concerned about our student athletes getting permanent lung damage and ALL our students and teachers who risk exposure by being in close enough proximity to these students.



For the past two weeks I have run by two of our high schools where soccer players and football players were mask-less, in close proximity, breathing heavily, and touching at times. I am an English teacher at

Sentinel and I can't help but think that all of the work I have put into training and adapting my curriculum to fit a hybrid model was for nothing. This summer I attended five workshops to be a better hybrid and online teacher, and I have put in no fewer than 120 hours toward adapting my teaching style and curriculum. I have met with our English department and my PLC group seven times to talk about best practices. All of this training has been optional and none of it has so far been paid for by MCPS. We have developed myriad safety protocols and cleaning protocols. How can any of this really matter when we're also saying it's okay for students to literally breathe heavily, pile up on top of each other on the field, and then come to class the next day?

Please tell me that our values are not just lip service. I played three varsity sports in high school and rugby in college and am an avid skier and runner now; believe me, I am familiar with the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of sports. But as a logical thinker, I would never argue that those benefits outweigh the good of keeping all students and MCPS employees safe. There are many sports that do not put individuals in as much risk of spreading the coronavirus like tennis, golf, and running. To protect all students, and especially our student athletes, I urge you to reconsider allowing close contact sports to resume in the fall. More progressive school districts in the country have moved their fall sports to the spring.

Thank you for your service and for considering my comments.

Respectfully submitted, Sarah Pohl

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## Re-opening schools

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**Kristy Tripp** <kristytripp4@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 11:42 AM

As a parent of 2 children who attend MCPS I would like my voice to be heard on the re-opening status. Due to work I was not able to attend the zoom meeting last week or last night but got updates from folks who had insight.

It is my understanding that several families (less than 200) and teachers have complained about school reopening, or at least in class attendance reopening. I believe we have roughly 3400 students between the 3 msla high schools and Seeley, I have no idea what the elem count is, but if reconsideration is being given to the 200 or so families(and staff) who are complaining about returning due to COVID I would like to bring attention to a few things.

FIRST- every school surrounding msla is returning 5/wk, Hellgate Elem who has 1500 students alone, Stevi, Florence, Corvallis, Hamilton, Kalispell, etc all returning 5/wk why aren't we? We all know these communities often have family that commutes in and out of Msla daily, how is that going to slow down the spread? If Hellgate Elem can figure it out and return 5/wk with a high school of 1100 (older kids mind you) mcps should be able to figure a way out.

SECOND- to the teachers who think it's a bad idea, why? I understand some might have compromised health issues or be in a higher risk due to age, so why can't they be matched to the concerned families who don't want to send the kids at all and teach online? I realize there is a lot more complexity to this than meets the eye, but again other schools are figuring it out, what makes mcps any different? And to the teachers who have pressure from their unions to push back on this, they should be reminded and thankful the nurses and doctors and cleaning staff at the hospitals still showed up for work, and did what needed to be done during the pandemic back in March when so many unknowns were in question. Schools have been notoriously known for germs kids spread, when teachers signed up for this profession I'm sure that was something they were aware of and have had many years to build a strong immune system. Utah, SLC to be specific who has a much larger population than us has sent kids back to school taking precautions, 5/wk. Myself and 70% of parents are in favor of sending our kids back and many of us would prefer FT in the classroom. Why aren't stats from the Assoc of Pediatrics being taken into consideration, they all say kids should be back in class, as do thousands of other dr's. MCPS needs to listen to this side as well.

THIRD- younger kids who need childcare before/after school, and in mcps case 3 other times per week are being placed in childcare facilities, where they will be around other kids in a room no different than a classroom, again tell me how this makes sense? If the true reason is to slow the spread, aren't the masks working? won't washing, sanitizing and distancing help as well. The virus has a 99.4% recovery rate if someone gets it, the fact our whole damn school, city, state, and country have crumbled to their knees over this is absolutely ridiculous.

We as a family decided on returning to class, I would love to see how many families are doing this, will actual numbers be shared? that in itself should give direction as how to proceed. We chose going back for the very hopeful fact that come Sept 18 we were being optimistic we would return 5/wk. Kids are ready for normalcy, our girls are excited to be returning to school, they need interaction with peers, not isolation, some kids flat out need the stability, as do the families where both parents work and have to. I'm sick of hearing how those opposing return to school are being heard but those who are in favor seem to be ignored. I will be encouraging all the families I know who support a FT return to class schedule to email you as well.

Thank you for your time,  
Kristy&Ben Tripp



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **In class school year**

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**Niccole Ostrom** <niccoleostrom@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 12:45 PM

To whom it may concern,

In regards to the return for in person school. My family feels it is in our best interest to resume IN PERSON, with all 5 days being considered. The risks and effects for my children not attending in person class are more than not attending.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely  
Niccole Ostrom

Sent from my iPhone

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## Please move to 100% online learning

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**Justin Whitaker** <buddhistethics@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 2:40 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, meholland@mcpsmt.org, mjsmith@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, ssterbis@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org

Dear members of the MCPS school board,

I am writing today as a Missoula resident, born in Montana, to ask that you move swiftly to a 100% online teaching model for this fall. I am deeply concerned that a return to classes, even with some precautions, will facilitate the spread of COVID-19 through our community at a rate we have not before seen.

We know that this is a communicable disease, most often spread through droplets in the air in enclosed spaces. Putting even reduced-sized groups of kids back into rooms will guarantee that some are able to spread COVID-19 to one another and those kids will then return home to siblings, parents, and grandparents to spread the virus to them.

I know these decisions are extremely difficult and I can only imagine the stress you are under at this time. However, if classes go forward, you have to understand that some MCPS teachers will end up in the hospital with COVID-19 that they contracted at school. Possibly some will die. Some parents, immunocompromised siblings, and grandparents face the same fate. Also, as COVID-19 spreads, area businesses will need to shut down if/when their workers catch the virus, and those of us in the community will feel less and less safe going out.

Again, I ask, for our safety, that you move to a 100% online teaching program until you can guarantee the safety of students, teachers, families, and the community. Failing to do so could have catastrophic consequences for all of us.

With thanks,

Justin Whitaker  
234 Edith St, apt 5  
Missoula, MT 59801

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Open schools

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**Nikki Sobczak** <nikki22477@hotmail.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 11:22 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I strongly feel it should be a parents right if they want their child to go to school 5 days per week . I feel like Missoula schools should open and allow us to decide for ourselves of our child should do in person. So many surrounding schools are opening like normal and our district survey showed 76 percent parents wanting schools to open! Open the schools please! It's our choice  
Nikki Sobczak

Sent from my iPhone

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## Reopening school

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randrtaxservice3@gmail.com <randrtaxservice3@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 11:01 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello

I have heard that you have some teachers that are asking the board to reconsider opening school. They are even saying they might strike

I feel that the District need to stick with the plan of reopening. I would keep the two options of distance learning or in person. What I think needs to be reconsidered is the in person. These students need to go to school 5 days a week. Only going to school 2 days a week is only getting 40% of their education. This is not alright. The hybrid method also puts the students and staff at a higher risk of getting exposed to COVID. Exactly what you are trying to prevent. My thought process behind this is in Elementary school these students are to young to stay home alone. Most of these students will be going to a daycare after school and the 3 days they do not attend school. This means they have their covert at school, then at least one more covert at daycare. This means they keep spreading germs between groups. You also have the hardship on your staff who have children attending your school. They have to work 5 days a week but their children only go to school 2 days a week.

I have to question if the teachers/staff members that do not want the school to reopen are going out shopping, eating out, or hanging out with friends. If they can do these things they can come to the school and work.

Please make sure that MCPS is doing what they need to do and educate their students. The families need a choice of all distance or all in person (5 days a week).

Thank you  
Robbi Ludemann

Sent from my iPhone

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**Re: Lewis & Clark Clarification Update**

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**toni matlock** <tonimatlock@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 5:28 PM

To: Alanna Vaneps &lt;amvaneps@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;

Cc: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, toni matlock &lt;tonimatlock@gmail.com&gt;, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, avgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, mjsmith@mcpsmt.org, hlittman@mcps.k12.mt.us, Bruce Tribbensee &lt;bruce@submittable.com&gt;

Alanna,

My son is attending first grade this fall at L&C. We have opted for the Hybrid model for several reasons. One big one is that we did not like the quality (or lack of quality) with the Online Academy. As we are ramping up into actual attendance next week I still need some more clarity on what the plan actually is. How many students are expected to be in each class? I've been watching for information that spells out the protocols specifically and in detail at L&C addressing C-19. Something beyond the fact that parents should not go into the school and fewer kids overall are attending in person. For example, what are the group sizes in classrooms, when do kids wear masks, when do teachers, and are you taking temperatures before people enter? Did I miss this information somehow?

What's the plan? I want to be supportive of my community and also prepare my son and myself for what to expect and discuss what is expected of him and us. Can you provide more written guidance?

Thanks,  
toni

On Thu, Aug 20, 2020 at 7:04 PM Alanna Vaneps <amvaneps@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

Good Evening Lewis & Clark Families,

In keeping you informed as we get ready to begin the school year, I wanted to provide some clarification regarding classrooms and teachers.

Currently we have over 130 students who have registered for the Missoula Online Academy and with approximately 370 students who will begin the school year at Lewis and Clark in the hybrid phase with their teachers. Two Lewis and Clark teachers have requested to teach in the academy with others from around the MCPS District. The rest of the LC teachers will remain at Lewis & Clark to maintain smaller class sizes and relationships with families.

Here are our teachers for each grade level for the 2020-2021 school year:

**Kindergarten:**

- Sherry Winter
- Melissa Cooper
- Erin Kemmis
- Mary Paoli

**1st Grade:**

- Lisa Langella
- Audrey Harper
- Darcie Vasquez
- Courtney Hottowe

**2nd Grade:**

- Kari Henderson
- Morgan Bond
- Christy Meurer

**3rd Grade:**

- Brianna Hougard



- Rachel Mosbacher
- Jennifer Jencso

**4th Grade:**

- Sharon Jones
- Kim O'Connor
- Andrew Wyatt

**5th Grade:**

- Jordan Garland
- Tessa Masters
- Nicole Vanek

In tomorrow's Family Newsletter, I will provide details about finalizing class lists and more information about the beginning of school.

Have a great evening,  
Alanna

Alanna Vaneps  
Principal  
Lewis & Clark Elementary  
amvaneps@mcpsmt.org  
(406) 728-2400 ext. 4350

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**Alanna Vaneps** <amvaneps@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 11:08 AM

To: toni matlock <tonimatlock@gmail.com>

Cc: Alanna Vaneps <amvaneps@mcps.k12.mt.us>, Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, avgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, mjsmith@mcpsmt.org, hlittman@mcps.k12.mt.us, Bruce Tribbensee <bruce@submittable.com>

Good Morning Toni,

Below is the newsletter I sent families yesterday including several documents. We will also add your email address to the system so you get my weekly updates. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Thank you,  
Alanna

*Good Evening Lewis & Clark Families,*

*I am looking forward to school beginning next week and to see all the smiling faces as we embark on a new school year. It is an exciting time for kids, families and staff, and we can't wait to see your student(s)!*

*This week, the county health office hosted a press conference where the professionals from UM Public Health discussed the data and current state of COVID-19 in our county. I believe they did a nice job of explaining the data. If you have questions or concerns about the data for Missoula County or if you are*

wondering why county health felt comfortable in their support of our return to school plan, this video may help explain: <https://youtu.be/ntlrx6QnO1E>

In addition, our families had some great questions around our districts COVID-19 Response Plan. I have linked the plan for you to review as well: MCPS COVID-19 Response Plan (also attached below). There is specific and thorough information included in the document and I recommend families review our COVID-19 protocols.

Also attached, are some helpful safety links for you to review before the first day of school. We are asking families to do a home health check, arrive at school as close to the 8:30a.m. bell as possible and to not congregate on the playground before or after school. Below are some important links for you to review and these documents are also attached.

Health screening checklist: At Home Health Screen

Parent responsibility during COVID-19: Parent Responsibilities

Response to COVID-19: Response to COVID-19

Student face covering: Student Face Covering

Our teachers and staff have been working hard to prepare our classrooms and building to welcome our students back to a safe, engaging and caring learning environment next week. I have been so proud and impressed with the dedication of the staff at Lewis and Clark. I feel so fortunate to work with the amazing group of professionals in our building.

I know the start of this year looks different, and our schedules have been modified. I want to make sure families feel comfortable with the first 4 weeks of school. We are so excited to welcome your kiddos back next week. A reminder, we are in our **Hybrid Phase 1 Model** for the first 4 weeks.

**August 26th-Kindergarten ONLY**

- Kindergarten Block A 8:30-10:30
- Kindergarten Block B 12:10-2:10
- No busing for kindergarten students on the 26th

**August 27th-All students on cohort A day K-5 (busing provided)**

**August 28th-All students on cohort B day K-5 (busing provided)**

Families can refer to the attached schedule for our 16 days of school to start the year. We will also text families each day the first two weeks.

I have included an attached map so families become familiar with our property and where students will line up. Please be sure to drop you student(s) off on AGNES STREET.

**Map entrance:** Families can review the attached building map, so you and your student(s) knows which area to line up each day. We will have staff out every morning to help students get into their designated wing, as well as helping kids get to their buses at the end of the day.

**Bell Schedule (M-F):** First Bell-8:30am  
Dismissal-2:10pm

Please drop your student off as close to 8:30 as possible

**MCPS Instructional Programs:** Please see the attached document for more information about the In Person Model and the Missoula Online Academy model for instruction.

**Breakfast:** Since students will not be using the cafeteria this year, students will eat breakfast in the classroom AFTER the bell has rang.

**School Supplies:** Students will not share their supplies. Their supplies will be stored supplies separately at school. You can review our supply list [here](https://www.mcpsmt.org/cms/lib/MT01001940/Centricity/Domain/1391/Lewis%20and%20Clark%202020-2021%20Supply%20list.pdf).

<https://www.mcpsmt.org/cms/lib/MT01001940/Centricity/Domain/1391/Lewis%20and%20Clark%202020-2021%20Supply%20list.pdf>

**Class Lists:** We have finalized class lists and they will be posted Monday morning on the following doors:

- Kindergarten ad 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – southeast corner door, closest to the Kndg rooms
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – on the main entrance door at the office
- 4<sup>th</sup> Grade – cafeteria door closest to Benton Ave
- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade – cafeteria door closer to Agnes Street

In addition, I will be emailing families who their child's teacher is this weekend.

**Visitation at Lewis & Clark in Phase 1 and Phase 2:** As much as we love having volunteers and visitors, we are unable to allow visitors inside our building during Phase 1 and Phase 2. We will miss having our families in the building and so look forward to having our families visit our classrooms, support our teachers and students, and help support the wonderful events when we enter Phase 3.

Again, I know this is a ton of information. I appreciate you taking the time to read and review our documents as we begin another exciting year at Lewis & Clark. As always, please reach out if you have questions. I will continue to update you on Fridays as we proceed into the school year. Have a wonderful weekend!

Principal Alanna Vaneps  
Lewis & Clark Elementary  
[amvaneps@mcpsmt.org](mailto:amvaneps@mcpsmt.org)  
(406) 728-2400 ext. 4350  
Alanna Vaneps  
Principal  
Lewis & Clark Elementary  
[amvaneps@mcpsmt.org](mailto:amvaneps@mcpsmt.org)  
(406) 728-2400 ext. 4350


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## 8 attachments

 **At Home Screening\_8.21.20.pdf**  
3898K

 **Instructional\_Programs.pdf**  
161K

 **MCPS COVID -19 Response Plan.pdf**  
218K

 **Map.docx**  
52K

 **First 4 Weeks of School Schedule based on Phase 1.docx**  
15K

 **Parent Responsibilities\_8.21.20.pdf**

8/24/2020

Missoula County Public Schools Mail - Re: Lewis & Clark Clarification Update

187K



**Response to COVID19\_8.21.20.pdf**

213K



**Student Face Coverings\_8.21.20.pdf**

718K

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: amvaneps@mcpsmt.org

Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 11:09 AM

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Facilities - Mt. Jumbo and Prescott School - the problems of giving help to a private school(s) by leasing our public school buildings**2 messages

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**David Joscelyn** <davedjosc@hotmail.com>

Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 2:00 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To the Missoula County Board of Trustees,  
This note is from Jeanne Joscelyn using the computer of Dave.

It came to my attention that Missoula International School wishes to lease Mt. Jumbo.  
Question - Why does MIS wish to not continue their lease of Prescott until their new building is completed?

The lease of Prescott School to the Missoula International School has always been controversial. And I believe that it has been illegal and if not that, unethical. The children of Missoula, more specifically, Missoula County Public Schools boundaries, are the BENEFICIARIES of all MCPS facilities.

It does not make sense to say that leasing one of our public schools to the competition, the private Missoula International School, is beneficial to MCPS.  
There has been false logic that MCPS is making money and that it is a win-win situation as MIS told disloyal Trustees back in 2004. MCPS has lost millions of dollars due to leasing Prescott School to MIS mostly due to the mushrooming of the MIS enrollment over the years beginning in 2004. This lease began in 2004 has now become a SIXTEEN-year lease. For many who were not around during 2004 and that is most if not all of you except for Rob Watson MIS requested only a TWO year lease. This lease has morphed into an unbelievable scenario of SIXTEEN YEARS - MCPS has gotten away with this scam because there is no watchdog group that has outlasted its corruption.

Over the years many members of the public, mostly neighbors and people in the Rattlesnake, have noticed the absolute lack of care MIS has engaged in over the years.  
When this issue has been brought up MIS states that it is not true and MCPS officials laugh it off. It is obvious that the Prescott building and grounds have deteriorated drastically over these 16 years. And has been possible due to MIS negligence and both MIS and MCPS not adhering to the letter of the lease which states that MIS is responsible for maintenance!!

The closure of Prescott School, Mt. Jumbo School, and Rattlesnake Middle School in 2004 was a HUGE blow to our family and the entire neighborhood and indeed the entire city. A friend of mine that was going through the 2004 nightmare with me told me that we might never get over the tragedy. Little did I know how true this statement was. The 2004 closure were so painful and tragic due to not only the decision but how it was handled. To this day I still remember how Board Chairwoman Rosemary Harrison and Superintendent Jim Clark completely ignored our pleas to stop the evil plan. Harrison was the most mean-spirited public

official I had seen and have seen to this day and it is distressing to think that she is still behind the closure and demolition still going on.

Please keep in mind that the public, especially the Rattlesnake and north part of our city deserve justice for the 2004 disaster. MCPS needs to reopen Prescott School, Mt. Jumbo School and bring back, somehow, all our middle school students. We deserve this. We need this.

Shortly after the closures in 2004 I started a blog to document the corruption involved in the Prescott School/Missoula International School lease.

Please go to the lease. As a current MCPS Trustee I believe that you have an obligation to go this blog to see corruption and disloyalty that took place and is really STILL taking place.

Please go to [www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com](http://www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com) This is not the most professional blog but it is the truth which all of you need to know.

## Prescott School Missoula

Missoula International School Montana Corporation documents from 1998 show that former Missoula County Public Schools Board of Trustees Chairwoman Toni Rehbein had served as the President of Missoula International School shortly before being elected to the MCPS Board in May of 2004. Rehbein did not reveal the information above during the 2004 election cycle but finally fessed up to her prior ...

[www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com](http://www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com)

This letter is long but is warranted due to the gravity of the situation. I apologize for any mistakes - I haven't typed this much for a while.

Thank you,  
Jeanne Joscelyn  
Prescott School advocate  
[www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com](http://www.prescottschoolmissoula.blogspot.com)

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**Fw: Instrumental music 2020**

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**Christine Wallace** <chriswallace52@yahoo.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 22, 2020 at 4:16 PM

Hello, sorry about the forwarded message but I have had problems finding your email address. thank you for understanding

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Christine Wallace <chriswallace52@yahoo.com>  
**To:** publiccomment@mcpsmt.org <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 22, 2020, 03:42:14 PM MDT  
**Subject:** Fw: Instrumental music 2020

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Christine Wallace <chriswallace52@yahoo.com>  
**To:** publiccommeeent@mcpsmt.org <publiccommeeent@mcpsmt.org>  
**Cc:** Liddi A. Elrod <laelrod@mcps.k12.mt.us>; Mike Johns <pmjohns@mcps.k12.mt.us>; rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 22, 2020, 03:36:06 PM MDT  
**Subject:** Instrumental music 2020

I am concerned about the decision to cut the crucial 5th grade instrumental program this year.

I'm one of your retired Music specialists and I need to point out that this 5th grade start up program is the root of MCPS's outstanding Music program. Please reconsider the damage created by cutting off that root, even for one year. 5th grade is the feeder program for a long standing incredible MCPS music program! Look ahead to the chaos and damage to this really fine program.

The start up in 5th grade allows the students to try something new in their home elementary schools. The numbers of students in 6th grade makes start up near impossible, plus the 6th grade student that can walk into a middle school Band or Orchestra with their instrument has confidence and a huge advantage over the student with no background, yes, even that one year!

We know not all students will elect to play an instrument. The Middle School choir programs are top notch but not a one of them can handle the huge jump in enrollment of students that did not have an opportunity to start on an instrument in 5th grade. Again, starting an instrument in middle school is often too much of a challenge. Imagine a room full of giddy 6th graders (60 or more...) trying to figure out what to do with instrument in hand.

I would encourage you to make even minimal contact with the 5th graders a possibility for Mr. Zschaechner and Mr. Belski, both these teachers can still make a 5th grade program work. I know they already have videos made to assist the beginning instrumentalists. We will get through this year and move on but please do not leave the long standing 5th grade program and the amazing instrumental specialists hanging out to dry. Look ahead, cutting the 5th grade instrumental program for even one year will be devastating!

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine Wallace  
MCPS String specialists, 1992-2008

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## As a teacher and parent I oppose reopening plan

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**Will Pereira** <wwpereira@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 20, 2020 at 9:32 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I will try to be brief. I oppose the current reopening plan. I honestly feel that you are literally forcing me to play russian roulette every day I come to work. Likewise for my children coming to school. The impacts of covid are virtually unpredictable, but we know that death and long term disabilities are both possibilities.

Admin has stated that they know covid transmission will occur due to reopening and yet that they are doing everything with safety in mind. These statements cannot both be true.

As a teacher I am completely inprepared to teach because of a lack of prep time and lack of certainty regarding way too many details of our instructional plan. Don't know if kids will have access to tech most importantly..

That is all. Please vote to delay start of school or start full remote

Regards

Will Pereira

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Will Pereira

"Unthinking respect for authority is the greatest enemy of truth." Einstein 1901

Teacher, Earth Science & Chemistry

728-2400 x7082

Sentinel High School

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**SEND KIDS BACK TO SCHOOL!!**

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**amythorpe77** <amythorpe77@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 23, 2020 at 8:30 AM

I am writing to ask you to please reconsider sending kids back to school full time!

This is definitely a strange time, but taking away a child's right to go to school to learn and socialize is wrong.

We are allowing all other events to continue to happen. How do you pick and choose what should and shouldn't be allowed?

Kids can wear masks safely.

Classrooms should have hand sanitizer readily available and every hour make all the kids actually wash their hands.

On a rotating schedule, kids in each classroom could be assigned every hour to wipe down high touch objects. Each child would only have to do this maybe every other day if they rotated...it would even teach them some responsibility.

If they stay in one classroom all day with the same kids, the risk is a lot lower, especially if all precautions are taken.

When its nice, teachers should also take their classes outside for lessons!

School can be brought back safely!

It is not fair for parents who work 40 hours a week to also be a filltime teacher. Our kids are missing out on so much education and my child for one struggles already and I will fight to make sure this does not continue to happen.

There are kids who have no access to the internet, that will fall so far behind and will eventually not even attend any sort of class.

I can only imagine the dropout rate in the following years will skyrocket.

The stress this is creating on families is completely unnecessary.

Let our kids go back to school!!

Sincerely  
Amy Thorpe

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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**Please RE OPEN**

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**Gena** <lotus2500@aol.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 23, 2020 at 9:55 AM

I am writing this to voice my family's opinion on the extreme need to re-open our schools. As a dual Income household (both of us with essential jobs, and one being a public servant for our city) we desperately need our children to be in a safe location, supervised and learning through in person instruction. Zoom does not work if there is not a parent to make sure kids are logged on at correct times and children stay on track.

The children of Missoula county are eager to have their school days back. For both their physical health and mental health, kids need kids to play with and grow with.

Families need to be diligent with hygiene and cautious of symptoms of not feeling well. If we all do our part, MCPS could provide a routine and normality that many families need, in one way or another.

For those families who are uncomfortable with in person learning, there are many online options for those children and parents. Utilize whatever works Best for your family.

From a parent who is all for RE-OPENING. Please keep those of us who support the return to normality for our children when you make city wide decisions- for sports, for concerts, for pep rallies, for school days.

Jeanette Rankin/Meadow Hill parents

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## Clarity of Leadership and Decision Making

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**Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard** <ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 10:02 AM

Hello,

I am writing to request that clarity of leadership and decision making for school reopening be addressed in the next regularly scheduled school board meeting.

1. The administration's process for making decisions has not been followed during this planning period. The public was told the board would not be voting on a recommendation to return to school, but did so swiftly at the Aug 11 meeting. The public was told the return to school survey would close at 5pm on Aug 10, but the results were disseminated at around 3:40pm on Aug 10. The public was told reopening in-person would only happen "if the numbers went down", yet we are opening in person. The public was told that students enrolled in person this fall still had the option of moving to the MOA at any time, but in an email (attached) Dr. Watson confirmed to me that this was "case by case" only. Please clearly outline who is making the decisions, when, and with what data/input.
2. In two separate conversations with local principals, I've been told that my family's needs can be met and accommodated so we can attend and feel confident in our decision, either in-person or MOA. In one conversation with another principal (I have children in different MCPS schools), I was told that my family's work schedule and technology needs were "difficult" enough that I should "just have them go in-person." As parents, should we expect to be supported in making the best decision for our families, or should we simply do what we are told by administration and principals?
3. I'd also like to request that parents be provided a virtual walk-through of their children's schools so we know what is actually, practically, being done in each classroom. A plan is only as good as its capacity to be effective. I can applaud the rigid yet data-informed plan that has been laid out so kids can attend in-person – I have serious doubts that it can be applied practically and effectively at half-capacity in hybrid or nearly full-capacity when all children (except MOA) return, in all classrooms and in all schools. Any failure to adhere to the plan in any classroom or school is, in my opinion, a failure of the administration in finding an achievable plan and not of the teachers and staff to follow it.

Thank you,

Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard

**From:** Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard <ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com>

**Date:** Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 10:26 AM

**To:** Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>

**Subject:** Re: Return to School Plan update from the Superintendent 8/17/20 - Full MCPS COVID-19 Response Plan included

Hello Dr. Watson,

Thank you for your reply. I am so disappointed in the change of narrative around these important items. I understand that information regarding return to school is changing constantly, however the process has felt cloaked, guarded and inconsistent and certainly not responsive to concerns expressed publicly by teachers and parents.

Ashley

**From:** Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>  
**Date:** Thursday, August 20, 2020 at 7:03 AM  
**To:** Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard <ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Return to School Plan update from the Superintendent 8/17/20 - Full MCPS COVID-19 Response Plan included

Hi Ashley,

Yes we are asking students to commit for the semester. But we do know that there may be a few students who need to be moved from the in-person learning to the online academy based on an individual need. We will allow students to move later, but it will be on a case-by-case basis. Hope this info helps. Rob

**From:** Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard <ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Monday, August 17, 2020 at 2:40 PM  
**To:** Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>  
**Subject:** FW: Return to School Plan update from the Superintendent 8/17/20 - Full MCPS COVID-19 Response Plan included

Warning!

This message originates from OUTSIDE the District's email system. Please verify the sender and contents before opening attachments or clicking any links. Contact the IT Help Desk at 406-728-2400 x7777 with any questions.

Hello Dr. Watson,

I wanted to clarify enrollment to MOA – your email indicates that the district will allow “a limited number of students to enroll after” September 2, however in previous communications in board meetings it was stated children could move from in-person to the MOA at any point during the semester, and enrollment to the MOA was expected to last through the semester. Has that changed, and in-person students are expected to remain in-person for the duration of the semester?

Thank you,

Ashley Hilliard

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 24, 2020 at 10:02 AM

To: ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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## One more vote for re-opening school

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**Tamar** <tamarkasberg@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 25, 2020 at 6:12 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I received a message stating "Parents of MCPS students, please send an email to publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, apparently many parents/teachers who oppose re-opening school at all are being heard. If you want return to class school you need to be heard (last nites meeting had 70 families who are against reopening, rumor is there might be a re-vote on doing anything but online) We need to speak up ASAP!!!"

Note sure if this is true but we are a definite vote to re open schools full time.

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## Senior can't graduate in Online Academy

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**Beth Morey** <eamorey@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 25, 2020 at 9:50 AM

To: Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>, publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

A close friend of mine has a MCPS incoming senior. The family would like for this senior to attend the Online Academy. However, due to the lack of electives being offered in the OA, this senior will not have fulfilled the requirements to graduate if she goes remote.

Why is she being forced to attend in-person against the family's wishes?

What is your solution? How can she attend the OA and still graduate? When I asked board member Grace Decker about it on Facebook, she replied that it is not your desire to stand between students and their success...but I haven't seen you fix this significant problem.

And how is it possible that this has been overlooked by you and the others setting up the remote learning option? This senior can't be the only student this is happening to.

Thanks,  
Beth Morey

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Kids need to be in school**

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**Nikki Sobczak** <nikki22477@hotmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 27, 2020 at 8:26 AM

I really hope that MCPS opens 5 days a week along all the other schools near by . 2 days a week is not even close to the same education as 5 days per week . I would like to know who I can talk to . I am outraged that this decision was taken from parents . If you want your child to stay home , fine but what about the people who believe different ?

Sent from my iPhone

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Hybrid

Elaine RATCLIFF <khaligr1@hotmail.com>

Mon, Aug 31, 2020 at 10:46 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us" <publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us>

I understand that next week you will discuss whether kids will return to full in person learning or continue the hybrid model.

It is to soon to return to full in person learning. School hasn't been open long enough to determine if COVID will or won't impact the students and staff. You need to give this time and not rush this. Continue the hybrid model until Christmas break. You don't want to open to soon and be responsible for children/staff getting sick and infecting the community or even worse deaths of children and staff on your shoulders.

Elaine Stewart

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**Fwd: National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard**

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**toni matlock** <tonimatlock@gmail.com>

Thu, Sep 3, 2020 at 9:54 AM

To: Alanna Vaneps &lt;amvaneps@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;

Cc: "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;, avgeris@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, hlittman@mcps.k12.mt.us, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, mjsmith@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, toni matlock &lt;tonimatlock@gmail.com&gt;

Hello Missoula Community School Folks,

I am confident that Emily Oster and her data collecting on schools and C19 are already on your radar but want to make certain. Please see below her latest email on the website that she is driving for the collecting of data. It will be a good source for parents and educators and you might also be interested in contributing your discoveries. Oster does a great job of compiling and translating data clearly. If you are not familiar with her work this is a great opportunity to look into it. I personally find her analysis confidence building and grounded.

Thanks for all that you do.

Best,

Toni Matlock

Parent of 1st-grader at Lewis and Clark

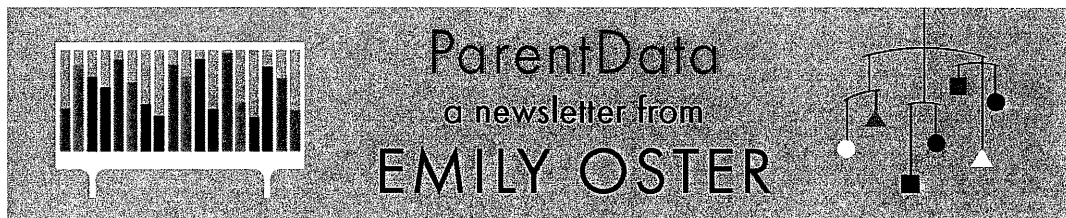
----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Emily Oster from ParentData** <emilyoster@substack.com>

Date: Thu, Sep 3, 2020 at 2:55 AM

Subject: National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard

To: &lt;tonimatlock@gmail.com&gt;



## National COVID-19 School Response Dashboard

Yeah, I couldn't stay away from schools. Sorry!



Emily Oster

Sep 3   

### School Dashboard

I know I said I'd cool it on schools but I lied. In particular, I wanted to take today to provide a little bit more information on the (ambitious) school

dashboard project, which launched this week. This is a bit more formal than usual, but I really, really want to get this out there. Please do share this out with anyone you think would want to participate or help. (If you are a parent: ask your school; if you are a principal, ask your superintendent, etc, etc.)

The broad motivation is the need for better data on COVID-19 in schools. I think in a way we all share the same goal : open schools if possible, as long as we can make it safe. Some conflict arises because of disagreement about what “safe” is — for people who think that even one case among someone in a school is too many, there is no safe — but some also arises due to uncertainty. We simply do not know enough about what will happen in the US when we open schools. What precautions are most useful? What age groups are lowest risk? How much does community spread matter? Is there a threshold level of spread that makes it unsafe to open?

Answering these questions requires evidence. It requires us to observe what schools are doing, how they are opening and see information on COVID-19 cases.

This project aims to collect this data from as many schools as possible, over time, on a national scale.

Our basic approach is simple. We are recruiting school districts, and individual schools, including public, private, charter, independent, Catholic. If you are a school of any type, we want you. Enrolled schools will complete two types of surveys. First, a baseline survey with basic school information — how are you reopening (hybrid/remote/in-person), age groups, enrollments, staffing and, if in person, some information on COVID-19 precautions like masking and distance rules. The whole survey is designed to take no more than 10 or 15 minutes.

Then, we'll survey the schools bi-weekly, with a very short survey asking simply about current opening status, average attendance and staffing, and COVID-19 cases in students and staff.

The data will be anonymized and published immediately in a navigable dashboard which will provide metrics of cases at the county level, and allow policy-makers and others to explore variation across age groupings, precautionary measures, and so on.

So that's the basic idea. Of course, there is a lot more behind this. We're coordinating with districts and in some cases directly with States. We want to make participation *as easy as possible*, which means work on our end to facilitate. **And we want to be fast. Our goal is to have a dashboard up the week of September 21st.** I bolded that so now we have to stick to it.

Below, some next steps if you want to participate or help, and some FAQ. But first: Sometimes people ask me whether the pandemic has any "silver linings". Usually I say more time with my kids. But I will also say that it has provided me with an opportunity to work with some extraordinary people who just want to help. This project is joint with the AASA, The School Superintendents Association; the National Association of Secondary School Principals; the National Association of Elementary School Principals; and Qualtrics. It's also benefiting from all kinds of other partnerships with a million different people.

My AASA counterpart, the incomparable Noelle Ellerson Ng, has said the motto for the project is "Yes, And..." meaning that when people ask if they can help or be involved we say "Yes", and then we ask what more we can do together. The sense of communal effort has restored some of my slightly fractured faith in humanity.

### ***Next Steps - Can I help?***

"Yes, and..."

- "I'm a superintendent or school district and want to enroll": [Complete our district enrollment survey here!](#)
- "I'm a school and want to enroll": [Provide your contact information here and we'll reach out with baseline survey next week.](#)
- "I'm a person who wants to help you do grunt work of organizing excel sheets and other great stuff like that." Email us at **covidschooldashboard@gmail.com.**
- "I am an organization who would like to help fund this project." Not going to lie, we would take it. Email us at **covidschooldashboard@gmail.com.**

***Questions! So many Questions!***

People have asked a lot of questions — let me try to answer a few here, and we'll keep a longer [FAQ up at COVID-Explained](#).

*Why is this any different from those crowd-sourced data which collects media reports on cases?*

This question we get A LOT. There are a several groups collecting data through reporting of cases by people in schools, or through media reports. And the bottom line is that we applaud *any* data efforts.

This approach misses a couple of things. First: denominators. Observing 20 cases is very different if the enrollment is 100 than if it is 100,000. Second: it misses cases that do not make the news, etc. Third: it doesn't really distinguish between cases that arrive from outside and cases that spread in school. We'll be able (we hope) to make more progress on this with the data over time.

Having said this: there is data here which is really useful, and it's complementary in the sense that we can use it to cross-reference with our data. In the slightly longer run, I hope we can develop partnerships to bring all this data together in one place.

*How will you verify the data is real?*

We will have procedures in place to follow up with schools who enroll individually to make sure they are truly representing a school. And we'll have checks in place to verify data, including cross-referencing to other sources which report cases, like county health departments.

*How will data be protected?*

Only the project team will have access to data with school identifiers. Publicly accessible data will be identified only at the county and state level.

*What is the incentive for schools to participate?*

The main reason to participate here is the public good. These data are (we think) necessary to get our kids back to school and project the safety of teachers, staff and students. However: we are thinking through ways to report out to schools about how they are doing (kind of an "Opower" for schools) and we hope to have that available.

### *Can schools participate if they are not opening in person?*

Yes. We're interested in any school that is open for the 2020-21 year, including remote-only instruction, along with those who are opening initially. Please indicate [your interest here](#).

### **Weigh in!**

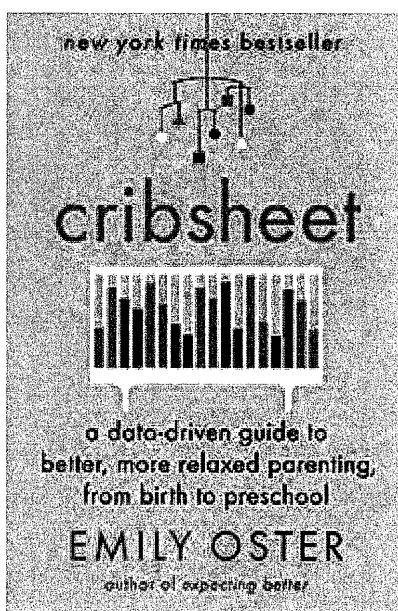
Keep the thoughts coming. I cannot write back to everyone but I do read all of your emails, I promise.

Write to Me!

### **Where to Find Me**

COVID-Explained

My Website



Cribsheet

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## Supporting our Special Populations

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**Bethany Nagel** <bnagel@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Sep 1, 2020 at 8:34 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I would like to express my gratitude for ensuring the safety of our students, staff, and overall community during these unprecedented times.

As a special education teacher supporting students with high needs, albeit social/emotional, medical, self-help independence or academics, I want to voice my concern in continuing in the hybrid programming. As it is, we are doing our very best to build structure and routines for our students. In models where students are at school for only two days out of the week, I not only worry about retention, but the overall emotional strain that students feel. It is critical and essential to have routines and familiarity for students with such high needs.

I would hope that we moved forward to the next phase to help create predictability, structure, and supports for students.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my thoughts.

-Bethany Nagel  
Extended Resource Teacher  
Chief Charlo Elementary School

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## input on moving from Phase 1 to 2

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Darci Coffman <ddawnc@msn.com>

Mon, Sep 7, 2020 at 7:38 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello to our MCPS school leaders. I'm writing to share a preference regarding the timing of potentially moving from Phase 1 to 2 from the perspective of a high school teacher. I agree wholeheartedly with the perspective shared by my good friend and colleague Carla Hinman, who wrote so persuasively about the problem with potentially moving from Phase 1 to 2 on or about Sept. 28. To have students go through a cycle of 1st and 2nd period, then one week of 3rd and 4th period, THEN change up the schedule entirely, strikes me as both baffling and daunting. Perhaps I don't quite understand the details of the proposal, but based on what I *think* I understand, I ask that you give us at least a full cycle of hybrid learning before changing the schedule.

That said, I know opinions and experiences vary, and I'm ultimately just thrilled that we get to carry out in-person schooling at all. Thank you for your time.

Darci Coffman  
Hellgate High School

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