

**Salem Public Schools
Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2020**

On August 10, 2020 the Salem School Committee held its regular School Committee meeting at 7:00 PM using the Zoom platform.

In Attendance: Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, Mary Manning, Amanda Campbell, Ana Nuncio, Kristin Pangallo, Manny Cruz, James Fleming, Superintendent Stephen Zrike, Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone and Duncan Mayer

Others in Attendance: Mary DeLai, Jill Conrad, Deborah Connerty, Liz Polay-Wettengel, Chelsea Banks, Ryan Monks, Marc Leblanc and Charlene Moske-Webber

Call of Meeting to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

Consent Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Manning motioned and Mr. Fleming seconded. The Mayor called a vote by roll call.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Agenda

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to approve the Regular Agenda. Mr. Cruz motioned and Mr. Fleming seconded. Mayor Driscoll called a roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Mayor Driscoll announced that following the student representative report, Dr. Zrike will be giving a quick recap on the proposed school reopening plan. The Mayor added that Dr. Conrad had already forwarded several written public comments to the School Committee and if any member of the public would like to comment, they may raise their hand and the secretary will unmute their mic. Mr. Fleming suggested that we limit the time for each comment and the Mayor agreed and said she would appreciate it if the public could limit their comments to a minute or less. It was also agreed that rather than 2 separate public comment periods, all of the public comments will be addressed after the proposed school reopening plan discussion.

Report of the Student Representative Duncan Mayer

Duncan Mayer reported that they recently hosted a communication forum with Dr. Zrike and the Student Advisory Council. There were questions and discussion regarding the reopening plan and Duncan felt that the forum went really well. He said that he hopes to continue this line of communication with Dr. Zrike and the student body and continue with more of these forums.

Report of the Superintendent

Proposed Reopening Plan

Superintendent Stephen Zrike began with introducing the team to the public; Ann Berman, President of the Salem Teachers Union; Mary DiLai, Interim Business Manager; Deb Connerty, Executive Director of People Services; Ryan Monks, Director of Building & Grounds; Marc Leblanc, Director of Technology; Charlene Moske-Webber, Director of Nursing & Health Services; Liz Polay-Wettengel, Chief of Communications; Chelsea Banks, Senior Advisor for Salem Returns; Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent; and Dr. Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems & Strategy for Salem Public Schools.

Dr. Zrike wanted to start by thanking Duncan for organizing the communication event with the Student Advisory Council and said he did a great job. He hopes that this is the first of many discussions with the students. Also, he wanted to acknowledge Friday's graduation ceremony. Although it was not what was originally planned, everyone made it a great celebration and congratulations to the graduates.

Dr. Zrike stated that he would begin with a brief overview, then turn it over to the School Committee to discuss and hopefully vote so that we can start preparing for the reopening of schools. He added that most of this plan was discussed at last week's meeting and more details can be found at the Salem Public Schools website.

Dr. Zrike explained how they chose the reopening plan and added that both staff and families provided a lot of input. First, he said that this plan prioritizes health and safety. This plan also implements our core value of equity. It maximizes opportunities to reduce risk, by including outdoor learning and using other assets in Salem's community assets and partners. And also offers flexibility for families and staff.

The Superintendent explained the overview of the age-based reopening plan with grades 4-12 foundation being remote instruction and PreK-3 the foundation would be in-person instruction, with the opt-out for any family that would prefer remote instruction.

The Superintendent addressed what the next steps would be:

- Secure parent choice whether it be in-person or remote
- HVAC assessment results and what we need to do to ensure optimal ventilation
- Establish safety protocols and routines for each school
- Develop training manuals for both staff and parents
- Ensure that all students have a device and are connected
- Engage our community partners to assist with running hubs and extended day
- Develop and agree to an MOU with our union partners
- Continue to carefully monitor infection and transmission rates to support keeping schools open
- Continue engaging with our community in anticipation of that start of the school

Questions were then presented to the Superintendent from the School Committee regarding the proposed reopening plan. Most of the questions were centered around health and safety procedures and protocols. The Superintendent, as well as Assistant Superintendent Kate Carbone and Director of Nursing & Health Services Charlene Moske-Webber responded to many of the Committee's concerns regarding what plans are in place to keep both staff and students safe. Assistant Superintendent Carbone also gave the Committee a summary of the in-person summer program. She explained that the students were doing well with wearing their masks and physical distance reminders were placed on the floors to help them with social distancing. There was a concern brought up regarding Chromebooks and if they would all be distributed in time. The Superintendent assured the Committee that although there is a delay in delivery, everyone that needs a Chromebook will have one before the start of school. Once the remaining Chromebooks are delivered, they will be distributed to the students who have not yet received one. Committee members also asked several questions regarding the HVAC system and if the school buildings are prepared to reopen. Ryan Monks, Director of Building & Grounds responded that a project management firm has been hired to oversee a very detailed assessment of each piece of equipment that supplies fresh air to our spaces. Mr. Monks added that he was able to hire additional staff and they are focusing on the recommended repairs and maintenance that need to be done. Once this is completed, an air quality report for each space will be provided to the Committee. A question was raised regarding if teachers were losing any teaching time due to additional training required due to the CDC guidelines. The Superintendent responded that DESE had established a MOA with the teachers union to set aside additional 10 days specifically for training and have dropped the required school days from 180 to 170. In addition, a question was asked regarding teaching schedules and if they would be similar to the spring. Assistant Superintendent Carbone responded that classes and schedules would be different from this past spring. Remote instruction would be more engaging for students. There would be both synchronous and asynchronous learning with standardized grading taking place. In addition, attendance will be required for both remote and in-person learning.

Public Comment

Mayor Driscoll opened up the public comment portion of the meeting.

Ann Berman, President of the Salem Teachers Union, came before the Committee to speak about the proposed reopening plan for the reopening of schools. She began with stating that there are some concerns with the plan that was recommended to the School Committee at last Thursday's meeting. She stated that there are several items they agree upon, including the value of in-person education, concept of equity for most in-need students and the general concept of increasing in-person learning throughout the year. But there are also three areas they are at odds with, which include the pace in which to begin in-person learning, safety measures that need to be put in place and what socialization will look like. Ms. Berman read some of the concerns and questions that were sent to her from the Union members.

Mayor Driscoll responded to Ms. Berman's request that all of the public comments that have been sent be read for the record. She noted that there were over 50 comments that had been submitted and in addition, there were several members of the public that were waiting to speak. She asked for the Committee's input as to whether we should move forward and read all the comments. Several Committee members responded that they would like to have all the written comments that have been sent in read for the record, but asked that we allow the people to speak before this happens. The Mayor opened the public comment to the public waiting to speak and requested that the comments be kept to a minute or less.

Steve Kapantais, 23A Wisteria Street., addressed the Committee regarding the 3rd reading of Public Participation at the School Committee Meeting. He stated he was surprised to see this make it to a 3rd reading since at the last meeting, Committee members spoke in support of the second public comment. He requested they reconsider passing this policy.

Dana Kleemola, 15 Linden Ave., Beverly, is a second grade teacher at Bates Elementary School and would like to encourage the Committee to vote for a remote learning plan.

Cheryl Zimmerman, 8 Hazel St., voiced her concern regarding if there would be enough staff to monitor the students during mask breaks and recess and also requested the protocol as to how a nurse will determine whether a child is sick or may be suffering allergies.

Brandi Burnham, 3 Heritage Dr., addressed the Committee regarding her concerns with how the students that need additional emotional support be handled, specifically students with special needs. Also, how can a parent that is having issues with a Chromebooks that was assigned this past spring receive a new working one?

Alexi Moutafis, 62 Appleton St., voiced his support for the plan. He went on to say that he believes that it is important to have in-person learning and felt that remote learning from this past spring was not a positive experience for his child. He also voiced concerns for families that do not have reliable internet access and how would this negatively impact these students.

Leanne Smith, Principal of Witchcraft Heights Elementary School, voiced her concerns regarding the importance of the early learning years for children. She supports bringing students back with in-person learning.

Geoff Millar, 29 Boardman St., spoke regarding his support with the constantly changing reopening plan. He understands it is all dependent on keeping everyone safe and healthy. He also voiced his concern regarding the Chromebook that was issued to his child not functioning properly. In addition, he spoke regarding his concern with students that may be suffering from abuse and not having access to teachers, who in the past have reported suspected abuse and are able to spot if a student is in need.

Michael Collins, 238 Loring Ave., a staff member from Witchcraft Heights Elementary School along with his wife who is a staff member from the Horace Mann Laboratory School, voiced his concerns regarding the spread of the virus and the dangers of returning to in-person learning.

Lissa Levine, 18 Bartlett Street, a staff member from the Carlton Innovation School, spoke with support for starting the school year with the remote learning plan.

Christina Minniti, 29 Boardman St., voiced her concerns about returning to school with a remote plan. She explained that returning to school as in-person, especially for younger students, is critical, not only for social emotional needs, but also for a foundational education.

Michael Lister, 70 Concord St., Principal of the Saltonstall School, wanted to voice his support for the proposed plan. He understands that the plan may change, but believes if the foundations are in place, adjustments can be made when necessary.

Seth Mascolo, 40 English St., asked the Committee what is the District putting in place to make sure special education and special needs students do not fall through the cracks with remote learning.

Jessica Leuci, a teacher at the Bates Elementary School, acknowledged that this was a difficult decision for the Committee and just wanted to make sure that they all take into consideration the safety of the students, staff, and families and the Salem community.

Jessica Caron, 100 Washington St., a teacher at the Saltonstall Elementary School, wanted to thank Ann Berman for representing the teacher's voice so well. She also wanted to clarify on the teacher survey from late June to end of July and it states that 27.5% of teachers were very uncomfortable with the in-person model and 38.3% of teachers were uncomfortable with the remote model. She added that she personally supports the remote learning model and is asking the Committee to vote remote.

Patricia Cullen, 41 Walter St., teacher at the Horace Mann Laboratory School spoke to the Committee regarding the reopening plan that was proposed at the August 6th meeting. She stressed the fact that information is being released regarding children spreading the virus and

that there are so many unknowns that could affect the health of so many. She is asking that the Committee vote for the remote learning plan.

Sarah Hill, 22 Amanda Way, asked the Committee to consider the needs of the staff and is concerned how the schools will keep the students safe. She is encouraging the Committee to consider the safety of both teachers and students when voting tonight.

Nicole Corneau, a teacher of the Bates Elementary School, spoke regarding her concern for parents that are unable to stay home with their children due to work, her concern for students that are not receiving the services they need (meals, internet, emotional support, etc.) and wanted to let the parents know that teachers are on their side.

Nancy DiGiammarino, 259 Puriton Rd., Swampscott, a staff member from Salem High School wanted to voice her concerns regarding opening the schools with so many staff members in the District in the high risk category.

Charles Barton, 26 Marlborough Rd., spoke regarding his concerns that there is so much unknown with this virus and there are no facts supporting that children are immune to this. He believes that the Committee should consider all the affects this virus will have on everyone before making their decision.

Diana Robinson, 362 Eastern Ave., Lynn, a teacher at the Horace Mann Laboratory School, voiced her concerns that with the remote plan, teachers and students will not be able to build relationships. She is concerned that students will suffer and teachers will not have the access to support them as they need. She has asked the Committee to not vote yes for the plan proposed.

At this time, Mayor Driscoll moved to have the written public comments read by Dr. Conrad.

Please see the appendix for the written public comments.

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to recess at 10:54 p.m. until 10:59 p.m.. Ms. Manning motioned for a 5 minute recess and Mr. Fleming seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes
Motion carries 7-0	

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to end the recess and resume session. Mr. Cruz made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Nuncio. The Mayor called a roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

The Mayor stated that before the vote for the proposed reopening plan, she wanted to share the conditions that would need to be met and implemented in order to reopen the schools. She added that most of these conditions are listed in the plan, but wanted to include them as conditions due to their importance. These conditions varied from instituting benchmarks, ensuring that the HVAC system is operating properly in each building, COVID prevention protocol as well as COVID testing and contact tracing, and tracking of the Chromebooks and internet connection. Mayor Driscoll explained that this would run on a 6 week cycle and at that point, the plan will be reassessed and make any necessary changes.

The Mayor asked if anyone from the Committee had any questions or comments regarding the proposed conditions. Mr. Fleming suggested adding to the condition regarding out of state travel to high risk states. Mr. Cruz wanted to clarify the check in dates and if necessary make them more often than the 6 week timeframe. He also wanted to make sure that the check in includes families, staff, and students. Mayor Driscoll replied she would include those amendments.

The Mayor requested a motion. Mr. Fleming made the motion for the adoption of the proposal as amended, incorporating the conditions that were outlined and Ms. Manning second.

The Mayor asked for deliberations before the vote. Ms. Manning began by thanking the Mayor and the School Committee for their work on this proposal and also to the central office staff and the entire team that worked at putting this together. She also thanked the families and staff that personally emailed her and called her. Ms. Manning went on to explain how she came to her decision. She feels that the plan provides different options for students, staff and parents.

Mr. Fleming clarified that his original motion was to approve the conditions if the proposed reopening plan is adopted. Mr. Fleming modified his motion to adopt the Superintendent's recommendation subject to the conditions that the Mayor outlined.

Ms. Campbell commented that she still has several concerns regarding the reopening plan, although she believes it is one of the most creative she has seen. She understands the difficulty between the remote learning with it's inequities and the in-person learning with it's health and safety concerns. She explained that she believes that the first to be brought in for in-person should be the students that have the highest needs.

Dr. Pangallo understands the fear that everyone is feeling regarding the virus, but feels that their duty is to the children. She believes that the risks of contracting severe COVID are outweighed by the risks of the youngest and most vulnerable students not receiving the foundational education they need. Dr. Pangallo supports the district's plan for reopening the schools.

Mr. Cruz said he plans on voting for the recommended reopening plan. He is concerned about the damage remote learning will have on the most vulnerable students and agrees with the tiered approach proposed by Dr. Zrike and his team.

Mr. Fleming began by acknowledging all the emails and phone calls he received from people concerned with the reopening plan. Mr. Fleming stated that he opposed the reopening plan. He understands there are students that will suffer from the remote plan, but he does not feel that it is fair to expose the high risk students, staff and families to the risks of this virus.

Ms. Nuncio announced that she will vote in support of the plan. She was originally worried that without properly working HVAC systems, the students with pre-existing conditions would be at higher risk. She was also concerned about the equitable Chromebook distribution. But after reviewing all the scientific information she believes that as long as the conditions are met, they should go forward with the proposed plan.

Mayor Driscoll wanted to thank all of the staff that worked on the proposed plan. She spoke of the importance of the deaths within the city due to COVID but acknowledged that there are children in the community that rely on us. She wanted to stress that the members that support the hybrid model still care very much about the health and safety of teachers and students.

Mayor Driscoll reiterated that all the recommendations to the conditions that have been outlined have been updated. Ms. Campbell requested that a change be made that rather than reads when the schools reopen, it will read when staff returns to the building. Ms. Manning, Dr. Pangallo and Mr. Cruz agreed with Ms. Campbell's point and asked for language to be changed to, in advance of full return of staff.

The school secretary called the roll call vote.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	No
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	No
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 5-2

Mayor Driscoll requested to return to the original agenda and Mr. Cruz moved.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

a. Deliberate and vote on the 2020-2021 Salem Public Schools Reopening Plan

The Mayor requested a motion. Mr. Fleming made the motion for the adoption of the proposal as amended, incorporating the conditions that were outlined and Ms. Manning second. A roll call vote was called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

b. Deliberate and vote on the 2020-2021 Salem Public Schools Calendar

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for the approval of the 2020-2021 school calendar, subject to the Carlton School Calendar approval. Motion made by Ms. Manning and seconded by Ms. Nuncio. Mr. Cruz questioned 2 dates that were originally proposed in February to be added to the calendar and were not noted, Juneteenth and Dominican Independence Day. Ms Campbell added that she would like to acknowledge Indigenous People's Day rather than Columbus Day. Ms. Nuncio agreed that the mentioned dates should be recognized on the calendar. Mayor Driscoll requested that the dates of Indigenous People's Day, Dominican Independence Day and Juneteenth be recognized on the 2020-2021 School Calendar. A roll call vote was called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

c. Deliberate and vote on the 2020-2021 Salem High School Calendar

d. Deliberate and vote on the 2020-2021 Carlton Innovation School Calendar

e. Deliberate and vote on the 2020-2021 New Liberty Innovation School Calendar

The Mayor asked if separate motions needed to be taken for each individual school calendar. Mr. Fleming made a motion to accept the 2020-2021 Salem High School, New Liberty School

and Carlton Innovation School Calendar, subject to the Carlton Innovation School calendar approval. Ms. Manning seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

- f. Deliberate and vote on the appointment of Nancy A. Weiss as the Executive Assistant to the School Committee

Mayor Driscoll asked for a motion for the appointment of Nancy Weiss as the new Executive Assistant to the School Committee. Mr. Cruz motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. Ms. Manning wanted to thank Jen Gariepy for all her work with the Committee. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion Carries 7-0

Finance Report

Mary DeLai, interim Business Manager, requested a budget transfer. This transfer is requested from the Music Department and will move funds that are not needed for FY21 transportation to instructional supplies to be used for a remote learning platform for music in the amount of \$7,400. The committee voted on transfer #1 as stated. Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for the transfer. Mr. Cruz motioned for a transfer from the transportation account in the amount of \$7,400 to the educational supplies account in the amount \$7,400 and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Subcommittee Reports

a. Policy Subcommittee

i. Policies for Third Reading

6409 Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Ms. Nuncio gave a brief summary on the changes to Policy 6409. A paragraph was added allowing spanish participation, the second public participation portion was eliminated and will now allow remote participation. Ms. Nuncio also wanted to recognize Mr. Kapantais, who spoke in Public Comment regarding this policy. The Mayor asked for a modification regarding the time limit to be at the discretion of the chair. Several members commented and had suggested changes. Ms. Campbell asked for the word citizen to be changed to community members and change in number 7 from School Committee authority to school district related. Mayor Driscoll read the proposal to adopt Policy 6409 Public Participation at School Committee Meetings for the third reading subject to the modification in paragraph 5 and the revisions proposed by Ms. Campbell, which would remove the word citizen and add community members along with the other items that were mentioned. Ms. Nuncio motioned and Mr. Cruz seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	No
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 6-1

ii. Policies for Second Reading

5416 Use of Physical Restraint

4105 Staff Conduct with Students

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for the second reading of Policy 5416 Use of Physical Restraint and Policy 4105 Staff Conduct with Students. Mr. Cruz made the motion and Ms. Nuncio seconded. A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

iii. Policies for First Reading
5221 Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion for the adoption of first reading of Policy 5221 Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities. Motion was made by Mr. Cruz and seconded by Ms. Nuncio. The Mayor requested a roll call vote be called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

School Committee Concerns and Resolutions

Mr. Fleming explained that at the last meeting there was a proposal made regarding a need for volunteers and he has received an offer from a gentleman who is a civil engineer that has offered to help in any volunteer capacity.

Mr. Fleming also announced that the Salem Day at Kernwood Golf Tournament will be held on September 14, 2020 to raise funds for scholarships for Salem students. Sign up will be at the Senior Center on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Mayor Driscoll requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fleming motioned and Ms. Manning seconded. A roll call vote was called.

Ms. Manning	Yes
Mr. Fleming	Yes
Dr. Pangallo	Yes
Ms. Nuncio	Yes
Mr. Cruz	Yes
Ms. Campbell	Yes
Mayor Driscoll	Yes

Motion carries 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Nancy A. Weiss

Executive Assistant to the School Committee
& the Superintendent

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/9/2020 14:28:20	jill	Borek	16 boston rd	<p>https://www.cbsnews.com/news/covid-19-kids-school-children-coronavirus-in-person-instruction/ We simply don't know enough about coronavirus. Students and teachers are not safe to go back to school if our state is "indefinitely postponing phase 3." If you can't have more than 6 people sitting together at a restaurant and we have reduced the number of outdoor gatherings to 50 how can we possibly think sending kids to school at this point is safe? Anyone that thinks younger kids can keep their masks on and practice safe distancing has never spent time in an elementary school classroom. We have buildings in the city where the heat does not work and if there is ac it is not turned on. We have classrooms without running water. We have bubblers that don't work. Are these things fixed? Have we hired additional janitorial staff to keep up with the buildings? Please consider the safety of your students and your staff first.</p>
8/9/2020 14:33:54	Jess	Caron	100 Washington Street, Unit 47	<p>Dear School Leadership Team,</p> <p>I am writing to you one more time to implore you to vote for the remote model. I miss my students greatly; however, I cannot risk their lives, my lives, or the lives of our families. My students are the high-risk learners who do not always love schoolwork and often have incredibly brilliant coping mechanisms to try to avoid schoolwork. That's why I find them such a challenging and engaging student population to dedicate my professional life to. At this time, those wonderful qualities have me scared for my life. My students don't always love to follow rules and any adolescent, or adult for that matter, may or may not be following proper COVID-19 protocol in their personal lives. I cannot know how these students and families take precautions in their home life. Did they recently have an unmasked birthday party or get together? The risk is high that the students I work with are asymptomatic carriers. Testing is simply not fast enough or consistent enough to prevent spread. We cannot guarantee that students and staff will be COVID free upon entering school since there are not mandatory tests in school. Schools who have already opened encouraged students to get tested and stay home if they are symptomatic. It has not worked. A few infected students and teachers slipped through the cracks and that will, without doubt, happen here. With only volunteer testing, I fear students and fellow staff will spread the virus without meaning to and put us all in danger.</p> <p>Please do not make me risk my life to provide a few hours of in-person instruction a day to these high risk learners. During the spring session, the majority of my students who had internet showed up. If they did not show up, I came up with individualized incentive systems and/or directly called them or their parents for reminders. This level of effort paired with more consistent grading expectations will be a much improved model for learning. I believe that I can safely and effectively run a remote model of learning for these challenged students. I do not know what I will do if you do not pick the remote mode. I cannot do a year without healthcare or without a salary but do not feel safe teaching in person during a pandemic and cannot risk the lives of the at risk family I live with. Please do not let COVID 19 infect even one child, teacher, or family through the Salem Public School system. Please follow the lead of districts like Somerville, Lynn, and Swampscott.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration in this serious matter.</p> <p>Best Jess</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/9/2020 17:19:48	Anne	Carlock	16 Avon St. Somerville MA	<p>I'd like to thank the school committee for their continued engagement with input from the Salem school community as we try to find the best possible way to reopen schools in the fall. With the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, I applaud the decision to have students and staff for grades 4-12 continue to conduct school safely and remotely. I am glad that there are provisions in place to address these students' need to socialize while remaining safely outdoors, where risk of transmission is much lower. I also appreciate that the plan accommodates families' desire to have remote options run by SPS educators.</p> <p>However, I am deeply concerned about the idea that students in PreK through third grade should return in person in September. I understand that this suggestion has been made in large part based on the idea that younger children are less susceptible to contracting and transmitting the virus, making in-person school less dangerous at the early elementary level. But the fact of the matter is that COVID-19 transmission in young children is not well understood. A summary of the research on COVID-19 in children by the Kaiser Family Foundation says that "this is a question where only weak, and sometimes contradictory evidence, is available." Some studies indicate that children do carry and shed virus in similar amounts to adults, and some show that children under 5, such as our PreK students, actually have higher viral loads than most adults. A study of transmission within households showed that children are infected at a rate comparable to adults. Researchers have pointed out that, since children are more likely to have asymptomatic infections, they are less likely to be recorded as the index case in a family or group. This is a limitation of studies that attempt to learn about transmission through tracing cases and may lead to an underestimation of how often children infect others. It seems this summer that every week there is new information suggesting that children are more susceptible to being harmed by COVID and more involved in its transmission than we thought the week before. A new report just released by the CDC on Friday finds that 1 in 3 children hospitalized for the virus needs to be admitted to the ICU—a similar rate to adults—and that black and hispanic children are particularly likely to experience severe cases. There certainly are other studies that do suggest that young children play a smaller role in the epidemic. But this is a novel virus and our understanding of its effects on children, who have overall been more sheltered from the virus than adults, is still quite limited. We know that, sadly, it isn't safe for older children and their teachers to return to school yet. We can't stake the lives of staff, parents, and grandparents of younger students—possibly even the lives of the students themselves—on "weak and contradictory" evidence of COVID-19's effect on young children.</p> <p>I've also heard the argument that is safe for some of Salem's students to return even as neighboring communities commit to starting full remote learning because the positivity rate is lower in Salem. But Salem does not exist in a bubble, so higher positivity rates in nearby towns can be risky for us too, as well as the fact that cases are on the rise again in our state and our country. Salem has many visitors from many places and we must work hard to keep community spread down.</p> <p>I understand that there are also risks to having our young students continue their learning remotely. We all agree that being in school in person, when safe, is what's best for our students. But I know that, as a community, we can come together to make a remote start to the school year as effective and positive as possible for them, just as we will do for students in grades 4 to 12. Teachers have already been working over the summer to learn about making remote learning more effective and engaging for young learners. I know that staff and families alike will work tirelessly to serve our students' needs during this difficult time.</p> <p>I want very much to be back in my classroom with my students, but we need more time to make sure it's safe and make sure we're getting it right. I ask that the school committee revise the draft reopening plan so that all students, all staff, and all of their families can have a safe remote start to our school year.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/9/2020 20:43:59	Amy	Selvaggio	42 Villa Roma Drive, Tewksbury MA	<p>Salem Public schools should prepare for a fully remote opening. Tuning in to hear the plan last Thursday, I felt somewhat relieved as I saw the phrase "foundation of remote learning" appear on my screen, regarding plans for grades 4-12. But then the plans for k-3 revealed that my colleagues, responsible for the educational and social foundation of Salem's youngest, were being "asked" (though I'm not sure what their options are) to head back into the physical classroom for in-person learning.</p> <p>While I appreciate that these plans appear to attempt to thoughtfully problem solve for inequities for Salem students, there was zero evidence of any thoughtfulness for Salem's educators, paraprofessionals, and specialists who will spend the bulk of their time in spaces with these children.</p> <p>And what about our students? We heard testimony last week indicating that young children did not suffer from severe symptoms of COVID-19 and supposedly do not transmit the disease as much as adults. Studies that came out in early July argue as much. But the findings being published in late July and early August would indicate an opposing argument, namely that children carry more of the virus in their noses and throats, but that it's unclear whether this means they are super spreaders or not. Additionally, the CDC has announced that children can, in fact, develop severe symptoms and that Black and Hispanic children were eight times more likely to require hospitalization than White children.</p> <p>This is, of course, to say nothing of students and staff with underlying health risks, or those whose family is at higher risk. Not to mention, in the words of one Salem student, the "moral and emotional toll," that reopening would have on students from potentially infecting their teachers with a deadly disease.</p> <p>In short, it seems that the medical community doesn't know what COVID-19 is capable of, so why are we gambling with the health, and potentially the lives of Salem's educators, students, staff, and their respective families? Salem should use the precious time we have before reopening to invest in a robust, fully remote plan for all.</p> <p>Amy Selvaggio Social Studies Dept. Salem High School</p>
8/9/2020 20:45:47	Maureen	Beaudet	21 Greens Point Rd, Ipswich	<p>As someone who has suffered the loss of my father, step daughter and close friend during this difficult period and as someone who has always worked to support students and families, I am bewildered as to why the Salem Public School community is not taking the health and welfare of the staff into account. A plan that doesn't include input from the people who will carry out the plan limits the viability and potential success of its implementation. This is a life and death pandemic and if you haven't been directly affected by it then consider yourself lucky, but please recognize that efforts to increase and support remote capacity is how we should be investing our time.</p>

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8/9/2020 20:46:57	Amy	Selvaggio	42 Villa Roma Drive, Tewksbury MA	<p>Salem Public schools should prepare for a fully remote opening. Tuning in to hear the plan last Thursday, I felt somewhat relieved as I saw the phrase "foundation of remote learning" appear on my screen, regarding plans for grades 4-12. But then the plans for k-3 revealed that my colleagues, responsible for the educational and social foundation of Salem's youngest, were being "asked" (though I'm not sure what their options are) to head back into the physical classroom for in-person learning.</p> <p>While I appreciate that these plans appear to attempt to thoughtfully problem solve for inequities for Salem students, there was zero evidence of any thoughtfulness for Salem's educators, paraprofessionals, and specialists who will spend the bulk of their time in spaces with these children.</p> <p>And what about our students? We heard testimony last week indicating that young children did not suffer from severe symptoms of COVID-19 and supposedly do not transmit the disease as much as adults. Studies that came out in early July argue as much. But the findings being published in late July and early August would indicate an opposing argument, namely that children carry more of the virus in their noses and throats, but that it's unclear whether this means they are super spreaders or not. Additionally, the CDC has announced that children can, in fact, develop severe symptoms and that Black and Hispanic children were eight times more likely to require hospitalization than White children.</p> <p>This is, of course, to say nothing of students and staff with underlying health risks, or those whose family is at higher risk. Not to mention, in the words of one Salem student, the "moral and emotional toll," that reopening would have on students from potentially infecting their teachers with a deadly disease.</p> <p>In short, it seems that the medical community doesn't know what COVID-19 is capable of, so why are we gambling with the health, and potentially the lives of Salem's educators, students, staff, and their respective families? Salem should use the precious time we have before reopening to invest in a robust, fully remote plan for all.</p> <p>Amy Selvaggio Social Studies Dept. Salem High School</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
				<p>I write to you today to express my strong opposition to any form of in person instruction this fall. So far this summer we have seen Somerville, Swampscott and Lynn opt for remote learning, as it is the safest option. Based on all the information we have and knowing what the worst outcomes will be if we return for in-person instruction this fall, I feel that putting staff and students back into school is at best blind ignorance and at worst willful negligence.</p> <p>Why is it so important to risk the lives and safety of students and staff to return to school? The answer that keeps getting thrown around to this question is that students might fall behind in their studies. This is what's being offered as the worst outcome of a remote learning model. What's the worst thing that could happen with an in person learning model? Students could become sick and pass it to family members who end up in the hospital. Families lose income because they can no longer go to work due to the illness. Families are then evicted due to their loss of income. Students could see loved ones die. Students themselves can become sick from the disease and miss further instruction, or worse.</p> <p>These scenarios are all applicable to teachers and staff as well. What happens when two thirds of the staff are sick and cannot come to work? How many willing substitute teachers will you have this year? Of those willing substitutes, how do you plan to spread that small amount of help around to every school when everyone is out sick at the same time? When you compare and contrast these risks, which option seems like the worse outcome? Furthermore, I ask how is this current proposed hybrid model anymore conducive or helpful for students learning than the remote learning alternative? I acknowledge that no matter what, our students' education will be impacted this year, but in my opinion having a potentially sub par learning experience online is a far better scenario than any of the above scenarios I listed out above.</p> <p>This past week we heard the overwhelming support of teachers in Salem say that they want a remote learning model. If teachers had been listened to and the remote learning model chosen, which they clearly prefer, we could have been spending this valuable time working to get students better equipment, better internet and supplies they need to make this remote year of learning a major success. I ask again, with the ample amount of evidence we have available that clearly paints a bleak picture and teachers supporting remote learning, why are we wasting this much time on entertaining the idea of hybrid learning? Why are we not doing the right thing and keeping staff and students out of harm's way? What we've seen instead of leadership are delays on opening schools, delays on making decisions and teachers continuing to be left out of the loop about what their job looks like next year.</p> <p>If we take a look at the data, the numbers do not paint an optimistic picture. As of August 8th Texas had 6,892 new cases. Georgia had 4,423 new cases. Florida had 8,502 new cases. All of these states decided to reopen and look at what happened. What about the daily death totals in these states? As of August 8th, Texas had 166 deaths, Georgia had 69 deaths and Florida had 182 deaths. In children alone, the positive test rates jumped from 23,170 on July 16 to 31,150 on July 24, a 34% increase in eight days. 9-year old Kiimora Lynum died from COVID-19 on July 18, a child with no known pre-existing conditions. This is what's at stake in Massachusetts. The decisions that are made in regards to reopening schools could single handedly put Massachusetts in a similar predicament. How, in good conscience, could you possibly feel it is safe to put children and staff at risk like this, knowing what we know? The virus is highly contagious and it's not a question of "if" people get sick, it's a matter of "when" people get sick.</p> <p>I leave with a few questions that were asked earlier on in these meetings that still haven't been answered as of yet. How many total deaths are acceptable? How many parents have to die? How many teachers have to die? How many people have to end up in the hospital sick before we conclude that this was a total disaster and should never have happened in the first place? We know what will happen, please vote for remote person learning so that everyone can stay safe and hopefully stay healthy.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/9/2020 23:51:30	Ben	Chertok	21 Bertuccio Ave.	<p>I am writing to provide my public comment on the reopening plan. Having worked on the staffing subcommittee, I am fully aware of and appreciate how much time and effort has been put into developing a robust plan that meets the needs of all. However, there are a few key areas that I feel have not been addressed adequately and would like to bring them to your attention.</p> <p>Recently, Dr. Pangallo was quoted as saying "When the teachers are safe, our students will be safe." Thank you Dr. Pangallo. I would, however, like the committee to consider this slight modification to that statement: "When teachers FEEL safe, our students will FEEL safe."</p> <p>The staffing subcommittee was charged with developing a survey that was presented to the faculty during the month of July. In it, staff members were asked to rate their level of comfort around various scenarios. The results, which are included in a hyperlink as part of appendix B of the reopening plan overwhelmingly do not support a full reopening. In fact, according to the data, approximately 66% of teachers and 53% of paras surveyed were uncomfortable with an in-person return. And, when asked to make a decision back in July (when COVID numbers actually better supported a partial reopening), 75% of teachers surveyed and 70% of paras surveyed either said no or expressed reservations about an in-person return. When asked what drove the decision, the overwhelming majority of answers were centered around general uncertainties surrounding COVID19 and SPS's ability to meet health and safety guidelines. The plan presented to you validates those very concerns. HVAC systems have not yet been repaired and no information or timeline for completion has been given. Neither DESE nor SPS have provided a concrete deadline by which they will have identified the data points which will be used to drive decision making about whether to expand or discontinue in-person learning. Water bubblers are not adequate for our students or faculty. Whether or not these items will be completed, there simply is not enough information to validate that systems will in fact be safe, let alone help staff members feel safe. Remember, when the staff feels safe, the students will feel safe.</p> <p>Another major question I have revolves around why staff members are not afforded the same respectful options of the families we teach. DESE, and by default, SPS, have made it known that all families will have the option to choose between in-person and remote learning without penalty. Should a family choose the remote option, our administration has made it clear that SPS has a responsibility to, and will provide resources to teach children remotely. What is the option for the staff member who doesn't feel that it is safe enough to teach in-person? So far we have only been directed to reach out to HR if we believe we are considered to be in the high risk category or would like to explore a leave of absence without pay. Remember...when the teachers feel safe, the students will feel safe.</p> <p>It is entirely unrealistic to expect that the Salem Public Schools will be able to guarantee safety. This wasn't realistic prior to COVID19 and it isn't possible now. However, prior to COVID19, the vast majority of teachers, and subsequently students, felt safe enough to come to classrooms each day to learn in what we consider the "traditional" way. Make no mistake...whichever way this committee votes, traditional school as we know it will not be happening when students return to learning. With that in mind, I respectfully urge you to adopt a fully remote start so that detailed and data-driven protocols can be laid out in a manner that helps all of us: staff members, parents, and children FEEL safe when the time is more appropriate to open the buildings for an in-person return. Thank you.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
				<p>Dear SPS Leadership,</p> <p>As you read these emails, you have an enormous decision in front of you. You have heard from teachers, medical workers, students, parents, and community members. The truth is simple- we all want to be back in school. We all want to see our students and coworkers and be back in our normal routine. While the plan put forth is "based in science" and we have medical workers saying that "we should be okay", I ask you, is that really enough when the lives and health of our students, staff and their families are at risk?</p> <p>On the news we keep hearing from medical experts that we are still learning about this virus and we don't know what its long-term effects will be. As a student or a teacher, would you feel comfortable going back into the buildings and worrying about the possibility of getting your parents, grandparents, children, etc. sick with this virus?</p> <p>A local medial worker was brought in to back this plan and to say that younger children don't really seem to get sick from the virus. Yet I am hearing more and more of these stories....</p> <p>Gillian Morse, age 6, Tennessee, passed on Aug. 4 from COVID-19. She had no underlying conditions.</p> <p>In Chatham County, Georgia, a 7 year old boy passed away from COVID-19. He had no underlying conditions.</p> <p>On July 18, Kimora "Kimmie" Lynum died from COVID-19 complications, according to state health department records in Florida. The 9-year-old girl's family said Kimmie had no known pre-existing conditions.</p> <p>Today as I was writing this I heard from a friend that her 14 month old child was running a high fever and was diagnosed with COVID-19, thought to be infected at their daycare in Beverly.</p> <p>Will one of our Salem students be one of these headlines next? I'm sure these parents also heard that their children should be fine and that kids are not really getting sick, and yet today I bet they wish they had made different choices.</p> <p>Is opening our school buildings really worth the risk of ANY of our community members getting really sick?</p> <p>Is it worth the risk of one of them dying? Especially if we are talking about a child?</p> <p>Would you be okay if one of our students or teachers passed away knowing it was your decision and vote that put them back into our school buildings??</p> <p>You have a huge decision to make, as you do this, via Zoom, from the safety of your own home.</p> <p>I will say it one more time-</p> <p>Even though a local medical worker was brought to the meeting to support this plan- experts are still saying that there is still so much about this that we don't know. People who have survived COVID-19 still have severe effects of the virus.</p> <p>Many districts, including several local ones, have already said they plan to go remote. For the safety and health of their students and staff.</p> <p>*According to the Massachusetts Department of Health, the number COVID-19 cases in our state are trending</p>

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				<p>Based upon my experience as a teacher in the elementary grades and as a professor at Salem State University who instructs future and current teachers in best practices in literacy instruction, my position is that we start the year off remotely for ALL of our students.</p> <p>The current plan of reopening the Salem Public Schools "Salem Returns," makes it safe for students, teachers, staff and the families of all three in grades 4 through 12. What about the rest of us? We are subject to an experiment, to be guinea pigs in a way. This decision was prefaced by data that says it's ok for the youngest of our learners to return. NO! There is no evidence or long-term research regarding children in school with Covid-19 in the United States because it has not happened over a long period of time yet. In fact on August 8, the American Academy of Pediatrics released that, 97,000 children tested positive for the coronavirus from July 16 to 30 as schools are starting to open. 97,000! There have been 338,000 case of Covid-19 in children according to CBS News' Michael George.</p> <p>The current plan of having face-to-face learning for grades Pre-K through 3 was also prefaced by the importance of acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy by grades 3. This is, indeed important. I agree. It indicates all later success in schooling. We have been saying this for decades.</p> <p>Health and safety factors aside, in order to reach our most emergent learners we teachers will be able to teach them in a more coherent, less interrupted, and comprehensive manner amid a pandemic if done remotely. Is remote learning the most ideal? NO, but it is better than the current CDC and SPS guidance (that's rightfully so) that needs to be implemented if we return to school. The current "Salem Returns" plan to vote was also prefaced by research and history proves the youngest learners learn best in person. Again, I say NO. Again I say, there is no longitudinal research against a fully remote model in the United States because it hasn't happened yet.</p> <p>My colleagues routinely came together, video conferenced and texted past 10 o'clock at night in order to make remote learning the best we could with limited if any prior experience and preplanning. The DESE has granted us 10 days before students return. Can you imagine how much better of a remote model my colleagues and I could push forward if we take advantage of this time to prepare for a school start with remote learning for all grades? ESPECIALLY since we are all in agreement that we will most likely need to move to remote learning in a matter of time. Please, help us to do the best we can to teach our preK-3 learners in these unprecedented times by starting the year remotely. We need this. Our students deserve this.</p> <p>I'm often asked by parents, community members, colleagues and my adult learners whom I still call my kids, what I do to make the learning that happens in my classroom, happen. I tell them I love what I do, care about my students, tell them that they matter to me, have the patience for them, and believe in them. I tell them that I reserve the time, energy and brain space needed for my learners day in and day out—and it shows. I know I can match what I believe works a hundred percent more in a remote learning environment. In remote learning I will not need to worry about my mask, a face shield, my gloves, my disposable garment, the sink in my classroom that has been shut of for years, the heat and AC unit that has leaked through the floor tiles across my classroom for years, or monitoring for a cough, a sneeze or any other of dozen warning signs I will need to look out for among my students. I can concentrate on teaching.</p> <p>There is nothing I want more to do than to return to face-to-face learning. Until conditions are safer, and until we give the time needed for longer term-evidence based, comprehensive research, I maintain, without a doubt, that I will be able to work on instilling literacy and numeracy for our most fragile learners remotely one hundred percent better than face-to-face in the conditions in which we are expected to teach in our ill-equipped buildings. I ask that all watching this please listen to me, a teacher--the face that knows best--the definitive factor between a return plan on paper and the delivery of what you actually want for the students in Salem.</p>

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				<p>Dear Mayor Driscoll and the Salem School Committee,</p> <p>We are writing to you today to express my concern with the reopening plan put forth by Superintendent Zrike and his leadership team. As educators in the district we understand and strongly believe that Salem students deserve the very best education we can provide. They deserve to learn in an environment that is safe and engaging for ALL grade levels and they deserve to learn from teachers who are the very best in their chosen career. We are proud to be teachers and even more proud to work in a city where students are always considered first. However, as we watched and listened to Dr. Zrike's presentation Thursday night it became very clear that although the needs and safety of our students were mentioned often and rightly so, the needs and safety of the district's teachers and staff was not. This was not only extremely disappointing but deeply concerning as well.</p> <p>We are a family of educators. I am a kindergarten teacher at Horace Mann, my husband the civics teacher at Witchcraft Heights and our son a school adjustment counselor at Beverly Middle School. When you consider all the students that we as a family will come in contact with during the course of a school day, that is the potential for a lot of exposure and therefore a lot of spread. It's unsettling at best. We are not the only family in this situation, teachers who work here also live in other districts where their children attend school. We can ensure social distancing within our school building to some extent but there are no guarantees what happens once students and teachers leave our school buildings.</p> <p>As you are aware in the spring when schools closed Salem teachers rose to the occasion and within days were calling and connecting with families, recording read aloud stories, creating social media accounts to connect with students, and planning and delivering instruction through on-line formats and Zoom. This was no easy task, teachers spent hours into the late evenings recording and rerecording lessons, answering emails and text messages out of school hours including weekends, while sharing our private phone numbers with our families for the</p> <p>sake of our students' academic and social emotional well-being. It was difficult, exhausting and painful. Why would anyone in their right mind want to go this route again? Because it is the safest choice for students, teachers, staff and their families.</p> <p>It is inevitable that we will at some point return to remote learning because someone WILL become sick with this virus despite our best efforts to keep that from happening. Wouldn't our efforts be better spent planning remote learning now, making sure all families are connected to and have access to technology? We understand there is much inequity to overcome, as teachers, we can safely say that was the most difficult and concerning aspect to remote learning as we tried desperately to connect with the kids, we knew needed us most.</p> <p>We of course believe that children belong in school, so they have access to their teachers, their friends and food because we know that schools provide much more than an education. However, the school they are returning to will not be the engaging social and academic experience they know and deserve. Consider what that looks like for Salem's youngest students, the ones you decide to send back to school or not. Early childhood students sitting in desks 6 feet apart, wearing masks, not able to gather on the rug for a story, not able to play together, share materials, read a book together or hold a hand. No hugs from their teacher when they are crying or upset. I can't even begin to wrap my head around how to teach a kindergartener in this way. It's almost cruel and the social emotional aspect of this may do more harm than good. We all so desperately want to be back in front of our students but at what cost? Even one child, teacher or family member that becomes sick or even worst dies from this virus is one child. teacher or family member too</p>

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8/10/2020 10:24:58	Larissa	Haliw	57 Forrester Street	If you are not interested in physically sending your child to school, that's fine - the proposal of in-person start with social distancing for grades k-3 with additional considerations for kids on IEPs and other vulnerable populations is well reasoned and provides options for families who are able to keep kids home/want to keep kids home to do so while still allowing for families who want/need in-person education to happen. The options proposed a win-win for kids & teachers; the distancing, mask requirements, and outdoor proposal will likely make in-person education, at least through the start of the school year, safe for everyone. Honestly, parents who will opt for keeping kids home should just opt for that and stay out of this in-person conversation.
8/10/2020 10:37:58	Sharon Rose	Alterman	21 Longfellow Rd, Arlington, MA	<p>The claim put forth by the proposed plan is that families have a choice. The claim is that nobody will be forced to go in person (except maybe special education teachers and therapists due to specialized training that cannot be replaced?)</p> <p>But the fact is that we know we do not have adequate communication with our non-English speaking families. One only has to look at the fact that these meetings are not translated, the decreased participation in surveys, or the fact that the translation of the plan only went out on Sunday evening to understand why. Yet, according to the CDC, these students and families are the most at risk in our community. Yet, they are being left out of the discourse and discussion. Many will have only the fact that the school says it's safe to go on. They won't have heard the discussion about the state of the HVAC units, or other concerns being shared. They put their trust in the school to do what is best. This is why I believe that remote learning as the default option, with opt-in for in person learning, both full and part time, across grade levels and populations, is the only safe plan for the Salem Public Schools. Thank you.</p>
8/10/2020 11:09:13	Barbara	McLernon	25 Sunset Dr Peabody	<p>Good Evening</p> <p>I have been a paraprofessional in the district for 12 years. As we look to the Salem Returns plan, I feel that we para professionals, as a group, have been overlooked. We operate under the auspices of the Special Education department. And with the reopening plan, almost 100% of us will be expected to return. Most of the para corps are either aging or have children at home. Some of our aging Paras are taking care of elderly parents or raising grandchildren.</p> <p>Most of us work with the K-3 or Special Education students, all of whom will have difficulty with social distancing, hygiene and wearing masks, whether it is because of age, sensory issues or trauma. This puts us at risk, more so than the students or younger teachers.</p> <p>I ask you to reconsider the Salem Returns plan and go remote. We would all love to go back to school and be with our students, building trusting relationships and helping them learn, but not so much as to give up our lives for them.</p>

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8/10/2020 11:47:28	Cynthia	Hatcher	1 Dearborn St	<p>There is nothing I want more than for everything to go back to normal. I miss my students and my colleagues. I was looking forward to being able to return and welcome another group of 5 year olds into the Saltonstall building but what was normal is now impossible. We owe it to our school families, personal families and to ourselves to be sure that we are safe.</p> <p>We never expected that when we left that Friday in March it would be for the rest of the year. A lot of us were not prepared for remote learning and it was definitely a learning curve but we were successful. We were able to learn the technology, create videos and hands on activities/lessons and upload them to Google Classroom within weeks. We worked with our grade level colleagues as well as coaches to make sure that those lessons were engaging and relevant. We showed that we are always ready to go above and beyond for our students.</p> <p>I believe that the Salem teachers proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that they could- in the words of any Salts alum- do anything and that we will continue to rise to the occasion. We can create a fully remote plan that works for most students. We can educate and help children grow. Most of all we can do it SAFELY because our students and staff deserve that and because SAFETY has be the most important part of any approach we put in place. The fully remote plan will do that and it is the only real choice in a "summer of bad choices".</p> <p>Thank you for reading this, Cynthia Hatcher Saltonstall Kindergarten</p>

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			12 Grant Road S	<p>Dear Salem School Committee,</p> <p>Three teachers in Arizona were wearing masks and gloves while teaching summer school. They transferred Covid to each other. Is it luck that only one died?</p> <p>Restraining a child requires two or more teachers to be in room together. Restraint and removal of young children happens every day in every school. In fact, it happens multiple times a day. Specialized teams deal with the restraint and removal of these children.</p> <p>Bad behavior does not only occur in children aged 8 and over. How will teacher coverage work when staff is pulled from one room in order to manage the removal of a second grader?</p> <p>How many subs do you have ready to fill positions when K-3 staff becomes sick?</p> <p>We can say what we think to be true, but we should stick with what we know to be true.</p> <p>The State and Federal Governments have underfunded education for years.</p> <p>State and federal legislators have allowed schools to become the be all and end all of student wellness.</p> <p>Both elected and appointed officials have chronically refused to address the larger picture of child hunger, social welfare and homelessness not just in Massachusetts, but across the entire country for decades.</p> <p>Schools now serve as child protective services.</p> <p>Schools now serve as health clinics.</p> <p>Schools now feed students multiple times a day and even send students home with food for the weekend.</p> <p>Schools watch children before and after school hours.</p> <p>Why is this? Why have we allowed teachers and schools to become the catch-all for our culture?</p> <p>The answer is simple. The answer is because it is easy.</p> <p>It is easy to take advantage of a teacher's passion and dedication to the welfare of their students. They are not looking for a fight and as a result are consistently taken advantage of.</p> <p>Bringing students back into buildings ill-equipped to house them during a pandemic is not Salem's fault. State and Federal money should be poured into education in order to make up for prior chronic under-funding.</p> <p>When this committee votes to bring it's youngest students back to school this fall, it will allow our politicians another opportunity to sweep this countries massive societal problems under the rug. Once again we are looking to pass the problem on to the "next guy" because that's the easiest way out.</p> <p>This committee is now the "next guys". Don't help sweep the problems under the rug again. Strive to fix the problem permanently instead.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 12:10:21	Melissa	Moore	29 Boardman Street, #2 , Salem Ma	<p>Dear Madam Mayor and Members of the School Committee:</p> <p>I am writing this email in support of opening the Salem Public Schools this fall. I am the step-mother of two Carlton Elementary School students. I first would like to commend all the hard work done by the Salem Public Schools who put together such an impressive and thoughtful reopening plan. The task force considered such important issues as science, health, and equity. It provided options for our most vulnerable students and worked at equity in the free and appropriate public education guaranteed all our students. Our family's experiences have not been unlike the experiences of other students. "Distance learning" was difficult under the best of circumstances, and often was a miserable experience for both parent and child. As a social worker in a medical day program, I am usually unavailable to help with the school work, leaving the bulk of the school supervision on my husband during our parenting time. In addition, one of our students requires an IEP, and this student has not been getting what is needed to be a successful learner. Both our students were frustrated, lonely, and exhibited behavioral regression during the time that they were at home. They have now been going to a YMCA camp and have been doing extraordinarily well there. It has been a relief and joy to see them running and playing with other children again.</p> <p>In addition, I would be remiss if I did not advocate for our more vulnerable students. There are students whose parents do not speak or write English, or who are unable to read and write. There are students who are neglected and abused, and school was the only "safe place" for them. As workplaces and society have reopened, parents are required to return to work. Service workers most of all have been required to continue to work in person, and have been unable to take the time off to be home with their children. These parents have been cobbling together supervision for their children, however, these plans can be tenuous and inconsistent. I worry that in the fall there will be many very young children left home alone if there is not a school day.</p> <p>Those parents who feel uncomfortable with their children being in person at school have been given the option of keeping them home for distance learning. Those parents who are privileged to have the resources to hire tutors or make "pods" are free to do so. But there is a large majority of families in Salem who are both financially and emotionally stretched by this ongoing pandemic and the economic crisis we are currently undergoing. It is my belief that all children in Salem must be given the option of in-person schooling. The task force's plan has settled on fewer students in person; this was a decision I'm sure that was debated and difficult to come to. Be that as it may, the fact remains that not only will students fall behind if they are unable to attend school this fall, many students will no longer have access to a free and appropriate public education. And this is a disservice not only to our children, but to our society as a whole.</p> <p>For the above reasons along with many others, I urge the committee to vote in favor of the task force plan for in person school this fall.</p> <p>Very respectfully, Melissa A. Moore, JD, LCSW</p>
8/10/2020 12:27:06	Rick	Albert	23 Hammond Pl Woburn Ma 01801	<p>Let's keep this simple and open up when it's safe for all grades to do so. Perhaps the only reason that younger youths have been less known to spread the virus is that they have been kept inside more. We really don't know for sure.</p> <p>p.s. Please allow Jill Conrad a water-break if she's been reading these again:)</p>

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8/10/2020 13:02:04	Melissa	Moore	29 Boardman Street, #2 , Salem Ma	<p>Dear Madam Mayor and Members of the School Committee:</p> <p>I am writing this email in support of opening the Salem Public Schools this fall. I am the step-mother of two Carlton Elementary School students. I first would like to commend all the hard work done by the Salem Public Schools who put together such an impressive and thoughtful reopening plan. The task force considered such important issues as science, health, and equity. It provided options for our most vulnerable students and worked at equity in the free and appropriate public education guaranteed all our students. Our family's experiences have not been unlike the experiences of other students. "Distance learning" was difficult under the best of circumstances, and often was a miserable experience for both parent and child. As a social worker in a medical day program, I am usually unavailable to help with the school work, leaving the bulk of the school supervision on my husband during our parenting time. In addition, one of our students requires an IEP, and this student has not been getting what is needed to be a successful learner. Both our students were frustrated, lonely, and exhibited behavioral regression during the time that they were at home. They have now been going to a YMCA camp and have been doing extraordinarily well there. It has been a relief and joy to see them running and playing with other children again.</p> <p>In addition, I would be remiss if I did not advocate for our more vulnerable students. There are students whose parents do not speak or write English, or who are unable to read and write. There are students who are neglected and abused, and school was the only "safe place" for them. As workplaces and society have reopened, parents are required to return to work. Service workers most of all have been required to continue to work in person, and have been unable to take the time off to be home with their children. These parents have been cobbling together supervision for their children, however, these plans can be tenuous and inconsistent. I worry that in the fall there will be many very young children left home alone if there is not a school day.</p> <p>Those parents who feel uncomfortable with their children being in person at school have been given the option of keeping them home for distance learning. Those parents who are privileged to have the resources to hire tutors or make "pods" are free to do so. But there is a large majority of families in Salem who are both financially and emotionally stretched by this ongoing pandemic and the economic crisis we are currently undergoing. It is my belief that all children in Salem must be given the option of in-person schooling. The task force's plan has settled on fewer students in person; this was a decision I'm sure that was debated and difficult to come to. Be that as it may, the fact remains that not only will students fall behind if they are unable to attend school this fall, many students will no longer have access to a free and appropriate public education. And this is a disservice not only to our children, but to our society as a whole.</p> <p>For the above reasons along with many others, I urge the committee to vote in favor of the task force plan for in person school this fall.</p> <p>Very respectfully, Melissa A. Moore, JD, LCSW</p>

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8/10/2020 14:05:00	Don	Seiffert	10 Daniels St., Apt. 2	I strongly support the district's recommended plan for fall reopening which includes in-person classes for the youngest kids. After struggling with my first-grader all spring to attend classes and complete homework on a computer, I don't think there's any way to make learning on a laptop very effective without a parent who is dedicated to essentially being a teacher full-time. As long as there's an option for parents who don't want to risk sending their children, as well as an option for teachers who are at-risk, allowing in-person teaching for young kids is not only safe, but it's healthier in the long-term for kids who would otherwise fall behind, and provides critical socialization skills which is at least as important as academics for young kids. Please support the district's recommendation.
8/10/2020 14:30:55	Meeyoung	Lee	1C Nimitz Way	Over the last weekend I was notified by my daughter's preschool director at Salem YMCA that one staff who was not directly involved with children tested positive for Covid-19. Then, I received another email last night that two preschool children tested positive. The center ran a successful program for the past 7 weeks following a strict protocol including small groups, masks, face shields, sanitizers, and staggered drop-off/pick-up times. It seems that our younger children and their staff are equally susceptible to COVID-19.
8/10/2020 14:53:31	Carolyn	Townsend	111 Columbus Ave	<p>Concerns I have about the August 6th reopening plan and questions for you to think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What concerns me is the fear that teachers feel to return to a confined space and work with 16 others for 5 hours a day is real. How many people do you know who work in such a confined space with limited amenities like fresh air and running water during this pandemic with 16 other people? •What concerns me are The faces on my students when they are reprimanded or constantly corrected for comforting a student too closely or for being kind by sharing their pencils and other materials. (This is what K-3 student do all day, we have done a great job at teaching empathy and kindness.) Question for you, What will this do these students' mental health? •What concerns me is Spending my the entire day (with breaks of course) wearing a mask while teaching students sitting at a 6 foot to over 20 foot distance from me. Having those same students wear their masks all day while sitting isolated, 6 feet from anyone. Question for you: Why do we have public meetings over zoom? Why do government officials take off their masks when addressing the public? •What Concerns me is Having students enter into a sterile, unwelcoming environment. There will be no libraries, comfy seats, break spaces, flexible spaces, centers, morning meetings at the rug (or any time near anyone). Question for you: What options do you have in your workspace that makes it warm and welcoming? •What concerns me is When students or teachers are not at school, or come to school, then everyone in the class has to stay home for 14 days or more. When a student has a fever and is put into isolation in the school's Covid wing. Our social bubbles will be so large as we will never know how the families of our students are interacting and living their own lives. Question for you: What will this do to a student or teacher's mental health? Do you limit your interactions with others? I have been until now.

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8/10/2020 14:59:35	Kerry	McHugh	Everett, Ma	<p>Dear School Committee Members:</p> <p>I am asking that you vote for a remote start for all students, staff and faculty.</p> <p>Many studies are now coming out that children can get Covid-19 and that they can spread the disease. CDC just released a report on Friday that "Hispanic and Black children in particular were much more likely to require hospitalization for COVID-19, with Hispanic children about eight times as likely as white children to be hospitalized, while Black children were five times as likely." (NPR). Additionally, "Nearly 100,000 children tested positive for the coronavirus in the last two weeks of July, a new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics finds."(CBS News). These reports and others that have been released are a clear indication that remote learning for ALL students, teachers and staff is the sensible path forward.</p> <p>Thank You, Kerry McHugh School Counselor</p>
8/10/2020 15:22:23	Kathy Ward	Ward	3 Sutton Terrace	<p>I particularly love your intense, methodical approach to this nightmare. Knee jerk or politics as usual must NOT rule the day. I for one think the only way either the child or adult should be inside an actual classroom space SHOULD be if there is NO compromise to their safety and if the city and state are in agreement with the teachers that ALL precautions have been put in place.</p> <p>Thank you, former Salem teacher from WHES</p>
8/10/2020 15:34:11	Shannon	Mataragas	19 Pickman Road	<p>I write to express our family's support for the district's recommended plan allowing an IN-PERSON learning option for our youngest learners. Young children crave socialization and human interaction -it is basic human nature. Most of our youngest learners are too young to sit in front of a screen and / or piles of worksheets to "learn." It is very hard to motivate young children to learn and thrive in this kind of environment.</p> <p>The current option gives ALL families of young children an important CHOICE. A fully remote option does NOT give ALL families a choice— it favors those who wish to keep their children home, over families who believe IN-PERSON education is better suited to their children - it must be fair for everyone!</p> <p>Families of young children in the district who do NOT feel comfortable sending their kids to school deserve the right to choose this option. AND Families of young children in the district who DO feel comfortable sending their kids to school deserve the right to choose this option. PLEASE vote in support of an IN-PERSON OPTION for our youngest learners.</p>
8/10/2020 15:34:18	Victoria	Masone	99 Essex Street	<p>I would like to commend the District for their creativity in developing the Reopening Plan for Salem Schools. I firmly support the option of in-person learning and appreciate that they are offering that option while still serving those who wish to opt for remote. I appreciate the thought that went in to the "Hub" idea as a way to offer remote learners access to in-person connections. While I understand the position of the Teacher's Union, many other industries have returned to work safely including nurses, grocery workers and first-responders. Pediatricians agree that the risk of infection and spread is low in children. It will never be zero. I strongly support the development of outdoor learning spaces as I have commented in the past, and look to the District to commit additional funds for that initiative. I am asking the School Committee for an affirmative vote on the proposed Reopening Plan. Thank you.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 15:39:24	Jen	Feener	50 Home St.	<p>Dear Respected School Committee Members,</p> <p>Tonight I am writing to you not only as a veteran Salem Public schools teacher, having been in the district since 2011, but also as a parent of two young children and a Salem community member.</p> <p>Though I appreciate the hard work that has gone into the proposed re-opening plan, there are far too many faults for it to be voted into practice. First, as we all know the virus is ever-changing and there is still too much unknown. Just today, a new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics found over 97,000 children tested positive for the coronavirus from July 16 to July 30. As a result, much of the data from the surveys that was used to create the plan is likely outdated at this point. It also should be noted that this plan was created using only limited ideas and discussions from teachers and staff who will be on the front lines bringing this plan to fruition. Also, we all know fall is Salem's busiest time with increased travel to and from our city. This increases our risk overall and is sure to alter current case numbers.</p> <p>In addition, as stated by Dr. Yarrington during last Thursday's meeting, the latest research predicts a second wave in December, and it has been made clear that outdoor spaces are not possible come New England winter, so remote learning is almost guaranteed by then. Why ask some of our staff and students to adhere and adjust to a new platform of learning when we can't guarantee this model will be here come winter. If we are so fixated on adjusting and coping with this new model, limited learning will result. Instead we should solidify and enhance the remote platform which our community has been using for the past three and a half months. Without proper HVAC systems in place, a sufficient drinking water supply, and adequate space in proper settings that are conducive to learning, the current proposed plan is not safe or equitable for our students and staff. Why ask students and staff to try a dangerous learning format, one that is far different than what they crave in terms of sharing, proximity to others and general play, knowing things are likely to change again in just two short months.</p> <p>My colleagues and I work tirelessly to provide the very best for Salem students. Both inside and outside of the classroom, we work to make sure they get what they deserve, often thinking beyond curriculum frameworks and making sure their health and safety come first. Yes we want to be in the classroom. We want to high five them for jobs well done. We want to see them constructing science experiments together. But we do not want to risk their life to do so. We will continue to work tirelessly to provide them rigorous lessons that challenge them in new, innovative, remote ways. Furthermore, as a parent of two young children at home, I know remote learning isn't ideal. Trying to care for my own children while also teach and care for my students isn't an easy feat but is necessary at this time. Although it is challenging to teach and learn in the remote setting, if fully remote ensures all of my colleagues, all of Salem's students, and the community at large are safe, I will take the challenge every day.</p> <p>I urge you to vote no on the proposed plan and instead vote a fully remote model into place. Thank you.</p>

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8/10/2020 15:41:24	Tricia	Cullen	41 Walter St.	<p>Dear SPS School Committee, Dr. Zrike, and Mayor Driscoll,</p> <p>My name is Tricia Cullen, I am a 27 year veteran of the Salem Public Schools. I am also a life long resident of this great city.</p> <p>I am speaking to you today in regard to the plan that was proposed on Thursday, Aug. 6th. I have to say I was quite blindsided by this proposal. Your meeting the week before gave a strong indication that the hybrid model was the model to be voted on. Needless to say this was not the case.</p> <p>As a second grade teacher at Horace Mann, I feel as though my voice needs to be heard. I feel as though this proposed plan was not thought through. There is new and current data coming out every day about children and Covid-19. Forbes stated today, "new evidence suggests that children can spread this virus more efficiently than adults." You should read this article.</p> <p>This makes me extremely nervous. Not only for my students and their families health, but for my health, the health of my colleagues and the health of my own children. This virus has so many unknowns and having children, prek-3 enter the classroom, is a death sentence for someone. We have all learned that remote learning is not the most ideal way of teaching but this seems to be the plan that needs to move forward tonight to keep all healthy and safe.</p> <p>In the SPS schools, our focus on learning in the elementary grades has always been small group instruction in all subject areas, spending one on one time with each child as much as possible and to give emotional support when needed. This will not be able to take place. A disservice will be given to these children. There is no doubt that the classroom is where both students and teachers want and need to be, but only when safe. The majority of you will not be the one entering the classroom. You have the opportunity to be in an office where you are not interacting with young children, you are not the one that will have to remain more than 6 ft away from a student who is crying and needs you and you cannot console them, you will not be the one who won't be able to sit with a child because they are frustrated, you will not be the one having to constantly redirect your students to remain in their seats and socially distance, keep their masks on, wash their hands, clean their space. More time will be spent on reminding students to adhere to the CDC's guidelines on keeping oneself safe than actual teaching.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the teachers do not have a vote on this, we have to rely on the school committee to make this decision for us. This is why you, as the decision makers, need to hear the voices of the teachers, families, and our community. We are the ones on the front lines, not knowing if or when the worse case scenario of a child or staff member could happen. I can guarantee you that every teacher in this district is here to educate and support our students and their families. This is why I am asking you to vote against this proposed plan. Allow us to begin the school year remote and return when safe to do so! Children are young and resilient and we teachers can catch them up with what has been missed. We cannot get our life back.</p>

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8/10/2020 16:18:15	Geoffrey	Millar	29 Boardman St	<p>Good evening school committee members. You have a terribly difficult decision before you this evening. I don't envy your position at all. First, I want to acknowledge that there is not one right answer for everyone. To pretend that there is ignores the many divergent scenarios faced by our staff, students, and families. I'd suggest that you disregard the advice of anyone who tells you that "the only choice is clear," "the answer is simple," etc. That would seem to favor rhetoric over nuance, or at least illustrate an inability to acknowledge or consider diverse needs and circumstances.</p> <p>It's because there is no single right answer for everyone that I was so pleased with the innovative proposal put forward by the reopening committee that I broke into song near the end of the last meeting. They have clearly thought through these issues of health, equity, and learning in great depth. Many districts have just decided "we're going back" or "we're going remote." Not here. Our reopening group looked at the various populations in Salem and came up with a plan that addresses the needs of our differing at-risk populations. If I were forced to find fault, I'd argue that our fourth and fifth graders aren't equipped to administer their own remote learning the way a middle or high schooler might. I imagine there was some rationale to the grade breakdown, though.</p> <p>But let me go back to our at-risk populations. I think of the staff member or student with a high-risk medical condition of their own, or that of a household member. They should have a remote option, and they do. Some even have the means to hire help to administer remote learning. Of course, many don't. In Salem, I also think of many other at-risk populations. I think of the household where parents don't speak English, or do, but can't read or write. Supporting their learners brings a bigger challenge. I think of the student who is food insecure, and has working parent(s) who can't pick up school-provided meals because they're working during those hours. I think of the student we haven't heard from since we went remote. I think of the student whose parents ask, "do we work, and risk leaving our student home alone all day, or do we not work, and risk our housing, and food on the table to help them log on?" Maybe more than anyone, I think of the abuse victim who hasn't been face to face with a teacher in 6 months. In 2018 more than 900,000 suspected abuse reports were filed by educators. Reports have dropped dramatically since children stopped attending school in person and with nearly 80% of perpetrators being parents, we've taken away the one safe space that many children had, and locked them away full time with their abusers. (Reported by the Washington Post and Mother Jones) Like it or not, schools serve more roles than they should have to, but ignoring that doesn't make it go away.</p> <p>I'll say it one more time. There is no good choice here. Nothing will work for everyone. Please make the choice that respects the hard work that was put in by the reopening task force and endorsed by the superintendent that you just hired to bring leadership and innovation to the district. It would be a shame if you rejected the first proposal he put in front of you as superintendent.</p> <p>More importantly, please vote for this plan that attempts to address the dire needs of both kinds of at-risk populations. It would be a shame to tell either that they don't matter. Thank you.</p>

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8/10/2020 17:00:25	LeeAnn	ONeil	57 Buffum Street Salem, Ma	<p>I have worked in the Salem Public School system for 25 years. In all that time, our jobs as educators has been to minimize the risks that our students face. Now, we are being asked to put our students at risk. It goes against everything we've ever been taught or have learned in our careers. According to the opinions of the healthcare professionals, that risk is small and the data is inconclusive about the risks COVID poses to our students and staff. This is mostly due to the fact that we, as a country, did the right thing in March and closed all our school buildings. How do we know that we did the right thing? We know because we can see what is happening in schools all across the country that have already opened and welcomed students back to class. We are learning as each school opens that children can in fact shed the virus, and that they can spread the virus to others pretty quickly, and most importantly we are learning that it only takes one person to close a whole school down. How can we take this chance with our students, families and staff? I am asking each of you to think about the risk we are putting each other in. We only get once chance to do this right. We should start remotely, while the numbers are still low and it's too late.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
8/10/2020 17:04:52	Erika	Conklin	11 Savoy Rd	<p>I fully support Salem Teachers. Historically the school facilities have always been underfunded. We have been pushing for improvements to our bathrooms in SPS for years. Look at the high school bathroom. What makes you think that we would trust that miraculously Facilities are going to be fully functioning?</p> <p>I have been to School sponsored events this summer where I have seen administrators speaking to groups of students without wearing masks. Just because they say they are going to do something doesn't mean they are.</p> <p>If you need more examples of people not complying with guidelines in the city of Salem, take a look around at downtown, Salem and in our parks where masks are mandatory, yet so many people are not wearing them, this includes public servants. There is no enforcement and little compliance. We can not go back to school safely with the expectation that everyone will comply.</p> <p>Teachers are part of our community just like the students and parents, each life should be cherished and valued. The safety for the families, students, and teachers should be guaranteed before we send anyone into a potentially life threatening scenario.</p> <p>We should be fully supporting our teachers that have collectively decided that school should be remote for everyone's safety.</p>
8/10/2020 17:32:16	Christine	Makary	28 Arbella St	<p>1-if Covid is still a global pandemic then we should treat it as a pandemic. I don't think anyone should be in person at this time. If teachers are made to work, you should offer hazard pay.</p>
8/10/2020 17:43:11	Elizabeth	Sullivan	1 Amanda Way	<p>The FAQs on the reopening plan received this afternoon say that parents need to decide if their children will go remote or in person by Monday August 17th, but earlier in the document it says that the detailed procedures for each school will be available by Friday August 28th. How can we be required to make a decision without all of the details regarding our school procedures?</p>

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8/10/2020 17:51:34	Charles	Barton	26 Marlborough Road	<p>Dear School Committee Members,</p> <p>I do not envy the position you are in to make the decision about returning to school in a pandemic, especially considering the potentially terminal effects of the illness. Even though the anecdotal evidence states the probability is low of spreading this disease in and through the younger students, there is no true data to support that younger students are immune or not carriers of the disease, just as there is little evidence to support whether one can be re-infected with the disease. In fact, there are medical reports of younger students coming down with a secondary infection to COVID-19 which is equally concerning. There is still so much that is unknown. The decision to return to in-person schooling with pre-K – 3 students has the potential to put many innocent lives into danger because that contagion probability isn't ZERO.</p> <p>You are asking the students, faculty, and their respective families to put their lives on the line based on the belief of the low probability of contraction. I would hope that you consider placing some collateral on the line linked to your decision. If you believe in the evidence so completely that you are willing to put other people's lives on the line, then you should feel equally as confident to put your elected position on the same line. Should a student, faculty member, or a respective family member lose their life as a result of contracting this disease connected to the school setting, you step down from your position. This will reinforce the confidence in your decision and allow people to understand and accept that you take responsibility for your decision.</p> <p>Being in the position to make a decision that could jeopardize an innocent life should never be taken lightly. In making this decision you must balance that decision with all potential outcomes. I hope you take your position and the effects that your decision will have on these individuals extremely seriously, as if it matters, because it does.</p> <p>As leaders, you must lead, but the best leaders would never ask of their people something they would not do themselves.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and look forward to your demonstration of personal strength.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 17:55:58	Lori	Marenda	115 North Street Salem MA	<p>Dear Members of the Salem School Committee, We are living through a historic time. When we left our classrooms on March 12th, never in a million years did I imagine that we would be teaching remotely for the rest of the school year. I miss my students every single day. Those personal interactions of the high fives in the hallways, making silly Ms. Marenda History jokes, and always my goodbye message when the bell rings at the end of every class - "Be good, Be safe, and Be kind." However, we all knew how deadly Covid was and continues to be in our community. We all stepped up to the difficult task of remote learning in a short amount of time. We connected with our families. We quickly learned on the job what technology would hopefully work so we could teach our lessons. After I would teach my lessons, some of my students wanted to stay online with me to chat and socialize. I always tried to stay positive and upbeat for my students - and there were days where it was a struggle for me. But I did it. I love Salem. I live and work here for a reason. Our students in our community are why I teach in Salem. I would NEVER want to risk their lives for a deadly virus. They deserve better. And as adults that work with students, we deserve better too.</p> <p>As a district, you have the power to make a positive decision that will impact the lives of thousands of children and hundreds of educators in our community. Every day, there are reports of more children getting Covid. Why are you risking their lives? To me, it is a no brainer. Please do not vote for the plan of PreK-3rd grade and high risk populations to teach in person.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>
8/10/2020 17:57:15	Megan	Otteson	6 DERBY ST.	<p>I am a 1st grade teacher at Bentley. During the K-5 Educator focus group (of which I was a participant) Dr. Zrike said that the Bentley is the only school without an HVAC system/air filtration. The plan makes no mention of how this is being handled, nor is there any mention of our building lacking an HVAC system. I have been told that our heaters blowing unheated air will be sufficient, but it is my understanding that that would be recirculated air, not fresh air from outside, nor does it remove possibly contaminated air to the outside. Also, during the focus group, when we split into groups of about 10 K-5 teachers, every teacher said that they would feel unsafe returning to the classroom with students. This sentiment was emphasized by my fellow Bentley teachers in the focus group because we don't have a guarantee of having proper air ventilation and filtration because our school does not have an HVAC system. How can you say you are adequately mitigating the risk for teachers when an entire school is at a disadvantage in regards to air quality/ventilation? I urge you to vote no on the proposed plan and approve a plan for 100% remote learning for all students in Salem.</p>
8/10/2020 18:00:25	Emily	Udy	8 Buffum Street	<p>Thank you to the administration, and members of the public who participated in working groups to develop the proposed plan for the schools. I support the proposal outlined by the superintendent at the meeting held last Thursday. I feel confident that our school officials are acting with the best of intentions, and weighing risks of various options. I am especially appreciative of the different levels of customization to address unique needs within the community. Features of the plan including weekly in-person "Hub" meetings, as well as small group mentoring resolve some of my fears about fully remote learning.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:18:21	Lori	Horsman	1 Courageous Court	<p>Dear Esteemed Members of the School Committee:</p> <p>While I appreciate the level of work that has been put into the reopening plan, much of the focus has been on the extent to which children transmit the virus or don't transmit the virus. If children are in the building, then adults are in the building. If it is not safe for adults to be together for professional development, reopening committees or other various activities involved in starting up this school year, then it is not safe for them to be in the building together to teach.</p> <p>The effect on children is not even fully known. An article in the New York Times on August 9th, stated that at least 97,000 children were infected in the last two weeks of July alone. Over 338,000 children have been infected since the pandemic began so more than a quarter of that number were in those 2 weeks. Many schools that have opened were shut down very quickly due to positive cases.</p> <p>There are no good choices in this unprecedented situation but safety must come before ALL else. This will not be the easiest solution for parents, teachers or students. We are all worried about the social emotional state of our students if they continue to learn from home. We should also worry about the trauma that would impact our students if someone in their building became very ill or passed away from this dreadful virus. We must also worry about the stress level of teachers who go in daily wondering if this will be the day that they catch the virus. This is not an environment that is conducive to effective teaching. To prioritize some students over others still puts people at risk. With the plan that is proposed, some of our staff are asked to come into the buildings whereas others are not. We are asking some teachers to risk more than others.</p> <p>It is more difficult to teach some students remotely than it is to teach others but we have never let difficulties keep us from providing what our students need. In the spring, our ESL department planned lessons that were rigorous, accessible through differentiation, and engaging for our students. With the accountability, grading, and schedules in place this time, we can do even better. With scheduled ELD classes for ALL ESL students, we will be able to meet with our students at specific times in order to assist them with the content of their other classes. We could also attend some live content classes with them. If we are required to be in the building would someone come in to teach them content after we have taught their ELD class?</p> <p>Also in the spring, we reached out to students daily to address their social emotional needs. We conducted live meetings with groups of students in order to connect, play games, and make sure everyone was okay. We learned much from the spring and will continue to improve upon our craft as we have always striven to do. Please trust that our teachers are fully capable of meeting the academic and social needs of our students.</p> <p>What data do we have that says ESL students will do worse than other students learning remotely when given a schedule and having accountability to attend? Aren't they more at risk in the building right now than at home? In this current climate especially, we should really think hard about why we are sending this particular group of students into the building and exposing them to a risk that we are unwilling to expose other children to.</p> <p>I urge the School Committee to vote for fully remote teaching until we can ALL come back safely together. It has been stated, not IF but WHEN we have to go fully remote, we will do so. We should ALL be able to use this time to prepare our fully remote lessons so we are not ill-prepared when we inevitably close the schools once again. Let's vote on the side of consistency in the structure of their learning rather than in the building and out again multiple times.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:20:33	Liz	McGovern	8 Lyme St	I want to thank the school committee, Dr. Zrike, and Deb Connerty for the hard work that went into developing this plan for reopening. SEPAC had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Zrike, Deb, and other PPS staff a few weeks ago where we discussed how to approach special education needs. Our concerns were welcomed, heeded, and considered. We have had the pleasure of working with Deb for many years and have every confidence that any reopening plan for special education students will have been thoroughly thought out from a variety of angles. SEPAC is comprised of parents and we share all the same concerns about reopening that everyone has. We as parents have not made any final decisions about how to proceed for our own children next year, but we do know whatever format is settled on, either by the district or by us as individuals, that under Deb's leadership Pupil Personnel Services will continue to provide the supports our special education students need and are entitled to. This past spring, we witnessed the ingenuity and creativity from PPS to make sure IEP meetings were done, therapies continued, and communications reached parents and guardians. There is no doubt that creativity and ingenuity will carry forward with any reopening plan. PPS has always had the best interests of some of our neediest learners at heart. This has not changed and will not change. Lastly, we want to encourage families to reach out to SEPAC and/or to their team chairperson if they have specific concerns that can be addressed, but with the understanding that maintaining patience and flexibility will be needed above all else as we as a community work toward our school reopenings, whatever that turns out to mean.
8/10/2020 18:25:59	Zannie	Duffy	Salem	What are School Resource Officers (SROs) doing to support our students and community during this time of remote learning? How does their role factor into the reopening plan? Are they still getting paid? Do we really need them at all?

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:33:28	Michael	Collins	238 Loring Ave	<p>Members of the Committee, Superintendent Zrike, Staff and families of Salem Public Schools,</p> <p>My name is Michael Collins and I am a resident of this city and a member of the staff at Witchcraft Heights Elementary School. I am presenting myself to you by way of this video, on behalf of my family of colleagues, family of students attending Salem Public Schools and my immediate family. My wife Lisa is a member of the staff at The Horace Mann Lab School, and my son is employed by Beverly Public Schools. As you are all well aware, we are enduring a fatal contagious disease that continues to infect all walks of human life, globally. Without a cure, a vaccine or rigorous preventive and precautionary mandates in place we are, as a society, powerless over this fatal, infectious, virus. Yes, we have been given solutions to safeguard against the potential spread of this lethal illness but there are no guarantees that we will not become infected when we compromise these suggested solutions. Social distancing, wearing of facial coverings, washing of hands, dedication, devotion and vigilance to uphold these things that for some of us have become social norms. For others it appears to be nothing more than a nuisance or an infringement upon one's constitutional rights. This being said, unity among all citizens is nonexistent with regard to this medical catastrophe. Therefore, this virus will continue to thrive amongst our young and old. Know this, we do not have control over this virus, it has control over us. It will not just go away eventually, and we are not making remarkable progress in areas of testing, vaccination and cures. And the national data for infected cases and deaths may be considered by some of our medical experts as low, due to ineffective testing. In essence, there is a potential killer on the loose in our community and it preys on large gatherings in confined indoor spaces and uses air borne water droplets as a vehicle to infect all in its wake. If there was a potential killer in our schools would you send your children there, to sit and wait for it to act upon our students? Would you, the committee, send your educators, custodial, clerical and food service staff to these buildings, knowing that their lives could be in jeopardy? Would you rush to those buildings yourself so you too could fall victim to the potential harm that this killer could inflict? What if we could take alternative measures to accomplish our potential educational goals and keep everyone safe in the meantime?</p> <p>If I or my wife contract this virus, as a result of your vote, sending us back to our respective school buildings, and eventually die, will you compensate my three sons accordingly?</p> <p>I have attended the funeral of a student from my school. This is something I do not care to do again. I have never attended funeral services for a colleague and would very much like to keep it that way.</p> <p>On behalf of my colleagues, students and families of Salem public schools, I call on you to use commonsense and set aside all opinions political, budgetary and agenda driven, when casting your vote. Do not send us back to our schools, using an in-person model, until such time that you can positively guarantee that staff and students are safe and protected from this fatal infectious disease. For you to vote to send staff and students back to an in-person environment could potentially lead to death. Is this something that would sit well on your conscience?</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to express my feelings on this critical matter and I thank each of you for your dedicated service to our city. I will continue to remain supportive of my colleagues and members of the Salem Teachers Union and I urge you, the voting members of this committee, to grant the SPS staff your serious consideration when casting your vote.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:42:54	Tremain	Surro	25 Marion road	We understand the seriousness of the situation, we also feel like the loudest voices should not be the determining factor in the final , that being said we thing the plan for the lower grades (k-3) is what needs to happen, these early years of development are important to young children, we believe that the measures being put forth for in person learning are more than adequate and additional measures can be addressed as they arise. We would choose in person learning first and opt into at home if the situation called for it.
8/10/2020 18:46:35	Josh	Turiel	238 Lafayette Street	I would like to commend the Salem Public Schools team for doing such a professional job in working through an incredibly difficult situation. No decision like this will be ideal for everyone, but this plan is well-thought out and has good science behind it. Regardless of the decision of the School Committee here, I am really heartened by the work the department has done and the effort to explain and communicate it.

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:50:52	Katie	Corriveau	13 Dudley Street, Peabody	<p>Dear Mayor Driscoll, Superintendent Zrike and School Committee Members,</p> <p>I am adding my voice, once again, to join with teachers, parents, and community members across Salem in expressing my concerns regarding in-person instruction in Salem's schools this Fall. The reopening plan that was presented to the School Committee on August 6th had many positive elements. I truly appreciate the efforts made to gather information from our families and our staff, as well as the research and time given by members of the task force reopening subcommittees.</p> <p>As teachers, we have been told in several emails from leadership not to get 'too wrapped up' in the news or social media. I agree – the news is awful and it is depressing! However, it shines a light on what is taking place in our country at this very moment. If you "were" to read/watch the news, you would know that children have begun returning to school, and classrooms and school buildings in those states are shutting down almost immediately as a result of COVID-19 transmission. If you "were" to check social media, you would notice a great deal of teachers and families in our own district are expressing their own concern for in-person learning. The surveys that we received in June and July do not reflect our current concerns or wishes with regard to our reopening. Many parents have shared publicly that they originally were open to the idea of an in-person/hybrid learning, but have now changed their minds. On the other hand, most staff members have been hesitant of any type of in-person learning model. Many who were open to, perhaps, a hybrid model have since changed their minds as we draw closer to the start of school. We know our buildings and we know the District's capacity to provide what we need in order to meet DESE guidelines. We know that it is unsafe to return to our classrooms at this time.</p> <p>Most importantly, we know our children. The in-person learning model suggested for the PreK-3 grades will NOT resemble typical teaching/learning. Young students, like my first graders, need to feel the excitement of learning, they need to move around, they need to work together in partners or groups, they need to see my smiling face (or any other facial expression). Try as we might, these things simply cannot happen in our classrooms this year. Those are some of the social elements of our day. Practically speaking, my students will not be able to see my mouth as it forms letters and words during Foundations. We will not always be able to hear one another as a result of mask wearing and distance. We will not be able to sit together in small groups at a "small group table" for the reading, writing, math and science instruction that is typically a majority of our day. We will not be able to sit together in a circle on a rug to learn new content and discuss with a peer. Every single moment of our day together will be impacted by COVID 19 when it comes to in-person learning.</p> <p>I truly believe that in-person instruction is the best thing for me and for my students, but it is just not safe to do so at this time. If you were to ask any of my former students what my job is, they will tell you that it was to keep them safe, to keep them happy and to help them learn. You see, as an early childhood educator, safety and happiness comes first. Learning cannot take place unless a child feels safe and happy. I have reminded my students of this consistently throughout the years. To know that my number one priority is their safety has helped my students feel comfortable when the fire alarm sounds or when we have to lock down/evacuate for an intruder drill. It is the reason why they know that they can ask me for just about anything, share just about anything, and return at any time after they leave first grade to celebrate, share or ask anything of me. Please help me to keep my students' (and their families) safety my number one priority this year.</p> <p>Thank you, Katie Corriveau Saltonstall School</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:54:27	Kate	Bouffard	26 Hemenway Rd. Swampscott	<p>Dear SPS Leadership,</p> <p>Please, please, please consider the decision you are about to make very carefully from all perspectives as literally lives are at stake. To think otherwise is both irresponsible and reckless. All of the talk about data, trends, projections and perceived safety are just that, it's talk and no amount of speculation on what could or should work is sufficient. This isn't a new pilot learning program you are looking to roll out, it is throwing staff students and families into a potential powder keg of an environment just waiting for a spark to set it off, and odds are it will not end well. I am writing to you to join with teachers, parents, and community members across Salem in expressing my concerns regarding in-person instruction in Salem's schools this Fall. As a veteran teacher in the SPS who has worked in several buildings over the years I feel that I have a strong working knowledge of our system and facilities, and despite best efforts I think we all know that those conditions alone are not optimal on a good day let alone in a global pandemic.</p> <p>The return to school plan that was presented to the School Committee on August 6th had many positive elements, but has not done enough to ensure the health of our community moving forward. I remain very concerned about the potential spread of COVID-19 and the danger presented not only to those involved in in-person learning, but everyone they come in contact with. Simply "trusting" our families to not send their students to school, especially the youngest ones, if they have symptoms or have been exposed is naive and completely irresponsible. In my 12 years I have seen students almost daily report to school vomiting, with a fever (often masked by Tylenol for the first few hours given at home) and more. There have been so many instances already where infected children have gone to camps and summer programs and exposed hundreds unknowingly. How is it safe to even attempt bringing students into the building in conditions like this?</p> <p>I believe that in-person instruction is the best thing for students, but believe that we should begin with a remote learning mode. From that point, our community can work together to bring back very small groups of students in a thoughtful, gradual and equitable way to ensure that we are being as safe as possible. This is too important of a decision and choice to rush into some grand plan on paper that puts any of our staff, student and families lives at risk. Please make the I conservative, cautious, and responsible choice and vote no to this proposed plan. Is a few weeks of disjointed, sci-fi movie like in person teaching really worth even one funeral? Is that something you want on your conscience? I have lost a beloved student to a senseless tragic accident already and we still grieve for him at Carlton years later. I can't even bear to think about going through something like that again whether it be with a student or staff member, I don't think any of us can. So please, think very carefully and I pray you make the right choice, the safe choice for all of us and vote no on this proposed plan.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Kate Bouffard Art Specialist and 4th Grade Math teacher Carlton Innovation School</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 18:56:10	Rachael	Kozlowski	15 Tsitsinos Drive	<p>Salem Public Schools needs to plan for a fully remote educational plan for the start of the 2020-2021 academic year for all grades, PreK-12. In viewing the School Committee meeting on August, 6, it was evident that much hard work had been put into the plan presented by Dr. Zrike. While I was relieved to see a remote educational approach for grades 4-12, that relief was quickly replaced by frustration and fear for my colleagues in PreK-3, who are expected to return to the building for in-person instruction.</p> <p>The reasons given for this choice were based on the idea that students in these early grades need strong foundations to prepare for future education in later grades and to prepare these students for the remote learning the district is expecting to have happen in the later fall. To support the safety of this choice, a doctor who works with high risk pregnancies spoke of the minimal risk presented by small children in both getting and spreading COVID-19, and that since cases were few and far between, there should be no worries about bringing those students together with teachers and staff. A follow-up town hall further discussed the risks and explained that since COVID-19 is an airborne virus, solid ventilation and outside classrooms should be sufficient to provide safety measures.</p> <p>Based on recent research, case studies, and the realities of the infrastructure of the Salem Public Schools, that the facts that supported the decision for any type of in-person instruction is based on are flawed or incomplete. Today, Time reported that nearly 380,000 US children have tested positive for COVID-19, with nearly 100,000 testing positive in the last two weeks of July. CDC additionally reports that Black and Hispanic children are at risk for severe COVID-19 symptoms requiring those children to be hospitalized at rates 5 and 8 times more likely than white children. Although fatality rates remain low for children, recent studies are showing that children are suffering similar long-term effects as those of adults. This directly challenges the idea that little children are safe from both getting the virus and passing it on.</p> <p>In looking at the reasoning that students need to be in-person to get those foundational skills and to learn how to go to school, I challenge you to show me how that is possible with current safety measures. Teaching no longer consists of a teacher at the front of the room lecturing for an hour, while students take notes and learn. This is especially true for the younger students. Images shown at the last school committee meeting showed young children sitting with masks in front of computers at desks. How is that a true "in-person" experience? If teachers and staff must remain six feet away, how does in-person provide the younger students with the support that they definitely need? How much foundational education will be provided when staff are focused on keeping students seated, 6 feet away from each other, and working individually? How is that in-person education so different from remote learning?</p> <p>Finally, the safety question. Although the HVAC systems across the district have been looked at, no repairs have yet been completed. If ventilation is a key factor in creating safe environments, then no discussion of returning should even be undertaken until those repairs are completed. With bubblers not running, how will students and staff get water? What about sharing of bathrooms, when in past years, most lacked soap and paper towels? How can we can say that aging school buildings are safe, when most Boston employers won't let their workers come back to relatively new office buildings with adequate ventilation and sanitation? And finally, if our own school committee will not meet in person to discuss in-person education, that in itself should be the deciding factor.</p> <p>I know that no decision you make will satisfy everyone. There is only one decision you can make though that will at least keep everyone safe, and that is to have Salem Public Schools go fully remote for the fall for all students.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 19:04:38	Heather	Wilks-Jones	6 Burnside Street	<p>Dear SPS Leadership and School Committee Members,</p> <p>First, let me thank you for your tireless dedication to our school community. I know that this is a terrible time for everyone, and I so deeply appreciate your commitment to, and compassion for, our students.</p> <p>Right now, I am writing to you as both a proud SPS staff member and SPS parent to ask you to adopt a robust remote learning model this fall for our schools.</p> <p>Returning to the classroom, whether it is via a hybrid or all in-person model, is simply not safe for our students or our staff.</p> <p>I fear that our youngest learners, which I work with at Horace Mann, will not be getting the positive foundation for school that they so badly need. The classroom they will be entering will be a place full of fear and stress, despite our best efforts as staff members to keep that from happening. There is just no way around it. The smiles, the high fives, the hugs from classmates, the cooperative games, will all gone. The tears that our students cry when they miss their family or when they have been hurt can no longer be wiped away and students no can longer be consoled by a caring and trusted adult. I fear that sending these young students back will only create negative and fearful feelings around school. I feel so strongly that our duty in kindergarten is to provide a positive and wonderful foundation for the school years to come, and I worry that beginning the school year in person, at this time, will not provide that.</p> <p>Anyone who has been with young students knows that the school year is a parade of sniffles, coughs, and sneezes. How are we to know when a cough is a covid-19 symptom? According to the plan, any student who displays cough, congested or stuffy nose, sore throat, and many other symptoms that we see with incredible frequency in the classroom, is to be taken out of the classroom. We are to immediately separate the student and text "911" to the nurse, who will collect the student in full PPE. Not only is this likely terrifying for students, but teachers and paraeducators are not trained to know what symptoms are related to Covid and what are normal for a classroom - in fact, in so many cases, they overlap.</p> <p>If schools reopen, we know that they will shut down again. It is only a question of when, but more importantly, at what cost. I beg you not to put staff and students in harm's way, and to begin the year remotely.</p> <p>Our district has a proud and long history of serving students, and as I said, I am so proud and grateful to be a part of this district - I know, without a doubt, that we can offer students a safe and effective learning experience through a remote plan.</p> <p>I ask you again to please adopt a remote learning model to begin this school year and to continue to work and ensure that none of our staff or students are endangered.</p>

Timestamp	Please identify your first name	Please provide your last name	Please provide your address	Please write your public comment to the Salem School Committee in the space provided below.
8/10/2020 19:16:23	Janice	Fischer	5 Nelson Way, Wilmington, Ma 01887	<p>Dear SPS Leadership,</p> <p>I am writing on behalf of myself and my colleagues. I am a grade 1 /2 teacher at the Carlton Innovation school. I know there has been countless hours put into our current proposed plan however so much has changed and continues to change daily. We now know young children are getting Covid -19. With summer camp activities and in places that have begun in person instruction already the number of childhood cases of Covid -19 is on the rise.</p> <p>As a grade 1 /2 teacher in the SPS I am strongly against in person instruction at this time. I would like nothing more than to be united with my students but only when it is safe to do so. There's so much we don't know yet about this virus and it is unfathomable to me that we are choosing to find out in this way. To expose ourselves in a situation that none of us would otherwise choose to do so if it was left to us to decide.</p> <p>In the spring I had a student in my classroom who had a family member contract Covid -19. We were learning remotely at the time. Now fast forward to this fall. That same scenario is almost certain to repeat itself. This time however, the outcome will be very different. Others will be exposed and contract the virus. I fear for my health, my colleagues health, my student's health, and the health of my own family. We also now know that even if we get the virus and survive it is likely that we may be left with long term health issues. Adults and children alike.</p> <p>As parents and teacher's it is our job on a daily basis to take information we have and make educated decisions and act on what is best for our children. Why are we not doing that here? Sure, we know that our Pre-K to grade 3 students will benefit from in person teaching but we all know that this is not the only solution. We have to step up and make the best decisions based on what we know. And what we know is that to start school in a hybrid model is putting too many people at risk. The numbers are on the rise. Let's start remotely and then transition our students back into school when we know without a doubt that it is safe to do so.</p> <p>There is no question that we all love our students and would like nothing more than to be with them once again in our classrooms. We spend thousands of our own money yearly to make our student's classroom experiences the best it can be.</p> <p>As teachers who devote ourselves to our children and who are now being thrust to the forefront of still unprecedented times please consider and take into account our concerns and fears in this matter.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Janice Fischer Grade 1 /2 teacher Carlton Innovation School</p>