

**September 23, 2020 Board Meeting**  
**Written Comments Received between Monday, September 21<sup>st</sup> and Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**  
**Submitted via Written Comments Form**

1	<p>I think we should evaluate how private school children are faring having returned to in-person learning. If they have generally remained healthy, CPS might consider following suit. Also, if CPS students return to school, please consider full days of learning. It would be difficult for parents who work full time to pick up their children from school midday.</p>
2	<p>6 plus hours of screen time is unrealistic and inhuman for children. Especially children with IEP's. What's your plan for the upcoming year if we stay remote? Children's mental health is now being jeopardized due CPS remote learning plan. You all need to review the existing schedule/demand we are putting on students, parents and teachers!</p>
3	<p>The Following is a Petition I started on Change.org:</p> <p>One week into E-learning and it is a disaster. The expectations from the district put upon students and the working parents of this city are unrealistic.</p> <p>As working parents, We can not forgo our sources of income to be tethered to our young and diverse learner's chrome-books by CPS mandating everyone be present and accounted for for 6 hours a day.</p> <p>We need the flexibility to do the work on our own schedule. The youngest children whose learning you are responsible for are developmentally unable to hold their attention span on a screen for such a long period of time. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics only recommends up to only 1 hour per day for 2-5 year olds, and 1-1.5 hours for 6-10 year olds. Teachers know that the average length of a lesson should be 20 minutes because that is the attention span of a young child. Why did the district not consider this when they came out with their plan?</p> <p>I know that you cannot possibly cover everything you must cover in only an hour so I propose that all e-learning be for up to three hours in the morning, with the rest of the homework done in an asynchronous fashion with the teachers setting the guidelines and the parents teaching them when they can, according to what works best for their families' schedule.</p> <p>All lunch breaks should be at the same time for the ease of working parents with multiple children.</p> <p>The teachers can also make videos of the lessons to be done so again, the families can learn on their own schedule.</p> <p>If the district does not change their current model, all parents should unenroll their students and do what works best for their families. I wonder if we had our elected school board promised by Mayor Lightfoot, would the considerations of the working parents and our most precious resource- our children- Have been ignored?</p> <p>Change must happen as soon as possible if Chicago Public Schools expects to have any students or tax base left.</p>
4	<p>Good morning, I am deeply concerned about CPS remote learning. Students as young as 5 years old are being required to spend up to 6 hours on the computer and are exhausted and overwhelmed. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a MAXIMUM of 2 hours of daily screen time for children. My child is a first grader who is required by CPS to log on for 3</p>

	hours of live online instruction and 3 hours of independent work. This is FAR TOO MUCH. My child is a diverse learner and extended screen time is incredibly difficult for him and comes at a very high cost. The CPS remote learning plan is neither developmentally appropriate or conducive to learning for students, especially students with disabilities. I URGE the Board to force the district to change their guidelines to make them respectful of students, families, and educators. Thank you.
5	Please see attachment.
6	6 plus hours of screen time is unrealistic and inhuman for children. Especially children with IEP's. What's your plan for the upcoming year if we stay remote? Children's mental health is now being jeopardized due CPS remote learning plan. You all need to review the existing schedule/demand we are putting on students, parents and teachers!
7	As a CPS parent, I feel the way the education process is being ran is unacceptable. Who in their right mind would think it is ok for children to stare at a screen for 6-7 hours a day/ 5 days a week? I do understand that they do get breaks and a lunch, but I believe a 5 day school week is a little to much. My advice is at most, a 4 day week with one day in between off. This long of a week is to much for our children. In my opinion, a perfect school week would either be a 3 day week, or if they must go all 5 days, cut it off at 3 hours. This is the main reason kids are unable to sit still and end up disrupting the class. If I had a choice, I would only send them 3 days or have a half day school schedule. Parents and teachers should be the ones voting, not city officials that have no kids or have kids in suburb/private schools.
8	Remote learning has been a challenge for my family.I Have 5 kids between 3-9 years old,I am an essential worker my mother takes care of my kids while i work shes an 75 year old lady and has no knowledge of technology. My 9 year guides her younger siblings during remote learning.My twin girls first graders during remote learning to nothing but google slides!!This is not age appropriate for a fist grader she does not know how to navigate google slides. The teacher solution to this is to tell the students who do not having an adult next to them during remote leaning to just do IXL or Raz kids and do the work later on with the parent discouraging a 6 years old to stay focus,why is my daughter even logging in. As opposed to my other twin teacher she teaches the student from the book guides them through the lesson using the book.Why are we using google slides with 6 years old specially when not everyone has an adult with .They should be teaching out the book. This has created anxiety for my daughter and myself for the teacher to expect my 6 year old to navigate between classwork,class meet and google slides. My daughter cries everyday to login in because shes not engaged in the lesson and gets frustrated not being able to navigate google slides.Please do not allowed teachers to use google slides as part of the lesson to complete task during the day discriminating the students who have essentials parents working. No child should feel emotionally incapable of completing the desk when the teacher is not using age appropriate material.My daughter would no longer login as the teacher stated to complete the work with parents later on and dismissing my daughter needs.
9	<p>My name is AJ Albinak and I am a Director and volunteer Child Advocate at the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights. We work with undocumented children, LGBTQ kids, and trauma survivors, and I am a parent of a Lane Tech junior submitting comments on the harms of CPS's mandatory camera-on policy.</p> <p>We have, as a community, failed to connect families to internet access to the degree we promised, making camera uplinks from 1000s of students impossible, something we will still punish them for.</p> <p>For students who have desks in private bedrooms, you are violating their privacy and compromising the critical developmental needs of teenagers in particular. No student invites</p>

their entire class into their bedrooms, and we should not be there either.

For students in poverty and the more than 16,000 homeless students in our system who don't have private rooms, desks, or furniture, you are exposing them to the derision of their peers.

For our undocumented students whose families fear exposure to government agencies, you are encouraging them to retreat deeper into the shadows as our government is increasing violence against their community.

For our transgender and nonbinary kiddos who struggle with dysphoria, the mirror effect of staring at their own faces while also seeing 30 people staring at them for 6+ hours a day is traumatizing.

For students under protective orders and cyberbullying victims vulnerable to screenshots, you put them at risk of further harassment.

For all students, we know that being "camera ready" is a disproportionate burden across racial, disability, and gender lines that privileges white, abled, cis het male students above all.

School districts across the US have determined that mandatory camera policies are a liability and researchers have written about Zoom fatigue. In just two weeks, I have listened to teachers scolding students for looking away from the screen, for speaking to a family member in their home while muted, and for having their camera off during independent study time.

You are creating a system where genuine child-centered, trauma-informed teaching would require that your teachers violate policy in order to prioritize the well-being and mental health of their most vulnerable students during a pandemic.

Instead of congratulating ourselves for operating from a punitive mindset, we must prioritize equity, compassion, respect, and the well-being of our students. Cameras should be encouraged but optional for all. Thank you.

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10

We need the board and CTU to open the schools. Enough about 'its for the safety of the children' or it is 'not safe yet'. We are content with keeping our kids and sacrificing their wellbeing for the unknown, because we don't feel comfortable. This is not acceptable. The CDC has recommended schools to open. The American Pediatric Academy has recommend the schools to open. The surrounding Catholic schools have open.

There is no reason other than political and selfishness for CPS to remain closed.

My son is a diverse learner and every day he is in this fake classroom we call remote learning he is loosing ground on what he has learned. For my son.... time IS of the essence because his time is counting down. He only has until he is 21 to graduate from the system. My son is 16. The school has yet to prepare him to ne an independent adult because they do not know how to in this virtual remote learning where students like my son needs 60% of his learning in real world applications and hands on learning. It takes my son longer to learn critical and crucial skills, and we are wasting it on google classroom lessons of how to upload to a Google classroom, Peardecks, or other useless skills that will not help him live. CPS and CTU are failing our kids today, my kid.

I am attaching a letter from a fellow parent in a suburban school district but in parental

solidarity I agree with all his points. We need to get our kids back in school. In person school. Now.

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11 The science is clear: Being in an enclosed space is the best way to spread COVID-19 --- the longer the time, the more likely it will spread. So why is CPS having \*inside\* in-person testing such as SATs, PSATs, and selective-enrollment exams? Parents don't want their kids in school; why make them go to schools for testing? Please follow the science and find alternatives. Because right now students have to decide between endangering their health and missing out on opportunity. Once again, this is not equitable.

23 September 2020

To the Chicago Board of Education:

I'm a parent of a student at Jones College Prep. My child is enrolled in an Advanced Placement class for the first time, and I discovered that simply in order to participate in the class and receive instruction, she needs to create an account on the College Board's website.

To create an account, the student, most of them legal minors, are told to click a box and enter into a contract with the College Board to accept their Terms of Service and Privacy Policy. This contract is spread across at least 10 webpages and requires that the student waives numerous legal rights.

Students who don't create an account on the site will not be able to take the course, nor take the test at the end of course, nor receive any of the purported benefits of participating in an AP class. In addition, since a school's rating with the district and the state depend in part on AP class and test participation, the school would also be negatively impacted by children not taking these courses.

This is deeply concerning to me as a parent and a public education advocate for two main reasons:

First, children---minor---should not be asked to enter into contracts with third-parties in order to receive their free, compulsory public education. Period. Parents should also not be asked to enter into contracts with third-parties. The Chicago Board of Education has an agreement with the College Board. Why isn't that agreement and its corresponding contract sufficient to cover whatever needs to be contractually stipulated for students to participate in AP classes and tests.

Secondly, the College Board sells the personal data of the students who take its tests via its Student Search Service. This has been extensively reported on in the national media ([New York Times](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Washington Post](#)) And the US Dept of Education [issued guidance](#) warning state and local education agencies about it. These sales violate at least two IL state laws, [one banning the sale of student data](#) and [one banning the sale of data of children under 16 without parent permission](#). Selling student data was also forbidden by [the contract between the College Board and the CBOE that expired at the end of June](#). Last fall the [IL AG said he would investigate the CB's business practices after being alerted to this issue](#) by members of the General Assembly.

The CB is profiting off their access to children's personal information by way of multi-million dollar contracts with school districts and the state. This is illegal and also unethical.

And the fact that students---in order to receive the full benefits of the education being offered to them by the school district---are forced into a legal contract with a third-party who is known to illegally sell student data is unconscionable.

A new contract between the College Board and CPS is under negotiation right now; this board approved the agreement in March (Board report 20-0325-PR2). **The contract should not be signed until this issue is resolved.** Students should not be forced to sign any separate agreements with the College Board to take AP courses or tests. The College Board should not be able to sell any of the information it collects from CPS students in school or via websites that schools instruct students to use. And the Board of Education should be pressing the IL State Board of Education for answers on why they continue to permit a state vendor to violate children's legal rights.

The implications of this issue are larger than just the College Board. With the amendment to the Student Online Personal Protection Act coming in to effect next July, schools will only be allowed to share students' data with operators covered under a written agreement with the school. Forcing children or parents into their own individual agreements with third-parties in order for children to receive instruction will circumvent the important privacy protections that the IL General Assembly intended the law to provide. This practice needs to end now.

Sincerely,

Cassie Creswell

September 22, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

We keep hearing the term 'unprecedented times' when talk of 2020 happens. It is true, 2020 truly is a unique year. The intersection of the Covid-19 pandemic and social upheaval has created turbulent times the likes of which haven't been experienced in more than 50 years.

How has Illinois responded to this? Not well.

This letter will show, via common sense and basic math, that the children of Illinois -- under the current guidance -- will not be going back to public schools until we have a vaccine or cure for Covid-19. This letter will also lay out some options that are available to parents and families that deem this situation to be unacceptable.

The Governor has turned authoritarian, and the citizens of our great State of Illinois have succumbed to the dictates of their master. **The most appalling being the implementation of erroneous 'guidelines' by the Illinois Department of Public Health and Illinois State Board of Education which effectively makes it impossible for in-person schooling to happen at our K-12 public schools.**

According to Barrington 220 School District Superintendent Brian Harris there are five metrics that will determine when large groups of students can return to in-person learning. According to Dr. Harris, all public schools in Illinois are operating under the same paradigm. They are:

*Metric 1: Average Weekly Cases per 100,000 people in the district service area (60010, 60110, 60192, 60021 for Barrington)*

*Metric 2: Average 7-day Rolling Positivity Rate for people in the district service area*

*Metric 3: PPE and Sanitation Supply*

*Metric 4: Licensed Staff Return Rate*

*Metric 5: Non-Licensed Staff Return Rate*

I'll dive into these metrics in some depth below . . .

Each metric is divided into four different stages:

*Stage 1: Distance Learning (groups of up to 10 students may be permitted in person)*

*Stage 2: Distance Learning (most students remain in distance learning and small groups of students return to in-person learning)*

*Stage 3: Hybrid (all students return to in-person learning in 220 hybrid mode)*

*Stage 4: Reopen (all students return to in-person learning full time)*

In order to enter into a new / better stage, all of the metrics must be in that stage. For instance, if you are in Stage 4 for Metrics 1, 2, 3 and 4, but Metric 5 you are in Stage 2 - overall you are in Stage 2.

So, in order to have our children back to 'regular school', we need to be at Stage 4 of all five metrics. Here is what that would look like:

Metric 5: 95% of staff can return to in person - currently BSD stands at 90% (Stage 3)

Metric 4: 95% of staff can return to in person - currently BSD stands at 80-89% (Stage 2)

Metric 3: Have 'multiple months' of PPE supplies - currently BSD meets standard (Stage 5)

Metric 2: Positivity rate of 4.99% or lower - currently BSD meets standard, 4.89% (Stage 5)

Metric 1: Weekly Cases of less than 7 per 100,000 people - currently BSD is at 68.2 (Stage 4)

At first glance, one cannot be blamed for looking at the above and thinking, "Wow, we aren't that far away!". In fact, that was the tone that Harris tried to set throughout the Barrington 220 School District board meeting on September 15, 2020.

But, we aren't even close and here's why:

Metric 5: If we don't have 95% of non-licensed staff able to be in the building now, what is going to be done to change their mind? Or more basically -- how does the district plan to influence their staff to show up? Or, is this metric set high on purpose to keep the kids from going to school?

Metric 4: Same story here -- only getting the licensed teachers to show up and do their jobs may prove to be more difficult than originally thought given the response of teachers in communities like Kenosha, IL, where they didn't show up to work. What is the district's plan to get the teachers in the buildings to teach the students? **This has not been addressed at all.**

Metric 3: This is fairly straightforward, and if the district is not able to meet its obligations in this metric, its leader will have demonstrated he is incapable of performing the duties of his role.

Metric 2: Now we are getting to the heart of this thing. It's very reasonable to be tracking what is happening in the zip codes that each district serves. Kudos for refining it this way. However, the way the measurements and implementation are set up, if the defined area slips above 4.99% at all -- the children go to a hybrid model. No consideration is given to whom is infected (old or young) or the severity of the infection (asymptomatic / sniffles / hospitalized) just 'Positivity Rate'. Without a vaccine, we will likely have a positivity rate hovering around 5% well into 2021!

Metric 1: Aka ***"The Deal Breaker"***: Even if the district is able to convince teachers and non-licensed staff to get back to work AND the district is able to maintain months of PPE in stock and the positivity rate doesn't eclipse 4.99%, there is virtually NO WAY TO ACHIEVE



STAGE 4 IN THIS METRIC!!! In order for children to be back in school -- full time -- we need to have an average weekly case count of 6.99 or less per 100,000 people in the service zip codes listed above. The lowest we have been on this metric in the last two months was 34.6 per 100,000. That was on July 25, 2020. This metric and the guidelines established off of it serve only one purpose: TO ENSURE WE DO NOT GET BACK TO FULL-TIME SCHOOL!

In order to achieve a 'Weekly New Case Rate per 100,000 population' of less than 7 -- we will need to have a positivity rate of less than 0.5%, (less than one half of one percent) for several weeks. Basically, we will need to have either achieved herd immunity or have a vaccine.

You read that right. According to the guidelines that Dr. Harris has worked through with ISBE, IDPH, Lake County Department of Health and that he claims all of the public schools in Illinois need to follow in order for our children to be in full-time school requires a vaccine. As it stands now, our children won't be back in full-time school until fall of 2021 at the earliest.

At this point, one might rationalize and think or say "Not a big deal. The kids are doing OK with it, and remote / distance learning is doing its job."

No they aren't. And no it isn't.

Distance learning is not an acceptable substitute for in-person instruction socially or academically. There is no shortage of position papers that effectively make the case for in-person instruction being superior to distance instruction. So, I'll simply appeal to your common sense . . .

Think about the 11 year old entering 6th grade or the 14 year old entering her Freshman year a few weeks ago. Think about the incredible experience of starting in a new school with new classmates and new teachers. The tremendous learning experiences of navigating new interactions and new relationships did not happen. The anxiety of figuring out what to wear, how to say 'hi' the right way, how to handle making the wrong movement or the use of the wrong word to convey your emotions has not happened. More importantly, the learning from those experiences HAS NOT HAPPENED! The social-emotional development of our students is being stunted due to the forced implementation of distance learning.

Children are resilient. There is no doubt about that. But try to explain the logic behind them being locked out of school because "we are following the science" (which Gov. Pritzker has stated more times than I can count) but not having any scientific data to back it up! In fact, according to the article "*The Importance of Reopening America's Schools this Fall*" - CDC, July 23, 2020 (**emphasis added**):

**Extended school closure is harmful to children.** It can lead to severe learning loss...We also know that, for many students, long breaks from in-person education are harmful to student learning...Disparities in educational outcomes caused by school closures are a particular concern for low-income and minority students and students with

disabilities. Many low-income families do not have the capacity to facilitate distance learning (e.g. limited or no computer access, limited or no internet access)...A study by researchers at Brown and Harvard Universities assessed how 800,000 students used Zearn, an online math program, both before and after schools closed in March 2020.[15] **Data showed that through late April, student progress in math decreased by about half**, with the negative impact more pronounced in low-income zip codes.[15] Persistent achievement gaps that already existed before COVID-19, such as disparities across income levels and races, can worsen and cause serious, hard-to-repair damage to children's education outcomes.[15],[16] **Finally, remote learning makes absorbing information more difficult for students with disabilities**, developmental delays, or other cognitive disabilities. In particular, students who are deaf, hard of hearing, have low vision, are blind, or have other learning disorders (e.g., attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)) and other physical and mental disabilities have had significant difficulties with remote learning.[17]

**Schools play a critical role in supporting the whole child**, not just their academic achievement. In addition to a structure for learning, schools provide a stable and secure environment for developing social skills and peer relationships. **Social interaction at school among children in grades PK-12 is particularly important for the development of language, communication, social, emotional, and interpersonal skills.**[18]

Extended school closures are harmful to children's development of social and emotional skills. Important social interactions that facilitate the development of critical social and emotional skills are greatly curtailed or limited when students are not physically in school. In an in-person school environment, children more easily learn how to develop and maintain friendships, how to behave in groups, and how to interact and form relationships with people outside of their family. In school, students are also able to access support systems needed to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate others' perspectives, and make responsible decisions. This helps reinforce children's feelings of school connectedness, or their belief that teachers and other adults at school care about them and their well-being. Such routine in-person contacts provide opportunities to facilitate social-emotional development that are difficult, if not impossible, to replicate through distance learning.[18],[19],[20]

**Additionally, extended closures can be harmful to children's mental health and can increase the likelihood that children engage in unhealthy behaviors.** An environment where students feel safe and connected, such as a school, is associated with lower levels of depression, thoughts about suicide, social anxiety, and sexual activity, as well as higher levels of self-esteem and more adaptive use of free time [19],[20] A longitudinal study of 476 adolescents over 3 years starting in the 6th grade found school connectedness to be especially protective for those who had lower connectedness in other areas of their lives, such as home, and to reduce their likelihood of substance use.[20]

**Further, a review of studies conducted on pandemics found a strong association between length of quarantine and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, avoidance behavior, and anger. Another review published this year found that post-traumatic stress scores of children and parents in quarantine were four times higher than those not quarantined.**[21],[22]

In-person schooling provides children with access to a variety of mental health and social services, including speech language therapy, and physical or occupational therapy to help the physical, psychological, and academic well-being of the child.[23], [24],[25],[26] Further, school counselors are trained in the mental health needs of children and youth and can recognize signs of trauma that primary caregivers are less able to see because they themselves are experiencing the same family stresses. School counselors can then coordinate with teachers to implement interventions to offer children a reassuring environment for regaining the sense of order, security, and normalcy.

Without in-person schooling, many children can lose access to these important services. For example, we know that, even outside the context of school closures, children often do not receive the mental health treatment they need. Among children ages 9-17, it is estimated that 21 percent, or more than 14 million children, experience some type of mental health condition.[27] Yet only 16 percent of those with a condition receive any treatment.[23] Of those, 70-80

percent received such care in a school setting.[23] School closures can be particularly damaging for the 7.4 million American children suffering from a serious emotional disturbance. For those individuals who have a diagnosable mental, behavioral or emotional condition that substantially interferes with or limits their social functioning, schools play an integral role in linking them to care and necessary support services.

**For children with intellectual or physical disabilities, nearly all therapies and services are received through schools. These vital services are difficult to provide through distance learning models. As a result, more children with disabilities have received few to no services while schools have been closed.**

The CDC lays out the case for working to get the children in school very strongly. Academically, socially and emotionally, they need to be in school. The detrimental effects of them not being in school are clearly laid out.

Here is the problem -- we have established that we are not sending our children to in-person school because we are terrified at the potential impact of Covid-19 on our society as a whole. Translation = we are worried about what might happen. We are choosing to sacrifice the academic, emotional and social well being of our children to save us from the unknown possible negative impact of Covid-19. Despite the fact that the CDC is recommending we get the children back in school. Despite the fact that states surrounding Illinois seem to be able to do it. Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri have all been back in school and have all allowed interscholastic sports to progress. Technically Illinois has left the decision up to the school districts. But, as shown above, the restrictions placed upon them by the government do not allow the schools to open for in person instruction until we have a vaccine.

This is not acceptable. Our state government and our schools are intentionally making the choice to harm our children by keeping them home in the hope of subduing the spread of a virus that has been shown to not be any more harmful than a flu to that population. Why are we sacrificing our children? Why not make the accommodations elsewhere in society? It can be done. They are choosing not to. They are being intentional in their choice to keep our children out of school and ensuring they experience the detrimental effects as a result (see above.)

So what do we do?

1 - Send this letter. Send it to every government official you can think of. Send it to your friends and neighbors. Send it to your family and your school. Then send it again. And again and again.

2 - Set a deadline. For me it's October 26th and January 4th. 50% in person by October 26th and 100% in person by January 4th, 2021. If that doesn't happen, then I have a choice to make.

3 - Here is where the rubber meets the road . . . pull the kids from public school and homeschool them or move out of Illinois. At this point we have rallied, we have demonstrated,

we have written letters, we have begged, we have pleaded. If our school leaders and our government won't listen, what choice do we have?

I never thought I would consider leaving Illinois. But the way this situation has been addressed has me there. There is nothing more important than my children. To think that Illinois is showing through its actions that it could care less about them absolutely breaks my heart. But, I will leave if it's the best decision for my children.

The powers that be are counting on us shutting up and going away. They are banking on the premise that we will tire and just do what they say. I for one cannot. I for one will not. I will not stand idly by and watch my children suffer the consequences of a power struggle by the people in our government. That's what this is, a power struggle at the higher levels of our government that is impacting our children -- and nobody is taking a stand! We must do so now -- we must bring an end to the insanity that has taken hold of our government! We cannot wait for elections -- if they will not listen, then we need to make our voices heard by pulling our children from the schools. If they still do not listen, then we move our families out of Illinois! Why stay in a state that does not want to take care of our children? Why continue to pay tax dollars to a government that is not working to make a positive difference for our children? Why continue to suffer for the poor choices the government of Illinois has made over the last 30 years?

To Whom It May Concern: Please consider this your notice. If you do not have my children experiencing in person learning 50% of the time by October 26th and in-person learning 100% of the time by January 4th, 2021, I will pull my children from school and look to move out of Illinois.

Sincerely,

An exhausted, troubled, tired, fed-up Illinoisian