

Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Voting meeting of the Ambridge Area school District held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday, October 14, 2020.

- I. Call to Order: Mrs. Fischer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 p.m.**
The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020. This meeting is being held to take action that has come before the Board. All meetings have been advertised to permit legislative action as necessary.
- II. Flag Salute-Please rise: Mrs. Fischer asked all present to rise for the flag salute**
- III. Notice: Mrs. Fischer read the following statement:** This meeting is being recorded for District purposes. It is or may be published in part or in its entirety on the District's website without the express permission of meeting participants.
- IV. Roll Call**
Mrs. Cathy Fischer, President
Mr. Scott Angus, Vice President
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe, Treasurer
Mrs. Kathleen Curtis
Mrs. Denise Manganello
Mr. William Metz
Ms. Valerie Pedigo
Ms. Valerie Young

Others President

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
Mr. Barry J. King, Assistant to the Superintendent
Mr. Keith Bielby, Director of Business and Operations
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

- V. Sunshine Law**
Mrs. Mueller read the following:
The Board of School Directors held Executive Session(s) on Wednesday, October 14th to discuss:
- Personnel matter(s)
 - Considering the purchase or lease of real estate
 - Matters subject to attorney client privilege and other confidentiality laws
- VI. Amendments to the Agenda/Approval of the Agenda**

VII. Presentation**VIII. Public Comment (Regarding Agenda Items Only)**

In light of the state declared disaster emergency, the Board has adopted modified public meeting and public comment processes, consistent with the Sunshine Law. These modified rules have been published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the District's website. Public comments received in advance of this virtual meeting by the Board Secretary will now be read.

IX. LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR THIS MEETING**Personnel****Mr. Angus**1. Professional Employee

It is recommended Paige Scherer be approved as a Special Education Teacher at the Middle School, at a salary of \$45,101.00, prorated, (Bachelors Step 1), as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Association AAEA/PSEA Agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

2. Long-Term Substitute

It is recommended Susan Schwoebel be approved as a Long-Term Substitute at the Middle School, at a prorate of 70% Step 1 Masters, \$46,011.00, effective August 31, 2020, as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Association AAEA/PSEA Agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

3. Institutional Review Board (IRB) Study

It is recommended that a student teacher, Carly Siegle, from The Pennsylvania State University, be approved to complete her IRB study at the High School, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Mr. Angus moved to approve items 1-3, seconded by Mrs. Cutis. Vote in favor was unanimous.

Salary, Schedule and Labor Relations**Mrs. Curtis**1. **Memorandum of Understanding**

It is recommended to hereby approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ambridge Area School District and the Ambridge Area Education Association regarding the expanded use of technology by educators for the purpose of delivering instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as presented.

Ms. Young moved to approve item 1, seconded by Ms. Young. Vote in favor was unanimous.

X. Superintendent's Report**XI. Solicitor's Report****XII. Motion to Adjourn the Voting Meeting**

At approximately 8:30 p.m. Mrs. Fischer moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Kehoe. All in favor.

RECONVENE THE MEET AND DISCUSS**Respectfully Submitted,****Mrs. June Mueller
Board Secretary**

Attachment

Danielle Zatchey
972 Beverly Ave. Ambridge, PA 15003

I have 2 sons in 3rd grade at State Street. I have many concerns with the current hybrid model of education, and I am respectfully asking the board to consider reopening the schools to 5 days a week in person. I can say that the issues I have are not with the teachers. They seem to be doing the very best that they can considering the situation they are given. My issue is that we are harming our children both educationally and mentally. It is extremely difficult for a child of elementary age to focus on a teacher on screen, at home, with distractions both in the home and on the screen. They are lacking a socialization that only school can provide them. The iPads are a wonderful tool, but doing all work on a screen, while staring at the screen to learn all day, is not proving to be a positive experience. It is hard to focus and pay attention like they would in a classroom. Their writing is suffering as they are paperless, writing on an iPad with their finger or a stylus.

I fully respect your caution when it comes to faculty and student safety during the pandemic. I am an Intensive Care Nurse at a Pittsburgh hospital as well as a Nursing Professor at CCBC and I am fully behind opening the school to 5 days a week. I have seen first-hand the tragedy of this pandemic. I know the district is taking all the precautions necessary to keep students and faculty safe. The cases in Beaver County are at an all-time low since the pandemic started. Other districts that have gone in person since day 1 remain open while others are opening back up. If they can do it, we can too. I am aware that class sizes may cause hesitancy, but with caution and teamwork, this can be our reality. We have allowed contact sports to continue with caution. What makes sports more important than education? I am in no way saying that sports should not be happening as my boys are still playing fall baseball. If proper planning occurs, we can do this. We are a resilient town who has the support of families and the community. We can do this if we work together as faculty, parents, and students. I have complete faith in this district and hope you will make the move to get these kids back in school where they belong. Their futures are depending on it.

Joelene Maslanik
16 Clara Street
Ambridge, PA. 15003

I understand that these are difficult times for not only the students and parents but also teachers and administration. I would like to thank all of you for doing a tremendous job considering these difficult times. But I would like to stress the importance of the teachers needing to keep up to date with recording homework scores and test scores in Tyler 360 promptly. Tyler 360 is a very valuable tool for parents, students and teachers. If the grades and assignments on Tyler 360 is not accurate it is a useless tool. This is causing alot of stress on students and parents. Some students

were being told they were ineligible to participate in sports because of failing grades when in reality the grades were not accurate because Tyler 360 was not up to date. Virtual learning has been a struggle for some students who were not being able to join meetings for classes. Also, technical issues with students completing an assignment or quiz and submitting their work and teachers not receiving it. There is also times when Schoology went down or loss of internet connection. Another issue is trying to communicate with teachers by sending a message and at times not getting a prompt response. I am sure it is very difficult for teachers to teach both virtual and live at the same time. I could not imagine the stress this has weighed on their shoulders. Will any grace or forgiveness be given to students who have had technical issues and have been marked truant? Will our school district consider giving our parents the option of our students returning back to school in person 5 days per week? Virtual learning doesn't work for every student and it is causing some students to suffer. With other surrounding schools now going back to live classes 4-5 days a week, I am hoping you will consider this option for our students as well. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Debby & Bob Scheib
Economy Boro

We would like to know what the plan is for getting our children back into school more than 2 days/week.

We're almost 6 weeks into this year and 0 cases. The kids are still spending time with their friends, playing sports etc. and still 0 cases.

Please consider increasing the hybrid kids to 3-5 Days in school as other nearby districts have done. Those who aren't comfortable should have the option stay 2 days or all remote. At minimum give everyone a choice of doing what we're comfortable with for our children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cindy McFarland
Baden

I hope all is well! I am writing to express my concerns with the hybrid learning that is currently in place in our district. First, I would like to commend the teachers and administration in our district as this is a very difficult time for all. The teachers are handling things the best they can. My husband and I are both graduates of AAHS and currently reside in Baden with two children who attend State Street Elementary (Kindergarten and Second Grade). Our virtual learning experiences have not been very positive for my daughter. She was in enrichment in Kindergarten and First grade and started the school year failing her tests and struggling with navigating the iPad along with constant interruptions by the other children in the virtual learning classroom. It is beyond frustrating as a parent to see our daughter struggling. Virtual days lead my daughter to multiple breakdowns/frustrations and extra stress she doesn't need. In addition, with virtual learning there is a lack of interaction, lack of motivation, and social isolation. Kids strive off of structure and learning hands on, especially grades K-3. My kindergartener is adjusting well as he knows no difference but his backpack is very heavy with all of the books he has to take to

and from school. It weighs in at 10 pounds. Gym class is a joke.....Why can sporting events take place but kids can't have a normal gym class and are forced to watch half hour youtube videos of exercises??

Thankfully, my husband and I have flexible jobs where we can be home for the three virtual days to assist our children; other kids are not as fortunate. Our district children started the school year behind as the 2019-2020 school year abruptly ended and we were forced to homeschool our kids. Enough is enough! Let's get our kids back in the classroom!! If surrounding districts can go back to in class four and five days a week, why can't Ambridge? I would like to know the benefits of virtual learning vs being in the classroom. Since school has been in session, how many Covid cases do we have in our district?

Please consider having the kids go back 4 days a week or at least give families the opportunity to choose between hybrid or in school 4 days per week.

Ashley & Tim Newmyer
107 Lyndon Lane
Baden, PA 15005

We have a 7-year-old in second grade and a 5-year-old in kindergarten. We happen to be fortunate enough that one of us can stay at home to help our young children navigate the virtual learning atmosphere that Ambridge has facilitated. Despite this blessing our kids are not receiving the education they would if they were in school 5-days per week. Distractions are abundant at home and full-time attention (which is needed) cannot be given to both children. Instead of learning in a classroom they are learning in their bedrooms. One parent cannot help a Kindergarten student and a 2nd grader at the same time given their schedules. They both need near full time attention given the corroded structure the 2020 school year has forced upon us. Would Ambridge ask a teacher to both teach a Kindergarten class and a 2nd grade class at the same time, switching from one to the other? Absolutely not. Furthermore, is this about lessening exposure? A large amount of kids play sports together, attend day cares and/or churches for virtual learning assistance. If that is the intent, we surely hope you recognize that it is not worth jeopardizing the good education all kids in the district deserve.

It comes down to the fact that elementary kids are unable to focus on an iPad for hours a day. They need to be in the classroom. They are falling behind. Our children are entitled to a proper education. They are absolutely not getting one. Please consider offering us the full-time option. Local schools are starting to offer it. I believe we should also be given the option. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Lori Hrinko
Economy Borough Resident

As other surrounding school districts are successfully running a 5 day in school week, what is the district's directive to get back to a 5 day in school plan?
Please share the data or metrics that you are using to justify the current hybrid learning platform.
What data or metrics need to be met to move forward to a 5 day in school plan?
Is there any financial funding that the school has received that influences the decision to run on any certain learning platform?

Maxine Gnarra
Baden

I am wondering what needs to happen so we are able to do this. I know several of the neighboring districts surrounding us are opened for 5 days a week in person classes and I would hope Ambridge is working towards making this happen.

Tabitha Sipes
Ambridge

I have a sixth grader at the Jr High and I have a fifth, second & first grader in Highland elementary. I'm emailing because I as many others feel our children need to be back in school full time 5 days a week! Virtual learning is not working at all for any of my children along with many other children from families I talked too! Families who have chosen virtual learning have the family, support and time to do so and that's great FOR THEM but being forced to do virtual learning has become a hassle and a problem! I didn't agree to this and it is not fair that my fully healthy children are missing out on an education they deserve! We(not just I) want 5 days back in school as an option!

Kylie Racioppo
Ambridge

As we enter our 7th week into the 2020-2021 school year, there are many concerns in our community and district about reopening our schools. The data on COVID19 shows that cases have slowed and the district has proven to use cleaning methods and follow other guidelines to ensure the safety of our students/staff. Not only is the safety of our students and staff important, but so is their education. I can speak personally for my kindergartener and 1st grader at Economy Elementary who participate in the hybrid learning model. Due to the nature of the virtual learning set up, there are times where my children are not completing their work or scoring poorly on assignments/assessments which is not a true reflection of their abilities. Young children who cannot read cannot be independent on their ipads. Also, the amount of daily screen time is detrimental to their health and development. These kids need hands on learning and experiences that cannot be simulated through a device. My kids' attitudes and overall morale is

much better when they get to spend the day in school. We need to take action to get our kids more in person learning even if that means 4 days.

As a full time working parent, this has been challenging. If there becomes no end in sight for this current model of learning, I will have to look into alternative options. One of those options would be sending my children to Baden Academy as Ambridge students typically have priority. Other options would be full time cyber school where the online teacher can better focus on working with my students ensuring that there are skills not slipping through the cracks. No option at this point is easy, but I have to do what is best for my family if our district is not going to support the need in our community.

Thus far, our teachers have done a wonderful job and are working harder than ever to help their students. This isn't enough. There will be huge gaps in education, increased learning support needs, and a generation of children trying to play catch up.

Please think about these children and the needs in our district. This is not a conducive way to learn. Also, consider sending out a parent survey to get honest feedback. No one has even asked us what is working and what isn't. Some families may continue to choose the fully remote learning choice, but 4-5 days of in person needs to be an option. I anticipate discussion at the next school board meeting on this concern as I know it's the voice of many parents in our district.

Heather Williams
416 White Pine Lane
Baden, PA 15005

What is the plan to get the children back in the classroom on a full time basis?

Cindy Deschaine
Baden

I am writing today to talk about our current hybrid model of education. The biggest question I have is when will it end? Every day I sit with students at Safe Haven and I wonder how much longer they will have to learn this way. With the threat of flu season in January and February, why are our kids kept out of school now? I have spoken to many people from different school districts and I think we need to reevaluate what we are doing. In Avonworth kids go to school for a half a day and get all of their core classes taught to them every day. When they are at home for the other half a day, the students participate in music, art, and gym virtually. That way they are getting face to face on the core subjects. Only seeing the teacher two days a week is not working for the kids. At least not the younger ones. Please consider sending the students back to school. If

the numbers for covid rise too much in our area, then send the kids back to virtual learning, but we have to try face to face learning.

The World Health Organization (WHO) have changed their stance on lockdowns and have since said forcing people indoors and shutting everything down is causing more harm than good. This includes schools. The students are missing out on a proper education. I have talked to many parents who cannot handle the workload with their kids and still try to put food on the table. We have children that are the highest at risk for child abuse now secluded from the teachers who show them the only love they may ever receive in a day.

Other schools are bringing their students back. I am asking you to consider doing the same for ours. They need to be back in class. They need some sense of normalcy in their lives.

We permit our children to play sports that has extremely close contact with no issues. We are letting our kids participate in fundraisers with no issues. We need to get them back in school.

That is the most important thing for our children right now. Give parents the choice if they want to be back in school or be in virtual learning all day. I know it will work. I am asking each one of you to consider sending the kids back to school on a more frequent basis.

Braelyn Tarpley
Ambridge

I am writing this email to express my dissatisfaction with the current learning options available for the families in the District. I will provide some personal background information on my family in hopes that you gain some insight from a perspective maybe different than your own. I am a single-mom of two boys that are currently students in the district. My oldest son is in third grade at Economy, and my youngest son is in Pre-K at Highland. I work full time as a psychiatric RN, often working overtime to provide on-call crisis intervention. I am the sole provider for my children, not receiving support from their father or eligible for any state assistance. In 2019, I chose to purchase a home in the Ambridge Area School District. Despite the ridiculously high school taxes, as a graduate of Ambridge, I believed my children would receive the same quality of education that I did. As a healthcare provider, I fully understand the concerns related to COVID-19, but as a mother, I am more concerned about my children's physical, mental, social, and emotional health, all which have been suffering since the start of this pandemic. The American Academy of Pediatrics also identifies that children learn best in the classroom. Although some families may find that virtual learning works for them, I am here to let you know that it is not working for ours. My third grader's grades have been suffering and I attribute that directly to not being in a structured classroom setting, where his mind is being stimulated and he is motivated to perform at the best of his ability. He used to have such a love for school and desire to learn, but now I am slowly watching his self-esteem diminish and all of our frustrations build. For my youngest son, who has been identified as having special needs, things have been even more challenging. It is impossible for him to do his assignments on his tablet or activities without guidance and support, which means we have to find time to fit it in our already overwhelming schedule. And if I'm being honest, sometimes there is literally no time, so it doesn't get done. As a mother, it's not a good feeling to feel as though I am failing my children because they are not learning as they should be. I cannot afford to quit my job and stay home with them to do their school work three days a week. I cannot afford to hire someone to

provide the structure and support they require to thrive in the virtual learning environment. The evidence shows that the overall benefits of children being in the classroom far outweigh the risk associated with Covid-19. I understand there are concerns related to social distancing in the classrooms. However, there have been times when my child was literally the only kid on the entire bus. There have also been times where my child is at home virtually learning, and there was only one child in the actual classroom. As a parent, that is frustrating to see and hard to understand why my child can't be in that classroom when I know he would be benefiting so much more. I am asking each and every one of you to give our children the opportunity to learn to the best of their ability. I don't think that is asking too much, as both a parent, and a taxpayer in the district. Many schools in the surrounding area are offering the option to return to in-person instruction full time, along with the options of hybrid or completely remote. Please give us those same options, so that we can decide what works best for our students and our families.

Patti Jo Lambert
Economy Boro

I'm writing to express my sincere desire for our district to please seriously consider bringing students back to school five days per week or give them the option to remain virtual five days per week.

While everyone is doing their best, this current system is most definitely not working. And it certainly is not working for my 7th grader who has never struggled in school like he is now. In fact, two different middle school teachers both told me that in their 20+ years of teaching they have never seen student grades so poor. This is just feedback from two teachers but this is proof that we need our kids to get back to school so they can learn.

Please help our students. There are enough plans in place to still abide by the Covid rules. Let's take the next step and make it work!

After talking to quite a few parents and sharing our own concerns about how this year is going in this hybrid environment, there is just no way to replace the kids being in school in person. Kids are simply not able to focus and listen when they are at home. There are working parents, pets, siblings, and many other distractions and there is no way for the teacher to redirect and refocus them like they can do in school. I think the online version can be very successful for students who are self motivated and disciplined, but for kids who don't have those qualities, this is extremely difficult regardless of grade.

While the teachers are doing their best using Schoology, there was never any training for parents. I consider myself fairly intelligent but my husband and I have very much struggled to figure out how it works, how teachers are posting assignments, what is homework and what is not homework, etc. I'm not exaggerating when I tell you that I am spending at least 30-60 minutes per day trying to go through every class, review what they are doing, figure out what is homework and then assist my son in making a plan to get his work done. This doesn't even count the time we spend actually doing the work. As a mother who works more than full time,

the amount of extra stress and arguing that is happening in my home is unprecedented and this is my youngest of three boys. This isn't my first go-around. If I'm struggling, I can't imagine how other parents with middle school and elementary school students are dealing with this, especially when there are multiple children in the home. While Schoology is probably a good solution, there was never any thought put into helping the parents understand how all of this works. If the parents aren't able to figure it out, how can we support our kids and give them a positive academic experience given the circumstances? I assure you that I am not in the minority of parents who feel this way. I think now that the 9 weeks is nearing its end, there should be a huge assessment, survey, etc. that reaches out to parents, teachers and students to get feedback on how this has been working. I think the board members will be very surprised at how difficult this is and how much stress has been added in our homes specifically due to this learning situation. Please please please listen to the parents and teachers who are dealing with this every single day. Other schools are going 5 days and we should have that option too. While this hybrid plan had wonderful intentions, it doesn't work for the majority of kids. Talking to the teachers about how students are performing academically is all of the proof you need. Since we have successfully managed Covid in our district, there is really no reason not to move to a 5 day in person and a 5 day virtual option.

Please spend time talking to the teachers....they are the ones who are really seeing the negative impact this is having on our kids. They don't have to live with it but they see it first hand. I think the teachers are doing well but many many kids are just not able to adapt to this. The long term consequences scare me....PSSA scores, SAT scores, GPAs and more are all going to be dramatically lower because kids are simply not focusing and absorbing the material like they can do in person.

Kimberly Villella
Ambridge

Dear Madame President and Directors of the Ambridge Area School Board,

As a grandmother and volunteer at the newly established Safe Haven Learning Pod, located at Good Samaritan Parish in Ambridge, I have had the pleasure of working with approximately 25 children from the District. Safe Haven's original plan for targeted individuals were Ambridge Area School District students in K-3rd grade who were identified " At Risk", along with students that are a part of the Latino community where language barriers exist. Our goal was to simply provide a safe and supervised space where children can come and remotely learn together. Our Mission is " To provide children in need, a friendly space and a smiling face". It was not our intent to provide formal instruction or typical daily child care. The learning pod has grown, out of need, to include students from K- 8th grade. Our volunteers have become one on one tutors in order to guide the children through the online learning process.

Working with these children since the beginning of the school year, I have a broad over view and insight of daily classroom operations, especially in all three of our elementary schools. I have

witnessed the difficulties and frustrations of the students and teachers alike. We have seen children who have over 100 incomplete assignments in their que. These children are struggling to keep up. Parents and teachers are overwhelmed. With each passing day, the children of our community are falling further and further behind. We are failing our children, especially the children in K-3rd grades. The early elementary years are the most important years in a child's life of learning. Parents and teachers know these years are the foundation and building blocks for years to come. U.S. News Today stated "Research shows the average annual learning gains for children in grades K-2 are dramatically greater than those for the subsequent years of school. Moreover, the outcome of early education, particularly whether or not a child can read proficiently by third grade is a powerful predictor of later school and life outcomes" Research also shows by third grade, low performing schools have left many children so far behind they never catch up.

Our children lost entire nine weeks of formal education in the spring. According to Brown University's Annenberg Institute for School Reform, "U.S. public school students will go into this new school year learning less than half of the math and just under 70 percent of language art skills they would have acquired had schools remained open last spring." We, as a community, can not afford to lose another nine weeks of educating our children. I am witness to a sampling, across the board, of our K-3rd graders who are not proficient in the fundamentals, many who can not write, read or spell at an appropriate level. I am witness to the hybrid model as a failed model, lacking consistency, accountability and most important a sense of normalcy. These children need structure. They need to be in school, person to person, on a daily basis if their families so chose.

Because schools are vital to learning and to the overall-well being of our children, the American Academy of Pediatrics in late June strongly encouraged school districts to prepare for students to return to school in person this fall. "School is also a refuge for many children, especially for those suffering from abuse, neglect or food insecurities", cited the Child Abuse Prevention Center. Under CAPTA, school employees are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If schools do not reopen in- person education, an estimated 807,700 cases of child abuse could go unreported this year. Is this something AASD is willing to risk?

The mission of the Ambridge Area School District is to be the "Bridge" to leading and learning, preparing students for the future through academic excellence. Please adhere to the mission set forth. Please join the progressive leaders of school districts throughout Beaver County and surrounding counties. The Washington Post wrote a series, "Back to School in a Pandemic" citing many reasons why schools should return to in person learning. Please, as members of the AASD School Board, it is your duty and responsibility to look at the available science and data. Experts, like renown Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of NIAID promotes in person classrooms as being safe with the recommended precautionary measures. We must prioritize in person learning for kids who need it most.

Lastly, The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine called for schools to be reopened especially for those students in Kindergarten - Fifth grade in person as well as for students who require additional support. I urge you to make a motion tonight to start the

transition process to get our children back into the classroom for in person instruction, five days a week. Please heed to the wants and needs of our community. Please do not fail our children.

Jessica Dixon
Economy

My name is Jessica Dixon. My children attend Economy Elementary. I have a son in second grade and a daughter in kindergarten. We really need to allow our kids the opportunity to attend 5 days, in person schooling! My children are both very good students with a true love for education. However the hybrid option is no longer working for us. They are missing out on so much of their crucial education during this crazy time. As well as the socially aspect that plays such a huge role in their development at this age. Although the teachers, staff and school district are doing an amazing job wading through this strange way of learning, there is definitely so much that is missing with the hybrid method. My kids have both expressed their dislike for virtual learning compared to actual in person learning.

At the very least I ask that a poll/survey be sent to all AASD parents to get a better understanding of where they stand. Would they like to send their kids 5 days, would they like to remain virtual, would they prefer cyber? What do they feel the best way to do so would be? This would give us a true sense of how many kids would come back into each classroom if the 5 day option was offered. As a school we could then see the best and safest way to remain socially distant while offering a full-fledged education. If so many other schools in the area are able to do so, and do so safely, I do not know why Ambridge cannot at least try also.

We owe it to our children to at least try to regain some sort of normalcy through such a crazy time. Do not let our children fall behind with their education because we chose not to fight for what they deserve!

Thank you for taking the time to consider this option. We all want nothing but the best for our children!

Amanda Brisco, Baden

I have two sons attending State Street Elementary. I am writing to ask that you reconsider the hybrid model and open the schools back up to in person learning to those who wish to send their children. While the hybrid or full remote style of learning is beneficial to some families, it is not for every household. We have found it to be incredibly difficult for our children to learn remotely. The teachers have been wonderful, patient, and hard working, but this type of environment is not beneficial to their learning. Having our children stare at an electronic device for close to six hours a day has created a significant change in behavior and mood. Their lack of focus on the lessons, frustrations, and emotional distress is a direct result of the excessive screen time. We are not a household that allows screen time during the school week and with this type of learning, our children have gone from zero to 6 hours a day, 5 days a week of screen time.

We have attempted to provide a healthy learning environment here at home for them, but it has proven to not be an environment that they will thrive in.

Our children are permitted to play sports for the district. They should be able to have the option to be in school - full time. I understand the risks of Covid and do not take it lightly, but we need to be considering the emotional, social, and educational disadvantages that these children are being faced with.

Please consider making the move to get our children back in school, in a proper educational setting, where they belong.

Stefanie Priore
128 Willow Drive
Freedom, PA 15042

I understand that there will be many comments this evening imploring the district to return full-time to school. While I understand the hybrid plan is not ideal for all families, I just want to share how well it has worked for ours. It is a program that deserves praise, as our experiences have been unlike friends with children in other districts. The Ambridge hybrid program has made the best of an unfortunate situation-a global pandemic, the likes of which none of us, nor our school leaders have ever experienced.

My son, a first grader at Economy Elementary, is engaged in learning from 8:30-2:30 each day he is at home. He is able to participate in live-stream instruction that is organized, purposeful, and exciting. His teacher, Mrs. Lisa Kovach, has done an excellent job crafting new instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners. She manages the classroom environment with apparent ease, and holds each learner accountable, whether in school or at home. As an educator myself, I have been impressed.

I do believe that all students will need to return to full-time, in-person instruction at some point. I have listened to many families who desire this, and I understand why they wish for this to happen. I, myself, would love for my son to return full-time in a way that is safe and appropriate. However, prior to sending the students back full-time, the district must address the large class sizes. Our teachers are hands-on educators, and I am certain that they would each love to have all of their students back full-time. With many classes over 25 students, this is unsafe for everyone.

Should the district be planning to vote on a full-time return to school, what steps will be taken to ensure the recommendations of the CDC are followed? Their recommendations include no more than 25 people in a classroom, including the instructor. Should the majority of students return, we would have classrooms out of compliance. Truthfully, a primary classroom with

more than 20 students needing to social distance is questionable. I am basing that on my own experience in the classroom.

If the conversation is shifting to a full return to school, I hope the focus of the conversation is on the safety of students and staff above anything else.