

Worthington School Board and Dr. Bowers,

We have a couple of sayings we use in our family. The first one is, "You have an opportunity to have your say, but you may not always get your way." I feel as though my family and others like ours have not had the opportunity to have our say about school restarting and I wanted to use this letter for that purpose. We may not get our way and we will come to terms with that, but I feel I can no longer be silent on this matter.

The second saying we use is "PATIENCE- FLEXIBILITY – COOPERATION". Our family has tried to remain patient as we realize there are lots of decisions to be made, lots of perspectives to acknowledge, liability issues to consider, etc. We have tried to be flexible for the last 5 months as certain decisions had to be made, health status changes weekly and daily, and events were canceled. We want to cooperate with our school, government, church, and community. However, for the better part of a month, I do not feel Worthington School District has reciprocated these same standards.

Since March 13th , we have taught our kids to be patient as our leadership makes decisions about a virus we know nothing about. We complied with everything that was asked of us. We found the "good" in every disappointment. We have read every email, every blog post, every communication given about our schools. We have shown grace when possible.

Since July 1st , Dr. Bowers has written about several options of what school may look like when we start back. There have been many changes since then and I'm sure between now and August 31st , there will be many more. We can be flexible. The issue I have is that there doesn't seem to be much cooperation from the school district on these plans.

I realize we live in a time of uncertainty and ever-changing times. But I would think that since you've had essentially 3 possible plans in place since at least July and probably longer, we would have a little more information and detail of how those plans would work if they were put in place. The fact that we don't know what the day would look like – (in hybrid or remote learning), how much teacher interaction we can expect, how grades, IEP plans, attendance, College Credit Plus, etc would be affected for any of the plans, is very concerning to me. I'm not saying we should have every last detail figured out – again we can be patient and flexible, but if you want our family to cooperate, we could use more information than what we have been given. And from what I have heard from several teachers, they feel the same way. I would think that if you are going to lay out possible plans, you would have considered how this will affect parents who work, those with special needs, those who depend on the school for meals, etc.

And maybe you have considered all of these things. Then my problem would be in how this has been communicated. Our kids have enough to deal with without the adults in their lives causing more drama. When sports and band were initially decided to be

suspended, the communication was the worst I have seen to this point. It should never have leaked out the way it did, but once it did, clear and immediate communication from our principals, athletic directors, coaches, and our Superintendent should have been given. Not wait until the next day after another sleepless night and anxious thoughts about the unknown.

For our family, it all comes down to this: We feel we no choice. Families that are concerned about health, the lack of stability, learning expectations, etc have choices for how they do “remote learning”. Those who want their kids in person learning have no options other than paying a ton of money for private school. I think discussions and consideration for all perspectives can be done in a civil manner to come to some kind of solution. We are willing to be part of that solution. We respectfully ask that you reconsider opening the schools for in person learning for those who need and want that option.

The most important thing you can do for our family and our community is to make a decision that will keep our students safe and provides stability during this chaotic time. We have had our say and now we will be patient, flexible, and cooperative even if we don't get our way. Thank you.

Russ, Carrie, Noah (12 th), Jared (11 th), Hannah (8 th) Wiley

Carrie Wiley
[2066 Sutter Pkwy](#)
[Dublin, OH 43016](#)

My name is Colleen Stoller, and our family is part of the Worthington School District, with an address of [1076 Putney Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43085](#). I would ask that the following matters are addressed by the Board in the August 10, 2020 board meeting.

- 1 Can you clarify if sports and band will be taken away if we start all remote learning on 8/31/20? I would like to know how the recommendation from CPH is being interpreted when school starts .
- 2 Worthington is contracted with CPH to address our cities public health concerns. Since, they are our contracted health department can they address why they are not looking at Worthington separate from the metropolitan area of Columbus? Total COVID-19 cases in 43085 zip code: Only between 232-333 (which is at most 1.83% of all Franklin County cases). Total Worthington deaths: 42 (note the amount of long term care deaths – 97.6% of Worthington's deaths)

Thank you,
Colleen Stoller

Submitted for public comment to Worthington School Board, Meeting scheduled for August 10

Dear Worthington School Board,

We have all seen the facts that state both – kids should go back to school – and evidence that they shouldn't. We are Americans. I am a true believer in **personal responsibility**. I am sure by now, you recognize that we are a fairly educated society here in Worthington. We have had this COVID situation now for the past several months. We understand there are risks. My solution: Let us be the ones to decide if our kids can go to school and participate in extracurricular activities. If our kids, or our parents, don't feel comfortable, then they should have the option to OPT OUT. Let us sign a waiver, release the school from any responsibility, and move on.

I also don't like the fact that given both sides of the argument, and the strong case made for both sides, the board has decided to err on the side of total control. Taking the power out of our hands is not what Americans are about. If you are to lean one way or the other... you should lean toward our freedom of choice. The decision to shut everything down, leans toward totalitarianism. I would feel much better with the power in my own hands, vs. 1 – or a couple of individuals making that decision for me and my family. I understand that is your job, however, you do have options. Shutting everything down is past the tipping point.

As of last week there hasn't been one reported case of a student passing the Coronavirus to a teacher - in the world. Think about that.

You know that we all face risks every day we step outside our door. There is a greater chance of a kid being killed in a car accident than dying of coronavirus. There is no end in sight when it comes to risks in our everyday life. This just happens to be what is getting all the media hype for now. It is concerning – don't get me wrong. I haven't seen my parents in months. But it is time to move forward. I heard the flip side of children not going to school is much worse for their emotional well-being. There are lots of individuals out there who don't respect the situation – (i.e. don't wear masks, attend crowded gatherings, etc). However, again, we can't live our lives based on how others live. I want to live on my terms. Our kids need to get back to school.

I just read an article from the CDC on “The Importance of Reopening America's Schools This Fall.”

Let ME make the decision for my children... PLEASE. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Chris Demko
614.430.9353

August 6, 2020

Dear Members of the Worthington Board of Education and Dr. Bowers,

I am writing to support of your commitment to Worthington Schools being an anti-racist school district. We as a society will not be able to tackle the staggering challenges facing us without everyone contributing their talents. When society preferences one group or culture, we are kept from working together effectively and efficiency. Inclusive policies and increased cultural competence and anti-racism curricula are needed to achieve this aim. I fully support these measures.

I expect that you will receive messages asking you rescind your recent affirmation to become an anti-racist school district and the measures that will come from it. I urge you to withstand this pressure and stay the course of anti-racism and cultural competence. This week we received in the mail an anonymous letter containing thinly veiled white supremacist propaganda expressing concerns with the board's anti-racism resolution. We will not fall for this cowardly, unsigned letter sent via pre-sorted mail and its attempt to stir up hate in Worthington.

Stand firm on the right side of history: the side of inclusion and anti-racism.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth L Black
[334 Highland Ave](#)

Dear Worthington BOE,

I am writing in regards to the suspension of extracurricular activities in our district. We have roughly 25,000 active cases in all of Ohio with a population of 11.69 million which is .002 %. I'm sure you have seen all the numbers and I know you still feel the need to blindly follow the recommendations of Columbus city health, who has equated us to the largest inner city school district in the state. I would like to know what makes Worthington think they are superior to every other comparable school district, Dublin, Arlington, Olentangy, Westerville, New Albany, Bexley, Pickerington, Hilliard etc... in thinking they know what is best for our children. Why are you so positive that Worthington should be the only school to not have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities? Do you think this decision is truly what is best for our children?

If so, regardless of the recommendation, not mandate, from Columbus health, I would love to hear these reasons. I have a Junior and Senior at Thomas and both have been playing club sports throughout the Summer, traveling to Virginia, Maryland, and Indiana. There have been no cases of Covid traced back to any of their sports. By not allowing kids to participate in any extracurriculars you are personally robbing them of State titles and scholarship opportunities, not to mention a void on college applications and the toll on their overall physical and mental health. Please be advocates for our kids and stay focused on what is best for them and please keep politics out of the decision making.

Regards,
Dawn Kendall
510 Poe Ave

I recently received a strange, anonymous letter objecting to the Worthington Schools being declared Anti-Racist. One certainly wonders who would possibly object to this. A Neo-Nazi? Someone belonging to a hate group? A racist? Those were my thoughts. The reasons they gave to object to this seemed to be about reading materials (not named) that were reviewed to research this decision. I would expect the group to have read a wide range of materials to research this decision. Their reading materials are not relevant to the basic declaration that we are an anti-racist district. I fully support your decision and proclamation as a Worthington resident, parent of a Worthington grad and retired teacher. Well done, Worthington Schools.

Priscilla Caris
691 Plymouth Street

I wholeheartedly disagree with the remote learning announcement that arrived on July 30th. You had a hybrid plan in place for us parents to work with; albeit difficult, we had an option to pay for 'some' sitting services vs. full time sitting service while we have to keep working. I request that the Board include specific data in their announcements for decisions that gravely impact families. Or, more importantly provide factual data and request input from families before making haphazard decisions.

So far the announcement has been based on 'recommendations' vs. mandate. For example, are hospitals currently or at risk of inundation if schools move forward, what's the current ratio of cases (nursing homes, jails, vs. communities)? The entire reason for the March shut down was to avoid overwhelming the hospitals - to date that risk remains manageable. Yes, people will get sick as we all do each year; schools have always worked with that.

Give parents a CHOICE to send their kids to school on hybrid OR remote. Taking away that choice you have single handedly increased the unemployment rates (where money is no longer available) because families, like mine, have to quit jobs to stay home and educate our children.

Where are the data on how many kids are at risk for abuse and neglect based on your remote only decision? Maybe a headline of 'schools remote learning leads to increased abused children' may change your mind. Schools are often the only avenue for children to escape horrible living environments and you just extended that based on what?

Why did the hybrid option 'suddenly' get so dangerous it had to be removed? The rest of society is moving through the mask mandate that would apply to schools. Teachers ARE ESSENTIAL workers, why should grocery store, police, or fire, people have to make choices to work every day WHILE being safe and teachers get to 'stay inside to keep safe'?

You didn't even give a reduced child to teacher ratio an option to work - shame on you. The writing is on the wall - 're evaluate in mid-October' followed by a week off for Thanksgiving, then Christmas holiday, mixed in with the regular flu season - you all have zero plans to get kids back in school whereas all higher governments and doctors are urging kids to be back in school.

As of yesterday, the Franklin Health Dept reiterated - their input was 'recommendation only.' Lastly, why are schools so much more 'dangerous' than day care centers that are reopening to full capacity next week. Sounds like a 'Teacher's Union Issue' to me. Apparently we can 'sacrifice' day care workers but teachers are on a higher pedestal.

In closing - give kids of working parents a voice and give parents an option - do a combo hybrid with a remote only option for immune compromised children, families, or teachers that want to stay home.

Kim Moore
XXX Buckpoint Lane
Worthington, OH

I recently received a letter commenting on the June 22, 2020 board meeting that passed the resolution affirming the board's commitment to be an antiracist school district. The letter basically disagreed with that action and encouraged others communicate the same to you.

The fact that the letter came with no signature and no return address, with a postal permit from Arizona, shows it to be a cowardly attempt by some group to spread a message that is without any merit. Those that hide behind anonymity don't deserve consideration.

Although their message is not worth addressing, I wanted to let you know of my, and so many others, support of your action. Although I no longer have children in school, your resolution helps build a solid future for not only our children and the community, but the state and country as well.

Thank you for the work you're doing.

Richard Pfister
[619 Lambs Creek Court](#)
[Columbus, OH 43085](#)

As it relates to Worthington Schools recent decision to suspend fall sports, band, and extracurricular activities, please do not leave this extremely important decision up to the Columbus Public Health Department. This should be a community decision made by the community of Worthington residents whose children are directly affected.

We demand a vote on in-school learning vs remote learning, as well as on fall sports, band, and extracurricular activities.

Thank You,
Mark Rush
12378 Buttermilk Ave

Dear members of the school board,

I learned today that the Columbus Public School System is going to a completely remote learning option for the beginning of the school year. I have had ongoing concerns about the safety of your hybrid model for my children, and I hope you consider changing your plan to be more like the Columbus Public plan.

I think in order to encourage learning, children first and foremost need to feel safe in their surroundings. To be clear, I think the Worthington school system is filled with wonderful teachers and safe spaces. But the changes required for classrooms, the needed adaptation to mask wearing/social distancing and the overall fear of rising cases may keep students from benefitting from the in-person social interaction and limit their ability to reach their fullest potential in this upcoming first semester of the school year.

Let's wait. Let's give our children an opportunity to see the expressions on their long-missed classmates' and teachers' faces through Zoom. Let's let them deal with the anxiety that COVID brings while tucked away safely at home. In the end, waiting four

months before reassessing the safety of in-school learning will seem like such a small price to pay.

While my opinion is very urgent, please also consider these my formal comments for the next school board meeting August.

Thank you,
Wendy Panzner,
Evening Street Elementary parent
Mother of Joey and Ramona Panzner
[6722 Elmers Court](#)

I am forwarding on behalf of Eric Stoller for items that he would like addressed at the BOE on August 10, 2020.

My name is Eric Stoller, and our family is part of the Worthington School District, with an address of [1076 Putney Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43085](#). I would ask that the following matters are addressed by the Board in the August 10, 2020 board meeting:

- I would like the Board to respond to each of the following exhibits, which are meaningful and relevant to the decision as to remote vs. in-school education:
 - Exhibit B (CDC Guidance)
 - Exhibit C (CDC Director advocating smart reopening of schools)
 - Exhibit D (American Academy of Pediatrics Guidance)
 - Exhibit E (Tweet by Lt. Governor Husted about the importance of schools and activities)
 - Exhibit F (University of Wisconsin study that 2/3 of high school athletes are experiencing depression and anxiety over cancelled sports)
 - Exhibit G (Dr. Fauci discussion regarding opening schools safely)

- If liability is a concern for the Worthington School District for something like COVID-19, where causation is much more difficult to show when people are “in the world”, why is the Worthington School District not equally (or more) concerned about potential liability in the event of suicide, drug overdose, car or gun accident or other terrible outcomes that may directly result from students being at home during online learning period – potentially with no parents in the household during the day. These terrible outcomes undoubtedly will increase in likelihood when kids are isolated and away from the structure of a school day, and causation may very well be easier to show than a COVID-19 related claim.

For Dr. Roberts, I would appreciate if she could review the following screenshots, taken on August 9, 2020 from the most up-to-date public sources of information, and help the community understand why Worthington needs to be treated in the same way as other more densely populated areas of her jurisdiction:

Charts below

Total Franklin County cases: 18,182

Total Franklin County hospitalizations: 1,577

Total Franklin County deaths: 523

Total COVID-19 cases in 43085 zip code: Only between 232-333 (which is at most 1.83% of all Franklin County cases):

Total COVID-19 cases in 43235 zip code: Between 334 and 490, and much of 43235 does not attend Worthington schools. There is also data suggesting that there have only been 17 cases in Perry Township.

Total Worthington deaths: 42 (note the amount of long term care deaths – 97.6% of Worthington’s deaths):

Perhaps most important of all, look at the downward trend since July 4th. Even if we’re waiting for a 4 week decrease, don’t we already have this? Chart below

(Graphics available in original email)

Aggregate Columbus/Franklin County stats:

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Perhaps most important of all, look at the downward trend since July 4th. Even if we’re waiting for a 4 week decrease, don’t we already have this?

Eric M. Stoller

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