

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORM RESPONSES

Thursday, August 13, 2020

Timestamp	First Name	Last Name	Magisterial District	Your written comments for the August 13 work session
Jul. 23, 20 -- 9:45: AM	Steven	Newman	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	Please support doctor cashwells recommendation for fully virtual learning to begin the school year. it is the morally, ethically, and scientifically right thing to do. It is virtually impossible to make schools safe at this point, and we are learning more and more about how this virus is transmitted. The lives and health of people always must come first.
Jul. 23, 20 -- 10:29: AM	Natalie	Sherlock	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	<p>On the school system's website, there is a page about HCPS' Strategic Plan and our "Four Cornerstones." The Four Cornerstones are Safety & Wellness, Academic Growth, Equity & Opportunity, and Relationships. I don't think any of those things are feasible if we are going to do online learning. Safety & Wellness would be difficult to accomplish for two reasons: 1) Online platforms can be easily hacked, and our cameras were turned off for a reason and 2) spending 6 to 7 hours on a computer Monday-Friday is not healthy (negative effects include behavior problems, educational problems, obesity, sleeping problems, and violence). I personally get migraine headaches and get grouchy when I have too much screen time. Academic Growth isn't realistic because there are so many things that just can't be taught online. What about students in trade classes? How will they "reach their potential" online? I can also guarantee you students will be less motivated to do any of their schoolwork online. Equity & Opportunity wouldn't be easy because there are lots of students who don't learn well online. If you force them to learn online, they wouldn't be given a fair opportunity to learn and achieve their best. You just won't be able to provide "engaging, meaningful and relevant experiences" to students who have to learn online. The last cornerstone is Relationships. If you think you can build "authentic, trusting connections that encourage collaboration and engagement among students, families, staff and communities," you are sadly mistaken. How can students and/or families build that kind of relationship with staff and teachers if they've never met in person? How can staff and teachers build a relationship with students and families they've never met face-to-face? How can community members volunteer in schools if we aren't even in the building? Please consider a hybrid or all-in option, even if it means students must wear face coverings all day, be driven to and from school, wash their hands, and wipe down desks. Without such options, you simply cannot accomplish your Cornerstones, much less the Eight Major Goals of the Plan. Without cornerstones, your building will fall.</p>

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Jul. 23, 20 -- 10:36: AM	Hunter	Smith	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I am writing to voice my extreme displeasure with the recommendation to start the 2020 school year fully virtual.</p> <p>1. Both the Student and Teacher surveys showed a majority of respondents want to go back to school! Why did you even ask for our opinion if you didn't care what the answer was? Your constituents have voiced their opinion and that is to return to school in person!</p> <p>2. How are dual working parents supposed to make this work? Please provide a simple, coherent explanation for how two parents are supposed to do their jobs while simultaneously helping their kid "learn" virtually? 3. During this time of inequality, rich people will be able to get tutors and make other special accommodations. In no world is virtual "learning" as good as in person learning. You are exacerbating educational inequality with this decision! 4. Every family should have the right to choose the best option for themselves based on their individual risk tolerance! If you are also offering a parallel virtual experience, then there is both a good option for those who do not want to return to school and for those who do. 5. My kids have now gone 5 months without meaningful social interaction. Do you think this is healthy for developing children? A policy to go virtual is creating tremendous hardships for both parents and students - the people you are supposed to be representing!</p> <p>Please vote against the recommendation to start the school year virtually.</p>
Jul. 23, 20 -- 10:48: AM	Audrey	Farmer	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>Please provide an in person option for school. Virtual does not work for many students.</p>
Jul. 23, 20 -- 11:21: AM	Amy	Bergmann	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>So now, the choices have been taken away and we're not forced with a one size fits all approach. I ask you, how do you expect parents in a variety of scenarios to execute this plan? How?</p> <p>Our schools are not experts in providing the best "user experience" b/c our school system is not a technology driven company that specializes in it. Additionally, I do not see how any underfunded school / education system can financially provide this or the required training to the teachers who are responsible for delivering this experience. I don't see how this is setting anyone up for success. This maybe works for 1 subset of the population....stay at home parents; god bless those that have multiple kids trying to do this. In Approving Virtual Only Basically Means You're accepting the following risks to happen or continue to happen:</p> <p>Children being forced to stay at home while their parents go to work so they can do said "virtual learning". Children that are far too young to be at home by themselves. I witnesses this first hand.....I heard children talking of this while listening in on my own kids zoom sessions in the spring....many kids mentioned they were home alone in her class. My daughter was 8 at the time!!!!!!</p> <p>This opens the door to increased human trafficking and pedophilia. Have you checked these numbers? They are the highest the US has seen in 10 years! Extend the negative impact on children that was already experience with the closures in the spring of 2020. Including physical and sexual abuse, substance abuse, depression and suicidal ideation. I'm sorry...but the sample schedule you put out for k-5 is a joke. You mean to tell me with all of the qualifications, which this board has/our local education representatives, in understanding early childhood education and development, that 1 schedule to cover kindergartners - 5th grade is going to cut it? One 10 minute movement break? 30 minutes for lunch? I come back to my original question...how do you expect us to do this? How?</p>

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Thursday, August 13, 2020

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Jul. 23, 20 -- 11:28: AM	Kristin	Mehigan	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	Should the HCPS school board vote to start the 2020-2021 academic school year virtually, please consider mandating that teachers should manage online classes from their respective classrooms. This will be a relatively safe option for teachers, allow them full access to classroom resources (promethean boards, books, posters, maps, charts, tech center, etc), provide much needed structure to the students, and give the HCPS stakeholders a closer approximation of a normalized school situation. Thank you for your service and consideration!
Jul. 23, 20 -- 11:31: AM	Kindra	Kirkeby	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	We need kids in person, full time school for our county and families. Without providing appropriate resources and safe accommodations for our children, those who need it the most will fall behind the fastest- causing almost unrecoverable setbacks. We can not compare our risks to those of Northern. Virginia, and should manage the actual Henrico data removing nursing homes and Covid rates outside of the demographics of our county! Henrico is taking the easy way out by appeasing fears and not looking at the reality of outbreaks and ways to manage safely.
Jul. 23, 20 -- 11:37: AM	Angela	Clinton	Crestview Elementary & Tuckahoe Middle	First, I want to say that I commend the superintendent for keeping teachers, students, and workers safe by recommending online-only instruction for the first nine weeks. My request has to do with the nature of this all-virtual option: I'd like to request that you permit a half-time option for parents. Under the current proposal, middle school students would be expected to be on a computer for over seven hours, plus additional hours of screen time to complete homework, do readings, submit assignments, etc. This is unhealthy and unsustainable for most students (often many adults!). A half-time option would provide the much-needed mental health benefits of group participation and social interaction that kids desperately need. It would give them the same amount of structure to their day and week, and they would get to know the teachers and peers with whom they'd be working throughout the year. But, it would recognize the limitations of the virtual format. It would provide flexibility to families at a time when that is desperately needed by many, and could lead to better learning outcomes, as kids are more focused and less burned out. Ideally, a half-time option might look like a middle-schooler logging on for their "homeroom," science, social studies, and an elective, but doing ELA and math in a non-virtual format (i.e., parent-directed, not school-directed). I hope the school board will consider this half-time option as things move forward.
Jul. 23, 20 -- 3:10: PM	Zulfia	Nurmukhametova	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn, Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	If private schools are open and day care centers, where is the logic?
Jul. 23, 20 -- 3:24: PM	Karen	Teegarden	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	I am in support of 100% virtual attendance for the first nine weeks.
Jul. 23, 20 -- 3:40: PM	Nell	Davis	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	I think it's important to note that the American Academy of Pediatrics have laid out guidelines for how to bring every age group back and it may need to be a little different depending on age. I would hope my rising Kindergartner gets this consideration. They also say that all policy considerations should start with them being fully present not fully virtual. Thank you for your time.

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Thursday, August 13, 2020

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Jul. 23, 20 -- 4:47: PM	Ffrank	Mazzeo	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I am writing as a parent, physician and community member. I urge you to follow Dr Cashwell's recommendation to limit school to virtual attendance for at least the 1st several weeks of school.</p> <p>Although, there are some studies that indicate children are not vectors in the transmission of Covid 19, these studies are: 1) small; 2) the data collection was done when schools WERE NOT IN SEESION; and 3) were done in countries where the test positivity rate is much lower than it currently is in the US and perhaps even lower than the current rate in Virginia. Recently a large study, out of South Korea, which has done an excellent job of containing the spread of the virus, shows that kids, especially in the 10-19 year old age group ARE SIGNIFICANT VECTORS OF TRANSMISSION.</p> <p>We should use the private schools as a bell weather to see if it is safe for the public schools to resume in school instruction. Certainly, if the private schools see significant transmission in their schools, which tend to be much smaller and less crowded, that would not bode well for having in school instruction for the Henrico Schools, some of which have around 2000 students.</p> <p>Thank you for your service to the school board and community. Stay safe.</p>
Aug. 5, 20 -- 1:40: PM	David	McCabe	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>When are we going to have answers on how exactly the next year is going to play out? I have a child with an IEP and have yet to hear how this school district is going to accommodate their needs in order to be successful. Having only a two week lead time is leaving us with very few options.</p>
Aug. 5, 20 -- 10:08: PM	Carey	Ricke	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>Please consider starting school at least part time in person. Our kids really need this. My daughter who makes really good grades stated that she learned nothing the last night weeks being out of the classroom. Teachers are important. I can't even imagine the nightmare of parents with elementary school kids that have to work outside of the home. Will daycare make sure the kids are logging on and "attending" school. What's the difference of them being with other kids at school or at daycare? They will still be with other kids. I think kids will fall behind if they can't start in the classroom instead of virtually. Parents are not teachers. If stores and malls can be open, schools should too. Kids are going to all these places. They can go to school. School is essential and not virtual. Please think of our kids 1st. Studies show kids are not vulnerable. Education must be priority for our kids. It can be done safely with masks, temperature checks, proper hand washing.</p>
Aug. 11, 20 -- 7:46: AM	Casey	Dildine	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>Why is it okay for the school to allow the 'Y' to come into the schools and use school property for kids when our own kids cannot go into the room our taxes have paid for? Not all parents have the money to send them to the 'Y' school. Why should I have to pay twice in order for my kids to get back in the classroom? This is worse when our elected representatives are advertising and pushing this thought. We put you in the position as voters for you to look out for the best interest and to keep our kids in the classroom's.</p>

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Thursday, August 13, 2020

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Aug. 11, 20 -- 9:51: PM	Amber	Lancaster	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>Since the School Board's decision on July 23rd there has been no communication regarding how HCPS will be moving forward to find a way to have students return to in-person learning. The decision was for the first nine weeks to be virtual indicating there would still be a work group of some kind looking into how to return to in-person instruction come November. The discussions and progress over the last four months were inadequately led and produced no viable strategy to return to the classroom. If the community is to truly believe there is an intent to return to in-person instruction, there should be some sort of progress to include a new leadership team co-led by public health experts and with parent, student, and teacher representation. The community needs to see progress toward the end goal of returning our students to the class for in-person instruction.</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 6:17: AM	Emily	Griffey	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>I hope School Board members and leaders can specifically consider the needs of students enrolled in or eligible for pre-k programs (Head Start, VPI and Special Ed). In the 19-20 school year HCPS enrolled more than 1,100 pre-k students. While virtual instruction plans have been announced for these students, child care plans have focused on serving children in Kdg and up. Please take a second look at the needs of your pre-k students to better support their instruction and ensure that families can support their learning. I hope that you can specifically address some of the following questions: 1. Will you help to facilitate child care arrangements for 3 & 4 year-olds? 2. Can you develop plans to provide in-person instruction to preschool students this year? It could be helpful to look at child care guidance and align with group size and safety procedures to ensure safety in school settings.</p> <p>3. Will you allow families to enroll in pre-K throughout the year if you choose to provide in-person instruction? 4. Is pre-k staffing up to a level where in-person instruction could be offered?</p> <p>Please use this opportunity to bridge the gap between "child care" and school. Young children learn in "child care" settings and school. School is "child care" for working families. We have created systems where there is a different expectation for a teacher's background in these settings, but more brain development occurs before the age of 5. As the pandemic has exposed in many ways, it is time to revisit some of our systems. Educators hurt the early education system when they create these divides. Please consider the HCPS pre-k programming and instruction to meet the needs of young children and to support all early educators.</p>

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Aug. 12, 20 -- 12:54: PM	Tom	T	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>Superintendent Cashwell recently requested an additional \$15.1 million in preparation for the upcoming school year, despite the first 9 weeks being virtual. When will the school board do a full audit regarding the money that is spent at HCPS, and account for this misappropriation of funds? At the end of the 2020 school year, schools were closed, which means resources such as cleaning supplies, buses, and food were not used, a substantial savings. Where did this money go?</p> <p>Next question is why are parents not receiving the additional money for the expense of educating children virtually? This is wholly unfair of the county to place the financial burden squarely on the shoulders of parents, while Superintendent Cashwell requests additional money into an already inflated budget.</p> <p>The HCPS School Board is responsible for managing this budget responsibly, and the residents, and tax payers, of Henrico County demand it.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 8:16: PM	Casey	Dildine	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>In the wake of the mother shot live on a classroom Zoom call, I have a question on how you are protecting my children.</p> <p>I have 3 elementary aged daughters. How are you planning on protecting them from pedophiles? What is stopping a family member from looking over the shoulder of their child and taking photos and names. Then finding out where they live, shop, or worship and began stalking them. They know their names, location, and what they look like.</p> <p>Our daughters know not to talk to those they do not know, but things do happen especially when someone knows a child's name.</p> <p>Please call me at the number above to discuss. I would like an answer.</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 9:16: PM	Yael	Levin	Fairfield District - Roscoe D. Cooper, III	<p>I would like to know what metrics HCPS and school board are using to bring back students into the buildings. CCPS and VA Beach Public Schools will be meeting every other week and will follow the following:</p> <p>Green - return to full or hybrid in some schools where there are more cases and < 5% positivity rate;</p> <p>Yellow - hybrid or virtual and phased-in cohorts 5.1%-7.4% Positivity rate;</p> <p>Orange - virtual and consider phased in cohorts 7.5%-9.9%Positivity rate;</p> <p>Red - full virtual 10% or higher positivity rate.</p> <p>I would like to note that we are currently in YELLOW!!!</p> <p>Also, positivity rate isn't the best metric to use. Percentage of patients on vents, hospital capacity, hospitalization rate, and infection-fatality-rates are much more appropriate benchmarks.</p> <p>I would also like to know why you asked for Dr. Avula's recommendation and then ended up completely disregarding his recommendation.</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 9:21: PM	Juan	Velasquez	Brookland District - Kristi B. Kinsella	<p>What are the exact data metrics HCPS is looking at for schools to reopen in person?</p>

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Aug. 12, 20 -- 9:50: PM	Kelly	Taylor	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>Several school districts (Including Virginia Beach and Chesterfield) have provided Metrics/dashboards so parents know how the decision to return to school will be made (percent positive, daily cases, etc). Is HCPS planning on developing and/or sharing their decision points with parents and stakeholders? Transparency will go a long ways towards helping parents determine whether or not to keep their children in district.</p> <p>Also, when will the district be addressing the very real (and off highlighted) concern regarding the need for increased mental health support for our students? I have asked this question (in writing) three times In the last month and my questions have gone unanswered and unacknowledged . As part of the relationships cornerstone for the district, it is imperative the school district not push these concerns to the side. The number of children reporting struggles with depression are increasing, and will continue to do so as school starts and there is no clear path to when kids will be able to return to school, play sports, or participate in clubs and school traditions.</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 9:56: PM	Kelli	Meadows	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>We need more information about the reality of returning to school. I am trying to make a decision of whether to pull my kids from Henrico schools and move to a neighboring locality that is attending school in person. Even Chesterfield is demonstrating "how" they will return to school, not "if". I can make this plan work for a few weeks, but not the entire year. Parents need more Information to go on. If this Extends longer than 9weeks, many of us have problems. We've been in limbo since March.</p> <p>In addition, I have high schoolers at Deep Run and the parents are trying to organize events to give some feeling of normalcy to the senior class. We are getting no where with our administration on organizing these student/parent led events. I understand we are not going back due to teacher transmission, so we should be allowed to have weekly outdoor events at the school that allow our kids some socialization. We are moving into the fall when we will have nicer weather and can provide some of what kids are missing. I'd like to understand the pushback here.</p>
Aug. 12, 20 -- 10:43: PM	Jeanne	Sarmiento	Tuckahoe District - Marcie F. Shea	<p>What are the metrics you are using to return to face to face learning?</p> <p>You need to be transparent with parents on the target you are using to determine the "safe" level for return to classroom.</p> <p>Are you shouting for a 0% infection rate ? What is the infection rate you are comfortable with ?? We need metrics!</p> <p>Henrico County is not a COVID hotspot, the students will suffer tremendously with this horrible virtual situation.</p>

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Aug. 12, 20 -- 11:48: PM	Sandra	Taylor	Three Chopt District - Michelle F. Ogburn	<p>Would you please consider a self-paced, more flexible option to Virtual Learning? In the Spring, we had 3 children trying to get on the WiFi to do school work at the same time as my husband was working from home. Our Wi-Fi could not keep up, and the kids were constantly being kicked off their assignments. Because of the flexibility in the Spring schedule, we could stagger when the kids did their school work throughout the day and evening. It was also self-paced so if one of the kids was really motivated and enjoying the subject, he/she could finish a week's worth of assignments. If he/she was struggling on a subject, we could take more breaks then come back to the subject later or the next morning and start fresh. He/she could also wait until a parent was available to help out. We are very concerned that our middle and high school students will be sitting in front of a screen for 6-7 hours a day. We don't allow them to watch tv for 6 hours a day or be on their phones for 6 hours a day. We are concerned that sitting in front of a laptop all day is extremely unhealthy and not conducive to quality learning. We are expecting to continue with Virtual Learning for the rest of the school year and would welcome something similar to what Chesterfield County is offering. They have teacher videos that can be watched any time that works with the family's schedule. The students need to complete the work and turn it in by a deadline and if the work is turned in, it counts towards their attendance in class. They understand that not everyone's home life accommodates being able to be logged in to their laptops all day. More flexibility is ideal. Thank you for your consideration.</p>