

Board of Education Meeting 7/13/20 Comments

Harmony Anthony [alaskanharmony@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 3:40 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

July 9, 2020

Good morning,

I wanted to voice my views from the perspective of a parent with 3 children in KPBSD schools, a parent of child that is considered high risk to Covid-19 due to having a genetic lung disease (Cystic Fibrosis), and a foster parent with 3 foster children currently attending school within the KPBSD. I am in support of school reopening for all children with increased precaution measures that the district and teachers support. Here are my thoughts to offer on why I believe it would be best for our children and community to entirely reopen schools:

On a personal level, the only way for me to keep my employment and maintain my children's ability to receive an education would be with the reopening of schools. I work at an Essential Facility along with my husband, so we maintained our normal work schedules, other than me going to school on my lunch hour to pick up school lunches and check on the kids. When I got home from work each evening, I came home to stressed out children frustrated with schooling challenges, new home responsibilities of babysitting and doing additional chores from more people home all day, and then tried my best to make sure kids stayed on a consistent routine and some level of education was getting completed. The final quarter of last school year, when the distance education was implemented was a difficult transition for the 6 students in my home to be able to take classes from their 5 different schools with each school having entirely different learning and participation plans for each individual class with the added struggle of sharing the best internet we can get in our area. This led to overlapping Zoom meetings that had to be prioritized and shared laptops, the schools were able to provide 2 laptops for my 6 students along with the 2 computers in our home. The 2 high schoolers did a bit better than the 2 Middle Schoolers, and 2 Grade Schoolers were not engaged, self-motivated or participating without total full-time assistance. We worked out a plan where one day a week each of the four older children took turns schooling and babysitting the Grade Schoolers, this ensured that each older child only missed one day a week of education and the younger children got 4 days a week of schooling from siblings. I paid for apps, we downloaded all the school learning apps, we got paper packets (super hard to actually get when you can't get to the schools and pick them up but grandma was able to make a few trips!), I requested teachers call students instead of calling me, and copy me in the emails sent, I sought out and used all school resources I could find. I was struggling to understand what the requirements were, and their school days ranged from 8 hours to 2 hours daily. I have 3 college degrees and even Substitute taught for a year in the KPBSD schools, and I still struggled to try and help with schoolwork questions and figuring out what the expectations for classes were. About 3 weeks into the distance learning, I finally emailed or called all the Middle School and High School teachers and told them the kids would not be doing more than 4 hours of schoolwork along with meetings a day, and we needed to know what the most critical schoolwork was. I feel as if I was put in a position of either choosing to stay employed or choosing to educate my children because I could not do both.

I'll briefly point out what teachers already know. The inequities of households became very evident as kids that had good internet, had a stay at home parent, and had access to resources would most likely be successful with distance learning. The children that did not were quickly discouraged and had very little incentive to keep trying.

One of my children, who is physically disabled with Cystic Fibrosis, needs a teacher and school as she is not self-motivated. She already has a 504 in place at school along with her normal preventative care that she does daily. Due to her disease she wears a mask in medical visits, hospital settings, or large events when exposed to sick people. She stays 6ft away from others that have been identified as sick or also have a lung disease (people with lung diseases breed super bugs that could devastate her lungs and she could easily pass her germs to another person with compromised lungs) When she was a small child her team of doctors advised that I could homeschool her and keep her in a bubble; or I could treat her like my other children. I made the choice to let her do sports, school, and all activities that my other children do. She does normal kid stuff along with her regiment of her daily medications, three daily physical therapy sessions to clear her lungs of mucus, and all her precautions that she is accustomed to. By sending my other children to school, she

will not be able to quarantine, and we would rather increase her daily treatments and wear a mask more often, than not go to school. I talked to her medical team at Providence and they offered to help me update her 504 plan and support going to school, as they understand my family dynamic.

The mental health aspect of children not going to school or engaging in their sports or social activities should not be discounted. About a month into quarantine, one of my children was getting frequent stress headaches, one was pulling out her own hair, the emotional outbursts of crying and anger were common in my house. I tried to find creative solutions by asking each child to connect with at least one friend, or family member by facetime or FB Messenger once a day. I arranged for some of my family to call during the day and let the Grades Schoolers read out loud to them. I found a local teen center that let me rent it for one night a week, so my 6 kids could play pool, ping pong, foosball, and just have a fun family outing to look forward to weekly. Grandparents dropped McDonalds on the doorstep or Papa Murphy's and waved or talked to kids by shouting from their car to avoid contact. We all struggled through this and came up with solutions, but it was still a devastating period of mourning for the loss of school, activities and social contact followed by the anxiety of the unknowns.

I had previously worked for the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services, and I know that school staff are the frontline staff in connecting families with local resources and protecting children from child abuse and neglect. School may be the only time some children get regular meals (breakfast & lunch, and dinner with Boys and Girls Club), it may be the only time they feel safe, get attention or praise.

I'm happy to comply with children wearing masks (as they already wore masks with their sister before this pandemic!), I'm happy to comply with school requirements to keep staff safe, and I understand that school will look different this school year, but I cannot support distance learning next school year. If distance education is happening again, let all parents know earlier rather than later so we can find a solid homeschool program that will work for our household and my children's specific needs (then we can schedule the time it takes and understand the expectations). I do not support distance learning, and I do not support putting all KPBSD parents in the position to have to choose either employment or being a stay at home parent/educator.

Thank you,

Harmony Anthony, parent
cell 907-953-8296

Smart Plan Concerns

Krista Arthur

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 11:12 AM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I'd like to voice some concerns I have from a teacher's point of view regarding the KPBSD Smart Start plan. Two sections of the document that concern me the most are Scheduling and Instruction Practices.

According to the Smart Start Scheduling section, parents will have an option to enroll elementary students to participate in online learning through their neighborhood school (not Connections Homeschool). I want to make it very clear that providing online instruction to a group of **elementary students** AND in-person instruction to a group of elementary students is **2 different full time jobs**. EVEN if you are using the same materials. Managing students and technology with 2 groups as suggested is impossible for 1 teacher within the time constraints of a regular school day. Elementary teachers already have to plan for multiple subjects a day and get nothing but a 30 minute prep. Being told to touch base with on-line students during this time is unreasonable. I feel that if parents want the choice of online they need to switch over to Connections and we can put more staff members over there to assist with that increase.

The yellow to red zones are most likely going to happen and I see that we either have students in school or we have to service them on-line, but to do both at the elementary level is way too much to ask any teacher to be able to do. According to the Smart Start Instruction Practices, teachers are expected to simultaneously teach elementary students in the classroom as well as virtual participants at home. Again, I want to make it very clear that providing this kind of instruction is **2 full time jobs!!** Under Instruction Practices it also states that teachers will hold office hours after school or during their specials, suggesting prep times will be eliminated? While doubling the work load? None of this makes sense or seems at all possible.

I cannot stress enough how important it is that a smart start plan be developed with input from the very experienced people who will be having to **implement** it. I hope this is simply a starting point to a more feasible plan designed by teachers with students, parents, and teachers in mind.

Teachers must be included in the decision-making & problem-solving for this to be successfully implemented.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Krista Arthur

6th Grade Teacher KPBSD

Safe start comments for School Board Meeting

Kimberly Bates

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:04 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I would like to thank the members of the committee for all the time and work they have put into creating this document. I would like the board and committee to consider not offering "remote learning" for elementary students. Remote learning was not successful for many students this last spring and Superintendent O'Brien stated this at a school board meeting. Instead, I would recommend the board and committee have elementary students enroll in connections or any other online homeschool program. Please do not encourage "remote learning" for elementary students.

Thank you,

Kimberly Bates

2nd Grade Teacher

Mountian View Elementary

Kenai, AK



Smart start

Kristi Baum [kristibaum@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 7:46 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

My name is Kristi Baum. I am a graduate of KCHS and the University of Nevada, Reno. I am on the McNeil Canyon Elem Site council as well as the VP on the McNeil community council. I have my certification in childhood development. I was a teacher for k-2nd grade for 3 years then the administrator of Ketchikan's largest private school & daycare center. I have completed over 300 hours in early childhood development and have worked in early intervention for at risk kids.

I have dealt with many health outbreaks and have put many virus / illness mitigation plans together. I am currently the children's director for a large church in Homer where I am currently implementing virus mitigation plans to keep our kids healthy every week.

I am also a parent to a 12 year old, 9 year old and a 6 month old. Also, a wife to an essential worker.

I want to encourage the council to offer a full-time and complete schedule for our kids for the 20/21 school year. Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being. Schools provide kids not only with academic instruction but social & emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech & mental health therapy and physical development etc. Schools also play a critical role in addressing racial and social inequality.

Our kids need to be in school together all week. Their social & emotional well being is just as important as their physical health. Also, there are so many at risk kids on the KPBSD who suffer if they aren't in the classroom. These kids will fail or fall behind if they are not in school full-time. Leading to life long problems and a larger gap in social inequality.

We also need a generation of kids who are fully educated. Not just enough to get by.

I want to encourage this council instead of limiting kids in the school to put strict virus mitigations in place. I suggest having a health monitor on the bus. Take each kids temperature before they jump on the bus. If it is over 100 they don't get on the bus. The health aide then hands the spreadsheet with temps to the principal who is greeting kids at the front door. Where borderline temps can be monitored throughout the day.

Kids who don't ride the bus get screened at the front door.

Then upon entry each kid goes directly to wash their hands with soap and water or they are squirted with hand sanitizer upon arrival.

Then the high touch areas in the school are consistently sanitized throughout the day.

I STRONGLY encourage this council not to mandate social distancing across the district. Kids do not understand 6' of distance. Kids learn through play. Their brains develop through cooperative play. We will see severe development issues if we disallow kids from playing together. Even the American Pediatric Society recommends against social distancing.

"The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school," according to the guidance."

<https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/06/26/schoolreopening062620>

Kids should wear masks when walking in hallways or while in large groups (assemblies, library etc). However, we should not force kids to wear masks while in their primary classroom. Not only will this cause major anxiety for many kids it will become a distraction and problem for our teachers. Our teachers are already dealing with so many behaviors, attitudes, challenges etc to ask them to be enforcers of masks is more than we should ask of them.

Ultimately, masks should be optional, just as vaccinations are. If a parent(s) desire their child to wear a mask the entire day they need to have this conversation at home with their kids and be the enforcer, not the school. Many parents do NOT support their kids breathing CO2 all day.

Nor do all parents have the means to provide multiple masks for their child to wear throughout the week. Also, half the kids at school can barely remember their homework, hat, coat, gloves, snow pants, lunch etc. every day, to add a mask to that long list is challenging. Also, who is going to ensure it is a properly fit mask that doesn't slide off during the day? If kids are coming to school with improperly fit masks they are going to be touching their faces even more all day just to adjust the mask.

Please open our schools this fall with the full and traditional schedule. Up our sanitization and monitoring but let our kids get an education together!

Thank you from a mom, educator and life long child advocate!

Kristi Baum
Kristibaum@gmail.com

Smart Start

Kelly Brewer

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 2:04 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

First, I'd like to thank the Smart Start board for their obvious commitment to putting safety and students' needs first and foremost in their plan. As an educator, I was a bit stressed after reading the proposed plan last night ... wondering how I was going to be able to do a quality job of onsite and remote learning at the same time. After reading Mr. O'Brian's email today, I'm hopeful that is not the expectation. Bottomline, I want to do a good job. Which means, I need to be at the top of my game. I can do one job well within a regular work week. I need to stay healthy, which means keeping stress to a minimum and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Both take time and dedication. That won't happen if I'm expected to teach in person, while running a video feed, manage a remote classroom website, and hold office hours during my prep. And, effectively roll out a new language arts curriculum.

The other concern I have is with the logistics of smoothly flowing from an onsite classroom to a remote classroom at any given time. I live in Clam Gulch. The only internet available is satellite. It will not fully support an online classroom. I worked from the building this spring. Hopefully, I will still be able to do so. If not, I'm going to need some help figuring out what to do.

Kelly Brewer
First Grade
KBeach Elementary

Crista Cady [crista.cady@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 1:49 PM

To: Board of Education Members

Cc: Lisa Gabriel

Dear KPBSD Board of Education Members,

Thank you for your hard work in trying to come up with a workable plan for the upcoming to the school year. I'll be in virtual attendance at the July 13 school board meeting, and I look forward to hearing more about how teachers and staff will be doing things differently when classes resume.

My reason for writing is that I honestly don't think the proposed four additional in-service days are enough to accomplish what the teachers and staff in our schools are going to have to do. The existing in-service days at the beginning of a "typical" school year (with required trainings, classroom set up, staff meetings, team collaborations, PD, lesson planning, etc.) are barely enough to prepare for students. So, while we got some weeks of practice at the end of last school year, I think that re-inventing school in four days just isn't realistic. If we want to begin the year with a well-prepared plan, my suggestion is to bring students back on Monday, August 31.

Sincerely,

Crista Cady

KPBSD Teacher and Parent

Subs

Holly Davis

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 3:59 PM**To:** Lisa Gabriel

Greetings,

I am wondering about teacher substitutes. Schools have a difficult time finding subs in a normal year. What plans will be in place if teachers need to be absent? Some of our substitutes fall in the vulnerable population and I imagine that the pool of subs might be even smaller this year.

Thanks,

Holly Davis

2nd/3rd Grade Teacher

Soldotna Elementary

(907) 260-5125

Questions for Board of Ed mtg re school start

Dye [jmdye@gci.net]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 8:56 AM

To: Lisa Gabriel

1) There is a large contingent of community members who do not believe that Covid is a valid issue. How stringent will guidelines be for students to wear masks, physical distance and temperature checks as requirements to participate in public schooling?

And how will school staff handle students at the middle school/highschool levels who do not follow these guidelines? Are they "suggestions" or will they be viewed as mandatory to attend school in person?

2) What alternative types of hybrid or online learning will be offered for students who are high risk with underlying health issues? Will this be offered through their current school or will they need to officially enroll in a homeschool program like connections prior to schools start date?

Thank you.

A concerned parent from Homer

Comment for School board meeting

Sandra Elam [sandraquick@me.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 7:33 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Hello,

My name is Sandra Elam and I have a son entering 1st grade this fall. I have a comment/question for the school board.

I have heard of some companies in Alaska who have had their employees take the Anti-body test for Covid-19. They've done this so that they can determine if the work environment warrants wearing masks and taking extreme steps to prevent the spread. Has the school board thought of this idea so they could have more knowledge of the risks that are actually out there for their employees and the students.

Letter of Concern

Andrea Hakkinen

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 3:03 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Hi Lisa –

I hope I am sending this off to the right person. If not, please let me know.

Thank you so much, have a great day!

- Andi Hakkinen

To the members of this committee, I do have some concerns regarding the proposed plan as outlined by the district.

First and foremost, it is unnerving that not a single teacher is listed on this committee. My hope is that teachers who recently experienced the shift to distance education will be consulted and **listened to** during this time of planning.

Second, as stated under Instructional Redesign, a “classroom” is defined as having two parts: Virtual + Physical. I cannot stress enough that delivering content face-to-face and delivering content online are **two full-time jobs**. There was also mention of teachers utilizing after school and prep time as office hours for distance-learning students. Does this mean teachers no longer have a prep period? During contracted hours, when are educators to plan and deliver meaningful content to students in and out of the classroom. If this is the case, then the length of the school week will need to be adjusted, providing ample time for educators to plan and assess student work, and maintain meaningful connections with students and families.

Third, I hope educators and support staff that are part of the vulnerable population are being considered, and that this district makes it one of the top priorities to keep this group safe.

Finally, I ask that the members of this committee and district employees are **reasonable with expectations**. This is **not** a time to go above and beyond, as this is a time we should be taking care of our families and each other, while delivering meaningful content and instruction in the most efficient way possible. I understand we are all doing the best we can under these circumstances, but I ask that you take the time to listen to and respect the people who will be implementing your proposed plan(s) during the 2020-2021 school year.

Thank you

- Andrea Hakkinen

KPBSD School Board: COVID CONSIDERATIONS FALL 2020

Anita Hakkinen

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:00 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I have but two requests:

- 1) As plans continue for school resuming in the fall, please solicit and value TEACHER INPUT. We are compassionate, creative and resourceful with experience in the traditional classroom *and* with distance learning. We have much to contribute to this conversation. Talk to us.
- 2) Please KEEP US SAFE. Along with many others, I am considered high-risk and need to know that returning to work will not be detrimental to my health.

Thanks for doing your best to get this right.

Respectfully,

Anita Hakkinen

Third-Grade Teacher

Redoubt Elementary

SMART start questions

James Knoebel

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 11:40 AM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Hello,

Here are the following question I have regarding the SMART start proposal:

Why are masks not required at all levels of the plan?

Is there a plan to reopen the Prep House building to create greater social distancing at the secondary level?

Will the plan be updated to include ratios that more accurately pertain to our local areas (vs. the per 100,000 stated in the graphic)?

Thank you for your time.

James Knoebel

KPBSD Smart Start Plan Comments and Concerns

Melissa Landess [melissalandess@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 11:10 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

To whom it concerns:

I'd like to voice some concerns I have from a teacher's point of view regarding the KPBSD Smart Start plan. Two sections of the document that concern me the most are Scheduling and Instruction Practices.

According to the Smart Start Scheduling section, parents will have an option to enroll elementary students to participate in online learning through their neighborhood school (not Connections Homeschool). I want to make it very clear that providing online instruction to a group of elementary students AND in-person instruction to a group of elementary students is **2 different full time jobs**. EVEN if you are using the same materials. Managing students and technology with 2 groups as suggested is impossible for 1 teacher within the time constraints of a regular school day.

To make this happen, elementary schools would have to EITHER have teachers that opt to teach online groups only, OR in-person groups only. Another option could be for elementary schools to have teachers teach the in-person ½ time and the online group ½ time (if you want online learning through the neighborhood school). Otherwise, it sounds way more feasible to have teachers that opt to provide online instruction for those few students from each school at each grade level that opt for online. For example, a teacher at Sterling Elementary would be in charge of online 4th grade students from Sterling Elementary, Soldotna Elementary, and Redoubt Elementary.

According to the Smart Start Instruction Practices, teachers are expected to simultaneously teach elementary students in the classroom as well as virtual participants at home. Again, I want to make it very clear that providing this kind of instruction is **2 full time jobs**. Under Instruction Practices it also states that teachers will hold office hours after school or during their specials, suggesting prep times will be eliminated? While doubling the work load? None of this makes sense or seems at all possible.

I cannot stress enough how important it is that a smart start plan be developed with input from the very experienced people who will be implementing it. I hope this is simply a starting point to a more feasible plan designed by teachers with students, parents, and teachers in mind.

Teachers must be included in the decision-making & problem-solving for this to be successfully implemented.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Melissa Landess

Board of Education Public Comment

Emily Mayberry

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 12:49 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Attachments: E. Mayberry Board Meeting~1.docx (136 KB)

Lisa,

Attached are my comments to be read at the Board of Education Meeting on Monday, July 9th.

Please verify that you have received them.

Thank you,

Emily Mayberry
K-Beach Elementary School

To Whom It May Concern at KPBSD July 9th Board Meeting:

I am writing this as a ten-year teaching veteran, 9 of those years being with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District.

As I read through the district's "Smart Start" and then saw the postings of Monday's Board Mtg, I felt I needed to share some thoughts/concerns that I hope you are/will address.

- I was disappointed there wasn't much of a scenario difference between green and yellow (how many students are in the classroom at a time). The COVID numbers go up but we are not open to staggered days, smaller groups so that social distancing and actual learning can occur.
- I am opposed to the language you are using in the plan which is not the 6 ft. recommended by the CDC. The plan states to "try" to obtain 6 ft. "or the maximum allowable"--giving meaning that if you can't stay 6 ft apart, whatever number will work. That is not creating a SAFE environment for staff or students.
- As an elementary school teacher, whatever plan the district outlines should be differentiated for high school and elementary schools. There is a huge difference in the understanding of social distancing and the ability to follow through knowing WHY the social distancing is necessary. This difference will impact all student learning.
- The "Smart Start" plan uses words such as "encouraging masks" instead of making it mandatory for staff to wear masks while in school buildings. The district needs ensure the safety of other staff members, students and staff families. Only "encouraging masks" will let the staff members who are not worried get away with not wearing masks while the staff members that want to be protected and wear masks are only more vulnerable.
- How will this look to parents that some classroom teachers wear masks and others don't? This could create problems for parent requests, removal of students from certain classes, and certain teachers having to explain themselves in order to try to keep themselves and family safe.

How interesting that the Board Meeting in the Chambers Assembly needs to be telephonic but your plan puts about 20+ students in a room half that size or smaller while only encouraging staff and students to wear masks. That is not a safe and smart plan for our students and staff families. Look at the discrepancy of having the Board Meeting telephonic for your and public safety and you want to send students and school staff into a much smaller, contained area. This is a Double Standard.

This really shows where the district's interest lies and not the students and staff members they serve.

I hope you can understand how worried, frustrated and anxious I am about starting next month with there being so little concern and planning for safety. I understand committees and principals have been meeting, but this is the best plan that ensures my safety, my family's safety and my students safety?

We can be smart now and not regret it later instead of having to back track because the Board and School District are so eager to get into the classroom without ensuring the necessary safety steps for all.

Emily Mayberry

Ten year teaching veteran

Master of Education Degree

Starting tenth year with KPBSD

Comment for July 13 meeting

Moore Fam [jessnjeffak@gmail.com]

Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 7:13 PM**To:** Lisa Gabriel

Hi & thank you all for your hard work.

I am a parent of a high risk teen who attends SoHi. Dr. Zink has recently described that high risk people are up to 12 times as likely to die from SARS CoV-2 & it's complications as other average risk people. As I look at Dr. Zink's risk factor chart which goes from 1-10 according to a variety of activities, I do realize that, for my child and other high risk students and staff, those numbers are off by a factor of 12.

This, then, makes me question how what is considered low, medium, and high risk for the SmartStart program for the average healthy kid or staff might be an equivalent alarming risk to high risk students & high risk staff.

On the SmartStart low risk level, it doesn't look like there is an option for students or staff to remain home. I would like for my child to have safest & least restrictive environment as well as the same opportunities as her peers. Indeed, she is legally entitled to such. This pandemic isn't your fault, of course, and makes things more complex, but it's not her fault either.

Please consider allowing those with 504's & IEP's, or other high risk students & staff the ability to Skype/Zoom in live to their classrooms. In this manner our daughter, as well as other high risk people, can still participate, ask questions, & learn with her peers.

Given that we have complex medical issues in our home, we have quarantined since early March. It is probable that we will continue to do so until a vaccine is developed. I am confident that many other high risk families are thinking the same.

We are willing to keep our high risk child from the SoHi building during the school year. We know that her being home is a win-win for all involved because it's easier on the staff & students of that building, and it's also much safer for her.

Would you please consider adding the option for high risk students & staff the ability to work from home even during times what you would consider low/green risk? It is simply not low risk for them.

Thank you for your time,

Jessica Moore

Your window for comment was too Small.

Nathan Nash [nathancnash@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:15 AM**To:** Lisa Gabriel

KPBSD shame on you. I got your email about opening the schools last night after the comment window had closed. I had less than 24 hours from the time the email was sent to review a heavy pile of documents. To be honest I still haven't reviewed them. I have three children all under the age of seven, it is impossible to read or focus on anything with them needing a lot of attention. From what I am able to glean from the little I have read you are planning on opening the schools. At the end of last school year you closed the schools rightly because of the danger of COVID-19 spreading while there was no community transmission. Now there is community transmission. We honestly don't know the extent. People are not wearing masks in public, about 40 tests are done a day at the hospital. The CDC says that there are likely ten times the number of cases than what is known due to lack of people being tested. The CDC says that if the schools open now that about 2% of students will die from this disease. If your website is correct you have 2500 plus students that is 50 plus deaths if you open. I would bet this is more kids than will die from car accidents in an average school year in our district. This is more than an average school shooting. Not to mention all the teachers and parents, grandparents and siblings that may have contact with children who are infected and asymptomatic. The disease also caused permanent brain damage. Yet I have had less than 24 hours to review the opening information and leave public comment. The only reason to do this is to cave to political pressures rather than do the right thing. Shame on you, for being cowards, for caving to the opinions of the ignorant and malicious who want to force the appearance of normalcy with no oversight. This shouldn't even be something that should be subject to a majority vote. Facts say it is dangerous and wrong to open schools.

Think about that 2% statistic. 2 out of 100 students will likely die. We don't have adequate testing, and by the time the community transmission is bad enough to close schools it will be too late. Every year colds and flu sweep through schools and nothing can be done to stop them. Quicker testing and a vaccine need to be developed. Our country has already had over 100,000 deaths and the number is only growing. The numbers in the state are only growing, opening the schools will only further send those numbers up. I will try to do a full review of your opening procedures. But shame on you.

Nathan Nash

Comments to School Board - July 13th

Katie Archer Olson [o2kctechnologies@gmail.com]

Sent:Friday, July 10, 2020 10:16 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Our family appreciates the hard work of our educators, IT department, and other support personnel as we face the challenges in this current climate.

We have had over 10 family members test positive with COVID and one pass away. The reality of the magnitude of this virus is very real for our family.

We believe in public school.

We believe in face to face learning, Online Learning, and Blended Learning.

We believe in social/emotional learning.

We believe in our school district.

Our decisions, however, carry the weight of ethical considerations and public safety concerns for our children, our educators, staff, and vulnerable individuals in our homes and community.

We are grateful for the choice in how we feel is the best approach to education until there is a vaccine, but here are two concerns outside of this grace/autonomy for families:

1. How will the district protect our educators/support staff? Will they have more sick days if they become sick or if they need to care for someone they love? How will their insurance provide support? Will Substitutes receive a higher wage because of potential health concerns? (they receive no benefits or sick days, but may depend on this income to support their families)

2. Would the school district/borough consider increasing the number of jumpstart courses so eligible students would be able to receive online dual credit? (this would help make more space available for the brick and mortar classes and work toward their future goals)

Thank you for allowing our voices to be heard.

Respectfully,
Katie Olson

Katie Archer Olson MAT ECE
Doctoral Student in Instructional Technology
Focusing on Curriculum and Instruction for Diverse Adult Learners
"Bringing life to your business, classroom and professional development"
(907) 394-4234

Parent of a T1D Student

Gnar Omar [csamskar@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 7:07 AM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Hello KPSBD Board members,

As a parent of an upcoming Type 1 Diabetic student that is super excited about entering Kindergarten, I have some concerns. While I want my child to have that experience of their 1st day in public school, doing so while wearing a mask is not how we envisioned it. I understand this COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of fear and pain in our community, country, and globally. My concern is that when my T1D child's blood sugar is running low and he's not feeling well, or high and becomes easily frustrated or temperamental he shouldn't have to don a mask to get his blood sugar checked and corrections. He's still too young to manage this disease himself, so I imagine he'll become good friends with the school nurse.

Although this unpreventable auto-immune disease puts him in the "at-risk" category if COVID-19 is contracted, we still want him to have that experience of attending school, playing at recess, making friends, socializing with others, and learning. A seasonal flu has the potential to send him to the emergency room, so we've already practiced good hygiene and social distancing before it was trendy.

Our plan is to utilize the available remote learning tools for the first month or so to see if there is a huge spike at Nikiski North Star Elementary, but ultimately we'd like to send both of our kids back with the personal choice to wear a mask or not. We'll be in direct contact with our local school as the start date approaches, I just felt the need to share our concerns and opinions on this matter.

Thanks,
Chad Samskar
Nikiski, AK

proposal for the board meeting

Mary Roed

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 7:47 AM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I have some major concerns with the new proposal for Smart Start. What you are proposing for each teacher equates to two full time jobs! As a special education teacher, I know that I need to be in person with my students for them to benefit from instruction. Also, having to manage an online group would just not work. For me, as a resource teacher responsible for grades 4,5,6, I would have groups for reading, writing and math at each grade level. Then, online classes for all those as well? The planning for both is incredibly time consuming. Unreasonable!

Saying that we could manage doing both in class instruction as well as conducting online classes for the school year is just crazy and not feasible. The parents are given a choice here....teachers should have some choices as well.

Online teaching requires constant phone, email, messaging, communications that take place daily. I don't know where in our schedules, that could be accomplished. Online students require constant clarifications, parents need assistance and tech support and always have questions. Students that are physically in school with you are demanding of all of your time during a regular school day. There is just not enough time in a school day to achieve all of this. Teachers should not be expected to continuously work outside the school hours in order to accomplish this.

The people who are having to implement this plan must have input. Hopefully, this plan will not go forward without some major changes. I realize that this is a daunting task to put a plan together that accommodates all. Please utilize the strength, innovation and ideas that your teachers are capable of.

Donald Smith [DSmith1@gci.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:56 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I feel that the covid-19 outbreak is way worse now than when we closed school earlier and I'm seriously feeling that we should stay on the stay-at-home and educate from home order or just move to homeschool in general it is just getting worse and worse

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Smart Start Plan comments for schoolboard

Shaya Straw

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:04 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

Hello Lisa,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input on this subject.

My biggest concern as a teacher is having more expected from me than I can physically accomplish. 4th quarter of 2019/20 was a time when teachers were putting in more than 100% to teach remotely. All other times teachers put in more than 100% to teach in-person. To ask teachers to do both, even if for smaller groups of students in each mode of learning, is to ask too much. It simply will only result in stressed-out, burned-out, desultory teachers spreading themselves too thin OR a mass loss of teachers.

I did read Mr. O'Brien's email today that stated "This does not mean that teachers will be expected to teach a group of kids in front of them, over video, remote, and through paper pencil packets at the same time." While this statement does bring some peace of mind, I am left still wondering HOW this will all happen.

A suggestion might be for the district to create a district-wide distance learning classroom/school, in which the teachers of these classes could fully focus on REMOTE learning, whether paper/pencil or digital. This could be organized by grade level or even intermediate/primary depending on the number of students. This would allow the in-class teachers to remain focused on their students in front of them. ALL teachers could still put in 100% and students would benefit with a better education during this interesting and difficult time in history.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Shaya Straw

School Board Comments

Bill Vedders [billvedders@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 1:02 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

If the meeting to reopen schools takes place via ZOOM for the safety of the participants, perhaps you shouldn't be discussing reopening the schools.

If you are willing to send high risk teachers and staff into a potentially deadly situation, will you at least double our life insurance benefits?

I decided long ago that I will voluntarily put my life on the line to protect my students from a school shooter, but a virus...not so much.

Bill Vedders

Kenai, AK 99611

For school board

Elizabeth Walter [elizabeth.sowers@gmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 4:02 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

This letter is intended to be read at the scoreboard meeting. From the perspective of a teacher who has taught for many years in a classroom and one quarter of distance education - it is very clear to elementary school teachers that we cannot and will not be able to teach in class and distance at the same time. The district needs to put into place a "district distant classroom" where a team of teachers can focus on distance learning. Depending on how many students are registered for distance education would depend on how many teachers they need to pool to create these "district classrooms" this way a team of teachers consult a focus on distance-learning and classroom teachers can solely focus on classroom learning to the benefit of all involved. Thank you.

Elizabeth Walter - elementary school teacher

Sent from my iPhone

KPBSD Smart Start 2020 - School Board Comment

Jennifer Wardas

Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 10:34 PM

To: Lisa Gabriel

I'd like to voice some concerns I have from a teacher's point of view regarding the KPBSD Smart Start plan. Two sections of the document that concern me the most are Scheduling and Instruction Practices.

According to the Smart Start Scheduling section, parents will have an option to enroll elementary students to participate in online learning through their neighborhood school (not Connections Homeschool). I want to make it very clear that providing online instruction to a group of elementary students AND in-person instruction to a group of elementary students is 2 different full time jobs. EVEN if you are using the same materials. Managing students and technology with 2 groups as suggested is impossible within the time constraints of a regular school day.

To make this happen, elementary schools would have to EITHER have teachers that opt to teach online groups only, OR in-person groups only. Another option could be for elementary schools to have teachers teach the in-person ½ time and the online group ½ time (if you want online learning through the neighborhood school). Otherwise, it sounds way more feasible to have teachers that opt to provide online instruction for those few students from each school at each grade level that opt for online. For example, a teacher at Sterling Elementary would be in charge of online 4th grade students from Sterling Elementary, Soldotna Elementary, and Redoubt Elementary.

According to the Smart Start Instruction Practices, teachers are expected to simultaneously teach elementary students in the classroom as well as virtual participants at home. Again, I want to make it very clear that providing this kind of instruction is 2 full time jobs. Under Instruction Practices it also states that teachers hold office hours after school or during their specials, suggesting prep times will be eliminated? While doubling the work load? None of this makes sense or seems possible.

I cannot stress enough how important it is that a smart start plan be developed with input from the very experienced people who will be implementing it. I hope this is simply a starting point to a more feasible plan designed by teachers with students, parents, and teachers in mind.

Teachers must be included in the decision-making & problem-solving for this to be successfully implemented.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

~Jennifer Wardas