

# Anne Arundel County Board of Education Meeting | May 17, 2021

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

Melissa Ellis  
*President*

Dana Schallheim  
*Vice President*

Candace C.W. Antwine

Robert Silkworth

Corine Frank

Joanna Tobin

Michelle L. Corkadel

Drake Smith

## Upcoming Meetings

### General Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Board Room

### Policy Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

3:30 p.m.

Virtual

### Budget Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

3:30 p.m.

Virtual

### Equity Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

11:00 a.m.

Virtual

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## 3:00 pm 1. Opening/Recognition

1.01 Invocation

1.02 Pledge of Allegiance

1.03 Establish Agenda Order

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## 3:05 pm 2. Public Comment

The Board will hear in-person public comment on agenda items from up to 10 speakers per agenda item during this section of the meeting. Those wishing to provide live in-person testimony may register, space permitting, at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony). All speakers will be allotted 2 minutes. Written comments on agenda items can also be submitted through a form available at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony). The process for submitting such comments and comments on non-agenda items, which are only accepted in writing, can be found at [www.aacps.org/boardtestimony](http://www.aacps.org/boardtestimony).

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## 4:05 pm 3. Presentation

3.01 School Reopening Update/New Executive Orders

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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](http://www.aacps.org)

The following testimony was submitted for the May 17, 2021, 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 3.01 – School Reopening Update/New Executive Orders**

1. I hope that the board will prioritize getting our youngest students back into the classroom for this last month. It is beyond frustrating as a parent to hear our governor talk about dropping all restrictions only to realize our 5-6-year-olds STILL can't go back to school. The 6 ft rule which limits our school to 12 per class is outdated now that teachers have been vaccinated, cases numbers are decreasing, and the data shows young kids aren't causing the spread. My student is going to be devastated when she logs into virtual school tomorrow and realizes so many of her friends get to go 4 days/week while she has to stay 2. It is like not being invited to a party that she has to sit there and watch. It is absurd to think that 12 kids is any safer than 17 when half of them go to both cohorts and it is completely unfair/inequitable for those kids who did not “win the lottery” to go back 4 days. We are now mixing cohorts anyways. Let individual schools bring (at least) k-2 back full classes if they can accommodate. Let kindergartners have centers for this last month. Other districts and states have been prioritizing our youngest learners' emotional needs and it is past time that Aacps does the same.

Sarah Mutchler  
Severna Park

2. 24 days left. Stop with the changes. Arlotto said he is getting as many in as possible 4 days per week. All of the "get creative" solutions ended up taking away my son's teachers. 24 days. By the time you read this, 23. Please, no more changes. ENOUGH.

Lisa Taylor-Soriero  
Shady Side

3. The constant delay on the part of AACPS must stop immediately. All children who want to be back in school 4 days/week, must be afforded that opportunity starting tomorrow, May 18, 2021. This Board has a duty and a responsibility to the students of Anne Arundel County to provide them (ALL of them) with a quality education. I can tell you firsthand that duty has not been fulfilled this school year. There is nothing that can be done to make up for this failure; however, at a minimum, it can be mitigated with prompt action. Please act now. Hold AACPS accountable and set an absolute deadline of May 18, 2021 for ALL schools to offer 4 days/week to ALL students.

Karey McDonough  
Severna Park

4. As of May 15, 2021, capacity limits have been lifted and all businesses may resume normal operations in Anne Arundel County. In addition, face coverings are to be worn inside school buildings and buses when not consuming food or beverages. With these guidelines the Superintendent, Board of Education, and School Principals have no more excuses as to why our children cannot immediately be back at school full time. Because of the irrational choices you all

have made throughout this pandemic, children are suffering from depression, isolation, lack of socialization, poor education, food insecurity, and the ever-increasing achievement gap. Schools across the country, Maryland and Anne Arundel County have been successfully navigating full time school. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few members of the board, you have been unwilling or unable to do this. It is time to salvage whatever meager amount of time is left of this school year and return these children to their classrooms full time.

Abby Glenn  
Davidsonville

5. Let's focus on getting it ready for next year. This is a waste of time resources and planning to open up schools with less than 1 month of instruction left

Time and energy can be better spent improving the schools for a full return in the Fall. Focus on planning the school start times to change by the start of the school year not the second quarter, focus on giving students more time outdoors, focus on making things safe, focus on how we can reduce the stress levels for all children, focus on recovery strategies for the impact of this school year, focus on virtual options for children who wish to remain virtual for their academics, focus on implementing things that worked from virtual learning and using those strategies to improve in person classroom instruction.

There is so much that has been discussed that can be planned for the future- no need to waste time and resources for just a few weeks. I can't believe this meeting is even happening.

Caryn Rose  
Severna Park

6. As a concerned parent please fully reopen AACPS schools. The children need this not only for their academic education but also for their emotional and psychological well-being.

Christine Gilliland  
Severna Park

7. Please, please do what is right for our children! They have endured over a year of isolation and lack of proper education (virtual learning is no replacement for in-person traditional education). It is time to get those to want to be back in the classroom, back full time. There is absolutely NO reason not to open full time for in-person learning. Maryland private schools have been successfully open full-time since August. Public schools in other states have been open all year as well. If they can do it, why can't we?? Please do what is right for our children! No excuses. Provide what our taxes are paying for: a quality in-person education. Open our schools full time now!

Jennifer Fold  
Linthicum

8. I was glad to see that you have scheduled this meeting to discuss the impacts of the governor's latest loosening of restrictions. As has been the case throughout this pandemic the public

schools have been last in terms of reopening. Our kids once again appear to an afterthought and it is totally unfair to them. There is absolutely no reason that schools should remain in their current hybrid format. Students are best served by being in a classroom and interacting with their teachers and peers.

I can already hear the "we don't want any more changes" and the "let things be there is only one month of school left" crowds and while I can respect their decision, I strongly feel that schools need to reopen now for all those that do want to attend. If a student/parent want to remain in hybrid then that is their choice but students who want 4 days of in person learning should all be allowed back into their buildings. Don't send out another survey, you already know the students who want to return. There is very little time left in this school year, but every day is valuable! Obviously, kids under 12 are still not eligible for the vaccine but masks are still required in schools so there is no reason that classrooms should need to have capacity restrictions when every other venue in this state no longer does. All AACPS staff who wanted the vaccine are fully vaccinated so the need for midday monitors and teacher not being allowed to use the teacher lounge should no longer be an issue....

Cheryl Wolf  
Severna Park

9. I am a 4th grade student at Central Elementary and I am writing this because I can't go back to in person school 5 days a week. I have friends in Hawaii, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, etc. They all go to school at least 4 days a week. How come their schools have students going back yet my school doesn't? It is unfair and unjust. A few kids I know get to go in person 4 days a week, yet I don't. My mom got a survey asking if she wanted me back 4 days a week and she said yes. The school told her no. Because there wasn't enough space in the classroom. Nonsense! There is science saying it is safe, I know that, and I have known that since fall. And people are kidding themselves if they say it isn't safe. I strongly believe that we should've been back since fall of 2020. Having a proper education is something every kid should get and it's crazy that we're not going back. There is no reason for students not going to school. I'm not saying that everyone has to go back in person, if a student's parent's want them to stay virtual I accept that . But there should be a choice that if parents want their kids to, that kids should go back 5 days a week. This is injustice. I beg you to fix this now. This year.

Your Central Student,

Annika Senkowski  
Edgewater

10. 1. Why are we living in the past?  
2. What makes AACPS Teachers special from other counties and states?  
3. Are you proud of the way this last year+ has been handled?  
4. Would you be able to look at my child or any other child in this county and tell them you did your best to fight for them for a quality education?

My son is finishing up Kindergarten in this county. He started this year loving school. As the year

progressed, I watched my child decline instead of making gains. I have watched our son shift from loving learning and engaging in school to the complete opposite. On a daily basis I hear my child say, "I do not like school."

This county has thrown out QUALITY education. One of my son's cultural arts teachers was teaching at home last week while watching his 6-week-old baby. Is he actually teaching if he has a baby to tend to? Dr. Arlotto, is this really what you would call a quality education?

The teacher's union is full of people just like you and me. They are nothing to be afraid of, Dr. Arlotto, the time has long since been upon us to stand up the Teachers Union and instead fight for our children.

I am asking you, to please do what is right. End teacher accommodations. Get our kids back into school in person for the remainder of this school year and open up full time with no limitations next year.

Amy Willey  
Pasadena

11. You have succeeded. My daughter no longer cares about school. She hears about her friends and family in other states going to school five days a week, since August 2020. While she sits in front of a screen, bored out of her mind. When she walks away from the computer and I ask her why...she says, "I already answered the question and we still have 3 minutes left to answer it." One size fits all curriculum for an entire county is irresponsible. I also realized today that she has learned more in one day a week, virtual religious school then the county curriculum from this past year. To NO fault of her teacher. Her teacher has done what she can. It will take years to catch our children back up to where they should be educationally and emotionally. AACPS Leadership...I take back my first sentence. You have failed. You have not succeeded in anything this year. Four days a week before the year ends will at least give me hope that next year will be in person, full time.

We want DETAILS on the five days a week, IN PERSON learning plan for the Fall. DETAILS. If it doesn't happen, watch your enrollment numbers drop.

Elisha Roth  
Edgewater

12. Well, here we go again. Another special meeting, another call for testimony /public input. I fully expect another unsuccessful survey to follow as well. It is all a predictable delay tactic at this point. I have one main question for Dr. Arlotto, members of the BOE, our county executive and county health officer- is it your intention to be the very last school system in the country to get our students back to 4 or 5 days of in person learning? My second question is how does that make you look and feel - to be dead last in ingenuity, integrity and trust? I have only 13 months of being an AACPS parent after 20 years and I cannot wait. The last 14 months has completely exposed the lack of leadership in this county, it has also created tremendous mistrust and significantly damaged relationships between parents, teachers, and the community.

Vicki Helel  
Pasadena

13. There is no longer scientific ground on which to stand to justify the continued lack of in-person education being offered in AACPS. Our family knows people in 34 states and four countries where kids have been in school more than the pitiful two days our children have been offered. Many of them have been back in school full time since the fall with no link between cases in the school and increases in community spread. My children are military kids with friends all over the country and world who've seen their peers going to school and know that they could also safely be in classrooms were it not for the lack of action taken by the people making decisions in AACPS (school principals and the BoE). They're 9, 7, and 4. AACPS isn't just losing the respect and trust of the adults/parents/families whose taxes fund their buildings and salaries. They're losing the respect and trust of kids whose parents have been honest with them about what's gone on for the last 14 months. I refuse to ignore science and evidence or use fear, hyperbole, or political ideology to protect adults at the expense of my kids and their well-being. They'll grow up with an ability to think critically and make decisions based on solid evidence, whether they learn that in AACPS schools or not. Please start the long process of regaining public trust by giving all children the option for 4-5 days of in-person instruction immediately. Thank you.

Gina Senkowski  
Edgewater

14. My daughter is a sophomore at Crofton High School. She has most certainly benefited from being back in school two days a week, but the isolation of virtual learning on the other days continues to be very challenging. Every student that indicated on your survey his/her desire to be in school 4 days a week should be approved for return TODAY. Now that we have abundant vaccinations, plunging case rates, and mitigation strategies that are WORKING, you have the opportunity to finally show your students that they come first- first before any existing accommodations or logistical "roadblocks." Yes, your students being back 4 days a week for the last 20+ days of this school year DOES matter for many reasons, as you'll hear in the upcoming testimonies. Your students are resilient and adaptable; any change towards more in person learning is a welcome change for those students that want (and NEED) it. You CAN and I still have faith that you WILL make this happen. In addition, a full 5 days a week return in August for the 2021-22 school year must be guaranteed for all students TODAY. Your students have

unnecessarily suffered long enough. At the very least, given that all children 12+ are now able to be vaccinated, I see no reason why the high schools can't be given the green light TODAY.

Heather Sanders  
Crofton

15. Follow the science and keep our youngest learners socially distanced and masked. The CDC loosened guidelines for the unvaccinated population. There are no elementary students and a very minimum number of middle schoolers who have been able to get vaccinated. The plan was 10-12 students per class. Stick to the plan and keep those students safe. Schools that were able to open at 4 days, have done so. Let the schools that couldn't go four days continue to invite more students in. You will continue to exclude them otherwise.

Kassie Haney  
Pasadena

16. While the state and the country are starting to resume normal activities, I have great concern regarding the health and safety of children 11 and under who cannot yet be vaccinated. The CDC revised guidelines only addressed fully vaccinated individuals; however, without a way to track that, Larry Hogan has made it so anyone can go maskless pretty much anywhere (unless a private business continues to require masks). As a parent who has had both of her children remain virtual, I had been looking forward to a return to school in the fall. I look forward to my kindergartner to finally walk into her school as a 1st grader. I long for her to be able to do that. But I want her to be able to do that safely. Until children under 11 are eligible for the vaccine, I urge you to continue to require masks for all within school settings. We need to stay vigilant for our children and continue to prioritize their health. We can reopen in the fall safely if we continue to follow CDC guidance as related to school children. Thank you.

Diane Milleville  
Odenton

17. My family is part of the Northeast feeder system. Since hybrid started for high school and middle school, I've talked with students who do not want to go back to school. It is surprising how many of them are afraid they won't do well. Some have resorted to cheating in order to get by this school year. These children are home alone and have learned that to cope with the laborious demands of virtual school cheating has not only become an easy choice but seemingly effective too. They google at home where no one can see them, they coordinate who is doing math and science and who can answer the writing portion for language arts. This is done after they have played video games during instruction, after endless texts back and forth because they missed the instruction and need someone to "hook them up" with the correct information. We are talking about students in AACPS who have compromised their integrity because the model provided for them has been so inappropriate to meeting their needs and is continuing to be ineffective. This is not teamwork; this is not cooperative learning, and this is not acceptable. Allowing students to continue with virtual learning at home in any capacity is saying it's ok for you to cheat in order to get by. Make a choice in favor of the students and reopen 4 days immediately. Students deserve to be in school now with social distance restrictions lifted just

like businesses and restaurants.

Jenn Farrelly  
Pasadena

18. That lack of leadership shown by the superintendent and the BOE over the past year has been appalling. You have had over a year AND countless examples from other Maryland school systems, public and private, not to mention schools across the country...to examine and learn from. We are incredibly behind in in-person learning, grades are plummeting, motivation from students is at an all-time low. Mental health issues are rampant. You have been elected to represent the students in this county and be a leader. This does not mean pleasing the teacher's union or burying your head in the sand and waiting out the school year. There is precious time left. Use it. Bring students back for AT LEAST 4 days, be the leader even if it's hard. This is what you agreed to do by sitting on this school board.

Erica Oneil  
Gambrills

19. I am writing to ask that you please consider the fact that the lifted restrictions for COVID-19 - both in the CDC guidelines and at the state level - are specified for vaccinated individuals. As you are aware, Pfizer is the only vaccine that has been available for any of our students, and up until a few days ago, that was only true for those who are 16+, which makes up a very tiny percentage of our Pre-K through 12th grade student population. Now that the CDC has approved the emergency use of Pfizer for 12+, that will still only include secondary students. The AACPS vaccination clinics have not even been open to middle school students until this Wednesday. I would also like to point out that just because the vaccine is available for students 12+, unless you make the vaccine mandatory, there are still many parents who are uncomfortable with their children being vaccinated with a vaccine that has not yet been fully approved by the CDC. What this means is that even though students 12+ are eligible for the vaccine, there could be entire class of unvaccinated students. With all of this in mind, I am not sure why there are discussions regarding changing the current mitigation strategies within our schools. I appreciate you considering all of this as you meet today.

Thank you.  
Michelle Choulis  
Arnold

20. Anne Arundel County must reopen schools 100%. There is no longer medical or safety reasoning to do anything else. The state has opened every other type of location without masks. Kids will be living a "normal" life again with the exception of school. These kids need to back in a building with the teachers. The excuses and lack of planning from the board is unacceptable. The educational and social impacts of kids being home without teachers, friends and a normal routine has gone on way too long. These kids need to get back and any "hurdles" need to be

worked out this year. Parents and students have lost trust in our public school system. Something has to be done today.

Jennifer Callaway  
Severna Park

21. Much appreciation to recognizing the need for elementary students to be able to take off masks during recess to prevent overheating. Will consideration please be given to adults supervising elementary recess to allow those adults fully vaccinated to also be allowed to take off their masks while outside. Adults can also overheat.

Catherine Chester  
Edgewater

22. The CDC, state of MD, and Anne Arundel County have not recommended broad scale masking or distancing changes for elementary aged children. With approximately 5 weeks left, please allow the current plan to play out, allowing as many children to enter the building where possible. Please, no schedule changes, or sweeping changes. Concentrate on a successful full time fall reopening.

Michaela Stanton  
Pasadena

23. Children should be back in classrooms full time ASAP. Virtual learning is not as rigorous as in person learning, and the younger kids especially lose interest quickly and need to be interacting with other children and teachers as part of their learning. Also, masks should be optional. The school board should not be telling parents how to keep their kids safe and healthy.

Nicole Kinstler  
Severna Park

24. I am writing in support of reopening schools to our children. On Friday, April 2, I wrote Mr. Arlotto expressing my disappointment that he and the Board were not supportive of children returning to school four days a week. (I requested a response from Mr. Arlotto, and even his time for a phone call; he did not respond.)  
In short, then as now, I remind you that you are charged with executing the vision and mission of the school system, which I will not recite here due to word constraints. Related to those statements, I assert our County's children continue to lose ground and fall behind in both relative and absolute terms. They are not developing the skills necessary to read, write, compute and communicate effectively. They will not be well prepared for college and the workforce. As a result, they are, then, not empowered to create a better quality of life for themselves. With Maryland ranked 47th on the Public School In-Person Index, I beg you to argue otherwise. I would hope that you would approach your role with a Fiduciary mindset. That is, putting the interests of your constituents in front of your own--and, to be clear, your

constituents are the students, not the teachers. Please reopen our schools. Our County's children deserve a substantive education, which will undoubtedly be best delivered in person.

Thank you,  
Jay Siembieda  
Davidsonville

25. Do not open school buildings five days a week nor force schools to have four-day cohorts that currently cannot do so for legitimate, compliant, reasons.

There are 23 school days left. There should be no discussion at all regarding reopening school buildings five days/week. The majority of students are still virtual for a reason. Prioritize families without health insurance and with compromised autoimmune systems. Prioritize our low-income families who face health risks and rely on a transportation system with a shortage of bus drivers.

More importantly, do not put staff at risk by forcing schools to have four-day cohorts. Schools have made every effort to meet these requests, but not all can do so. RESPECT THE NEEDS OF STAFF WHO CANNOT BE IN-PERSON FOUR DAYS A WEEK. ACCOMODATIONS WERE GRANTED FOR LEGITIMATE REASONS AND THERE IS NO REASON TO REVOKE THOSE ACCOMODATIONS AND UPEND THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES SIMPLY TO MEET THE WANTS, NOT NEEDS, OF A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS. Additionally, the lack of midday monitors is very real. It's delusional to think every school can hire monitors these last 23 days. Don't force counselors, cultural arts and special ed staff to act as monitors, taking away from their actual job responsibilities. People leave jobs because of lack of respect, not pay. Don't put our dedicated staff in such a situation.

It's May. Stop with these endless changes that do not address the needs of the majority of our students: focus on a safe FALL reopening.

India Ochs  
Annapolis

26. Nothing in Anne Arundel County is closed except the schools. Think about that. You have failed our children.

Denise Iversen  
Gambrills

27. We have been battling this virus for 14 months. If there's one thing we have learned, it's that things constantly change. One definition of insanity is doing things the same way and expecting a different result. That's how I feel this county has handled many decisions throughout this pandemic. I had plenty of patience at the beginning, but it is quickly waning. This was all novel and there was much to learn. So, what have we learned?

1. Cleaning surfaces isn't as effective as other mitigation strategies.

2. Mitigation and vaccination are driving case rates down.
3. Youth mental health issues have increased compared to 2019 and isolation is a major reason.
5. School spread is lower than community spread.

I could keep going but am limited to 250 words. AACPS has had months to prepare contingency plans that are ready to implement as changes dictate. Local, state and federal governments have done this through “phased” plans. AACPS should have a plan ready to go for just this moment, not a list of excuses as to why it can’t be done. Current data shows case rates plummeting. You closed schools in ONE DAY, you should be prepared to reopen them quickly. Seek solutions and give families the option to return in person 4 days immediately and 5 days in the fall. There are NO CAPACITY LIMITS anywhere else in our state (to include public transportation). You can apply the same rules to schools. You owe it to our kids.

Mary Cascia  
Crofton

28. With most recent changes made by our Governor Larry Hogan & County Executive Stewart Pittman, I am hoping and praying for my 6-year-old son’s sake that the wait to get these kids back in school is OVER. It needs to be OVER. No more, letting teachers/unions dictate and uphold ridiculous standards. Everywhere is making it happen. Some even have been open for MONTHS! It is their job to educate. Let the parents choose the routes of what is safe. What about the parents who have worked this entire time and had their kids in childcare? People were forced to flip their lives upside down from all this and most have adapted but some can’t say the same. Some had to quit their jobs, work from home with maybe one kid or 5 kids doing virtual learning. You think no one else had to adjust and make do? Well, news flash WE ALL DID AND TIME IS UP. It’s time to put these kids FIRST! What about equality? Our kids are not getting the same education as other kids in our state nor across the country. That’s all because of the decisions made by AACPS. We are going to have a huge spectrum of problems all across every single grade. You’re ok with that in your hands? I don’t care if it’s only 20 days left in school, every day counts. MAKE IT HAPPEN!

Just to personalize this a little, I have a son named Owen. He just turned 6....

Disappointed Parent,  
Brittney Curran  
Pasadena

29. Now that Governor Hogan and County Executive Pittman have relieved the county of any/all restrictions there currently is no reason that these students are not back to school 5 days a week starting NOW. Can you lawfully disobey the reopening of the county? Can you lawfully disobey your boss, County Executive Pittman? Can you lawfully hold students from obtaining the

education they want/deserve? There is no in between: NO RESTRICTIONS means NO RESTRICTIONS.

We have been given every excuse possible: the metrics (no longer being used), teachers need vaccinations (vaccinations readily available), 6 ft. social distancing rules (reduced to 3 ft), cafeteria issues (restaurants are full capacity), and bus issues (kids still wear masks and simply open the windows). If the rest of the state is able to safely return to work, shopping, and sports there is no reason children should not be allowed to return. All we want is for our children to receive the education they deserve, and that everyone else is receiving in other states.

I know you might say the schools face new issues such as not enough mid-day monitors, and teachers' accommodations. However, these are NOT the parent/students problems. They are the school boards problem. All of the issues SHOULD have been accounted for ahead of time in the reopening plan.

The solution is easy, those who want 5 days a week go to school. Those who don't want to can stay home. TIME TO FINISH OUT THE SCHOOL YEAR IN THE CLASSROOM!

Mark Trohanowsky  
Pasadena

30. Hello, I am a front-line healthcare worker and have been here for you all since the beginning of the pandemic. Even when there were no vaccines and not enough PPE. I pulled my children out of private school to attend AACPS and was assured they would get a quality education. My 3rd grader is now getting Cs in her classes and says she "hates virtual school". She has been crying more and argumentative and when asked about it, she relates it's due to the stress that this is causing her. She is being forced to attend a daycare to do her virtual school as her parents are essential workers. She is more than a grade level behind now in reading, spelling and math. There is NO REASON from CDC guidance and from a medical professional's opinion (I am a hospitalist PA) that she can't be in school 4-5 days a week. Children are not a known cause of increased community transmission. There are no capacity limits anywhere else in the state. Our children have become pawns in game of politics and money. Please start giving your time and energy to our most vulnerable, our children, before it's too late. My child deserves a full time in person education, and it is now safe to do so. Thank you.

Michelle Hill  
Annapolis

31. Please stop the excuses and look for options to return these children back to school 4/5 days per week this school year! I genuinely appreciate the enthusiasm and the effort at the start of the year, but this process is not sustainable. My children have fallen behind and even regressed. I asked them this morning, why they need to go back now and my fourth grader with an IEP said she wants to be around her friends, and she can focus better in school. Her daily IEP charts even demonstrate the difference of her behavior and attention for in person learning vs virtual. Private schools in our area have been open all year and these children have excelled and advanced while the public school children are falling behind. Everything else is getting back to normal except for these poor innocent children who have

suffered academically, emotionally, socially and mentally this year. The state is open and so should the schools. If teacher's have accommodations for daycare, they should be removed. If schools are open, then daycare shouldn't be an issue. Have the cultural arts teachers come into the homeroom classes, instead of being virtual. This will give the homeroom teacher a break and eliminate the need for the mid-day monitors. There are countless ideas and ways this can be done. We are one of the last states and even counties to make this happen. Please support education for our children by making this happen now.

Jennifer Grey  
Davidsonville

32. Dear Board, with the acceleration of the reduction of the mask requirements, I would like for you to keep the mask requirement for our unvaccinated kids. There are only a few weeks left in the school year and the kids are doing great wearing masks. Let's keep them safe until they can be vaccinated this fall.

Thank you,  
Travis Regier  
Annapolis

33. Hello. Thank you for reading! I am a healthy care worker with an autoimmune disease ( type 1 insulin dependent diabetes). I have been treating patient RA since 5/23/20 ( COVID tested and not COVID tested). That is my job. I feel all teachers should return to school 5 days/ week, as in most states and counties NOW. The teachers Union stance is teachers can't find personal day care for their children (as told to me by an AACPS teacher) the rest of the parents (not teachers) have had to do it. Enough is enough. All children that want to return to school should have that option. It's been over a year to figure this logistical nightmare out. I truly believe, teachers can choose other options if they are not willing to return to the classroom, even if they had to teach virtually. AACPS students are falling behind everyone else. AACPS has already lost many people to private schools. Some families , like mine, can't afford that option. So, we rely on you to do the right thing and go with science and allow the asking students to return 5 days now. Thank you for reading.

Shobha Whitacre  
Severna Park

34. The public school system in AA county has always prided itself on being "equitable". To elevate ALL students and eliminate ALL gaps. Yet now, when our students need it most, there is no emphasis on equity.

In Anne Arundel County, some elementary school students have been selected to return to in person learning 4 days per week while others are left only attending school 2 days per week. In other counties in Maryland and across the country, students are attending in person learning 4-5 days per week. Many of these students have been learning in the classroom for most of the

year.

My children's education has not been prioritized by a school system who has touted equity as a reason for most of its best practices. With almost every other industry operating at capacity, our students are learning that education is ranked as less important than gambling, dining, entertainment, sporting events, etc.

I implore you to return to 4 or 5 day per week in person learning for any student who wants to attend. Allow our students to make their education a priority.

Claire McGuinness  
Severna Park

35. Restrictions were lifted across our state, which means our kids can participate in anything they want, except go to school full-time at AACPS. Keeping students out of in-person learning is NO LONGER a defensible position. Around the country, almost every other county and BOE has been able to implement full time, in-person learning.

Remember when the teacher's union demanded that our infection levels must be extremely low before they would return full time....check, we are there.

Remember when the teachers' union demanded full access to vaccines before they would return...check, we are there.

Remember when we needed updated guidance (not mandates) from the CDC to reduce the required distance between students at school....check, we are there.

There are no longer legitimate reasons to deny children the choice for full in-person learning. If it is not scientific evidence keeping them home, and we know remote learning is not working, why are they not back in school full time? Let me be clear- not offering full time in-person learning is simply a VOTE TO VALUE THE TEACHERS' UNION OVER ALL STUDENTS! As an ELECTED Board of Education, take that to heart.

All currently approved accommodations need to be reevaluated now that ALL AACPS employees have been offered the vaccine. No other workforce is allowed this level of accommodation for a virus which they are now fully immune. Anyone not voting to fully open our schools immediately is making a clear statement to our students that they are still not the priority.

Mathew Fine  
Gambrills

36. Getting kids back to school full-time in the fall is one thing. Getting kids back in school in a "normal" environment is another. Enough with the games ... restaurants are open, events are happening, no masks for being indoors, kids are not high risk, for those who want to get

vaccinated get vaccinated for those Who don't , sign a waiver so you don't sue the school for getting Covid. I've been saying this for a whole year and I will say it again if there isn't a written game plan of what is going to happen and how they're going to execute it, not hypothetically than these kids will not be in school full-time for fall. We've been manipulated, lied to , put on hold and given to many excuses. Need to move forward as soon as possible with lawsuit. This is the only way they are going to move. On another note Why are we still talking about midday monitors when we are moving in a direction with everything being lifted. I can go to the gym with 100 people and work out with them and be fine I can go to the restaurants and bars, Sporting events for my kids. Why are we still talking about monitors??? Why are we still talking about kids having to wear masks during school, on the buses? Have to be 3 feet apart vs 6. This is absolutely absurd.

Melissia Stevens  
Edgewater

37. We are at the end of the road hopefully. I really want to be able to send my daughter back in only after she is fully vaccinated. Please give us the option.

Jennifer Andor  
Gambrills

38. My children were denied 4-day in-person learning at Broadneck Elementary School (BES). Setting aside my concerns with other elements of the denial and the lack of policy transparency used for the denials, my comments focus on "no available seats following health department guidelines," as stated in the denials. BES leadership advised that the cafeteria is prohibited for eating lunch and children must eat at their desks, in turn requiring 6 ft. separation distances in the classroom. This is stricter than CDC guidelines allowing for 3 ft. separations in the classroom with masking in place. To understand the "prohibition" on the cafeterias for eating by AACPS, I made multiple calls to officials in the Superintendent's Office and the Health Department. The Superintendent's Office stated that they were required to apply Health Department guidelines, however Health Department officials stated that the school system could choose its policy and the schools were not mandated to prohibit the use of cafeterias for eating [April 2021 guidelines]. Given progress announced by Governor Hogan underpinning his recent ease of State restrictions, including high vaccination rates and low COVID positivity rates, I request that AACPS release to parents the justification for continuing prohibitions on cafeterias for eating AND the resulting number of students excluded from return to school based on the application of 6 ft. separation distances. If the data and analysis does not identify a health risk, then AACPS should immediately drop the cafeteria prohibition, apply 3 ft. separations, and allow more kids in the classrooms.

Debra Satkowiak Clowry  
Arnold

39. Now is not the time to change instructional days. Teachers and students deserve stability and a predictable schedule. Staff with accommodations should not be pressured to return. Follow CDC guidelines and maintain the current model.

Ellen Norris  
Dunkirk

40. AACPS schools should open now and in the fall with a Mon-Fri normal schedule. My daughter (third grade) is not engaged in virtual learning and does not have the attention span for it. On my daughter's first day back to two-day hybrid she said, "I had the best day of my life and school is so much easier!" She felt incredible relief at being in the same room as her teacher with hands-on help. Her emotional health improved with two-day hybrid but it's not enough. She was devastated and cried when she was not selected for four-day hybrid. My child is not learning much this year and I fear how far behind she will be next year. She needs to be back full time with her teachers and peers. Additionally, kids without support systems desperately need to go back for learning, resources, and food. Kids need to go back full-time now for their mental, emotional, educational, social, and physical well-being.

Carlyn Foster  
Odenton

41. Current CDC guidelines state 3 feet for elementary school children. My first-grade son's elementary school is fully staffed and yet he is still denied a 4 day in person instruction. They have mid-day monitors and could easily obtain more if need be. Therefore, why is he denied access to in person instruction, 4 days per week? Since his school is fully staffed, the only rationale that is provided is spacing during lunchtime. Why can other counties manage the eating issue with current CDC guidelines and AACPS is incapable of such logistics? Here is an idea, have every other row eat and take turns. AACPS, your excuses are weak and diminishing, your poor logistics and leadership have caused enormous educational, social and emotional losses for our children. I request that my child be allowed to return to a fully staffed school 4 days per week starting immediately. The two day a week hybrid education is not robust or equitable since some students in his school and across the state can return 4 days a week, but others are denied. How can my child, under such circumstances, bridge the unequitable opportunity gap??

Keith Spencer  
Severna Park

42. AACPS has failed our students. As of Saturday, everything in Maryland was fully reopened without any capacity limits except our schools. The cruise port, indoor and outdoor dining, bars, theaters, sporting venues, and retail spaces are open. However, the majority of our students are

only allowed to go to school 2 days a week. It's absolutely disgraceful that we have put our students last on the list for returning to any sort of normalcy. Virtual learning continues to fail our students, and the inaction of the Board and the Superintendent have increased the learning loss that has been ongoing since March 2020. Staff accommodations need to be recalled, and the 6-foot rule needs to be abolished. All staff who chose to be vaccinated are vaccinated, and the CDC has already stated that 3 feet of distance is sufficient in schools. Bus transportation should also not be an issue based on the current CDC guidance. The excuses given for not returning all students who requested 4 days a week of in person instruction are not acceptable, and I expect for my students (and ALL students) to be permitted to go to school 4 days a week immediately. I have students at all levels in the Crofton cluster, and I am shocked that I'm still fighting for them to return to school when everything else is open. Put the desks in the classrooms and let the kids go to school! It's very simple if you remove all the barriers and excuses.

Carol Green  
Crofton

43. In light of the recent updates from our Governor, the removal of capacity limits and removal of the mask mandates in all public indoor and outdoor areas, I respectfully request that the Board members return our children to 5 day in-person non-hybrid learning immediately. We have continued to see the Board and our local schools FAIL to follow the updated guidelines and follow the recommendations of our Governor and state. Our hybrid children were supposed to have the option to increase their in-school days to 4 days and the majority of our schools have failed to do so. We continue to hear excuses...the distancing, need for mid-day monitors, teachers out on accommodations. I believe the most important piece that a few Board members have forgotten is this following statements straight from their handbook:

“Board Members are EXPECTED to make decisions based upon a desire to serve the students in Anne Arundel County in the best way possible”. Not the teachers, not the opposing parent groups and teachers' unions. The STUDENTS. The stakeholders. It's time now for our children to have THEIR turn to return to normalcy as others now have.

Michele Rowley  
Pasadena