

Metrics meeting 11/13

1 message

Rachel Heiligman <rheiligman@gmail.com>

Fri, Nov 13, 2020 at 1:58 PM

To: Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Cc: steenm@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, stoney@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, Lisa Schneider Fabes <fabesl@wilmette39.org>, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, PublicComment@wilmette39.org

Good morning

Thank you, Dr. Cremascoli, for doing an excellent job moderating today's meeting while also providing updates since last weeks meeting.

I understand that a temporary stay at home order from the governor is potentially imminent. My feedback today is to provide some parental perspective as we move forward.

The WEA and teacher/nurse representation on the committee is strongly biased toward remote. They have been this way from the start. I am wondering whether there are teachers with differing view points who would be willing to participate in these discussions. I believe that some fresh input from teachers in these meetings would be invaluable. The teacher input thus far has been disturbingly negative. My child's teacher as well as other staff have shared with me the value of teaching in person. I'd assume that these individuals are not the only ones who feel this way. It would be helpful to have a more balanced and fair representation of the teachers and staff.

I will again point out the overwhelming amount of subjective and fear based reporting from teachers on the committee. For the second week in a row, Heather Cartwright spoke out of turn on the alleged feelings of in-person families who now feel unsafe. Ms. Cartwright teaches remotely, so her claim to know the feelings of in-person families is questionable at best. Not to mention how highly inappropriate it is to bring this type of here-say to a metrics committee meeting. Allow in-person families to speak for themselves, please.

Additionally, there is a lack of discussion regarding how our circumstances affect the well being of our children. Both Frank Panzica and Mark Steen touched on this today. Unfortunately, the teachers on the committee consistently have not incorporated students needs into their arguments unless it supports their viewpoint (An example from today was a statement suggesting that substitutes will not provide the quality of education that regular staff does, therefore remote is the better option). The teachers/staff on the committee continue to neglect discussion regarding the social/emotional needs of these kids.

It is undeniable that these teachers are making sacrifices that they would have never imagined. It has been said in previous meetings that teacher morale has been low. That is understandable. How very different it would be if the union leaders set a positive example for the teachers they represent. D39 teachers and staff should take tremendous pride in the work being done to serve our children! How proud they should feel to work in a district that demonstrates such a strong commitment to our children! The union reps should be giving teachers positive feedback for a job well done while modeling a positive attitude. The negativity from these folks in the meetings is exhausting. I can only imagine how this negative tone affects the teachers.

Given that our metrics consistently have been very good within the school environments, the continued negativity and biased from WEA reps against in person learning is frankly, astonishing. It also is cause for deep concern regarding their true motivations. They are making themselves look bad. They are also unfairly making the entire teacher body who they represent look bad. A simple

shift in attitude without a change in ones viewpoint would go a very long way. This is especially important as we will be dealing with this virus for some time in our future.

I am not blind to the rapid rise in community numbers and to the realities we face. I just feel strongly that there needs to be a shift in attitude of those chosen to represent our teachers. There are members on the metrics committee who make very fair arguments that represent both sides of the issue. There are others who consistently do not do this. Instead they contribute a very negative viewpoint with one goal in mind- to shift to remote as they had attempted to do in August.

Moving forward, it seems as though some adjustments in the committee makeup could be helpful.

Dr. Cremascoli, your leadership during these meetings has been incredible. You are in a very challenging position and you handle it with grace and professionalism. Thank you for your ongoing time, dedication and commitment.

Take good care everyone. Be well and stay safe. Thank you for your service.

Best
Rachel

From: K Sullivan <kathleensullivan99@gmail.com>

Subject: Parent support for keeping District 39 schools open, short and long term

Date: November 12, 2020 at 9:14:27 PM CST

To: stonee@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, fabel@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Dr. Cremascoli and the District 39 Board of Education,

My name is Kathleen Sullivan and I live at [REDACTED]. My daughter is a second grader at Harper Elementary School.

I am writing to express my support for maintaining in-person learning in District 39, between the holiday breaks, and beyond. I also propose a solution/compromise that would allow all parties to maintain their own safety and comfort levels while maintaining onsite learning, with families having an option to transition to remote learning from November 30 - December 18 and/or January 4 - January 15. I have not heard of *any* District 39 family planning to break travel or social distancing advice, but some families might feel more comfortable keeping their children at home during these specific time periods.

To be honest, I have yet to participate in one of the Metrics Reopening Advisory Team Zoom meetings, but I plan to tomorrow. I am uninformed about what has been stated so far in the meetings (beyond what I read in updates) so I don't want my opinion to sound unconcerned about others' very real issues and perspectives. Every opinion matters. My family is full of educators (some of whom have underlying health conditions) and I'm aware of the many arguments about risk-reward analysis.

At this point, I can only speak as a parent of a child who is profoundly different after resuming in person learning, from a mental health perspective. My child was described today by her teacher as a "ray of sunshine" yet, during the times of remote learning, her spirit and motivation have been overshadowed by her lack of social engagement, routine, and in person teaching.

After her first physical day back at Harper this September, I asked my daughter if her "bucket was full" (in reference to the book, "Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?"). She said her bucket was overflowing. At bedtime, she amended her assessment and stated that she had filled *four* buckets that day at school. All of this is from a child who cries every two hours during remote learning days (her older brothers keep track) and who forces the rest of the household to suffer the remaining daylight hours with her, because of her regression and sadness. I'm also hosting a high school and a college e-learner, and there are vast differences in their reactions to remote learning. Younger children lose out.

I am just as afraid of Covid as anyone. As a Covid survivor (my physician husband was exposed at work on March 16, before masks and social distancing were in our vocabulary) and as a parent who has witnessed a child dealing with symptoms, I am humbled by the experience. Our family has remained hyper vigilant about and sensitive to any possible future exposures, given that my husband still sees patients in person and given that re-infection could still be a possibility for our family. We are the first to deem others' behavior as unsafe or noncompliant, and when it comes to Wilmette 39 families, we are universally impressed with their rigor and safety mindedness.

We would not have sent our daughter back to in person learning if we were uncertain about the school's ability to limit exposure and transmission. We, and the Wilmette community, are *beyond grateful* for the supreme efforts that you and others have put into hosting students in person. Our children are exponentially happier and healthier because of the onsite education you provide, and it's an affirmation of your safety efforts that there seems to be **no evidence of in-school transmission**.

District 39 parents are taking safety precautions outside of school seriously because we so value the gift of in-person education that you provide, compared to our friends in other communities that have not found a way to host students onsite. My backyard affronts Thornwood Park, the outdoor social hub of the Harper district. My family has been observing nine months of outside social behavior, when families might let their guard down... but they don't. We

have participated in many Wilmette Park District programs and every family is compliant, happily so. I have yet to hear of a District 39 family that intends to flaunt the district's advice and requests. With K-8 students (with over sharing tendencies), I would think we would hear of noncompliance from the mouths of babes. Are we?

Is there a possibility for families to voluntarily opt to enroll their children in remote learning, based upon their own family's holiday plans? Again, I have heard ZERO mention of noncompliance with travel and social bans, but perhaps families could be honestly queried. If a family chooses remote learning for their kids (based on their travel schedule *or* their fear of other families' lack of adherence to the rules) could District 39 offer temporary remote learning for each grade (it doesn't need to be specific to a school) so that families and teachers can weather the quarantine periods? With this option, perhaps ten or twenty percent of kids can do remote learning, without judgment, while the rest can remain in school.

I applaud you for your amazing commitment to our kids and to our community's health. We are all in awe of our teachers and of their ability to engage and motivate our children. I am just offering one family's opinion about the benefits of in-person learning versus remote learning.

In gratitude,
Kathleen Sullivan

From: info@wilmetteparkfriends.org

Date: November 12, 2020 at 1:45:23 PM CST

To: "Cremascoli, Kari" <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Subject: **Coordination with the Wilmette Park District**

Reply-To: info@wilmetteparkfriends.org

TO: Wilmette District 39 Leaders and Board

Carlson, Dominique, Cremascoli, Jackson, Moric

Cesaretti, Panzica, Poehling, Schneider-Fabes, Steen, Sternweiler, Stone

Dear District 39 Leaders and Board Members,

I am contacting you on behalf our our group of Wilmette residents, the **Wilmette Park Friends**, who are concerned about the current and proposed actions, designated as Park Improvements, by the Wilmette Park District in Community Playfield (and possibly later in Thornwood Park).

As Wilmette residents we want to promote mutually beneficial relations between the three major civic units in Wilmette, the Village, the Park District , and District 39.

In reviewing plans that the Park District has for Community Playfield, it does not appear to us that they have coordinated with you, in particular with the Wilmette Junior High School and Highcrest Middle School that book-end the park. It appears to us that with two populations of **over 800 students each**, these two schools are the **major users of the Community Playfield** (as far as we have been able to determine the Wilmette Baseball Association has about 250 players scattered around Wilmette's parks: Wilmette Wings Soccer has between 350-450).

We realize that many **Physical Education classes and extra-curricular activities** may take place indoors, e.g. basketball, wall climbing, dance, and wrestling, but many others, including the Thursday Run, field hockey, soccer, cross country, track & field, as well as normal PE classes take place outdoors, weather permitting.

Therefore it would be logical and appropriate for the Park District to coordinate regularly with District 39 (at least the WJHS and Highcrest) to see how the Park District can provide for our younger residents.

Some suggestions our group is making could be of use to the WJHS and Highcrest students.

1 - We are recommending that there be a **delineated 1-mile grass (or possibly later a permeable) path/track around the perimeter of the park**. This could be used by local residents for measured exercise walking or jogging. It could also be used by any of the local cross country teams in the area. This would be an inexpensive addition to the park. If usage showed that there was too much use and sections of the grass path needed to be replaced by a more resilient, permeable, cinder path, that would be fine. With some modest creativity it should be possible to make several sub-loops, possibly one around the north side of the park (north of the bike path), and one or two others around the south side of the park. There might be other useful configurations as well.

2 - We have recommended that the Park District install low, **downward facing, bollard lights along the central east-west bike path** to make that path safer for students and other residents crossing between the two schools and between Hunter and Locust. These lights should just light the path and have light-sensors and timers to turn off at a reasonable hour, e.g. 8:00 or 9:00 pm.

3 - In the past there was a string of **outdoor fitness equipment** spaced around the park. It would seem worthwhile to explore the possibility of putting in some new equipment convenient for use by both schools, as well as the general public. One suggestion would be to place several pieces of equipment in the park along the east side of the WJHS parking lot for ease of use by WJHS students. A second set, perhaps scaled down for the younger students at Highcrest could be located at the east end of the park near the north-south bike path.

4 - We are recommending that the WPD complete **landscaping plans** for the park. In that plan we would hope that there was coordination with both the WJHS and Highcrest to see what long-term, nature/environmental educational components might be included in such a plan.

Perhaps there are other improvements that could be added to the Community Playfield that would be useful not only to WJHS and Highcrest students but other Wilmette residents as well.

We would be pleased to engage with any representatives of District 39 who you might suggest to come up with one or more mutual recommendations for the WPD.

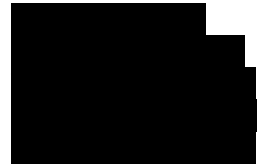
Thanks for taking the time to consider our suggestions.

Best regards,

Walter

Wilmette Park Friends

c/o Walter L. Keats



Emails: info@wilmetteparkfriends.org



From: Lisa Schneider Fabes <fabesl@wilmette39.org>

Subject: Re: School feedback

Date: November 11, 2020 at 7:10:21 PM CST

To: Katie McCalla <kmccalla1106@gmail.com>

Cc: Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Hi Katie & Kevin,

Thanks for your email. I am glad in-person instruction is going well for your children. I know from personal experience - how meaningful it is.

The administration and Board are committed to keeping schools open as long as it is safe and operationally possible to do so. We have no plans - nor do we support - going remote so that families can travel for the holidays - beyond the scheduled days off for Thanksgiving and the December break.

We do not have any confirmed cases of in-school transmission. Studies are showing it's safe to have kids in school. We have the structure and mitigation procedures in place to make our schools safer than almost any other place at this point.

That said, there is a real risk that increasing community spread will mean increasing cases entering our schools from sources outside our doors. We will be adding additional mitigation measures in the near future to mitigate some of that risk. I urge you to urge your friends and neighbors to stay vigilant and follow the recommended safety precautions. It will take collective action to keep the school doors open.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best,

Lisa

On Wed, Nov 11, 2020 at 5:18 PM Katie McCalla <kmccalla1106@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Lisa,

First of all, thank you and the board for all your efforts this year with keeping D39 schools open. This is a year like no other. I know you, the administrators, teachers and staff have done a tremendous amount of work for our community this year and we can't say thank you enough.

Secondly, having two days a week in school has been incredibly important and meaningful to my 3 children. They would take more days in school if we could do it.

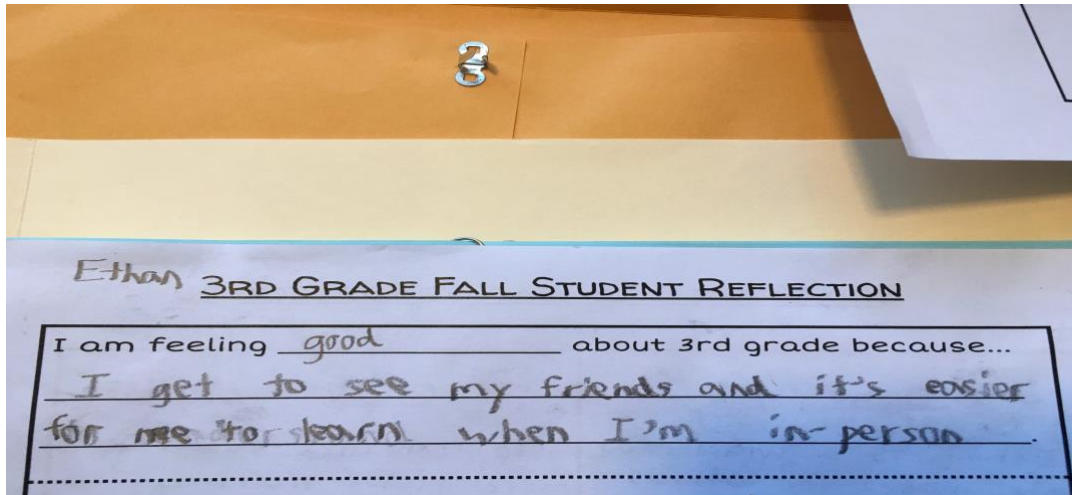
I am concerned that the district is considering closing the schools between Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays so families can travel. While we are all doing the best we can with managing Covid, I think it's important to keep the schools open during this time. We are actively choosing to cancel our holiday plans to stay in town and stay safe so that our kids can continue to go to school and follow Illinois state guidelines. I would hate to have school cancelled so other families can choose to bend the rules and go out of town.

I encourage people to do what is right for them, but I don't believe we as a community should close schools so that people can go on vacation. That is a decision each family should make for themselves. If they choose to go, then they should choose to keep their kids out of school.

Thank you for all the work that you do,

Katie and Kevin McCalla

Katie McCalla



On Nov 10, 2020, at 2:13 PM, Rucha <ruchapateldpt@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi I just wanted to take a minute and applaud you all on the metrics emails and research and data driven guidance. I'll have to say, at least from parents at The elementary level the parents appreciate the emails reminding to practice good mask wearing. It's very important for you all to keep reminding the community why we are all doing this. To keep in person going! I think the take is- we are sacrificing thanksgiving gatherings and travel for keeping schools open. Which everyone is happy to do! I think the pivot to remote will 100% throw that in the wrong direction with kids getting together indoors, parents not being vigilant and the community giving up. I think Wilmette parents have not given up due to schools remaining open. So thank you for the be emails stating how everyone working together as well as the research and data driven guidance. Parents are really taking that to heart and rethinking gatherings and socializing in order to keep kids in school. Just wanted to give you the positive feedback and to keep the momentum going to keep everyone socially aware and masked up for one common goal. Schools to remain in person! Everyone is so happy and thankful that you all are doing everything with the new research and data and helping us to keep up helping you to have us open in person!!! Applaud applaud!!! Keep up the positive work! Positive feedback is all I've received from so many parents !!!!

- Dr. Rucha Patel, DPT

From: Stacey Woehrle <stacey.woehrle@gmail.com>

Subject: Keep schools open

Date: November 9, 2020 at 6:24:59 PM CST

To: cremasck@wilmette39.org, stonee@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, pazicaf@wilmette39.org, Lisa Schneider Fabes
<fabesl@wilmette39.org>, sternwee@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org

Dear Dr. Cremascoli and D39 Board of Education,

I'm writing to you regarding what has been going on with the metrics committee over the last few weeks, and the recent push from WEA members and others to close D39 schools between Thanksgiving and the end of the calendar year.

I do not support this initiative in any way. Our kids belong in school. To reverse course at this point and go remote, there would have to be substantial data to support that move. As far as I can tell, it simply doesn't exist. My son is a 3rd grader at Central School. There have been a couple of infections at his school since we started in-person learning, and they have been dealt with effectively. From what I understand there have been individual cases reported in other schools as well. And again, they have been dealt with effectively. The fact remains, there have been NO outbreaks in our schools, and our schools remain a very safe place for our students and teachers.

All of the studies and considerations I have seen to date regarding whether to keep kids in school or not have to do with the potential downside of keeping them in school. What I haven't seen is the other side of the equation. Has anyone done any work to analyze or provide insights as to the potential damage done to children when they are not in school for prolonged periods of time? It's a big concern to most parents. Based on the communication from D39 the majority of parents prefer to have their children in school knowing that things are not perfect but still moving forward. For those families and teachers that want a remote option, it is available to them.

Thank you for your continued hard work and efforts.
Stacey Woehrle

From: Chris Woehrle <chris.woehrle@gmail.com>

Subject: Keep D39 schools open between Thanksgiving and Christmas

Date: November 9, 2020 at 12:17:35 PM CST

To: cremasck@wilmette39.org, stonee@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, pazicaf@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org

Dear Dr. Cremascoli and D39 Board of Education,

I'm writing to you regarding what has been going on with the metrics committee over the last few weeks, and the recent push from WEA members and others to close D39 schools between Thanksgiving and Christmas breaks.

I do not support this initiative in any way. Our kids belong in school. To reverse course at this point and go remote, there would have to be substantial data to support that move. As far as I can tell, it simply doesn't exist. My son is a 3rd grader at Central School. There have been a couple of infections at his school since we started in-person learning, and they have been dealt with effectively. From what I understand there have been individual cases reported in other schools as well. And again, they have been dealt with effectively. The fact remains, there have been NO outbreaks in our schools, and our schools remain a very safe place for our students and teachers.

Please do not give credence to those trying to shut down the schools with no concrete data to back up their claims. The WEA rep on the metrics committee that used a shark analogy is simply trying to play to people's emotions. Divers swimming with more sharks in the sea conjures up images of violent attacks, blood in the water, perhaps people dying. That is ridiculous. Our schools are clearly not spreading this virus. Furthermore, if you use the logic that kids shouldn't come back to school after Thanksgiving due to potential increased exposure to the virus during the break, you can use the same logic for the first two weeks in January when kids will be coming back from Christmas break. Should we shut down the schools until mid-January? That would be 8 weeks our students would be away from their teachers and classmates. It doesn't take a genius to see this is where the WEA is headed with their arguments. Keeping our kids out of school for 8 weeks (or 6 weeks) would be a complete disaster. And pivoting in this direction without significant, new evidence to support making such a move would simply be irresponsible.

In closing, I want to state again that there have been no school outbreaks to date in Wilmette. In addition, schools being open has not been identified as a factor that increases positivity rates, and schools during this pandemic have proven to be a very safe place for kids and teachers. For the people pushing to close D39 schools between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the onus is clearly on them to provide evidence that supports their claims. In the absence of that, our kids should remain in school.

Regards,

Chris Woehrle
D39 Parent

From: Krista Robinson <krista.robinson2@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: In-person learning feedback

Date: November 9, 2020 at 9:12:26 AM CST

To: stonee@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, Rebecca Littmann <littmanr@wilmette39.org>, cremasck@wilmette39.org

Cc: Chris Robinson <chrisrobinson2@gmail.com>

++Including Kari Cremascoli's correct email address

On Mon, Nov 9, 2020 at 8:58 AM Krista Robinson <krista.robinson2@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello -

I'd first off like to thank you all for the huge amount of effort and planning that has gone into this school year. I'm a parent of an in-person kindergartener at Central (including KEEP39) and cannot imagine how challenging this has been.

I wanted to send a few points of feedback in our time so far during the school year:

- The welcome weeks ease-in to in-person learning went well. Charlie's teacher did a wonderful job and the kids built community even with the in-and-out of school situation.
- I very much appreciated the flexibility in moving up the in-person full model a week for kindergarteners. The willingness to pivot was a great sign of future decision making.
- The full in-person experience at Central so far has been fantastic. Charlie is thriving, making friends, learning, engaged, sleeping well, etc. He chooses doing extra school work on the weekend instead of playing sometimes. While I think he would be positive even in a remote environment, thriving would be harder for him given his temperament.
- Central is doing a great job following the protocols as intended.
- While the community spread is scary right now, I'm happy to see that the in-school metrics haven't really changed over the weeks. This shows the protocols are working.
- I recognize that at some point, if community spread is bad enough, you run out of teachers/staff to run the school appropriately due to sickness or quarantine. In that case, moving remote may have to happen. However, I appreciate that we have been able to stay in so far and that we haven't completely reacted to the community spread given the data we have on the schools themselves.
- I have heard that getting testing within the district is a goal. I would personally feel more confident in the ability to continue in-person (given the community spread) if there was more testing available for both random testing and symptom/close-contact testing. I hope this is able to happen.

While I know the decisions going forward will continue to have to weigh the numbers, testing, staffing, as well as the teachers union needs, I appreciate what we've had so far and applaud your efforts.

Thank you,
Krista Robinson

From: Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>
Subject: Re: No Task Force Update?
Date: November 8, 2020 at 6:27:11 PM CST
To: Julie Hanahan <jrhanahan@gmail.com>

Dear Ms. Hanahan,

The Task Force updates are typically sent on Monday afternoons prior to 5:15 pm. This week, in particular, this timing is critical as the Board of Education will receive an update at its Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday morning. Their Committee Meeting agenda is posted [here](#). Parents and community members can expect an update on Monday afternoon.

Your partner in education,

Kari Cremascoli, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Wilmette Public Schools District 39
www.wilmette39.org ~ 847.512.6030

On Nov 8, 2020, at 6:18 PM, Julie Hanahan <jrhanahan@gmail.com> wrote:

Good evening, Dr. Cremascoli and members of the D39 board —

I was just reading about the soaring COVID numbers in the state and in our area, so I went looking for the update from Friday's task force meeting, thinking I missed an email. Not only has there been no email, but there has been no update on the website either since Oct. 30.

I don't understand the lack of communication, especially given the way the numbers and hospitalization rates are looking for our area and the fact that many suburban school districts have reverted to remote-only. The communications, as they are, are not very informative about what the task force is discussing and what exactly would trigger a "pivot." Last week's email was the most specific on the latter front, and this week's numbers suggest we've reached a trigger point.

Is the task force shying away from triggering a change? If so, why? If not, how much notice will we get? Is the idea to hang on until Thanksgiving regardless of numbers and then go remote through Christmas, as suggested in the parent survey? Why the silence?

I will renew my strong recommendation from August that you prioritize hiring a dedicated communications professional to spearhead your communication to all constituencies. It is a specific skill set, and the district is desperately in need of professional assistance.

But I also respectfully request an update from the task force, as promised.

Many thanks,

Julie Hanahan
773-459-5075
jrhanahan@gmail.com

From: Rucha <ruchapateldpt@gmail.com>

Subject: Schools SHOULD remain open!!!

Date: November 7, 2020 at 12:26:22 AM CST

To: cesaretj@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, publiccomment@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>, stonee@wilmette39.org

Hello all!

I'm writing once again about in person instruction. It is going so well! D39 is doing all the right things. Mitigation efforts are in place and Kids and parents are SO very happy with everything. Schools should remain open and with current metrics should remain open through and after the holidays. Closing schools and pivoting to remote is not an option. Schools are the SAFEST place per researchers, doctors and educators. Closing schools WILL NOT change positivity numbers in communities. This is a well documented fact by scientists and researchers.

My kids are thriving and socially, mentally and emotionally very stable with their teachers, peers and most importantly them selves. The main goal is to keep schools open and I fully support this decision as a healthcare worker. Schools are NOT the cause for spread.

Keeping schools open between thanksgiving and Christmas is very important to me and many many many parents I talk to. They would have schools remain open for the same reasons as schools being safe, no spread at schools and most importantly the children!

Please keep science and data in mind before pivoting to remote (will not do anything to stop community spread) and will be a big disadvantage to our students.

I am with you as are about 300 in person parents. We had a petition to keep schools open that went around and we stand behind that decision, the science and data.

Please and thank you! You are all doing a wonderful job not being biased and getting information from the top experts in their fields vs the hearsay most people would like to shut schools. Which is infuriating from the perspective of parents that follow science and data!!!

Cheers to ALL of you!!!! Please keep in person schools open!!!!

- Rucha Patel, DPT

From: Rachel Heiligman <rheiligman@gmail.com>

Subject: Today

Date: November 6, 2020 at 1:46:48 PM CST

To: Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Cc: stonee@wilmette39.org, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, PublicComment@wilmette39.org

Hello Dr. Cremascoli and school board

I listened in on the metrics meeting this morning. It is clear that our situation is becoming increasingly complicated as the regional and national rates rise.

I am concerned about the number of subjective viewpoints and anecdotal experiences that were shared today rather than focusing more on the objective issues, namely, the metrics. The teachers/WEA participants seem to ignore what has stayed consistent and true throughout—that we have had no in-school outbreaks. Additionally, they seem to not hear when the epidemiologist states that schools are the safest place for teachers and students. One can legitimately argue that shifting to remote learning automatically allows for looser “control” of the pandemic in our school community, similarly to how going on vacation does.

The contributions from our board members, physicians, and school principals remain positive, objective and fair. Positives and negatives are weighed and discussed when considering how to proceed. Thank you for this.

Another piece of feedback—the survey sent out to parents serves the purpose to allow us to voice our opinions. Metrics committee members should not speak on parents behalf (as was done today by I believe Heather Cartwright). She stated that many parents of in-person learners are now uncomfortable with the situation. If this is true, allow parents to communicate this themselves.

Regarding discussions around shutting down between thanksgiving and winter break—why all the pressure to make the decision now? Shouldn't these decisions be made with up to date metrics to support them? If families and staff choose to travel, isn't it reasonable to have this disclosed previously so that appropriate measures (quarantine) can be put in place afterwards to maintain status quo in the school environment? The entire district should not shut down for this. Since when did school become optional? Why are we not discussing how this could affect our students? Has anyone considered adding the student social/emotional well being as a metric?

I understand the possibility that we may shift back and forth between in person and remote/hybrid learning in the coming months. However, pivoting to district-wide remote learning in place of in-person learning when metrics do not support this shift is not okay. Pivoting to remote when there have been no outbreaks in the schools simply does not make sense. To implement this shift solely to allow for staff and family travel undermines the integrity of the very effective system that we have in place. It gives a perception that we can use the remote option for anything and everything. It overlooks the importance and quality of our children's educational experience.

Lastly, I'd like to address the shark analogy used at the end of the meeting by the WEA

representative. This is the perfect example of a fear mongering strategy. The responses that it got in the meeting from the "remote camp" members exemplifies just how powerful and damaging this strategy can be. In my opinion, comments like these are not welcome or appropriate in a metrics committee meeting.

Thank you for your continued commitment and hard work. My intentions here are not to be an adversary. I support our schools, staff and administration. I am deeply grateful that my kids are in school and that D39 continues to advocate for this. What causes me continued concern is the tone of the WEA reps in these meetings. I believe that my questions/concerns are fair and valid.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my thoughts.

Best,
Rachel

From: Rucha <ruchapateldpt@gmail.com>

Subject: Pixel by LabCorp

Date: November 6, 2020 at 9:48:09 AM CST

To: cesaretj@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, publiccomment@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>, stonee@wilmette39.org, Rebecca Littmann <littmanr@wilmette39.org>

This hasn't been advertised because of the current political climate. But you can order at home Covid testing kits free and it's covered by insurance. If we could get the community as a whole to test weekly at home, that would help us out even more in terms of keeping open in person school. The kits are for 18 and older but our household is going to use this and test weekly. A lot of our affluent community has insurance and all of the insurances are listed in there as well. It is at zero cost to the person ordering.

I am a healthcare worker and as a community member I hope we can keep our schools open based on science and data that covid spread is not occurring at schools and masks, hand washing and social distancing is key!

<https://www.pixel.labcorp.com/>

- Rucha Patel, DPT

From: Rucha <ruchapateldpt@gmail.com>

Subject: NPR: Mass. Governor Announces New Coronavirus Restrictions As State Infections Surge

Date: November 2, 2020 at 6:40:50 PM CST

To: cesaretj@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, publiccomment@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>, stonee@wilmette39.org, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Schools remain open as new restrictions go into place with mask mandates and curfews. As should be as schools are not sources of outbreaks like the wonderful job of in person in d39. The teachers and staff are doing a mind blowing job and should be applauded!!! Thank you for a safe and well run in person classes!!! Thank you thank you. My kids are so happy and learning so much from the teachers.

Mass. Governor Announces New Coronavirus Restrictions As State Infections Surge

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker implements new mask mandates and stay-at-home orders as confirmed coronavirus cases surge in the state.

Read in NPR: <https://apple.news/A2hVUCStWRauavgVhIM1DMQ>

Shared from [Apple News](#)

- Rucha Patel, DPT

From: Rucha <ruchapateldpt@gmail.com>

Subject: Numbers look good

Date: October 28, 2020 at 3:45:06 PM CDT

To: Kari Cremascoli

<cremasck@wilmette39.org>, cesaretj@wilmette39.org, fabesl@wilmette39.org, panzicaf@wilmette39.org, poehlinga@wilmette39.org, publiccomment@wilmette39.org, steenm@wilmette39.org, sternwee@wilmette39.org,
Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>, stonee@wilmette39.org

The numbers for positivity look great this week locally despite Cook county. The continued downward trend is so encouraging! Schools staying open are at the discretion of the local towns per the governor. Children are so happy in school and the schools are doing a fantastic job of in person risk mitigation. The NYT has had many articles last week stating schools are safe and the bars and restaurants are the no go for Covid. Thanks to everyone for doing such an amazing job with this entire process and thank you for having in person school from everyone of us! We are all so happy with all the processes.

Thank you all

- Rucha Patel, DPT

From: Karasick, Steve <SKarasick@williamblair.com>

Date: Mon, Oct 26, 2020 at 5:09 PM

Subject: A letter to the District 39 Board of Education

To: stonee@wilmette39.org <stonee@wilmette39.org>, cesaretj@wilmette39.org <cesaretj@wilmette39.org>, steenm@wilmette39.org <steenm@wilmette39.org>, panzicaf@wilmette39.org <panzicaf@wilmette39.org>, fabesl@wilmette39.org <fabesl@wilmette39.org>, sternwee@wilmette39.org <sternwee@wilmette39.org>, poehlinga@wilmette39.org <poehlinga@wilmette39.org>, Kari Cremascoli <cremasck@wilmette39.org>

Cc: abkarasick@gmail.com <abkarasick@gmail.com>, steve.karasick@gmail.com <steve.karasick@gmail.com>

To the District 39 Board:

Our names are Abby and Steve Karasick. We live in Wilmette with our son, a 7th grader at WJHS and our daughter, a sophomore at New Trier. We are writing to the Board to express our strong interest in having District 39 implement a Covid surveillance testing program.

As the Board likely is aware, New Trier has announced that beginning in mid-November, students and staff will take part in a Covid testing program. Specifically, New Trier will test students and staff once a week using a saliva based test. Students and staff will produce a small saliva sample at home and then drop off the sample at New Trier. A sample that screens positive for Covid will be “presumptive positive” and the associated person will be referred for a standard PCR test administered by a healthcare professional. Presumptive positive people will not attend any in person activity at New Trier until it is determined that the person is no longer a risk.

We understand that the mitigation strategies currently in place in District 39 are a great start. We recognize that the early identification and isolation of cases is of course a required process. However, the current process is not designed to identify asymptomatic cases. Screening programs, such as the program outlined by New Trier, will additionally identify asymptomatic cases. The combination of the existing strategies plus a testing program would enhance the safety in our schools. This is not our opinion, it is supported by the following facts:

1. The New England Journal of Medicine article “The Missing Piece — SARS-CoV-2 Testing and School Reopening” [October 21,2020 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp2028209<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2028209>]
2. IDPH Director Ngozi Ezike M.D., while speaking at a Northwestern Feinberg School of Medicine Department of Medicine Grand Rounds on October 13th, voiced support for the use of rapid tests for screening in public schools
3. Existing and announced screening programs at New Trier, the University of Illinois and Northwestern University
4. Successful implementation in other Illinois school districts such as District 102

We understand that testing may have been discussed within the District 39 Metrics Re-Opening Advisory Team. We believe that consideration of a testing program is a topic for the District 39 Board. To be clear, all the Board members should understand how a testing program works and the decision to either move forward or not more forward must be decided at the Board level.

At a minimum, we strongly suggest that the Board engage Dr. Edward Campbell PhD of Loyola University to do a short presentation to the Board on testing programs. Dr. Campbell is an Associate Professor in the department of Microbiology and Immunology at Loyola University. He is also a parent and school board member in La Grange-Brookfield Elementary School District 102. He helped design and implement the screening program in District 102 and consulted to New Trier in the design of their screening program.

Our understanding is that this note will be entered into the minutes of the Board. If that is not automatically the case, then we would like ask that our note is properly memorialized.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We are of course available to answer any of the Board's questions. We look forward to future communications on this topic from the Board.

Sincerely,

Abby and Steve Karasick