



Public Comment

August 10, 2020 BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

I understand that the Health Department is putting pressure on schools to go virtual due to Covid 19. This is extremely difficult. Our children are not going to do well sitting in the house on the computer all day. My daughter Evelyn is a vibrant young sophomore, who is very active in theatre and lacrosse. I have seen such a decline in her overall well-being. She doesn't want to get out of bed, and she isn't motivated for anything. This is not her!! She is a good student. I'm sure she isn't the only one suffering right now. I'm hearing from so many parents that this is damaging to our children. The other factor is the children who will fall through the cracks. This isn't necessary!! Our children are not in danger as a whole from this virus. They need to be active in sports, and get in front of their teachers. They need to get back to school in person. I am willing, as I'm sure many others are as well, to sign waivers that we will not hold the school liable if they are infected.

- Carolyn Dee Strayer

The electives offered at the middle school level are very limited. Will there be more electives offered (especially for 7th graders)? Why is there a limit of only one full-year elective?

- Cheryl Dalton

Please reconsider the 100% virtual school that is being planned. We are told time and time again to "listen to the experts". You are NOT listening to the countless experts - the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, countless Doctors, Mental Health providers- just to name a few, ALL of these experts say children NEED to be IN SCHOOL!!! You are also not listening to your parents and tax payers!! We want our children in school. By holding remote school I believe you are taking away several opportunities for these children. Which will indeed affect their future! All the while, these same needs and Opportunities are being met at most other local districts. Some say "what about the teachers?" Teacher are essential! If a teacher is at risk or caring for an at risk family member they should teach remotely. Otherwise we need our teachers! I've heard this has been done in part because of the teachers union. Please Stand up to this group, we need you to be our voice! I know several teachers that want to get back inside the classroom with the kids. Sorry to sound so callous but Just like every other business out there, if you refuse to work you are replaced. I'm sure there are lots of young teachers waiting in the wings that would love a secure job in our great school district! Many other professions and businesses have reopened successfully and safely. I go to work everyday in a social setting, unable to socially distance, we are safe! We use other best practices and precautions to keep all employees and guests Safe and healthy. IT IS WORKING! You can open smart and safely! Using common sense practices this can be done. Have families sign waivers stating they understand the "risk" of sending their children back to school and agree to the terms. We did this for sports! Please, please open our schools! I want the same CHOICE you are giving the families that want to stay home! I want the CHOICE to SEND my children to school!! Thank you for your time, A proud Westerville Grad, Westerville Parent and Tax Payer.

- Holly North

My daughter is a Senior at Westerville North High school, she and her friends are fearful of the virtual learning option. These are honor students and in the top 10% of their class. They are already feeling disengaged and concerned with how they will be prepare for college admissions. What do you recommend?? We haven't heard a word from the guidance counselors, no one is reaching out to them to help prepare them for this experience. These students want to be in the classroom and are willing to comply with all guidelines. These students are leaders and are

willing to set the example for adults and students upon the new rule book. Can you please engage them? Teach them to be resilient? Adapt to change? Not to be fearful, but responsible with how to manage these new standards!

WE ARE LOSING THEM ALREADY, please give them a structure of activities and learning to help them move forward!! They are already feeling defeated, retreating to their social media, and feeling like their Teachers Don't care enough about them. I have heard students speak of becoming depressed, having suicidal thoughts, and are feeling anxious about the uncertainty of making it thru their Senior year, and getting to college seems unattainable/unrealistic. This is their social media chats that you may have not seen!!! Please don't have us tabulating suicides, teenage pregnancies, drug overdoses (which by the way last year exceeds the # of Covid cases in this age group.)

We understand that you have challenging decisions to make...and so do we! Our family has been loyal, giving parenting support and thousands of dollars to support athletics and academics over 20 years with both of our children in the Westerville school system. We want and will continue to be part of the solution moving forward!! I am asking that you please offer our children the option to be in the classroom just as you have offered others to go virtually! Seems like you are discriminating against our choice to be in the classroom.

Also, please create a communication strategy that involves these Students! Let them use their voice positively to encourage their fellow students and teachers to be strong and live today for tomorrow!! I am excited for the possible improvements and innovation to the education system.

PLEASE...organize a special task force for Seniors, and give them an opportunity to take Ownership and Accountability for their education and futures.

Lastly, Let Them Play!! We will hold everyone accountable for following the guidelines, and will stay home when sick like we do every year when the flu hits the school and our household.

I appreciate all that you are doing, just ask that you put your students first by giving them the CHOICE they deserve.

- Julie Hoover

I am an ED nurse and parent of a Westerville Central High School senior. Please consider in class learning at the start of the school year. Please give parents and kids the option for them to return to in class learning. Covid is a serious virus, but for those with healthy immune systems, not serious. Kids need in school learning for their mental and educational wellbeing. High School students are more than capable of following safety measures in order to return to school. Thank you!

- Michelle Scott

Please for the well being of our children, families, and whole community, allow school to open in person and/or at least all sports and activities to continue in order to save their mental health and our economic wellbeing. People are dying, suicide, depression, addiction, abuse and violence against children and spouses- we've all seen the staggering numbers that these have increased- we are deceiving ourselves that we are helping by staying hidden. Quarantine the sick and vulnerable and allow the healthy to go free- if you're afraid of lawsuits- just have everyone sign waivers to release liability. I know we'd all be happy to do that to get our communities back to a functional level. Our elderly are still dying in nursing homes, but worse, all alone due to Covid restrictions- the protection is actually worse than just allowing freedom to let people love and care for the sick af the dying. I am immune compromised, along with my daughter, but we can assume the risks and make good decisions for ourselves, just as everyone else has a right to. Please save our freedoms and open our schools! Thank you!

- Jennifer Pedrozo

I know that some parents in the District are pushing for in-person instruction. They are angry, frustrated, and upset. They are organizing on social media, planning and holding demonstrations and protests. As is their right. But please know that there are just as many parents who fully support the difficult decision you made to start the year 100% remote and limit athletics/extracurriculars.

I too am angry, frustrated, and upset. I am upset that my kids cannot socialize with their friends. I am upset that there will be likely be limited opportunities for them to compete in athletics. I am upset that this year they will not receive the vibrant, collaborative, in-person instruction I know our WCS teachers desperately want to provide. I am

terribly upset about the impact on students who are disadvantaged or disabled and depend on school for so much more than academics and socialization.

BUT. We are in a pandemic. As much as we all want to go back to "normal," we simply cannot. Teachers drafting wills, purchasing life insurance and discussing end of life decisions as part of their back to school preparations is about as far from normal as I can imagine. It is so hard to give up "normal." It is heartbreaking, especially for seniors. But we must make sacrifices to reduce the spread of a disease with unknown long term health effects. We have already, within weeks, had cases of COVID-19 linked to the practice sessions of sports teams at the high schools. These activities, as well as having in-person instruction, have great potential to spread this disease.

The board has the unenviable task of making hard decisions to protect the health of students, teachers and staff across the entire school district. The board is not to blame for this situation, and is not deserving of the vitriol directed at it. It is the fault of leadership at the state and federal level, or lack thereof, which has failed to competently take action to control the virus. As well as the selfishness, denial and willful ignorance of the many who refuse to wear a mask, social distance, limit gatherings and treat this virus as the serious threat that it is.

Please know that I, and many others, are willing to suspend "normal" and muddle through as we can in order to reduce the spread of coronavirus. This sacrifice is necessary in order to support the health of our students, teachers and larger community. We can overcome a lost year. We cannot overcome lost lives. Thank you for erring on the side of safety in the face of so much uncertainty. Please do not falter.

- Heather Dardinger

Has the district considered having only special education classroom students (who on the hybrid plan would attend daily) in the building since the teachers have to be in the building? It is very difficult/impossible to teach/interventions virtually for these students. Unfortunately, the spring quarter was pretty useless for our son. He is entering high school and due to his needs virtual education will not work and he will continue to fall behind without the in person assistance. Know that I am making this plea as a mom who is also a nurse practitioner living in a multigenerational home and who's son is considered high risk. (This virus could wipe out our family) However I value the education and interventions my child needs and will not receive with virtual education.

- Trina Anthony

I am a parent of a rising 3rd grader at McVay Elementary School and a spouse of a Westerville Schools employee. We all can agree this we are in a period of time that none of us have ever gone through. Tough decisions have to be made, at times with little to no processing time. That being said, I must express my disappointment and clearly communicated lack of concern from the Superintendent and Board members due to the recent decision made, thanks to a "suggestion and not a mandatory order" made by the Franklin County Public Health about school going all virtual at this time. While I have seen how others are set on nothing but 100% in-class learning, I have tried to take a more realistic and logical approach to the thousands of children in our system. I for one, along with hundreds of others, were comfortable to varying degrees with the hybrid model that had been decided on. While that is not the perfect scenario, as currently there is no perfect scenario, it would still provide the greatest benefit to students and teachers on so many levels while already having procedures in place thanks to our leadership for overall health and safety. This model will have the best impact in the current situation especially for the thousands of students from Kindergarten to 12th Grade who are very reliant on social interaction, those with mental issues, physical and mental handicaps, and those who's education is stunted vs. an all-virtual learning style. As a result of a "suggestion" and not a mandatory order from our Public Health department, not only Westerville schools but every Franklin County school system essentially folded without speaking in opposition and switched to all-virtual learning. I have seen first-hand the anger and frustration hundreds of other parents and community members have voiced on social media, many of those directly to our Superintendent and Board Members including myself. However, in voicing my concerns, how many of you actually fulfilled your sworn duty and actually responded to concerns addressed? That answer was 2...one Board Member and our Superintendent. I have challenged them in sometimes blunt terms to truly lead by example, stand up for our most at-risk/needy students in all demographics, ethnic populations, financially strapped, and go back to their original decision or even standing up like the School Board in Dublin Schools have done and even start off the 1st 2 weeks remotely, followed by the Hybrid/Blended model afterwards. While I know that has fallen on deaf ears, what I found eye-opening is the fact, as specifically stated by a board member that even prior to announcing the Hybrid/Blended learning model, they knew through consultation with

Franklin County Public Health that learning model was not feasible. How is that being honest with who you serve, being transparent, and serving our most at-risk/needy students? Some effects/facts below:

- 1) Only 24-25% of parents actually registered for the Virtual Academy. Considering no one has provided specific #'s as requested, as still awaiting response from our Superintendent, what about the other 75-76% who obviously did not choose that option?
- 2) Considering how fragile the mental health is for our children, my child included who is very dependent on social interaction to help her learning and is now officially diagnosed with dual forms of ADHD, and the fact that your choices are punishing thousands of children as a result of the change known about for months, why lead by example and reinstate the Blended Model which best helps all those kids, diagnosed and undiagnosed?
- 3) As a result of the switch, I have heard from leaders in the schools who have stated they are receiving poor communication and follow-up from our leadership on what is occurring. A lesson I learned in effective communication is that it is better to overcommunicate than undercommunicate. Even the weekly newsletters leave at times more questions than answers.
- 4) If your job as a Board is to serve, listen to those in the system and respond/acknowledge those concerns, than why did only one board member respond to one parent's concerns for the thousands of students who are being punished.
- 5) A request has been made two times for a breakdown of the survey that went out earlier this summer and all the responses that came back and the percentage breakdown for each question to show a breakdown. As of now, that request has not been answered and provided.

If you as a School Board and Superintendent truly care, you will read this during your meeting. As I have witnessed personally, my bet is you won't because it would be put into a category as stated as either unprofessional, calling out a board member by name (no names used), or any other reason defined in the public comment terms. I am speaking for those without a voice, those that do not know how to voice their concerns, those who are afraid of retribution for speaking out and perhaps as far as losing their job (HR Violation) for doing so. I love our school system and while I totally understand the tough position you all are in at this time (sibling who has taught in the 3rd largest school system in NC for many years and an in-law who is an elementary school principal in NC, now in Italy), the actions taken have clearly been more out of fear and not logic. I, along with hundreds/thousands of other parents and school employees, pray that you do the right thing, do not be afraid to speak up and not follow the sheep, so to speak, and immediately go back to the hybrid model of education so our children's mental health is not suffering further and get farther behind, but also a plan that our leadership in our schools already had amazing plans in place and are now being punished and are frustrated with the leadership being shown right now. Let's not be like Upper Arlington Schools and have potential legal action taken to force the change please?

Thank you.

- Todd Lotz

I'd like to request that the Oct 5th date be lifted for contact sports and would also like a timeline of when schools will go from remote to hybrid to fully in person. Thank you in advance for your time!

- Mindy Koenig

Do you have a plan to have our kids in schools 100 percent of the time using social distancing / masks . New Albany is in Franklin County and has a plan. I urge you to do reopen our schools. Levy's won't be passed if you don't listen to parents need in the future. I have been involved with promoting our schools , it's not easy to pass a levy here. I won't be able to support keeping our kids out of schools. Have you asked the Franklin County Department of Health to define what they count as as case ? I have and they don't respond. I It's imperative you ask them as if they what they are counting as cases. They need to separate it out by test result , age and location. We will never be in person if you don't demand that data from them. You won't be able to make informed hat are not confirmed by several diagnostics tests then you may be keeping our kids out of the class room for faulty data. Share the exact numbers with the parents please share the documentation they show you . Please allow our kids to compete in contact sports before October 5th. If you do not please show us the documentation of data that the FCDH has given you to support your decision .

- Laurie a Schulze

We need to have an in school learning option for those that want it. Only having remote learning to start the year takes choice away from the parents. We need an in person option.

- Bruce Lewis

What is the timeline and/or plan to get the students back to school from a 100% virtual learning? How long do you need once a decision has been made to get the students back to school?

- Anita Schimmel

How can we let our students return to sports and can't let our students return to class in a hybrid model? Why is it New Albany schools in Franklin county can return to school 5 days a week and we can not? If both parents work out of the home and can't help with virtual school throughout the day will children be penalized for that?

- Erin Rose

I believe it is important to constantly reassess COVID thinking and planning. It is the duty of the board to do the same.

1. Will the district consider reevaluating the date of when Westerville students may return to the hybrid schedule?
2. Can the board explain, in detail, the reasoning for the October hybrid start up date? Does this date reflect the? When does the 4 week window begin and does it coincide with the recommendation date from the board of health?
3. Is a two week transition needed for students to switch from the remote to the hybrid schedule? Does the board believe this is the best use of instructional time?
4. When making decisions for the district, does the board consider that Westerville sits in two counties? Many Westerville students live in Delaware County and are surrounded by districts and students headed back to some sort of in person schooling.
5. Additionally, assuming that the district now has the information of how many students are joining the WVA, would the district consider surveying remote parents/students on a return/hybrid schedule? Wouldn't this data be helpful for future decision making?
6. Since WVA students are set, does the board believe it is possible to bring the remaining students back to in person or hybrid as socially distancing guidelines might be easier to achieve? The in person instruction is extremely important for all students, especially K-5, as they are the least equipped to handle a virtual environment.
7. When making decisions for the district, what data, specifically, is the board using to make decisions?
8. Since the board has decided to closely follow the positive tests results in Franklin County, is the board now more skeptical of Ohio's COVID testing after Governor Dewine tested positive and then negative?
9. Has the board considered the other social risks to students when they are out of school? Do the risks of going to school out weigh the risks of getting the virus?
10. Does the board believe teachers are essential workers?
11. Does the board believe students in Westerville are being discriminated against based on the city they live in?
12. New Albany Local Schools, a Franklin County school district, is going back 5 day in person learning. Is it possible and fair that their students will receive a better education than Westerville students?
13. Does the board believe that remote learning will grow students? Will this type of learning help students in a district, who has already has a C on the state report card?
14. Has the district consider collaborating with other districts in the city for alternative hybrid options. Etc. Dublin 1/2 day, every day.
15. Are the leaders in Westerville Schools ready to make hard decision that best meets OUR students? It does not seem that our district's priority is to get OUR student back to in person learning. Westerville City Schools seems to be followers not leaders.

- Molly Fisher

In regards to distance/remote learning, what is the structure for the students? Will it be similar to the spring where they log in for a few minutes, say hi to the teacher, ask questions if applicable and then log off? Or will it be similar

to an actual school day? I would think that with all students having a Chromebook or device at home that is internet enabled, we would be able to have a regular school day (possibly reduced instruction time) schedule by period. For example, from 8-8:30 is math, 8:45 - 9:15 is language arts, etc. If the previous is not how the remote learning is going to work, then why?

- Tanya Cusick

Kids should be able to play sports! All sports and schools should be open. Sports should be open and so should schools!

- Curt Cuckler

Will additional funding be allocated to increasing the numbers of counselors available to students in the midst of the current crises?

- Tiyi Morris

Thank you for the opportunity to ask a question and receive a response. My inquiry is around the district grade card and how the district is going to do better.

Has the board discussed how the district is going to earn a better grade card from ODE for 2020-2021? If so, can you share how the district will achieve a better grade by not being in the buildings with the students, full time?

I am not sharing anything you aren't aware of, but these components for example, and grades from last school year are very concerning knowing the boards decision to begin all buildings with 100% virtual learning. Achievement - C with chronic absenteeism being a concern Prepared for Success - D - I speculate it will be virtually impossible, no pun intended, for the district to receive an above average grade card for this coming school year if the students don't get into school asap. Mrs. Davidson covered many of my concerns regarding students on an IEP or 504 plan or even in a gifted program where interaction is imperative to their learning. Just to reiterate my question, what is the plan for ensuring a grade card better than the last one? Thank you again for your time and your service.

- Diane Crawford

Will the kids be allowed to play sports if we go remote? Do you think they will be back in school by September; at least by hybrid?

- Craig Will

How will you hold accountable 1) teachers and 2) students for learning this fall? Do you think our students will be prepared for the next grade if remote learning continues all year? How do you feel this will happen if teaching is only required to happen for 30 minutes a week (according to your remote learning plan of 3-5 videos ranging from 10-30 minutes each)? Do you feel all students are able to learn the material on their own for 4 hours a week?

No parent is willing to go through another year in the same way the spring was conducted. There was absolutely no accountability for students or teachers, and we know students were all passed, even if they only logged in only once. How is that fair to the students who completed every single assignment?

- Elisabeth Brooks

When you announced school would open with a Blended model on July 16, there was mention of being flexible in terms of being able to make changes on the fly by school, building, even by classroom.

Our children NEED to be back in classrooms and for you to make the announcement of a switch to 100% online model and no extracurriculars that cannot be changed until Oct 5 is not acceptable.

Our world right now requires adaptability. You changed the opening plan within two weeks...two weeks before school was even scheduled to start. That says you were not prepared to start on time at any point...other school districts have microsites devoted to their reopening plans...reopening plans that even if virtual offer much more instruction time than you've provided for in your plan. And if you don't have a plan, that makes my point even stronger...you spent a lot of time hypothesizing and not enough time doing.

Why not push start date back one week (you'd already done that once) to see if numbers leveled out (Delaware County has already gone back to Level 2)?

Why not wait another two weeks to make a decision?

Why not make decisions on 2-3 week increments (as Governor has with health orders) ?

Why not follow OHSAA guidance on these matters?

WHY NOT FOLLOW CDC GUIDANCE ON THE DAMAGE BEING DONE TO OUR KIDS NOT BEING IN CLASSROOMS?!?!?!?

Why not follow your own words and let schools in Delaware county stay blended?

Moreover, Franklin county numbers are driven by the city of Columbus, not Westerville. Our numbers of positivity in the 43081 and 43082 zip codes are at or below state numbers...you need to do what's right for WESTERVILLE.

WHY NOT GIVE THE KIDS EVERY CHANCE TO HAVE AS NORMAL A YEAR AS POSSIBLE RATHER THAN GIVE IN AT THE FIRST CHANCE?

I, and a lot of others, feel that you are not living up to your responsibilities to our children in this district...you owe it to every one of these children and families to reconsider the flexibility of your decision-making and give them the time necessary to ensure every opportunity to go back to their classrooms, fields, courts, tracks, etc. To say something cannot be changed in ten weeks time is not acceptable by any means, ever.

- Peter Fantine

I believe Westerville schools should REOPEN 100% at the very least the original hybrid model that was proposed earlier. If teachers are at risk they can teach remote learning children who are at risk or that have at risk family members.

- Lisi cuckler

Please lift the Oct. 5 date for contact sports as you did for non contact sports this past week. My son is a senior soccer player at Central and we feel Governor Dewine will announce soon contact sports can play therefore Westerville has to lift the Oct. 5 date please. Also, our community needs to know a timeline for the school year....how many weeks online, when would a Hybrid plan possibly take place? Numerous surrounding school districts have a timeline but we don't. The mental well being of my senior is at risk if he can't play soccer and is at home all the time for online learning. If he could play soccer at central and do a Hybrid version of school, he has a better chance for some normalcy as he heads to college in a year. Thank you for all you are doing for our kids!

Regarding online schooling, we should have a choice as we did earlier in the summer, online or Hybrid. That choice has been removed. Families and students at risk for health reasons or they are wanting to be cautious about Covid can choose the Virtual academy. Please bring that choice back sooner than later for the sake of our kids mental health. The long last effects of this school for our Westerville community is in serious danger. I plead with you all to reconsider Hybrid after a couple weeks of being online as Franklin County numbers stay steady or decrease. You all have the power to help our Westerville students out! Thank you

- Tracy Curran

I know I am very concerned as many other parents that there has been very little information on how learning is going to work remotely. We have no idea schedules or how learning is going to work for our kids. Working parents are at a major disadvantage as they need to be able to plan how this is going to work. Not all parents are able to work from home. We need to figure a way for safe in person learning. I've already voiced my concerns regarding IEP children and really didn't get any concrete answers. All sports need to proceed as well.

- Michelle Gallagher

I'm writing to encourage the board to allow sports to resume even if learning is online. Kids need an outlet and activity. We can do this responsibly and have proven such during practices. Even having a few scrimmages or

games would boost morale as kids are becoming depressed, bored, less active and withdrawn. Please let our kids play!

- Sheryl Prichard

The choice for the hybrid option has been delayed. What will the decision makers use to measure our ability to return to the classroom, how do we ensure the data is relevant to our demographic and can we consider phasing the return by specific schools not in franklin county?

- Leslie perrini

You are causing further psychological damage to our children by not allowing them to, at the very least, attend part-time classes. Your decision is promoting unnecessary fear and emotional distress. Let them get back into a "normal" regime of curriculum and safe social interaction with their peers for the 2020/2021 school year!

- Mary Swackhammer

Please allow our students to play sports at competition level this season. These kids need socialization, exercise, and to be teens! Please let the parents decide if they want their children to go to school or play sports. It is not only affecting their education, but also their mental health. Thank you for listening to us.....

- Mary Traudt

According to the CDC IF CHILDREN become infected, they are far less likely to suffer severe symptoms. At the same time, the harms attributed to closed schools are well known and significant. Based on this information, what brought you to the conclusion to return to virtual learning instead of giving parents and teachers a choice?

- Bruce Sterling

Westerville's high school math curriculum has used a model of group learning with teacher supervision for a number of years. With virtual or hybrid learning, that model is no longer possible. What modifications have been made to the curriculum to eliminate group learning with teacher supervision?

- Rebecca Seum

Why is our district marching toward an October date (seemingly pulled out of a hat) and schools all around us have managed to update their plans to either hybrid or 100% in person instruction? I DON'T GET IT! We must do better.

- Christa Sackett

Our family appreciates all of the thought, consideration and effort that has gone into planning for this upcoming school year. However, we respectfully urge the Board and Administration to reconsider your position on 100% virtually learning to start the year as well as the ability for student-athletes to fully participate in competition for fall sports where not already approved. These decisions seemed to be based on fear and intimidation vs. reliable data. The Board and Administration need to demand more specific zip code COVID-19 data from the Franklin County Department of Health before making such decisions as communicated in the last two weeks. For those families and teachers who are not comfortable returning to the class room, options have been provided to address such concerns. Other families should be afforded the same opportunity to have a learning model in place that will provide for the best success of our children. We are in no way minimizing the health concerns of this virus, but by the same right we feel that the emotional, social and educational impact of these decisions are even more concerning for our students well-being. Thank you for your consideration.

- Lynne Pasi

Can you explain the specific criteria and data FCBH is reviewing and using in their recommendations to WCS?

- Beth Domanik

How do you plan on supporting kids who don't quite make the requirements for IEP or Section 50r plans, yet receive services from the school such as a way to briefly talk to a counsellor or social worker? There are limited appointments for mental health counselling right now and wait lists from anywhere from 6-8 weeks to a year

(Nationwide Children's for example has a year wait). These kids need support! By keeping kids at home, there is far more of a risk to their mental health than Covid 19 is to their physical health. I fear we are going to see a rise in suicides or suicidal ideation.

- Paula Lynch

Please consider lifting the sports date of Oct 5. This date gives us no chance of fall sports. So many have retracted and are starting . This is so unfair to the kids who thrive on sports and do better in school. We need a better plan for hybrid and dates of heading back. These kids need to be in school.

- Kim Still

Why wouldn't we follow the governor's orders on contact sports and lift the October 5 restriction

We as taxpayers have the right to choose whether our children elect to participate in virtual learning or in person

We need a timeline established on what our children's academic options will be.

- Thomas Curran

Regarding online schooling, the Franklin county health dept is giving you a recommendation not an order to keep kids home. Other school districts in Franklin County have plans in place with timelines in place about online/hybrid/in person. Westerville city school taxpayers have the right to know the timeline of you plan that you haven't told us. Also please remove the Oct. 5 date for contact sports as the Governor is announcing about sports this week and contact sports need to be ready to play!

- Tracy Curran

How are the Success Coaches and Guest Teachers being paid for? Is it out of our current budget? How much will this cost the district?

Have you asked every teacher in our district how many students disengaged from the classroom once we went online. I understand you may be better set up however a pure online route for the majority of kids in primary grades are going to have a hard time logging in.. How will you be tracking student engagement? How will you be making sure kids are not left behind

- Laurie a Schulze

Over the time that my family has been part of the Westerville School District (currently 13 years), I've generally been supportive of how the schools and system has been structured, setup and administered. At this point, I'm feeling much less confident in where this is headed. My daughter who will start her first year of college at the end of the month, participated in an online forum hosted by her school, outlining every aspect of the coming year, including changes, protocols, backups, and every fine detail of the student's lives, while at school. They made it point that planning started immediately after the students were sent home earlier this spring. I don't feel the Westerville School District has put in their time nor done their homework, it's really embarrassing. We are now almost 5 months removed from when the schools shut down, I don't feel Westerville SD used that time properly and I along with others would provide you a failing grade "F". This looks very amateur, when you compare what we are being told with lack of details, the flip-flopping of openings, the lack of details, timelines and plan, etc. as compared to other districts that surround Westerville.

Beyond the medical profession, I consider teachers to be "essential workers", they are the backbone of society's education and are more than key to our future success. There should be blended education between in-person and virtual, to start the year, exactly as was decided, in the last board meeting. The majority of students will have a void and gap in their education if they are forced into complete fully virtual education. They need to be back in the schools, in some form and they need to be in front of their teachers. Equip the teacher properly and safely so they can be back in school as well.

Westerville SD also needs to get its act together regarding athletics and extracurricular activities. There seems to be a lack of understanding, knowledge, and true leadership in combining efforts and thoughts along with our other school district partnerships in central Ohio. The guidelines for return to play need updated, removing the arbitrary

October 5 day and plans needs put into place, assuming predicated guidelines and procedures, high school sports competitions and extracurricular activities may begin.

Our kids need to be back in school and they also need the release of mind body and soul provided by athletics and extracurriculars.

Thanks!

- Jeff Fowler

We have 2 soccer players in the District who WANT TO PLAY SOCCER! We want them to have that opportunity to compete! The teams have been preparing, conditioning and training and should NOT be forced to wait until OCT to compete. We will sign waivers again, if necessary. LET THEM PLAY! Also, we want to watch. If you have seen attendance at a HS Soccer Match you must know that we will be able to Social Distance to safely watch them play!

- Linda Givens

We feel very strongly that the kids need to be in school and to have a date to look forward to. Last spring, my daughter Learned nothing and it had an affect on her anxiety and mental health. She needs to be with friends and to be in person with her teachers. Please reconsider the all remote. Those that do not want to take the risk have the option. Thanks!

- Debbie Prichard

Numerous schools re reversing previous decisions to suspend in person learning and activities in favor or 100 distance...you need to do the same for the good of our children!

- Pete fantine

I would like thank the Board for finally following the science by opening the school year using the Virtual Model. This decision will help ensure that our district will not contribute greatly to a spike in Corona Virus cases in our community. That being said, I fear the decision to continue with contact sports to be a very dangerous one. There is no way to play contact sports safely during this pandemic. How many of our student athletes is the Board willing to be allowed to become infected? How much community spread is the Board willing to allow to happen from these infected student athletes. Please not put our student athletes and our community at further risk by allowing contact sports to continue until it is safe. If it is not safe enough to bring students into classroom, it is not safe for them to play contact sports.

- Geoff D Mize

Any thought to give parents 100% in person to those that want it? To the teachers that will teach 100% in person? Open up a building. Sign a liability form.

- Alisha Buchanan

The decision to not open the schools for some degree of in person teaching is detrimental to the children that the district serves. Basing the decision predominantly on reported cases, data that is not well understood and potentially misleading, is very disappointing. I ask the district to reconsider a hybrid model that leverages simple guidelines to keep the students and staff safe. Steps including, but not limited to:

- Shifting the burden of transportation to and from school to the students, parents, and community
- Allowing teachers who are not comfortable physically in the classroom to teach the class virtually on a screen /monitor. The classroom could be monitored and supported by student teachers and volunteer parents.
- Soliciting the help of parents to monitor distancing and student behavior outside of the classroom

The above ideas, and others, can be leveraged to support a hybrid option for students who are yearning for some degree of normalcy. These measures, along with the opportunity for students to enroll in the VA will ensure that all voices and opinions are heard and supported.

Thank you for your consideration.

- Gino Palozzi

Thank you for your service and dedication to our students. I respectfully ask you to reconsider your stance on Online only and restrictions on Fall sports at this time. While it is a concern to keep everyone safe and the greatest risk is for the teachers and staff, I also ask that you consider the damages done to the students. They will not be impacted greatly by this virus. And for those who are fearful, you have given them options to do virtual. Both teachers and students should be given BOTH options. To return to school in person OR virtually. As for Fall sports, again it would be best to give options for those who do not want to participate then they do not have to. For those who do, they can. Choice should be afforded to either side of this issue. This doesn't mean we aren't concerned and cautious. It means that all aspects are looked at equally. The health of EVERYONE may actually mean different things. One may be at risk of this virus and therefore should choose to stay at home and not participate in person. One may be at risk of mental health issues and not participating would be devastating to them. Please look at zip codes. Please question Franklin Co Health Department. As of 8/7 the total number of cases in 43081 and 43082 according to Franklin Co Health Depart total 425. I do not know that that means per 100,000 in those 2 zip codes. That would be a great question for FCHD. If the heat map would be red for our zip codes based on the same markers as they are for the entire county. Thank you for considering giving EVERYONE choices.

- Kim Snyder

I would like to better understand why we are coupling the the target data for return to the classroom with when we are willing to let our student athletes play competitively. Having 400+ high school students indoors and 22 players outdoors on an open field are very different conditions. In my opinion, they are mutually exclusive decisions....and decisions that each individual coach, family, and student athlete should have the freedom to make. I respectfully ask that you reconsider and let our student athletes play based on the guidelines and rules outlined by the Governor's office and the OHSAA.

- Rene Primiano

I just want to express my concerns about the children going to school they need to be in school they need to have sports activities friends all that to thrive in their life if someone is not comfortable bringing their kids to school and the online option should be for them but there also should be a choice everyone is practicing social distancing wearing masks disinfecting and I think this is just doing our children more harm than good please reconsider this especially with the October 5 date this is a hardship on everyone and I feel that they can be worked out a different way than just no one's going to school thank you for your consideration

- Tammy Darlington

As a concerned RN and parent of three seniors at Westerville Central High School, I am asking you to reconsider starting the school year remotely. My fear is we will not get back to face-to-face instruction. The point of the shelter at home order in March and subsequent school closure was to 'flatten the curve'. This gave us time to get the hospitals ready, ramp up testing, and prevent the spike in cases. We did this, and we did it well. The intention was never that this would prevent us from getting Covid. The CDC estimated that up to 70% of us will at some point get this virus. The only thing that will prevent this is an effective vaccine that is widely available, distributed, and accepted by the general public. We, unfortunately, are months, maybe years away from this. We must learn how to live with this pandemic. Our children can not learn in a remote setting until a vaccine is available.

Everything in medicine is risk vs. benefit. The CDC believes that the risk of having students home is higher than the risk of having them in school.

[https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschoools-childcare%2F reopening-schoools.html%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0SIryDtCyLtTgN8hlA10I50pqu_tnmSWc5b4iNfztX1yJfRbZaVQM7lkI&h=AT30vHsHIDgCAwX9zVJsw_07D8Vn6OWwViSb0a1FpmBLsvhGalnUffED1j7WnMj5pH0u65Gw25GV881yOUpZ8hM6gaf_4CUi_F4X-2vsEZGuWv_sdag9rY2YLIVY1P557g&__tn__=-UK-R&c\[0\]=AT00D5ycGb--mV3QCm_q-vXE8rqikHI5r5NBO4k-PriKM1in2LS5ABGKWP05Dr9N-](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fschoools-childcare%2F reopening-schoools.html%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR0SIryDtCyLtTgN8hlA10I50pqu_tnmSWc5b4iNfztX1yJfRbZaVQM7lkI&h=AT30vHsHIDgCAwX9zVJsw_07D8Vn6OWwViSb0a1FpmBLsvhGalnUffED1j7WnMj5pH0u65Gw25GV881yOUpZ8hM6gaf_4CUi_F4X-2vsEZGuWv_sdag9rY2YLIVY1P557g&__tn__=-UK-R&c[0]=AT00D5ycGb--mV3QCm_q-vXE8rqikHI5r5NBO4k-PriKM1in2LS5ABGKWP05Dr9N-)

M3D0yO8ScFqiKo4sacch1_TY2cEHRNIUQiAx5vnuOiQI-
orsOxhPhwHNUZsog5829ZUlaf2RtEjZA2Ox6YN9T1pclkREt5B5b0atxM9Qf_Jj9psZBN7LsHWbISUJ2sR2Kq79z
yKt7M2ngk

The mental health of our students is at risk and we are already seeing the effects of this. I understand that some teachers may be fearful of going back into the classroom. As a nurse, I was fearful as well. However, I have seen how my hospital has put measures in place to keep us safe. We did not have an option to stay home. This would need to be a group effort among everyone. If teachers truly feel like they can't teach in the classroom, they should be given the option to take a leave of absence or teach in the WVA. However, most teachers I know would like to get back in the classroom, at least in a hybrid format. Masks must be strictly enforced with students being removed from class if they fail to wear a mask. School will not look like it has in the past, but any face-to-face instruction time is better than nothing.

Again, please reconsider your remote start plan because we can't keep our students home until a vaccine is available. If we have to start remotely, I ask that the board have a very detailed plan to return to the classroom so parents will know what to expect. Many of the nurses I work with have no idea how they will work full-time away from the home and educate their children, plus find child care. This is too much to ask of our working parents, especially our single parents. Other districts are either putting together very detailed hybrid plans (please look at Dublin and New Albany), or they have remote plans that give very specific requirements for teachers to follow along with clear plans for returning to school.

I know that you all want the best for the children in our district, and I trust that you will make the best decisions for our schools. Please know that the community members are behind you and willing to help with temperature checks, cleaning supplies, providing masks, etc. We are all in this together and need to support each other, but that means our district supporting the needs of our children. Thank you for your time.

- Karen Radecki

Are children who are unable to attend live learning online sessions at a disadvantage to those who are able to participate in real time virtually with the class? It seems as though the kids whose parents work will be at a disadvantage educationally and socially by only being able to access the classes after the fact by watching the recorded session. Would it not be in every child's best interest to make this as fair as possible and not punish children whose parents have to work therefore they are unable to log in for live teaching sessions? Just make all of the learning sessions recorded sessions if you are seriously interested in putting all children first and not just those children who have the privilege to have parents who work from home or are stay at home parents.

- Renae

With the change of school to 100% virtual, how is the district going to ensure children with special needs gets an education? My child has an iep, is in a special learning class, and needs human interaction with his amazing teachers. Will there be any exceptions to virtual school for kids like him. I just want him to learn to read please.

- Sherry M MAY

Do you have any idea of the percentage of students who have signed up for WVA versus the percentage who will attend Westerville Online School (formerly the Blended model)?

- Suzanne Shetler

As a healthcare worker and parent of a special needs student I understand the complexity and conflict of determining if students in specialized learning can have another option than 100% virtual.

It essentially means my son will not even have the engagement of a virtual classroom like a typical student.

My son requires specialized in person instruction that is beyond what I could provide. I say this knowing the potential risk. But is there not a way to do 2-3 hr in person even 3 days per week for these classes that are very small and easy to social distance a way? I feel my son is being given the same metric as the typical student when we know that would not be equitable. An all virtual environment places him and any special needs student at great disadvantage.

Please reconsider for not only his educational, but emotional well-being.

Thank you for your re-consideration for the special needs students.

- Jacqueline Bastian

I would like to continue to express my concern for the decision by WCS to start the school year 100% remote. I cannot find the words to describe what a disservice this is to my kids, and the children of this community. Yes, we are all making sacrifices, but our kids should not have to sacrifice their educational and social development. Parents, kids and teachers should absolutely have a choice if they want to be in the classroom! Westerville City Schools needs to reconsider allowing students who want to participate in sports and extracurricular activities to do so. Respect those that do not wish to participate, but also please respect those that want a choice to participate as well.

- Dusty Eby

Will the teachers have to be in their classroom certain hours? (Finding childcare should not be an excuse as we are all trying to find childcare) My kindergartener will no be going to a daycare 3x a week because he needs to socialize and he's timid. I still can't believe the daycare will teach my child and not the schools.

- Alisha

Thank you for allowing public comment. My main question is how the school district plans to meet the needs of children with IEPs. It is very difficult for parents to provide appropriate education given the special nature of the way children with special needs learn as well as common behavior issues demonstrated. Also, how will the district be testing for and addressing possible learning disabilities in children while they are home? It would be a significant problem if a child with a learning disability was not identified readily and then provided with appropriate intervention.

- Michelle Spader

What measures will be taken to ensure quality instruction for students with special needs for whom remote/virtual instruction has proven to be ineffective?

- Scott Cloud

How does the School Board plan to educate children with IEPs appropriately?

- Elizabeth A Hamen

My daughter (with low-functioning autism) has made significant gains in the special education department at Westerville South the past two years. Since she has been forced to learn remotely, she has regressed significantly. She needs constant structure and schedule, something that is impossible to do remotely. She will not sit in front of a computer to learn. She needs hands-on experience. Her IEP specifically says that ""She needs a low student to teacher ratio and benefits from:

consistent schedule; frequent breaks; verbal, visual, and physical prompts/cues (hand over hand technique); modeling; directions in few steps; visuals with text to support understanding; direct instruction; extended processing time for oral information and directions; repeated practice."" Her IEP also says that she will get so many minutes every 4 weeks for speech therapy, occupational therapy, APE and with her intervention specialist. How will she receive these crucial services if she cannot learn from a computer? She is also missing out on learning life skills that are necessary for her future. Last year she was able to go to community outings to determine what type of job might best suit her, and she actually got a job where she worked at an elementary school library. How will she get this experience? Her classroom has no more than 8 students. It seems that a setting with 8 or less students should work, considering that daycares and adult day programs (with 10 in a group) are open during this time. I appreciate the chance to express my concerns and hope to hear what will happen with the students who have an IEP.

- Nina Corbut

Can children with IEPs be taught in person in small groups even while the schools are 100% remote learning? These children need personal instruction and remote learning is not a feasible option for many of them!! Are these students' needs being discussed and considered to allow for any accommodations to the proposed learning models?

- Annie Matthews

Fear is paralyzing. It has paralyzed our society, our community & our school system. I acknowledge that many have a different opinion from mine and I respect the choices of isolation and remote learning they have made for themselves. They have choices. However, you have taken away my choice to have our children educated, in our schools.

Everyday in our schools we would teach our children to educate themselves to make informed decisions. Investigate. Research. Don't take something at face value. Learn!

We are now failing them as educators. It seems that decisions of impressive magnitude are being made based on incomplete or insufficient data. Please share what these decisions of 100% remote learning & no extra curricular activities are being based on for WESTERVILLE? Franklin county #'s are declining. Hospitals are not at capacity (YES, data we no doubt need to monitor closely). Covid-19 patients are occupying small numbers: of beds (4%), ICU (8%) and Ventilators (3%). Do you have access to different information or data? Please, please share it if so. Why OCTOBER 5th to start when Franklin county numbers are declining now?

The Governor has said our children need to be in school. Pediatricians have been cited as saying our children need to be in school. Give us the CHOICE to do what is best for OUR children.

- Jennifer Eby

We unfortunately have to learn to live with Covid. This is a virus and it isn't going away anytime soon. The longer we keep everyone indoors, everyone's immunity system will be compromised. We will no longer be able to fight off infections. I think we need to start asking the health departments who are the majority of positive at what age group are these being found at? Get the breakdown of these facts and share with the community. High school students are not to be tested for covid per Governor DeWine. Maybe an option for majority of sports is some form of a face shield, like plexiglass fitted into the football helmet, maybe some type of helmet with plexiglass for soccer, lacrosse. Using disinfectant wipes or keeping X number of balls sanitized for each sport. Look at other options. These kids work hard and deserve an outlet of constant school work. They have to learn how to live with this virus. A vaccine can only prevent from a bad case, but the virus will always be present. Our kids, our schools, our lives

- Vickie Kerscher