

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County | November 4, 2020

Board meetings are held in the Board Room of the Carol Sheffey Parham Building at 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401

Times for agenda items are intended as guidance only.

The Board may choose to change the order of agenda items to meet the needs of the Board. Unless changed by the Board, items occur in the order listed.

Board Members

Michelle L. Corkadel
President

Melissa Ellis
Vice President

Candace C.W. Antwine

Terry R. Gilleland, Jr.

Eric Grannon

Julie Hummer

Robert C. Leib

Dana Schallheim

Drake Smith

Upcoming Meetings

General Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 18, 2020
at 6:00 pm

Policy Committee

Wednesday, November 18,
2020, 2:30 pm
TBD

Budget Committee

Wednesday, November 18,
2020, 4:45 pm
TBD

4:00 pm 1. Motion to Enter Closed Session

1.01 Agenda

6:00 pm 2. Opening/Recognition

2.01 Invocation
2.02 Pledge of Allegiance
2.03 Approval of the Minutes
2.04 Establish Agenda Order
2.05 Recognitions

6:15 pm 3. Public Comment

The Board will accept written public comment prior to the meeting for those items that appear on the agenda as well as issues that do not appear on the agenda. The process for submitting such comments can be found at www.aacps.org/boardtestimony.

6:20 pm 4. Departmental Reports

4.01 Safety and Security Report
4.02 Bullying Prevention Report
4.03 Diversity and Inclusion Report
4.04 Transportation Report

6:45 pm 5. Consent Items – Award of Contracts

5.01 E-Rate Consulting Services

7:00 pm 6. Action Items

Policy Revisions - First Reading (I)

6.01 Access to Student Information – Military Recruiters, State or Federal Agencies or Institutions of Higher Education – Code JCM
6.02 Administrative Personnel Appointments
6.03 Personnel
6.04 West County ES – Schematic Design
6.05 Brock Bridge ES Addition – Design Development
6.06 Class of 2021 End of Year Activities Committee

7:30 pm 7. Review Items

7.01 Award of Contracts
7.02 2020 – 2021 Reopening Plan Update

8:15 pm 8. Other Action Items

8.01 Hybrid Reopening Implementation Date
8.02 Elementary School Hybrid Learning Schedule
8.03 Student-Focused Needs Assessment
8.04 Request for CAC Review and Analysis of Reopening Plans

10:00 pm 9. Motion to Enter Closed Session (if needed)

Key: (I) Information (A) Action (R) Review

Information on agenda items can be obtained from the Board of Education Office (410-222-5311) or at www.aacps.org

The following testimony was submitted for the November 4, 2020, meeting of the Board of Education. The “...” designation indicates the cutoff of testimony due to it exceeding the word the limit. The full version of such testimony has been provided to the Board.

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 4.04 – Transportation Report

1. Regarding the October 21st meeting’s hybrid transportation/start time discussion, the Board should recall Prismatic’s conclusion “...the decision to alter school start times is an educational, board level decision, not to be driven by the transportation department.”

Prismatic’s report refuted AACPS's cost estimates. While the report didn't specifically address the two late schools, the same faulty assumptions were used. Prismatic concluded that ALL elementary schools could start at the same time using existing resources, a recommendation AACPS willfully and repeatedly ignores. While Prismatic's conclusion may be temporarily obsolete with the significant changes for the pandemic, questions abound:

1. Of the approximately 13,000 students that chose hybrid school, how many are eligible for and opted-in to receive busing?
2. How do those numbers change with the second semester?
3. The Prismatic Report discussed that students are not assigned to routes. Has that recommendation been implemented?
4. Will routes be different for A/B cohorts?
5. Will hybrid routing be based on demand (questions 1 and 2) and maximum bus occupancy of 23 students?
6. The Prismatic Report identified 581 contracted buses and 54 AACPS owned buses. Just as some teachers and families are declining to participate in-person due to the pandemic, so too may bus drivers. How many buses are available from contractors and school system?
7. How many hybrid bus routes are needed vs drivers available?
8. How many hybrid bus tiers are necessary?

AACPS must be able to answer these questions to explain their hybrid transportation plan to the public.

Lisa VanBuskirk, P.E.

Start School Later

Maryland & Anne Arundel County Chapter Leader

The following testimony was submitted for the November 4, 2020, meeting of the Board of Education. The “...” designation indicates the cutoff of testimony due to it exceeding the word the limit. The full version of such testimony has been provided to the Board.

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 7.02 – 2020-2021 Reopening Plan Update

1. Hello,

I am the concerned parent of a first grader at Central Elementary in Edgewater. I continue to have serious concerns about the reopening of schools. Of utmost concern is our AA County case rate. Yesterday, 10/29 it was 13.5, which is well above Dr. K’s recommendation of less than 10 to reopen schools. It has not been below 10 since 10/8, which was over 3 weeks ago. This steady increase shows that we are not in a safe place to open schools.

Health experts have warned that our numbers will continue to rise. We are heading into the holiday season, with Thanksgiving just 10 days after the proposed K-2 opening. As much as I’d like to believe people will stay home and away from risky activities, I just don’t see it happening. This will cause an even greater increase in our case rate. We also do not know what flu season will be like this year, which adds a whole new complication.

Please pause these plans for reopening immediately and reevaluate in January to see if we are within Dr. K’s parameters. With the holidays and flu season coming, it is the only safe thing to do. Our teachers and students are in a good rhythm and putting them back in schools, knowing that they will likely close again, does not make any sense. Please allow our teachers and students to continue working and learning from home and do your part to keep our precious ones safe!

Sincerely,

Amy Speed

Edgewater, MD

2. Hello Board Members,

I strongly oppose going to a hybrid learning model beginning in November.

My concern is public health, as COVID cases in Maryland and Anne Arundel County continue to increase. Even under normal circumstances, schools have a bad reputation for efficiently spreading cold, flu, and stomach viruses. COVID is much more contagious. Re-opening schools now will create the perfect conditions for super-spreader events with our children and teachers at risk.

Beyond the obvious disease danger, it will also be difficult to maintain the quality of learning we have now. While virtual learning is not ideal, masks and social distancing do not lend themselves to efficient learning.

There will be a future time when COVID subsides and we can plan on re-opening, but that time is not now. It does not make sense to force a re-opening, even on a small scale, give that COVID cases are trending higher. Thank you for considering my position.

-Richard L Slonaker

Crofton, MD

3. Dear Board of Education Members,

I can only hope that with the rising Covid-19 case rates that AACPS will delay the hybrid plan from moving forward until the second semester or later depending on the health metrics. I urge you to use this time to do the following.

* Develop a much better thought out reopening plan that keeps everyone in mind (students, families, teachers, and staff).

* Conduct a needs assessment of all students and families and then create a plan using the information gathered that truly meets the needs of those who need it most.

* Support the teachers and staff members who have been amazing and working tirelessly for their students/families, while keeping their health and safety at the forefront.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lauren Werley-Wolf
CWES & CMS Parent

4. Hello,

I'd like to know what is being done for the special needs population, specifically the ones in elementary school that are not ready to return in November. Our teachers have very little answers. We do not know if we are losing the teachers our children have come to know, and the communication from the special education department has been minimal to say the least. How do we continue to support our most vulnerable population if we are taking the teachers away?

Eva Washington

Hanover, MD

5. Dear Board Members,

Considering the rising case numbers in AA County, I am anticipating a delay start to the hybrid plan, yet we know that school reopening will not drive case numbers up. The research is clear.

1) Put pressure on Mr. Pittman and Dr. Kalyanaraman to live up to their September 2nd vow to get students back in school. It is exactly two months later, and we are still at home. We mistakenly delayed

starting in person on their recommendations when case numbers were much lower. Current case numbers are not rising due to our schools reopening; they are rising because county officials will not enforce curfews and limitations at restaurants and bars- drive by Fat Boys every day. Put pressure on our local officials please!

2) Follow the state metric guidelines. As soon as our numbers allow, we must not delay and talk round in circles about reopening. I instead implore you to get all our grade levels back to school for the second semester. It will be because of your inaction that our secondary students never see their school buildings this year.

3) Finally, I ask you stop reinventing the wheel and take this time to look to local private schools and districts as well as states across this nation that have successfully opened because of the development of a fluid four stage plan based on metrics. Spend this time creating a plan that we will STICK to and stop TALKING about.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fine

Mom to two secondary students in the Crofton area cluster

6. Greetings President Corkadel and Esteemed members of the board,

I am a fourth year teacher in Anne Arundel County with four years of educational experience.

I am writing to express my concerns with the plans to reopen our schools. The number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise. We are also approaching cold and flu season. We are seeing some of the highest numbers we've had since the start of this pandemic. Sending our children and teachers back to school now will only increase these numbers because our students and staff will be unnecessarily exposed. I strongly encourage you to reconsider your reopening plan. Please wait until January. The lives of our staff, the students, and their families are not worth this risk. Please continue virtual learning until January to help combat COVID-19 and keep us safe.

Thank you for your service to the board and for hearing my concerns,

Gabrielle Ryan

Pasadena, MD

7. Dear Board Members,

Now that we are clearly out of the "safe to reopen" range, as the numbers have continued to climb and our cases per 100K is now 14.4 (the highest it had been at any point since the pandemic began) and we could not possibly reopen schools safely at this time, I urge you to use this time to reevaluate the current plan and make improvements that allow us to help the students who would most benefit from in-person learning to find a safe way back into schools. The public has clearly pointed out a multitude of issues with the current plan. Out of the 100 who spoke, only 3 were in favor of the current plan. Out of 142 written comments, only 11 were in favor of the current plan. That's a 5.8% approval. Clearly there is

work to be done.

Please take these next couple of months to revise the plan to make it equitable to our students who need it most. Please use the time to take a needs assessment for each child. Please come up with better options for our teachers who are amazing and deserve a respectful approach that excludes statements that make them sound expendable. They are not expendable!

I know you will welcome this time to rethink and replan so that we can continue to be AACPS Awesome!

Thanks,
Diane Milleville
Piney Orchard

8. On November 1 Anne Arundel County reported its highest case rate per 100,000 residents since the beginning of the pandemic! That was 14.4...very close to the red portion of Dr. K's chart. We've not been below 10 since October 8 and there is no end in sight for these rising numbers. Help yourselves get home earlier tonight and vote early to delay this plan until 2nd semester.

As the mother of two AACPS elementary students and as a loyal AACPS Kindergarten teacher (13 years), please stop this reopening plan. I can't begin to explain how much stress is being felt and time is being spent by parents and teachers to try to come to grips with what is expected.

This plan not only is unsafe with Covid numbers increasing, but it is also extremely developmentally inappropriate for children to learn under these circumstances. Staying virtual will help keep everyone safe and allow teachers to continue building relationships with students.

Concerns around ventilation in our buildings is still real. Please take the time to check ALL buildings and not rely on building personnel to validate systems. They are not ventilation experts! There are many buildings without windows!

Thank you,
Lindy Stansbury
Severna Park

9. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board:

I am writing today to express my concerns about the need to reassess the hybrid learning plan in order to allow for more community and educator input, and time for a needs assessment to determine which students truly need in person learning. I am also concerned about our start date for hybrid as the COVID numbers continue to rise daily. I believe there is also a need for clear standards for a safe environment for teaching and learning. There are still so many things that need to be worked out before students can safely return to school buildings.

As a parent and educator in AACPS, I really look forward to the day when myself, my children, and my students can all return to school safely. I believe that easing small groups of students back into school in a hybrid fashion is a good start to returning to school. I do believe, however, the hybrid plan as it is currently proposed by AACPS will be very difficult for early childhood teachers to execute successfully. I

fear that either in person or virtual students will suffer on a daily basis as the result of the teacher's attention being split between two student groups in two different places.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns, and for your commitment and service to AACPS.

Sincerely,
Kaitlin Day
Lothian Resident

10. Good Evening,

I'm aware that you are meeting on Wednesday to discuss on what date the final decision will be made as to whether students will return to buildings. I'm pleading with you to also discuss whether it's wise to require teachers to return to the buildings if students are not present. Governor Hogan has once again declared Maryland to be in a State of Emergency. Covid cases are on the rise. Please allow teachers to continue to teach virtually from their homes whenever students are not present. If you delay the return of students, please delay the return of teachers. If and when students do return, please allow teachers to teach virtually on those days when students are not present. Businesses are allowing their employees to remain virtual whenever it is possible. Our virtual model is working extremely well from our homes. Please allow it to continue.

Thank you,

Teresa Abbott
Gambrills, MD

11. I am a parent of two elementary students and a teacher. I am asking that you reconsider your plan to start reopening because moving forward currently is unsafe.

When the reopening plan was being discussed Dr. Kalyanaraman, Health Officer at the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, spoke about the metrics that should be met before there could be a safe return. Dr. Kalyanaraman stated that a new case rate between 10-15 per 100,000 would be a yellow zone and he would not consider sending children back to school with metrics this high. For the last week our county's new case rate has been rising and stands at 13.12. Based on what experts are saying this number will continue to climb.

Allegany County started reopening school buildings to elementary students on October 12th. At that time the new case rate in that county was 6.09. Since that date Allegany County's new case rate has surged to 28.81, a new high for that county and one of the highest rates the state has seen. A similar pattern can be seen in Garrett County which also reopened on October 12th. On October 12th Garrett County had a new case rate of 2.95. On October 28th Garrett County recorded a new case rate of 16.74, the highest the county had seen during the pandemic.

I am concerned that reopening at this point will only aid in the increasing positivity and new case rates eventually forcing schools to revert to virtual instruction anyway.

Erin Wolfe

Severna Park

12. Dear all,

The past month has been difficult, at all levels. On top of a worsening pandemic and political strife, the Board chose to throw our community into upheaval, without notice, and with a lack of understanding about what was at hand. Virtual learning has been difficult for some. It took a few weeks to get used to the new paradigm. Many children, my own included, have adapted to this new paradigm and are thriving. Dr. Arlotto's recommendation, where most students stayed virtual so the system could focus on those failing, recognized this – because he and his team are the experts. Rather than upending everything, it focused on the most at need, and yet you chose an unformed, messy, unrecommended plan. It is unbelievable that you chose not to listen to your expert in this matter.

As we teach our children – being able to recognize and acknowledge your mistakes is a key part of learning and growing. Be the example our children need – recognize the faults of this plan and the destruction it's causing in our schools, families, teachers, and children, acknowledge it was a mistake, and halt it until February and:

1. The case rate is steadily below 10
2. Needs assessment completed at all grade levels
3. Complete plan provided to all teachers before they have to decide
4. Complete plan provided to all parents before they have to decide
5. Comprehensive stakeholder communication and question/answer plan is available
6. All issues regarding access, equity, ..., as detailed in the filed appeal, are fixed....

Sincerely,

Jessica Pachler

Mom of four AACPS students, two at Annapolis Middle and two at Eastport Elementary

13. Hello and Good evening,

My name is Becca Robison, my children attend Broadneck ES (2nd and 4th), and eldest at Magothy River MS (6).

I choose the hybrid option for my ES

students as I firmly believe that it is time to get those that are ready back- and begin the process.

If the children continue to stay out – this could easily run into another end of school year with the kids NOT in school.

Here in Maryland we are very much behind the other states up and down the east coast as many are back in school. My sister in Fredericksburg, VA just sent their Freshman and Sr. back- as Elementary had already tested it out.

What is happening here in AACO and in Maryland is becoming a threat to our children's wellbeing (all economic status') mental health and development.

Please move forward with Nov. 16 and further the 6-12th post Christmas Break. I am a former teacher myself and understand the important of the structure that school provides.

Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Becca Robison

Arnold Md

14. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board:

I am in my third year at AACPS with 10 years of total experience in education. I became an educator because of my passion for working with our young and brilliant community members. I look forward to favorable conditions for in-person learning as I want nothing more than to resume being in person safely in our school building.

I am writing to express my concerns about: the need to postpone hybrid learning due to the current rising COVID case-rate hitting an all-time high of 14.4 (Nov 2) as educators are being mandated to return to AACPS buildings on Monday, lack of an MOU with TAAAC addressing a safe environment for all, need for clear standards for a safe classroom environment, availability of sufficient PPE for students and school staff, air filtration quality in schools, and need to reassess the hybrid learning plan to allow for more community and educator input and time for a needs assessment to determine which students truly need in-person learning.

I am experiencing a lot of anxiety due to being recalled to teach from the school building while students are learning virtually outside of school. A decision like this will increase the possibility of exposure to COVID for both myself and my loved ones, two of whom are immunocompromised, with no practical improvement to the instructional environment but an increase of a risk of transmission.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and for your service on the Board for our shared AACPS community.

Sincerely,

Minna Kim
Millersville, MD

15. Dear Honorable Members of the School Board,

I'm dismayed to see COVID-19 case rates rising. Anne Arundel County has now hit 14.4 cases--the highest yet! Based on these metrics, the November 16 student return date should be postponed.

But until when? I'm urging that we stay virtual until the end of first semester, providing time for the following:

- a needs assessment to identify individual students who need in-person instruction and/or access to school buildings for Wi-Fi
- consideration of stakeholder input about current hybrid plan to modify or overhaul it
 - I have concerns about the additional workload for educators with hybrid instruction: as we transition to a fully reopened school system have we considered a transition model in which students who need in-person instruction are brought in for five days a week while students who are being successful virtually stay virtual?
- finalize an MOU with TAAAC to ensure there are clear written mutually agreed upon safety protocols to keep everyone--staff, students, and the community--safe
- make decisions about educators' accommodations requests in order to know which teachers are available for in-person instruction

I'm also urging that teachers' return dates be postponed until just before the students they'll be teaching return. As case rates rise, there's no need to bring more teachers back into school buildings to simply continue teaching virtually. Whether a teacher teaches at home or in their classroom does not affect students' virtual learning experience. Let's help slow the spread of this virus by keeping as many people at home right now as possible.

Sincerely,
 Kristina Korona
 Meade High School teacher
 Baltimore, MD resident

16. President Corkadel and all members of the Board:

I have been a teacher for almost 20 years, I started working in another public school system, worked in a private Catholic school and then began working for AACPS about 9 years ago. I love my job, I enjoy the challenges and rewards it brings to me. I love that I am forced to constantly try new things professionally, but I do not love being undervalued for what I do. I do not love the feeling that my health and that of my family's and students do not matter.

I currently teach 8th grade Social Studies, and have some phenomenal students. We have spent the first part of the year getting into a pretty good routine with virtual school and many of my kids are doing very well. Most of those who are struggling are kids who have struggled in the past, I have reached out to previous teachers for help. I have very few students who are struggling due to just the online platform that we are using. When the hybrid plan was announced, I had lots of students ask questions. I was open and honest with them about what the hybrid plan would entail when we started. An overwhelmingly majority of my students said things such as "That sounds horrible!", "Why would we do that?", and "Can I stay virtual all year?" The hybrid plan that has been proposed is NOT good enough for our AACPS families. It is NOT good enough for our staff. I am doing everything I possibly can SAFELY from my home to teach to the best of my ability....

Thank you,
 Lydia Bevilacqua

AACPS Teacher, Parent and Resident

TAACC member

Rupert Manor/The Timers, Arnold MD

17. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board:

I am in my fourth year at AACPS with 12 years of total experience in education. I became an educator because of my passion for working with our young and brilliant community members. I look forward to favorable conditions for in-person learning as I want nothing more than to resume being in person safely in our school building.

I am writing to express my concerns about: the need to postpone hybrid learning until at least the end of the first semester due to the current rising COVID case-rate hitting an all-time high of 14.4 (Nov 2) as educators are being mandated to return to AACPS buildings on Monday, lack of an MOU with TAAAC addressing a safe environment for all, need for clear standards for a safe classroom environment, availability of sufficient PPE for students and school staff, air filtration quality in schools, and need to reassess the hybrid learning plan to allow for more community and educator input and time for a needs assessment to determine which students truly need in-person learning.

As case rates rise, there's no need to bring more teachers back into school buildings simply to continue virtual learning. Let's help slow the spread of this virus by keeping as many people at home right now as possible.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and for your service on the Board for our shared AACPS community.

Sincerely,

Gregory Meyer

Severna Park Elementary School Teacher

Severna Park, MD resident

18. Dear Members of the Board,

As a teacher of 11 years, I understand the many benefits of in-person instruction. The context of teaching virtually for the past 9 weeks has certainly made this clear. While virtual teaching and learning is certainly a challenge, my students and I have begun to hit our stride within the realities of this new normal. Virtual teaching and learning is not perfect, but I do believe right now that is doing more good than harm for our students. The same cannot be said of the adopted hybrid plan.

While "messy" is the word that Dr. Arlotto keeps using in relation to the hybrid plan, I would go even further and say that it will ultimately do more harm than good. The inherent flaws of this model will increase teacher workload exponentially for those teaching in-person and virtual students simultaneously while also increasing the risk to COVID-19 to those in buildings throughout the week at a time that will be the most dangerous in the midst of this entire global pandemic.

With the case rate in Anne Arundel County spiking to 14.4 as of November 1st, I would ask that you strongly consider delaying the start of this "hybrid" plan until the end of the first semester. This will give the much-needed time to fix the many flaws of this plan through collaboration of ALL stakeholder groups while at the same time keeping ALL students and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Ross Chakrian

Physical Education Teacher

Oakwood Elementary School

19. To Whom It May Concern:

I am an elementary school teacher in Severna Park and also reside in Severna Park. I am writing to express deep concern about returning to school buildings. I have watched videos that depict what the classroom model would look like and have seen many CDC guidelines not being adhered to. For instance, some desks do not appear to be the six feet apart that is recommended. Moreover, if a teacher is expected to walk around, as shown on the video, those aisles definitely do not allow for six feet on either side of the teacher. The expectation that teachers are required to clean and sanitize between meeting with small groups is absurd and potentially puts a liability on the teacher. The majority of private sector companies have been informed that they will not return to buildings until mid-2021 at the earliest. Why are teachers treated differently than the rest of the work force?

Please reconsider and recognize that putting teachers in the buildings is putting them at risk, and no one should be asked to risk their health for their job.

Sincerely,

Susan Linthicum

Severna Park Elementary

20. Dear Board Members,

I am writing as a parent of a student in our county and as a teacher of Kindergarten students to address my most recent concerns. According to the numbers published daily by the Health Department in our county, our COVID numbers are on the rise. Today's number is 14.38. Dr. K is on record as saying we are now in our fall surge, the numbers are rising, and will continue to rise.

Many of you stated it is the pandemic/virus that shut us down and only the pandemic/virus should change our plans of going back into the schools. Follow the health metrics and guidelines. Please don't ignore what is happening. Please reconsider pushing the hybrid plan through now. I am asking that you reconsider the date of November 16th for students to return to the buildings. Put student, family, teacher, and staff safety first.

Thank you for your time,

Maria Witles

SRHS Parent

AES Teacher

21. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board:

I write today not just as a teacher, but as a concerned citizen of Anne Arundel County. Firstly, the health metrics are simply no longer at a safe level to justify any large-scale return. Our incidence rate is officially the highest it has been - including when the original decision was made to begin the school year virtually.

Further, it is unconscionable to send students and teachers back into the building without a clear MOU regarding safety procedures. I truly cannot understand why this has not happened already.

I urge the Board to suspend all plans for returning to in-person learning until February, as was originally planned. Use this time to establish an MOU, prioritize and target students who absolutely require in-person instruction, and actually consult with teachers about the practicalities of returning to school buildings. We have quite a lot to offer to this conversation. You may think we have been stubborn for the sake of it these past few months, but that's not true. We want to help; we can help; we should be asked to help.

We are told again and again in professional development that relationships are key. Please build a real relationship with us instead of fighting us. You trust us every day with teaching our students. What possible reason exists for not trusting us to help do it better?

Please keep students and staff safe.

Thank you,
Erin Lorenz
Teacher, Annapolis High School
Annapolis, MD

22. Dear Board Members,

I urge you to stay the course and re-open schools as scheduled. This virus is not going away. We need to live with it. Other districts have opened across the nation and school spread has not proven to be a source of rising infections. European countries are going back into lockdown BUT their schools are remaining open! We need to prioritize our schools. I totally respect parents right to choose to remain virtual but give those parents who want to send their child to school a choice as well. I don't like this hybrid plan. I feel it can be vastly improved, especially the part where teachers are supposed to somehow teach in-person learners as well as simultaneously teaching students virtually. This seems impossible especially for our youngest learners. Continue to improve the hybrid plan but we must also continue to move forward with returning our kids to in-person learning. We can not continue to hide from this virus, we must take precautions and live with it. Our children our missing out on many essential aspects of school. They deserve a chance to go to school.

-Cheryl Wolf (mother of 3 students at Folger)

23. Hello Board of Education,

My name is Matthew Cassidy & am a 5th grade student at Belle Grove ES. I may be 11 years old but I know more than most people think. I thank you for creating a smooth online school system, but we

need an ACTUAL plan for reopening. COVID 19 are INCREASING FAST as we speak & I am BEGGING you to take a step back and think of a SAFE & EQUAL plan for everyone. If you care about your students and your special needs students who will NOT wear a mask, please consider making a better plan! My brother is Autistic & needs to be in school but since he won't wear a mask all day, he gets left behind with your current plan & that's just not fair to him or any other kids who can't wear it all day. You said you care about us, but the plan you have now only helps you, not us. PLEASE change your plan. I am begging you!!

Sincerely,

Matthew Cassidy

5th Grade Belle Grove ES

24. Good Morning Honorable Members of the Board,

The path forward is clear - stay the course, continue virtually until the end of the first semester, focus on getting the most at need students the support they require. The AACPS community overwhelmingly supports the Superintendent's recommendation to do just that. Thank you for hearing us.

Sincerely,

Sarah Seiler

District 6 Resident

25. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board,

I am an eighth-year teacher in Anne Arundel County and have spent my entire career here in the same school. I chose this profession because I wanted to make a difference in children's lives. I am very concerned with the rising COVID numbers in our county. We are at the highest we have been since the pandemic started and talking about reopening schools seems to be an unsafe action to take.

We need a clear plan of safety for students, teachers, and the community. We can do this together by creating an MOU with TAAAC and the other bargaining units. Our children deserve the safest learning environment that can be provided, but we have no clear plan in place, nor have the adults responsible for keeping the children safe been trained how to keep them safe from this invisible danger.

My students have expressed anxiety over going back to school and I share in that feeling of anxiety. We have students and teachers who are or live with someone who is immune compromised that should NOT be in a school building. Teachers have heard nothing about their accommodation requests, so most schools do not even know how many teachers they have that will be in the building. How can we continue a plan that is not completely organized and complete?

Thank you for hearing my concerns and taking this decision very seriously.

Amanda Carver

MacArthur Middle School

26. Dear Dr. Arlotto and Members of the Board,

When looking at the case rate per 100K in Anne Arundel County, as of Sunday, Nov. 1, the rate was 14.4 per 100,000. We have not been below 10 (the rate at which Dr. K. said it was safe to consider a hybrid reopening) since Oct. 8. Please, keep your promises to follow the metrics with action of actually doing so. Be courageous, and suspend this plan until the end of the first semester, as originally decided.

Metrics aside, this plan does not provide what's best for kids. The board needs to quit working for equality, giving everyone the same thing, and truly fight for equity. Equity is not just a word to throw around during board meetings. Please, make your actions match your words! Fight for giving students what they need. For our most vulnerable students, that may look different. A needs assessment is the place to start. Many of our special education students spend the majority of their time in general education classrooms. For some, virtual learning, and it's reduction in services and support, is a disaster. For some, the mechanics of virtual learning are what they need to learn. A unilateral decision serves no one. Assess the needs of all students, and then provide more support to those who need it most. We can do better.

Thank you,

Jean Keating

Crofton, MD

27. My name is Britta Ward I live in Severna Park Maryland. I am a teacher for AACPS.

Our current health metrics are no way in line with a re-opening this November. We need to halt the re-opening and allow for this plan to be revamped so that when we open again in a safe manner, we do so in an equitable fashion for all. It was clear from the public commentary last week that the vast majority of parents teachers and those involved in the schools are not in favor of the current plan.

Please take this time to look over and decide what additional PPE can be given to the schools. Things like plexiglass, air purifiers, and looking at the ventilation systems which so far has been ignored. Even sinks for handwashing need to be examined. Thank you in advance for waiting until we can all be safe together in the schools again.

-Britta Ward

28. President Corkadel and honorable members of the Board:

The decision to start hybrid-learning on November 16, 2020 should be reversed. Currently the new case rate in Anne Arundel County is at 14.4 per 100,000, which is the highest case rate at any point since COVID-19 tracking began in March. The rate is at the high end of the [county health department's recommendations](#) for considering hybrid learning and all indications on a local, state, and national level is that the case rates will only rise through the winter. It is clear to any reasonable person that opening the schools for in-person learning is irresponsible.

We live in Arnold where our son is a first grader at Broadneck Elementary School and very much want him back in school, when it is safe. However, because of the board's impulsive decision to reopen

schools, we reluctantly chose the hybrid model. At that time the case rate was lower and deciding on a hybrid model appeared the best way for son to keep his teacher whom he's developed a relationship with and she's created a wonderful virtual learning environment. It is clear that with raising case rates it puts students, educators, and staff at unnecessary risk to be in the school building.

Your service on the board is commendable and we urge you to follow medical science and make the only logical decision, which is to keep virtual-only learning in place for now.

Sincerely,
Peter and Heather Johnson
Broadneck Elementary School parents

29. Dear Honorable Members of the School Board,

I'm a parent and teacher with AACPS, and I'm concerned about the rising COVID-19 case rates. Cases have now reached 14.4, the highest number yet. Dr. Kalyanaraman's recent article highlights concerns about the county's rising rates. Some area private schools are delaying students' return after Thanksgiving because of concerns about COVID-19 spread.

Allowing students and staff back into buildings at this point is irresponsible. I want to be back with my students, my children want to be back with their teachers, but it needs to happen in a way that is responsible.

We should remain virtual through the first semester until:

- Covid-19 cases are declining, rather than rising
- An MOU with TAAAC has been finalized to ensure there are clear, mutually agreed upon safety protocols that keep everyone safe
- A needs assessment has been completed to identify students who need in-person instruction and/or access to school buildings for Wi-Fi
- Stakeholders have had input on the current hybrid
- Decisions about educators' accommodation requests have been made
- Teacher workloads have been considered with the transition of moving from virtual to hybrid

Teachers' return dates should be postponed until just before the students they'll be teaching return. As case rates continue to rise, there's no need to bring more teachers back into school buildings to simply continue teaching virtually. We can slow the spread of the virus by keeping as many people at home right now as possible.

Sincerely,
Nicole Murphy
Teacher, Southern Middle School

30. Hello Board members and Dr Arlotto,

Thank you for the effort you have put in this year to ensure all AACPS students keep learning. Online learning has been so much more successful and effective this fall than I had thought possible! The teachers and staff at Cape St Claire Elementary School are going above and beyond to make it a good experience for my daughter.

That said, I did choose hybrid model for my daughter as she would *love* to be back in school and get to see her teachers and friends in person. Now that it is clear that the AACo health metrics are well above the 10/100,000 cases needed to implement the hybrid mode, though I told her that it is unlikely she will be returning to school on November 30. She is disappointed, but understands. As a parent, though, it is very hard to have no clear answers for when we will know for sure or when the next decision point will be. Please understand that families and teachers need several weeks to both mentally and physically prepare for a change.

Please provide clear dates with plenty of warning for when decisions will be made. Please make a concrete decision at the November 4 board meeting and agree to a timeline and process for decision-making. (For example, a good timeline might be that at the first board meeting of every month, you evaluate the health situation and select a potential start date no earlier than the first of the next month.)

Thanks again for all your efforts,

Morgan Van Arsdall

Cape St Claire, Annapolis

31. Good morning all,

As a parent of a AACPS student,

I never would want to be in your shoes.

I am a retired nurse with 30+ years at Hopkins, Mayo, & Cleveland Clinics, working with renowned physicians, scientists, and researchers, that would agree this pandemic, may or may not be around for 6 more months, or 6 more years.. Vaccines normally are years in the making.

I have severe autoimmune issues, and when I would have to go out, I wore my N95 masks and gloves, faithfully....and I STILL TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID 19! I was overprotective, but this can/will happen to anyone.

My child is in high school and personally, does better in school, however, she understands why she is not in person.

You have a difficult job and thank you for all you do.

Mrs. Donna Calder

Southgate

32. Greetings,

Schools w/outbreaks have not been reported and COVID rates are rising! Please keep schools closed for staff and delay hybrid.

My father in law recently passed away from COVID complications, my mother in law almost died for it, and my husband and mother are high risk. As a teacher, if I had to come back in the school building, it would force me to put my three children in school 5 days a week, as they attend a private school.

I am extremely uncomfortable with being forced to return to the school when there's no vaccine available yet, COVID rates continue, and the holiday season is upon us (many will be think with their emotions and not practicing safety protocols.)

Sincerely,

Princess Dickens

Gwynn Oak, MD