

From: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 8/18/2020 7:53:06 PM
To: Higdon, Corrie F <[REDACTED]>; Ellen Burdine <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Returning to School

Hi, Corrie.

I'm copying Ellen in with your permission, as you have both expressed similar concerns for the planned return to school.

Our local health officials, including EMA, Williamson Medical Center, and the County Health Department, have informed WCS that they do think it's appropriate for WCS to return to school. I will admit that I was surprised by this news, and connected with Mr. Golden and Mr. Fletcher on this issue. My understanding from those conversations is that the district will continue to monitor the local numbers, and will plan to reassess if necessary.

Thanks for writing.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett
District 12, Williamson County School Board
[REDACTED]

From: Higdon, Corrie F <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 7:27 PM
To: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Returning to School

WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - Do not click on links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Nancy, please pass this along to the rest of the board as well as Dr. Golden as you see fit. I have just sent this to you since you represent my district.

I first want to thank you for all the hard work you have put into this school year. I know that you had no idea you would be facing such things as a global pandemic when you decided to run for school board. I wanted to let you know that our experiences so far with remote learning has been great! Yes, there have been a few glitches here and there with being kicked off a zoom, trouble logging in, etc. However, those have been very rare, and nothing more than one would expect with the number of students having to log on daily. As parents that both work full time jobs outside of the home, my husband and I have had no issues with balancing our jobs and our daughter's school. I do understand that I have a high school daughter that is very self-sufficient and that is not the case with everyone. Just know that the loudest voices do not always represent the majority.

I do however have many concerns with sending all students back to in classroom learning currently. As a health care provider, I have seen this virus first hand both in my place of work and my personal life. It is a real thing and children are dying! As I recently walked through the COVID unit at the hospital, my heart sank knowing those sweet children might not survive. I was also saddened at the thoughts of what long term effects is the virus going to leave on their little bodies. There are still so many unknowns at this time.

Not only is going back to school in person putting thousands of children at a higher risk, I fear for the staff that work in our district. They too are going to be put at a higher exposure risk. We know that the numbers are going to rise once everyone is back together. I cannot help but wonder what the impact will be once we see the numbers of staff rise to the point that not only in person school must be cancelled, but there will not be enough healthy staff to have remote learning either. What happens to our children then?

I just fear that we do not have enough data to support sending our children and staff back to in person learning at this time. There are just too many unknowns and the reality is there are still just too many people sick with the virus right now. As a community, we cannot live our life in fear and must return to normal at some point. Also, I understand that no matter what your final decision is, someone is going to suffer and there is no way to make everyone happy. However, I pled with you to please base your decision on facts and science right now. To lean on the multitude of healthcare professionals for guidance. I will continue to pray for all of you and the decisions that you are faced with. Please know that you are appreciated and supported.

Corrie
mother of [REDACTED]

Corrie Higdon, RN, BSN, CPN
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Vanderbilt Children's Hospital

From: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 8/18/2020 7:26:11 PM
To: Suzann Overton <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Concerns about WCS Reopening Plans

Suzann, thanks so much for your email. I'm glad to hear that remote learning is going well for your family.

Our local health officials, including EMA, County Health Dept., and Williamson Medical Center, think that WCS is ready to reopen. However, WCS will continue to monitor the data available to us and make changes in the plan if we think they are warranted.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett
District 12, Williamson County School Board
[REDACTED]

From: Suzann Overton <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2020 1:28 PM
To: Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Concerns about WCS Reopening Plans

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Thank you for the time, energy, and compassion you have for WCS schools, teachers, and families. I genuinely appreciate the work you've put into forming and implementing a plan during a truly difficult time. I was really proud to see our county develop a guide that determined whether students would be learning remotely or in-person based on science, data, and research. Because of that plan's requirement for masks in schools and reliance on the active cases numbers, our family opted to participate in this option versus a semester of fully online school.

Our son is a [REDACTED] at Brentwood High, and we wanted him to have daily interactions with the fabulous teachers at BHS. I believe that strong teacher relationships improve the quality of learning and will be needed as he seeks recommendation letters for his college applications next year. We also knew that there would be no foreign language offering for him if he went fully online. So, in spite of our concerns about the coronavirus, we decided that we would trust the school board and superintendent to follow the outlined plan for remote vs in-person school and to enforce safety procedures at schools when it was appropriate for them to open.

We have had a very good start to the school year with remote learning. There have been a few small technical glitches, but, overall, he is engaged and active throughout the day in his classes. We've been really pleased with it. However, I am not happy with the way in which the district seems to be changing course on its plans for reopening. On the only day in recent months when the positive rate was below 0.5 (and, even then, just barely), WCS announced it's plans to begin a staged reopening. I do hope that you will continue to evaluate the community spread before you stick with this path. The numbers are already back in the yellow zone which your plan specifically says signals the need for remote learning. I do not believe that it is safe or fair to families to disregard the reopening plan just because families are antsy to return to "normal". We aren't going to be living in a normal world for a while still.

Just this week the New York Times published an article about whether communities are safe to reopen schools in person. Williamson County is not labeled as such based on the data.
(https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/14/opinion/politics/covid-school-reopening-guidelines.html?campaign_id=174&emc=edit_csb_20200817&instance_id=21342&nl=coronavirus-schools-

I know you have many competing interests to balance as you go forward. I hope that safety and science will continue to be top priorities. Learning is taking place, and it is high quality. Please don't put our community at risk by re-opening schools too soon. The mask ordinance is obviously helping. Please give it time to bring the numbers down consistently into the safe zone before we change plans. As adults, we need to set consistent examples of good behavior for our children. School board members need to wear their masks properly when they are in group settings. If we are patient and prudent, I do believe our students will be able to safely return to schools and teachers in person. We owe our teachers, staff, and community members this caution to protect everyone's health.

I appreciate your time.

Thank you,
Suzann Overton

[REDACTED]