

| First and Last Name | Public Comment - April 8, 2021 |
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| Amy Johnson | <p>Please please please keep Monday's remote. It is so important to consider all students. As a teacher of 29 years in the district, I consider myself pretty well versed in knowing what children need. Remote Mondays are needed so that the remote students have a day that they are a part of the whole. Please do not outcast them. Remote Mondays are needed for teachers to prep in class and remote student's work. You have asked us to do double prep work this year- please give us the time to do it. You can't have high quality teaching without time to prepare for it. Your teachers have gone above and beyond- given it our all. Don't pull the rug out from under us when we've done so much for the students and the community.</p> |
| Meghan Yarbrough | <p>Mondays Matter. 15% of our student population who are staying remote STILL EQUALLY MATTER as much as the 85% who are physically in the school buildings.</p> <p>I am a parent of two Greenbrier Gators, and a teacher in the district. Mondays Matter because ALL of our children matter. My children had been fully remote this year, until March 29, 2021. Their teachers at Greenbrier did an absolutely outstanding job creating engaging and meaningful activities for the remote students and I will forever be grateful that they worked so hard to create a bond with my girls, all over the screen, this year. My girls truly felt that they were a member of their classroom, even though they were not there in-person. Additionally, I have watched my girls grow academically, physically, emotionally, artistically, musically, etc. because of the Greenbrier staff and their dedication to ALL students, both in school and out of school. My children mattered at Greenbrier, even though they were not physically in the school.</p> <p>85% of our district families have made the choice to be back for in-person learning. This also means that 15% of our population have chosen to keep their children remote. These 15% of students EQUALLY MATTER to us teachers--just as the other 85% who are in the physical space of school with us.</p> <p>WHY do Mondays Matter? Building a trusting classroom community that promotes an emotionally safe place for students to take risks with their learning is difficult when there are some students on Zoom and others in the classroom. Remote Mondays means that the entire class can see each other, interact with one another, and levels the playing field. They can ALL have the attention of the teacher! They can interact with one another in a different way than you can when you have some kids in the classroom, and some on Zoom. One of the best benefits is that the students and teachers can see each other's full faces. It is such a joy to see a child smile fully when they see a friend or understand a concept! Seeing a full face is also beneficial for helping students learn how to read body language and facial cues. Teaching children how to articulate their words and sound out words while reading can be done better on Zoom, because the teacher can model how the mouth should look/be formed when speaking. Masks muffle students in the classroom, but when on Zoom, they can be heard because of increased volume and you can see their mouths form the words they are saying, too. Another benefit of Remote Mondays and Zoom is working in small groups. Social distancing makes it impossible to work with a small group of students, but Zoom makes it possible. There are so many benefits when students share a day on Zoom together!</p> <p>YOU have the power to show our community and stakeholders that ALL CHILDREN OF D25 MATTER by keeping Mondays remote. If you choose to decide that Mondays are full in-person, then the message you send to the 15% of families who chose to stay remote is that they don't matter. Is that the message you want to be responsible for sending?</p> |
| Casey Whitaker | <p>Mondays Matter to me...As a music teacher, Mondays are the only day of the week that I can actually sing with my students (despite the spotty and lackluster technology). With the current CDC guidelines, and students less than six feet apart in the music room due to class sizes, I am not allowed to sing with students Tuesday through Friday. Without singing, I am not able to teach and assess half of my curriculum or standards.</p> |

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| Carrie Bradshaw | I couldn't help but wonder...do all school boards make rash decisions without spending time in classrooms or really seeing what teachers and students are doing virtually and in-person? And just like that, I realized only in District 25. |
| Regina Fortman | <p>This school year is unprecedented and I have worked very hard to make the very best of it for my students. I would love for all of my students to be back in my classroom, however, I have six students who will remain remote. In order to provide the best, most engaging education to both in-person learners and remote learners, the extra plan time on Mondays is critical. It takes many hours to adapt and digitize weekly lessons in order to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>Just to clarify, it is not just teacher planning that is completed on remote Mondays! I teach all day!! Mondays are also very important for the social and emotional well-being of all of my students. All students can be grouped for discussions, lessons, and sharing. Remote learners do not feel as isolated on Mondays. Having everyone on Zoom allows for a more cohesive day for all. Mondays are currently used for much of my student assessment, one on one teacher/student meetings, small group lessons, and hands-on science that can not be done at school because we can not share space or materials. Lastly, my union representatives made a deal with the board. I am dedicated to continuing teaching to students in a room and in a Zoom simultaneously, even though that is extremely difficult, for the rest of this school year. Please keep up your end of the bargain and leave Remote Mondays unchanged.</p> |
| Gabriela Porras | Mondays matter. Mondays provide teachers an opportunity to make better connections with remote learners so that their education is equitable. |
| Allison Keough | <p>Mondays Matter. I was "lucky" in that all of my special education children choose in-person; I have not had to plan and implement both remote and in-person learning like my colleagues have with the small exception of one student. Mondays matter for the sanity of the teachers. It does not matter if a teacher has only one student working remotely, or nearly the entire class; the amount of prep and planning is still doubled.</p> <p>I see both the teacher and parent sides of the argument. At this point, adding Mondays gives 6 days. It is not worth pushing staff past the brink of exhaustion for 6 days. Finish out the year as we are. To some, adding an additional day is an easy transition, for many of the special education children in the instructional programs, it is a big shift in consistency and routine. For related services and special education teachers, it requires them to redo their schedules yet again to make sure minutes are being met; it requires transition and adaptation periods for the kids. Both of which take a a week or two to get in order .</p> <p>Adding Mondays is not just showing up for school, there is a snowball effect that happens, that with the exception of admin and teachers, the board and community aren't aware of, and don't understand the daily function inside a school.</p> <p>6 days. Leave the rest of the year alone. We have learned from planning mistakes this year and are better equipped for a better model in the fall if needed.</p> |
| Fiona Dolce | As an educator, it is important we keep Mondays remote. Mondays provide the opportunity to do small group instruction, really check-in with students and groups to see their progress, and allows me to be more 'hands on' with my students when it comes to their work. |

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| Allison Duffer | <p>There is nothing I would love more than having ALL of my students back in my classroom FIVE days a week. However, I have a handful of students staying remote, along with students going in and out of quarantine on a daily basis. In order to continue to provide a quality education to both in-person learners and remote learners, the extra plan time on Mondays is critical. It takes many hours to adapt weekly lessons to meet the needs of all learners. Mondays are also extremely important for the social and emotional well being of ALL of my students...as we ALL get to be together as a class. The remote learners do not feel as isolated, and it allows for a more cohesive day. I currently use Mondays for much of my student assessment, one on one teacher-student meetings, and small group lessons that cannot be done at school because we cannot share space or materials. I am dedicated to continue the difficult task of teaching to students in a room and in a Zoom simultaneously for the rest of this school year. Please keep up your end of the bargain and continue to support me in doing so.</p> |
| Amy Johnson | <p>Please please please keep Monday's remote. It is so important to consider all students. As a teacher of 29 years in the district, I consider myself pretty well versed in knowing what children need. Remote Mondays are needed so that the remote students have a day that they are a part of the whole. Please do not outcast them. Remote Mondays are needed for teachers to prep in class and remote student's work. You have asked us to do double prep work this year- please give us the time to do it. You can't have high quality teaching without time to prepare for it. Your teachers have gone above and beyond- given it our all. Don't pull the rug out from under us when we've done so much for the students and the community.</p> |
| Kristin R Burmeister | <p>We need remote Mondays to continue. Mondays provide an opportunity to connect with ALL students during class, not dividing attention between 2 groups of students; it equalizes the attention to all learners whether they are typically remote, or typically in person students.</p> |
| Joy Kirr | <p>One thing parents and educators already know: Every child learns in his/her/their own way. (Some struggle in person, some struggle at home, and some struggle in both. Some flourish in person, some flourish at home, and some flourish in both. Some fluctuate, depending on the conditions at home and at school.)</p> <p>One thing parents and educators should keep in mind: Every family is in a different situation during this pandemic. (The stories that have been shared this year by children will forever change my thinking about privilege and hardships.) Parents were told they could keep their child remote all year long.</p> <p>One thing parents and educators can do for the last few weeks of this school year: Continue to be flexible and provide time for educators and children to speak and work one-on-one or with small groups on Mondays. It is 20% of our week that is beneficial for at least 18% of our adolescents at my school (more if we actually ask the children - many of my current students love to be able to sleep in, eat and drink when they want, and not wear a mask all day). Being flexible in this way will benefit our community as a whole, and not only will we talk the talk of being more equitable, we'll be walking the walk.</p> <p>Next year will most likely be back to some sort of normalcy, and educators will still be as flexible as our career dictates - for the children. For now, parents, educators, and our children are all doing our part to make it through this one school year with some success for ALL. It is not fair to many parents, educators, and children to change the school year one more time for these last few weeks of school. Thank you for keeping your commitment for remote Mondays - and not dismissing those children not fortunate enough to be able to make it into a school building.</p> |

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| Amy Kuehl | <p>Mondays Matter for all students because they afford teachers invaluable time to meet with small groups of students. Remote Mondays give teachers the opportunity to see all of their students' lovely faces without masks. Keeping Mondays remote gives the students learning at home remotely the opportunity to be on the same playing field as their peers. Mondays matter because they give many teachers precious time to plan and coordinate with their colleagues. Please try to really understand the importance of keeping Mondays remote and listen to the experts in education telling you why they want Mondays to stay remote. I tell my students to use the resources around them. You have hundreds of EDUCATORS telling you that MONDAYS MATTER. Listen.</p> |
| Allison Anderle | <p>I happen to be one of the fortunate D25 teachers whose entire class now attends school in-person. I know I've been given a gift with this situation, and I certainly don't take it for granted. With that being said, it's important to acknowledge just how difficult teaching and learning in dual environments actually is for teachers and students. I support remote Mondays for my colleagues and the many remote learners who still need this day to feel connected to their classmates and have their needs met through small group instruction.</p> |
| manoj garg | <p>Can we make a switch to in-person now...is there a way or possibility?</p> |
| Lara Rebsamen | <p>Remote Mondays were negotiated as part of an MOU. A MOU is defined as a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a critical document in establishing coordinated efforts in a school-justice partnership. An MOU is a multilateral agreement among multiple parties intended to express a common vision and line of action.</p> <p>The vision is the ongoing challenges we face in delivering services and curriculum, even with over 85% of the total population of students in school, everyday their are students we are planning for to be in in-person attendance that become remote. Our days and the students needs are an ongoing change of the action plan.</p> |
| Lisa Welch | <p>Please maintain Mondays as remote. Monday is the only day that our remote students feel part of the classroom community at this point. Let's show compassion and respect for the families that chose to stay remote and provide those students with the sense of belonging that they need!</p> |
| Tricia Fuglestad | <p>Please use the government grants to improve the ventilation, air purity, and monitoring of air exchanges per hour in every space of the buildings now that it is confirmed that COVID is primarily spread through airborne aerosols that linger in stagnant spaces.</p> <p>The district's univents do not operate at the recommended MERV-13. Please supplement this by purchasing HEPA air filters that clean virus laden air and increase the air exchange quotient. The ideal air exchange rate per hour is six. Univents are currently at 4 with a maximum of MERV-8.</p> <p>Please also consider purchasing CO2 monitors for each room. These monitors would indicate how fresh the air is which directly correlates to the likelihood of infection transmission. The monitor would signal when the windows need to be opened more for fresh air or other mitigations are necessary. The cost of both the air purifiers and the CO2 monitors would be approximately \$300 per room.</p> <p>Children are at highest risk of infection during lunch and snack times. Please find solutions to mitigate this risk. Do not continue with the practice of eating unmasked indoors. If a highly infectious variant were introduced into our buildings we would certainly have an outbreak with serious consequences since it has been shown to be highly contagious among children.</p> <p>Currently 4% of the in-person student population (that we know of) in our district has already contracted COVID. We are learning more of the long term effects it may have on cardiovascular, pulmonary, and neurological systems daily. Please do all you can to avoid even one more case.</p> |

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| Amanda Bhansali | <p>I am a D25 parent and I urge the board to approve the strategic plan as written, including DEI goals and core values on April 8th meeting.</p> |
| Lisa Schindler | <p>I really am quite surprised that we're spending so much time discussing remote Mondays with six Mondays left in the school year. Mondays were something that were previously agreed upon by our school board, so the fact that so many community members are seeing remote Mondays as the "fault" of our teachers or as a reflection that our teachers don't want to work is really troublesome. I, too, am a working parent with school age children. I understand that having students remote is challenging. There's no doubt about that. But we are living in a pandemic. THAT is challenging. I feel that we have forgotten, too, that we live in a community. And unfortunately, it seems like we have a community with many bullies who are failing to think outside of themselves and who have no regard for the opinion of the people in the trenches, so to speak.</p> <p>Of course parents should advocate for their children and should seek what's best for them, but to assume that people who have a different opinion from you are out to harm your children is so incredibly hurtful. This year has been hard for EVERYONE- your children, but also your teachers. However, your teachers have shown up every single day in an effort to provide your children with a high quality education and some sense of normalcy in this crazy time. Aside from my maternity leave and burying my mother-in-law, I have not missed a single day (or even half day) of school this year. I scheduled every single prenatal appointment outside of school hours because I didn't want to make things difficult for my students or my building by being absent. I didn't want my students to have one more disruption to manage or my building to have to scramble when my vacancy couldn't be filled. So, please know that my support of remote Mondays does not mean I don't want to work or I don't want to be with your students.</p> <p>Remote Mondays allow me time to plan with my team. We have had to completely revamp how we teach and assess everything this year. Even with students in-person, I can't just walk up and down the aisles to provide feedback or pull a group of students to my back table. I don't even have a back table anymore! I have 23 students in my classroom. My classroom consists of student desks and my corner. I can't teach from the board because students are so close to the front. It's not even a matter of trying to maintain social-distancing; they literally could not see and I could not walk if I taught from the board this year. I have no bookshelves, no comfy chairs, nothing but student desks in every corner of the room. I have had to adjust every part of my routine; having some extra time on Mondays to figure out how to do my job completely differently has been necessary and very much appreciated.</p> <p>I have only one student remote at this point. Doesn't that one student matter? Mondays allow that student to feel like they're part of the classroom community; they get to have friends and interactions with someone other than me one day each week. But let's say we don't care about that one kid, we need to look out for the majority- that's not how a community should work, but nonetheless... I think Mondays have some benefit for the majority, too. Even if students get NOTHING academically out of Mondays, the fact that they have coherent instruction the rest of the week can be attributed to the fact that teachers have time on Mondays to plan and collaborate. And even if students get NOTHING academically out of Mondays, perhaps they are getting other benefits.</p> <p>Mondays allow students to have more time with their families. They have time to work at a pace that suits them. They are learning how to manage their time and how to fit in breaks appropriately. Perhaps they're even learning some work-life balance. Spring is here- maybe students get more time to play outside because of Mondays! How great is that! Students get to have a day where they don't have to wear masks all day and they can see each other's faces. Students are learning how to manage their materials between two locations- aren't many remote workers doing just that these days? Isn't it nice as parents to have one day</p> |

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| | <p>where there isn't a scramble to get out of the house in the morning and there are no lunches to pack? Of course we want students to make academic gains, but I'm not sure that needs to be our only focus.</p> <p>Ultimately, we need to find a better way to disagree. I have never been as disheartened as a teacher in this community as I have been this year. My own children love school- they play school regularly, have elaborate set-ups for their American Girl dolls' education, they dream of being teachers when they grow up. Honestly, though, if things don't change, I would steer them to any other profession- or at least another community. And that makes me sad. I love teaching and I love my students, but I don't love being a scapegoat. I don't love being talked about on social media, rather than addressed like a professional. I don't love being torn down repeatedly and constantly feeling like no matter what I do, it will never be enough for this community. Our students deserve quality schools and excellent teachers, but if this community continues to ignore the recommendations of teachers, silence their voices, and demonize the very people who are working tirelessly for their children, there will be no teachers left.</p> <p>Thank you for allowing me to share my opinion and support of continuing the agreed upon remote Mondays for the remainder of the school year.</p> |
| Kerri Hood | <p>Please continue to move to five full days this year. Other local districts have surpassed us and have managed to make that happen. There is no reason why our district can't do the same.</p> |
| Natalie White | <p>I'm writing to beg and plead that we go back to in person on Mondays immediately. My kindergarten son who has been super resilient all along - for this first time this week started using the phrase - "I don't like school Mommy", for the very first time , multiple times... when I told him it was time to eat lunch and then log onto zoom. I had to bribe him by letting him watch a movie in my bed while on zoom just to get him to get started. Then on Tuesday / he is a completely different kid - psyched to go and begging to stay at CAP as late as possible to play and have fun. This can't continue this year or in the case of a future pandemic . My child's teacher is in her classroom alone on Mondays - a class that has 100% in person choice every other day. This makes no sense! Please consider an immediate change for these kindergarteners at Patton PM class.</p> |
| Diana Lane | <p>Please reconsider Monday Matters. Monday is not inclusive for the remote students it only hinders the students who want to be in-person. I am all for choice and every parent can do what is right for their child but Mondays are the least productive days. If it was truly to incorporate the remote learners then there would be more group activities in breakout rooms not the asynchronous learning where none of the students are together. If Monday truly mattered then make Monday Matters and let the kids be in-person 5 days a week.</p> |
| Jennifer Anderson | <p>As a resident and parent, I'm in full support of the district's adoption of the DEI Policy as part of the Strategic Plan for all the reasons stated in the language of the policy. But I'm writing today to request the administration and board take a more proactive approach to communication than we've seen in the past. The district needs to provide specifics on how the policy will be implemented in order to avoid leaving a vacuum of information that invites people to create their own narratives or facts. It's understandable that all the specifics may not be ironed out yet, but at minimum the district should provide our community with a concrete schedule for when these plans will be shared. It's my hope that's part of the presentation planned for April 8. If not, I ask that you think about when things have gone wrong in the past and how a more proactive communications approach may have made a positive impact by providing facts and transparency. Thank you.</p> |

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| Heather Walsh | <p>I am so proud to be a member of the AHSD 25 teaching staff and a member of the AHSD 25 parent community. I have chosen to work and live in this community and send my children to these schools because I deeply believe in the quality of education that is offered here.</p> <p>Everyone in our community has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are all wearing "hats" that we never thought we would have to wear. Unfortunately, we are still in a pandemic and we need to be cautious for our greater community. I still receive weekly Covid-19 positive case emails from both the school I work at and the one my children attend.</p> <p>The purpose of my Board comment is to emphasize that for every Covid-19 related incidence, a teacher's thoughtful and carefully planned classroom routines and lesson plans are disrupted. Whether it's due to a Covid-19 positive case, quarantined students or students that have visited outside our state and need amended remote plans, nothing is routine and teachers must react immediately on a daily/hourly basis. In addition to the dual modality instructional model, this constant state of change is mentally and physically exhausting.</p> <p>Mondays Matter because in addition to actively teaching, they allow teachers to simultaneously charge up and catch up. Catch up with their entire class on a level classroom instructional field. Catch up with colleagues to reflect on what worked, what didn't, and how to make instruction better for the next lesson for all students. Catch up with small groups of struggling students or advanced students. Catch a chance to celebrate, create, communicate, and/or console a fellow colleague. Catch the administrator's or special services team's attention to discuss the needs of a student. Catch a breath.</p> <p>Let's all work together and care for one another so that we can nurture our AHSD 25 school community back to an emotionally and physically healthy place to be, no matter what happens with Covid-19.</p> |
| sophia vassos | <p>In looking at the list of Board members, it is wonderful to see that next to everyone's name is the word, "nonpartisan". I would love to get that feeling when watching the Board meetings instead of having an overwhelming feeling that some members of the Board sit at the table with preconceived notions of what should happen and their own agendas. It has been overwhelmingly apparent this past school year thus far.</p> <p>Moving forward, please stop patronizing members of this community by pretending to be a problem solver with everyone's interest at heart. BE that person.</p> |

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| Tim Morkert | <p>A few thoughts I'd like to share on the importance of keeping Mondays remote.</p> <p>1) Choice. The decision was made to offer choice to our families. The choice of coming to school in person, or of staying remote. No judgment passed, each being a respected choice. We have returned to offer in person learning 4 days a week, allowing those choosing remote to join the class via Zoom. While the choice has been offered, the experience is obviously not the same. Mondays offers those that are remote to have ONE day where things are equal and where they can feel a part of the classroom. ALL are on screen. About 15% of our families are remote. Having 20% of our week be remote seems equitable to those families. To take this away would seem to isolate them even more.</p> <p>2) Faces! A day without masks. Being able to see each other's faces and smiles is something I don't realize how much I miss and appreciate. Mondays bring this. We can laugh and smile and share in a way that we can't on in person days.</p> <p>3)Mondays ARE Educational. I hear the claim that those choosing in person learning are only getting 80% of an education. That somehow, Mondays are a lost day. This is frustrating and far from the truth.</p> <p>I (and teachers I work with) put the same time and effort into a Monday that they would a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. In fact, extra thought goes into how to utilize Zoom to do smaller groups and breakouts that are difficult (at best) in person.</p> <p>4) Teacher Sanity. Dual-platform teaching takes an IMMENSE amount of planning and energy for execution. Our attention, daily, is being pulled into two worlds. Mondays gives teachers one day of being able to work fully on one platform. No attention pulled back and forth—all in one place. A loss of Mondays takes this away.</p> <p>Our school year is down to its last weeks. I ask that we ride out this unprecedented year finishing as we are currently working. I care greatly about the well being of every one of my students and firmly believe that this is the most equitable for ALL families and teachers. Thank you</p> |
| Karen Johl | <p>I have little faith in our children returning to school five days/week, though it is needed immediately. My daughter HATES Mondays, she is not engaged, she does five other things while "in class," and no one can give me an answer why remote Mondays are still needed. Some teachers say it is time to plan. The day is not shortened that much, so how much planning is being done? Other teachers say it is time for small groups. That can't be done in-person? Others say it is so remote students feel more connected. A remote academy would have accomplished that and kept teachers from having to teach students on screen and in person. Our kids deserve better. Our teachers deserve better. You need to have a plan publicly ready for next school year by the end of this school year as well. No one wants, needs, or deserves the mess presented this year.</p> |

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| Kris Adams | <p>This school year is one that has been filled with unbelievable obstacles, yet the teachers, administrators, support staff and students have all risen to the challenges time and time again. I would love to have ALL of my students back in my classroom FIVE days a week. However, I have one child that is completely remote for the remainder of the school year and several that are currently learning remotely due to not feeling safe in the classroom since having several people in our building test positive for Covid-19 in the last week. I also have a handful of students going in and out of quarantine on a daily basis. In order to continue to provide a quality education to both in-person learners and remote learners, the extra plan time on Mondays is critical. It takes many hours to adapt weekly lessons to meet the needs of all learners. Mondays are also so very important for the social and emotional well-being of all of my students, as we ALL get to be together as a class. The remote learners do not feel as isolated and it allows for a more cohesive day. Mondays are currently used for much of my student assessment, one on one teacher/student meetings, and hands-on science that cannot be done at school because we cannot share space or materials. I am dedicated to continue teaching to students in a room and in a Zoom simultaneously for the rest of this school year. Please keep up your end of the bargain and continue to support me in doing so.</p> |
| Melissa Van Buren | <p>Monday's matter to my children! They have become more of a fight at home as they do NOT want to be remote. The teachers are trying hard but keeping kids attention on zoom when they know how amazing it is to be learning in person the other four days is torture. The small group things that happen for my children is nothing beneficial as all they do is laugh and mess around.</p> |
| Kate Hojek | <p>Mondays Matter. Let's end the school year by being consistent. Every quarter has had a change and mastering the change has been exhausting, especially while continuing to dual teach. Let's stay on course and finish strong by remaining in a remote setting on Mondays. Please honor the MOU that you already agreed to.</p> |
| Lauren Rzepka | <p>I'm writing as a parent of a future D25 student to urge the board to approve the strategic plan and the DEI policy. D25 needs to follow through with its commitment to DEI. Actions speak louder than words, and this is the board's opportunity to speak loudly and clearly that DEI is a priority for our students. As a community we can continue to discuss the implementation of the DEI policy without taking a pause on the strategic plan. We must put the needs of our students first and do our part to make sure all students get what they need from our schools. If we want people of color to want to live, work and learn here, we need to demonstrate that our schools are willing to do the work to be welcoming spaces for all.</p> |
| Alina Laurie | <p>The district needs to start a remote academy for any remote students. It's silly to ask teachers to teach on zoom to 1 or a few kids when majority are in the room. Neither the kids on zoom nor the kids in the room are getting a quality experience. Do not start next year with the same mistake.</p> |

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| Beth Deiter | <p>Hello, I am a resident of Arlington Heights and District 25 taxpayer. My 2 children are currently in elementary school, and I am so thankful to live in a district that places such a strong value on education. I was proud of our school board for unanimously voting to include the proposed DEI policy in the school's strategic plan over the summer. Our children are fortunate to have a members of the school board, administrators, and teachers who value diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> <p>Our children have received an excellent education thus far; however, I know their world view could be much richer if exposed to teachers who represent a more diverse population. When looking through the photos in their yearbooks, only 2 teachers were identified as people of color out of 90. While we have truly loved every one of the teachers we have had, I have to wonder what our children's learning experience could looked like with a staff that more resembled the real world in which we live. Arlington Heights students need to be prepared to interact with, understand, and appreciate other cultures, languages, and abilites once they graduate. We just cannot ignore the many differences in our world. By recognizing and encouraging their presence in our own community, we set an example for our children that we can all help to better appreciate, respect, and embrace differences.</p> <p>The DEI policy that fosters diversity, equity, and inclusion aims to ensure that no one particular group of children/staff are excluded based on their differences. We cannot forget that our children with different learning needs & therapeutic needs are included in this description. Upon reflecting on my own childhood, I cannot remember having many, if any, interactions with children who have disabilities while at school, as they were not included in the general education classrooms. This lack of basic exposure/inclusion at a young age sends a message to children that children with disabilities are not valuable members of the school/community, worthy of our time or understanding. We have made great strides towards inclusion since I was in elementary school, but there is certainly more we can do as a community to show children with disabilities and their families that they are welcomed and valued. By including them in everyday school experiences, children without disabilities don't grow up wondering, whispering, or discriminating, but rather, they grow up seeing all abilities as a natural part of the human experience. They see that taking the time, patience, and ingenuity to include everyone has lasting benefits such as friendship, understanding, and compassion.</p> <p>I believe that embracing all differences (i.e. cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic) has the same impact.</p> <p>The DEI policy has already been passed, unanimously. It sends a message to our children, the community, and all those interested in moving to our community that we welcome everyone and aren't afraid of each others' differences. Please, stand by what you know is right and continue to include DEI as part of your strategic plan. Thank you for your service to our community, your time, and your openmindedness.</p> |
| Lisa Nason | <p>Thank you to all the teachers. I want kids back in school on Mondays, there is no learning going on for my 2 kids on those days.</p> |
| Jodi Copersmet | <p>As a parent of 2 D25 students as well as D25 teacher for the past 20 years, I ask you to continue Remote Mondays. My own children are not doing great with remote learning, however, I see things differently as a teacher. I know my own children will get their needs met on the days they are in-person with their teacher. I know this because they have amazing teachers that are doing their best to meet the needs of ALL of their students! For some, in-person learning is not an option at this time. Our remote students deserve to have a day that allows opportunities for them to interact with their peers as a whole group. Remote Mondays allow instruction to be delivered in one mode allowing for differentiation. Remote Mondays provide opportunities to meet with students in small groups. Remote Mondays provide us the time to continue to grow as a classroom community.</p> |

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| Karen Joseph | As a parent of three District 25 students, I urge the Board to approve the strategic plan as written, including DEI goals and core values, at the April 8th meeting. I would like to see more open and facilitated conversations about DEI as the District moves forward to implement actions based on the approved strategic plan. I also urge the Board to keep the direction set in DEI Policy 1:32. Any pause on the strategic plan or on the DEI policy is a pause on all of our students. |
| Kaitlin Fajks | Mondays Matter! In this dual mode teaching model, they are essential for differentiation, targeted instruction, and social emotional connections. One of the many things that makes our district great is that we do what's best for every learner. |
| Liz osterhues | Now that D25 staff are fully vaccinated, able to teach in full classrooms, able to meet in larger groups with other staff, and able to attend in-person meetings with 50+ individuals in a room, why aren't they able to conduct IEP meetings in-person? Please clarify the policy on this and if not now, when will we resume in-person IEP meetings? These are some of the most critical meetings of our students' education and if your staff can collaborate in-person with each other, why won't they collaborate in-person with parents? |
| Maryann Zaleski | <p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>As usual, thank you for all of the time you take to hear from the community and make informed decisions on our behalf. Please consider implementing a late start on Mondays for teachers so they have the necessary time to collaborate, plan, and deliver high quality curriculum for their in-person and remaining remote students. That additional time is still needed, and while teachers know how to teach in-person students 5 days a week, many teachers are still having to teach remote students and could use the extra contractual time to plan for teaching to both mediums. Please consider this compromise rather than going back to the full 5 day in-person model.</p> <p>Also please consider sending out a survey to parents to report back on their remote Monday experiences and share that data with the public. Not all children are having the same, rich experiences for small groups as mentioned in previous meetings, and this is concerning. If remote Mondays are continued for the remainder of the school year, there needs to be better consistency and accountability for what those Mondays should look like for each student.</p> <p>Finally, while I certainly empathize with the families who must continue to keep their children remote and are concerned about their child feeling more isolated, please know there are still ways to keep those students part of the class without having them feel totally left out. In 2017, I taught a student who had to remain remote during the flu season due to her compromised immune system, and while it was challenging to plan for at times, the other students in my class were so great about including her during partner or group activities. They truly went out of their way to make her feel a part of the class even though she was participating through a screen on an iPad.</p> <p>Our teachers and students have proven to not only be amazing- but also resilient. I have faith that they can positively finish this year together.</p> <p>Let's all continue to be flexible, find creative solutions, and keep moving forward.</p> |

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| Michele Hilgart | <p>I am writing to you today as a resident of Arlington Heights, a District 25 parent and a taxpayer. I have a Kindergartener at Olive and a 3-year-old in the Early Childhood program at Greenbrier.</p> <p>I initially moved into this area, in large part because of the school district's outstanding reputation, and when my oldest was born, I was excited to raise him in D25. Not long after my youngest was born, I began researching the district's inclusive education practices for children with IEP's. I was shocked to learn how far behind D25 was in this area, relative to many other districts in IL and other parts of the country. Several of the parents I connected with early on candidly advised me to consider moving out of district because I wouldn't find the type of educational environment I wanted in D25.</p> <p>When I found out last summer that the board had unanimously approved DEI Policy 1:32, I was hopeful that the district was finally moving in a positive direction, embracing and attending to the needs of ALL students. It was a great, and essential first step. A few months later, I received an email inviting me to weigh in on a draft 2021-25 strategic plan. The initial plan was good. It was well thought out and the committee had clearly made an effort to build strategies aligned with the DEI policy. I saw some opportunities to take it even further, and provided that feedback in the survey. I am grateful for the opportunity to weigh in and recognize that the committee put a tremendous amount of time and care into building the final plan to reflect the values of the community.</p> <p>As I watched the last board meeting, I was concerned to once again see a community member calling the DEI policy into question—even suggesting that the board “revisit the policy” or possibly “put a hold” on the strategic plan until it is worked out. I grew more concerned still to see the policy back on the agenda, just ahead of the action item to approve the strategic plan.</p> <p>I am writing to once again express my support for the DEI Policy 1:32, which has already been unanimously approved by the board, adopted for the purpose of cultivating respect for the dignity and uniqueness of every individual in District 25. I urge the board to approve the final strategic plan as it is, built upon the principles in the DEI policy. The policy is sound. The plan is good. It was built by members of this community and there were ample opportunities for those with concerns to provide their feedback.</p> <p>Once the strategic plan is approved, the teachers and the administration can move forward to develop the specific tactics and programs to meet the identified strategic priorities. During that phase, there should be many more opportunities for community feedback and forums to discuss the specifics. I welcome that. I will be there, doing my part as a community member and a parent. Just as you did your job when you approved Policy 1:32.</p> <p>Please, stand by what you know is right and approve the strategic plan, so the district can move forward with DEI. Thank you for your service to our community and for your time</p> |
| Paula Slome | <p>Mondays Matter! Please show your commitment for ALL learners by keeping Mondays remote. This is the one day our remote students truly feel a part of the classroom. Their smiles are bigger and their engagement is stronger than any other day of the week.</p> |

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| Katie Rausch | <p>Dr. Bein stated that starting April 26th Mondays will be in person. Please hold yourself accountable and follow through on this statement as the community continues to watch your leadership. Mondays look different for everyone, this I know. I am a stay at home mother with a teaching degree and I am able to supplement for my children when they have finished activities and still have an hour before they sign on to zoom again. Even though my children are fine, many families in this community are not. Many parents can't help or supplement for their children for many reasons. I'm here to speak up for them. I am parent who has engaged with families all over this district and they need their voices heard. In many homes throughout the district, Mondays involve children having meltdowns or simple disengaging in any or all activities and parents feeling defeated and hopeless. This causes a lack of learning. Mondays are not measurable as every teacher, grade level and school varies. That is 20% of the instructional week that is subjective and therefore future assessment are less accurate. If data drives interventions and instruction then this needs to be addressed. Please consider what Mondays mean to our families, as well as our teachers, since we all have a common goal of doing what's best for our kids!</p> |
| Rebecca Fahnoe | <p>Dear Members of the Board,</p> <p>I am a lifelong resident of Arlington Heights. I am rooted deeply in the D25 community. I am an alum, a current teacher, and a recent parent of the District.</p> <p>The purpose of my submitted comments is twofold;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I ask the BOE to consider ALL students (not just the in-person students) with respect to in-person Mondays and 2) I ask the BOE to thoughtfully consider their role and opportunity to unify our very divided community <p>As we move forward and plan for the 2021-2022 school year, we must do so in a positive and productive light. I believe this community has a shared common goal to put students (all students) first. That being said, the difficulty of this year (in my opinion) has created a very unhealthy divisive culture.</p> <p>The leadership in D25 is strong. The opportunities in this community are strong. The teachers in this community are strong. The parents in this community are strong. The students are the strongest of all. Unfortunately, as a result of a tumultuous year paired with the emotional challenges of a pandemic, these strengths have been tested and challenged and we now stand as a divided community.</p> <p>The knowledge, experience, and passion of those who work in the field of education are priceless. The value of collective decision-making is also priceless so please work with our admin team, not against them. I applaud your efforts as public servants. I applaud your dedication but I ask that you rely on the admin team for the guidance they are able to give as they have made lifelong careers and advanced degrees in the field of education. I cannot imagine making decisions in an industry in which I have never worked. Please have faith in and trust our admin team to put students first. Please work with teachers as we continue to reinvent education to better meet the needs of our students during this challenging time.</p> <p>On a personal level, I have been absent this year for all of 1.5 personal days to get my son settled at college. I have subbed in over 20 different classrooms, supervised zoom rooms, taken on door and lunch duties all while keeping a busy LMC open to serve 950+ students. I have welcomed kids back into our building with enthusiasm as this is where they belong. I have made connections with students through clubs I have voluntarily offered. I have coached. I have been a team player. Yet, as a teacher in this community through some BOE mtg public comments as well as through social media posts, I feel as though I have been vilified with negativity.</p> <p>Simply said, the adults need to work TOGETHER to support our students.</p> |

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| Kate Renno | <p>Monday's Matter at the middle school level where every single class I fluctuate from 2-6 kids learning remotely. Monday's are the only day of the week where my remote learning students have 100% of my undivided attention and get to be a part of the whole class environment. As a P.E. teacher, my remote students can never experience what in person-learner's are doing in terms of team and individual sports, use of fitness room equipment, etc. Monday is the one day where I can tailor my lessons so we are all doing the same activity in the same learning environment and have the same shared experience.</p> |
| Sara Mungovan | <p>Dear members of the board and Dr. Bein,</p> <p>Please get our children back into school FIVE FULL DAYS as you promised this year. Four full days was never a thing. This is not where we end this year. The community and parents want this. This can no longer be about what is best for the union. Children first. FIVE FULL DAYS starting 4/26.</p> <p>Thank you, as always, for all of your time and efforts.</p> |
| Amy Harder | <p>When considering Monday's please remember that our remote students do still need to take mandated assessments. Those students' parents have been agreeable to coming into the school on Monday's when no other students are present since most teachers have been vaccinated and the school has been sanitized during the weekends.</p> <p>Additionally, when considering your resolution in support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, please remember that the state of Illinois has passed new mandated Multicultural Learning Standards. After ISBE had fully studied the research regarding the topic over multiple years, they moved to enact legislation for the educational benefit of our children. This resolution helps to support the teachers' and students' work that is and will continue to be done in our schools.</p> |
| Alexis Christensen | <p>I am an D25 parent of two students at OMS. I'm very concerned that D25 is considering putting policy 1:32 on pause. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to a healthy school community and a student's development as a global citizen. I urge the board to approve the strategic plan as written, including DEI goals and core values on April 8th meeting.</p> |
| Blair Christensen | <p>I am an D25 parent and I urge the board to approve the strategic plan as written, including DEI goals and core values on April 8th meeting.</p> |

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| Leah Ross | <p>Thank you for the four full days of school our students have. My four children are absolutely thriving. My concerns remain in these three statements/questions:</p> <p>1) With the vast majority of elementary children, even the ones who were staunchly in need of remote until recently, now back in person, isn't it possible to differentiate, and consider elementary school buildings able to return on Mondays, and the middle schools that are dealing with more kids still at home and teachers needing to plan for their various classes, can continue to retain Mondays at home for a bit longer? I'm just asking for some reason and compromise. Elementary schools at home means that kinder, first and second grade kids are still spending a full day away from the interaction that's required for their learning. In front of iPads. Still. For one whole school day a week. I believe these children should have been in buildings from day one and they certainly should be now, five days. Families are struggling still to manage work schedules and there is no reason their children should be in front of an iPad for schooling at THIS point, more than a year later. Passing periods are a struggle unique to only the two middle schools and if more kids are still remote due to concerns then I can understand South and Thomas needing those Mondays. Just a plea, once again, to see the immense difference between a first grader and an eighth grader, and to try to make choices on behalf of those unique learners. Just because we are a district with both elementary and middle, it does not mean the same rules and adjustments need to apply to all of the schools and students all of the time. This is not how we treat elementary and middle in normal years with regard to their daily needs and structure to their education. Not sure why we are lumping them all together now during a year that needed creative problem solving.</p> <p>2) Can we have a detailed plan for what day one of school will look like in August and goals/intentions for 2021-22 in terms of what a school day/week will look like for both elementary and middle?</p> <p>3) Has the district officially adjusted its contact tracing policies to eliminate sending home kids within the now completely outdated 6 foot rule? Has the district officially decided to consider 3 feet as the healthy and sustainable plan for keeping kids in school as much as possible without unnecessary contact tracing that does nothing to further "protect" our community? Thank you</p> |

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| Dawn Frenzel | <p>Dear SB 25, I am a district 25 parent and I am writing in support of the existing DEI policy which includes DEI goals for the 2021-2025 strategic plan, as currently written. I believe cultural respect and inclusion are values that matter greatly in the classroom. Using a curriculum which supports different perspectives can create a positive learning environment. Exposure to diverse perspectives, opinions and view points beyond what has already been formed gives students the opportunity to think critically about what they know and may help them to see their world view in fresh new ways. It promotes creativity, innovation, problem solving skills as well as respect for one another regardless of appearance, culture or disability. The more new cultural experiences children are exposed to, through appropriate curriculum, the more creative they can be. DEI also fosters a classroom where students are more respectful and understanding of different cultures beyond their own. This will have the potential to create an environment where children listen respectfully to different view points rather than fear the unfamiliar.</p> <p>It is also essential to gain an educator workforce that reflects the diversity of the student population. When children, who too often do not see themselves reflected in their role models, have teachers they identify with it can create positive educational benefits regarding cognitive, social, and emotional well being. Just as important is when a child has an educator who comes from a different cultural background, which could be a new experience for a child who has always been taught by someone they identify with. I believe this can also be very beneficial in fighting against negative bias and stereotypes. An educator plays a role as a person with knowledge and respect and has the ability to profoundly effect the way a child views a particular culture.</p> <p>By implementing a curriculum that embraces and support DEI and hiring a more diverse staff will be significant in shaping a district where the culture is inclusive, supportive and equal.</p> <p>Thank you, Dawn and Bryan Frenzel</p> |
| Nathan A Ulery | <p>I respect the voters of Arlington Heights for seeing through the one issue candidates that recently ran for the Board. Now it is time for the Board to focus on balancing the needs of education our children, respecting the faculty, and keeping our community healthy and prospering. It is also essential that the Board stay in its lane and focus on governance and budget and not the day-to-day operations of the District.</p> <p>It was gratifying to see that only half of Rich Olejniczak's Arlington Heights Forward team lost the election and that Rich had the lowest vote count of the candidates elected. The board needs to recognize that Rich has no mandate from the community and he must not be elected by the Board to an officer's position.</p> |
| Heather Lepold | <p>I speak on behalf of my 9 and 11 years old children.</p> <p>I support 5 days in-person learning for all K-5 students who choose in-person.</p> <p>With joint guidance from IDPH & ISBE (March 2021) supporting "...the return to in-person instruction...", with the five essential layers of mitigation in place in our elementary schools, and the low rate of transmissions in elementary schools in our community it is imperative that we prioritize our children's learning.</p> |
| Julie Paxson | <p>Mondays Matter. I teach first grade in the district and use Mondays to meet with reading groups that have too many students for me meet with in person. I also do social/emotional breakout rooms with my students so that my remote students have time to talk and interact with their classmates.</p> |
| Lindsay Nugent | <p>Dr. Bein and Board Members, I am troubled that the DEI Policy has not been voted on for 2021-2025 school years. Not only does the policy benefit District 25, it will truly benefit the community as a whole. This is so important and we cannot wait any longer to vote yes on integrating the DEI initiative into the Strategic Plan for the upcoming school years. Thank you for your time.</p> |

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| Pam O'Connor | <p>As this extremely difficult years gradually comes to a close, I wanted to take the opportunity to share that I am hoping for brighter days ahead for all. Watching board meetings this year has been disheartening for a multitude of reasons; they left me with a sadness that I never thought I would experience in District 25. I saw teachers scrutinized for feeling terrified, unsafe, and trying their best in a difficult pandemic, and Dr. Bein sharing how dire things were (such as regarding staffing) with the board taking no real helpful action to assist. And yet, I know that in order for us all to move forward to the brighter days we all so desperately want, requires unity, collaboration, and hope. I am challenging myself to acknowledge the feelings I have about this school year (aka statement above) and then look to reframe my thinking and look to the future. I am hopeful that the board can do the same. Let's work collaboratively and find a way to unify staff, board, and community. Let's be the example our kids more than deserve.</p> |
| Cindy Vander Klay | <p>I'd like to urge the board to accept the presentation given on why Monday's matter & move on to more important issues. Of course our kids matter, but the adults teaching them also matter. May is filled with IEP meetings, articulation across grade levels and with middle schools, testing, etc. Mondays offer a simple solution to fit those things in without disrupting the rest of the week with subs. They also offer the only day in the week where remote kids are part of the class. Our kids have been through so many changes in schedule and I do not understand why we'd make yet another change for just 5 or 6 days.</p> <p>I'd like to offer a different perspective on Mondays that is rarely presented among the complaints at the board meetings. My 3 kids love Mondays. It is a relaxed schedule without COVID rules, they get time to ask their teachers specific questions, they get to see their entire class and see the actual faces of their friends and teachers. I have 2 elementary students who went back to school in person for the first time in mid-February. I did not plan to send them back that early, but since we are at Olive it became extremely isolating to be remote once school went to 4 days. They were alone or with only 1 or 2 other students on zoom. In person learners are not on zoom or interacting with the kids at home except if the teacher choses to do a partner activity between in person and remote students. I cannot imagine now taking away Mondays for the kids that are still remote-especially in classrooms where they are alone. Now they love Monday as a day to connect with the entire class.</p> <p>I also have a middle schooler who just went back last week & there are still many kids staying remote in her classes. She is looking forward to Mondays as that's now the only day she'll interact with the remote students who have been her friends this year. Taking that away is further isolating all kids from eachother. Mondays also offer a break from carrying a large load of materials around all day long & the stress of passing periods which is an adjustment for those students who just went back for the first time.</p> <p>I'd like to ask the board & superintendent to consider all families when making such a monumental decision. Why weren't all families, but especially remote families asked about Mondays? We assumed that decision was already made at a prior board meeting where it was made very clear that teachers need Mondays and classrooms need them to feel like a cohesive group.</p> <p>Please consider what's best for ALL students & teachers. 15% of our students are remote-their needs should not be tossed aside & we're only now giving them 1 day a week to fully interact with their classmates. 85% of students are in person for 4 days, not all of us are demanding more time or unhappy with Mondays. Mondays do matter.</p> <p>Thank you for your time-</p> |

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| Jennifer Borrell | <p>I support including the proposed DEI policy as part of D25's strategic plan. As a parent with a child in D25, this issue is important to me. I grew up in a largely homogeneous area. As I grew up and began to experience other cultures, races, ethnicities, abilities, etc. I made a number of faux pas in how I interacted with people; thankfully I had friends who were understanding and willing to call me out on certain thought patterns and educate me. As I entered the workforce, it became even more apparent how important DEI is to be a well-adjusted colleague, but also how deeply it impacts and betters my work to have diverse perspectives contributing to goals and end-products. Because I believe DEI is important and valuable, I'd like to see the proposed DEI policy be adopted as part of D25's strategic plan for 2021-2015. We need to make it clear to children from a young age that our differences make us stronger and having diversity in our schools is a great way to start.</p> |
| Amy Duffey | <p>Recently there have been questions about need to better represent, teach, and embrace diversity in our schools. I know that not everyone believes that this is necessary, or that the board should take action now. Here are my questions:</p> <p>Would you want your child to fear that classmates might ask if he is a terrorist because of his name?</p> <p>Would you want your child to dread group assignments because his learning disability makes reading comprehension difficult and his handwriting hard to read?</p> <p>Would you want your child to struggle to find books with positive messages about women with her skin color?</p> <p>Would you want your child to struggle to make friends because other children don't understand all of his speech?</p> <p>Would you want your children to know that the hateful graffiti written in our village last summer was targeted towards people who look or worship like them?</p> <p>How would you explain to your children that other people in this community might tell them to "go back where you came from" based on the color of their skin?</p> <p>How would you prepare your child for the reality that people who look like him are being verbally and physically attacked across the country?</p> <p>Would you want to receive a phone call from the school that your child said, or did, something to make another child feel less valued?</p> <p>No one wants this for their child, but it takes our families and our schools, working as partners, to change it. "The City of Good Neighbors" is an active motto; good neighbors recognize each other, support each other, and teach their children to do the same. This is not the time to stop moving forward.</p> |
| Michelle Casillas | <p>Please keep April 26th through end of year for 5 full days, Kids need to be in school and do best in the classroom. We need a plan in place that we will open up in August full 5 days, many are waiting on this confirmation to decide for next year. Also, keep working on inclusion for all students, kids with IEP sometimes are treated differently by other kids.</p> |

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| Maryann Zaleski | <p>Dear Board Members of School District 25,</p> <p>Last summer, I, like many others, became much more aware of how systemic and systematic racism continues to affect justice and the everyday experiences of Black, Indigenous, and people of color in America. I spent months examining my own biases, prejudices, and privileges and continue to do so to this day. Along with others in the community, I began to discuss the ways we have seen, heard, and experienced racism in our D25 community. Many people I spoke to agreed there is room for improvement here in Arlington Heights and the surrounding communities, and we need to actively find ways to do better. In taking the time to read and learn more about modern day racism, I have learned much more than I was taught in my own educational institutions. As a result, I have developed a strong understanding of the need for change in our educational institutions when it comes to the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.</p> <p>When I learned about the District's DEI initiatives, I was proud to know District 25 will address the need for more a more diverse staff, include more diverse curriculum, include curriculum that highlights authors of various backgrounds and experiences, and teach children about how to consider other people's experiences. All of these initiatives are SO important.</p> <p>Not everyone in the community has been educated on what the DEI initiatives are though. Many do not understand the language, what these initiatives hope to accomplish, and how they will be implemented into our district. Please see this lack of awareness as an OPPORTUNITY to invite people to learn about these initiatives and understand WHY they are so important. Education on these initiatives is something that needs to happen, and what is District 25 if it is not a source of education? I would love to see a committee formed for the district that involves not only Board members and teachers, but also parents and people from the community. In speaking and learning about the DEI initiatives, I believe we, as a community, can have productive conversations and learn TOGETHER.</p> <p>It is imperative that you continue to make the DEI initiatives a priority. It will take a continued effort to make positive changes, and we are past the point in our nation's history where this topic can be easily tabled. Please continue to have the DEI initiatives on the agendas and vote to include DEI goals and Core Values in the 2021-2025 strategic plan as currently written. Thank you for your service to our community.</p> |

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| Marianne Corcoran | <p>I have asked for emailed mental health check ins. I have asked for more mental health staff. I have offered my services as a clinical psychologist to aid with assessment and referrals of students. I have offered ideas for groups, education, and assessment for children in crisis.</p> <p>At this point, after doing all of that and speaking at 6 board meetings, attending multiple face to face meetings with Dr. Bein, and countless emails to board members, my principal, and Dr. Bein, I see zero progress in terms of assessment and treatment/referral to treatment. I'm not sure if everyone is under the impression, and falling victim to the complete untruth, that if mental health issues are swept under the rug they will magically disappear. The truth is- they get worse. Children are killing themselves. They are cutting themselves. They are being hospitalized. They are self-medicating. They are isolating from friends and family.</p> <p>I know everyone on this board has heard me. I know you have listened to the news and read articles about what I am saying. What I can't wrap my head around is the fact that NOTHING has changed. My fear is that this is somehow about money. So let me offer some free things to do to help our kids.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop taking away recess for ANY reason. 2. Take the children outside during class, during break, take a walk, anything to get their little bodies moving. 3. Implement more rewards and incentives for positive behaviors. 4. Teach them the vocabulary for emotions. Even in the older grades, this can be an interactive way to start the conversation. 5. Check in often. Use these emotion words often, work them into other activities. 6. Recognize that fear, guilt and shame result from demanding children to understand concepts and act in ways that are above their developmental level. Stop talking about covid safety and distancing in a way that scares them. Stop threatening and punishing them for being close but instead reward and encourage games that allow them to move and be distant. 7. Talk to the parents. Send emails, send check lists, do just about anything to show us that you are concerned about our children's mental health. 8. Recruit people such as myself to help with finding referrals for therapists, group therapy, hospitals, or other advocates. 9. Do more informational zoom conferences to teach the parents about the warning signs, how to find help, how to engage when you are concerned. 10. Teach the children how to talk to their friends about feelings. Encourage them to check in with each other and also when to ask an adult for help if their friend is in trouble. <p>As always, I am offering any assistance I may be able to contribute and willing to volunteer, make referrals, and give suggestions.</p> |
| Nora Fergus | Please keep Mondays remote. Teachers overwhelming want Mondays to stay and remote and a M.O.U. has been signed. How is this even up for consideration? |
| Emily Eisenhuth | Consider keeping Mondays remote for Ivy Hill. Over 50% of my students are remote learners. They deserve my undivided attention at least once a week. |
| The following comments were received after the submission deadline and not included in the April 8, 2021 Board meeting. | |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment - April 8, 2021 |
|---------------------|---|
| Erin Zurek | <p>Please consider Monday's as all remote. My sons class has ZERO remote children and the teacher is in the classroom teaching through zoom, why is this happening still? Why aren't we providing the least restrictive environment, the best environment which is in person for the children. Please don't let the loud few union members speak for all the teachers. All the teachers in D25 can't possible feel this way. They get the same amount of planning time on remote Mondays as they do any other day. Why not have a late start if they need more time? Or as a former teacher we were paid salary so did planning time out of school hours. I thought when we chose a home in D25 we were choosing a district that was ahead of the times. Please help stop this. Please allow children to be in person 5 full days a week. Everyone is vaccinated that wants to be. Small group instruction is happening on days other than thursdays, I have emails to prove it. These reasons that Bein is giving are lies. Please, for our children return to five full days ASAP. Thank you for your time.</p> |
| Maria Zeller Brauer | <p>I am the parent of a child who will be starting 1st grade at Ivy Hill for the 2021 – 2022 school year. She told me earlier this week, as we have been preparing her to leave her current school, that she is a little bit sad, a little bit scared, and a little bit excited. I've told her that she is going to love her new school and that she is going to meet lots of new friends. I told her that she is going to learn so many new things.</p> <p>I know that district 25 schools are going to meet the needs of my child. But in order to continue to meet the needs of ALL children in our district, we need to adopt and act on the DEI policies as approved. What does it say to the children and parents of in our district who are Black, brown, LGBTQ, disabled, etc. if we take a "pause" on these basic policies? Are we willing to tell these families that we are taking a pause on their children? And if my daughter finds herself in one of these groups at some point in her life (LGBTQ, disabled) will I have to tell her that we are taking a pause on her right to feel equal and included?</p> <p>I know that our community cares deeply about our residents, especially our children. The passion that was displayed in this recent election cycle showed how much we care. So let's continue to move forward. Let's continue to show that we support ALL of the children in district 25. I implore the Board to continue moving forward with its DEI strategic plan and policy 1:32. Thank you.</p> |
| Sarah Van Huis | <p>Good afternoon,</p> <p>The decision to revisit the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policy was a huge disappointment in a year full of disappointments.</p> <p>If you reverse course on this issue - an issue everyone seated at the table tonight agreed was important a few months ago - you are abandoning those families who are not feeling fully seen by this district, and you are telling new families who may be moving into the district they are not all welcome. You are leaving behind those students who don't recognize themselves in the curriculum or in the teaching and administrative staff. You're missing the opportunity to teach all children an important lesson of empathy in action - that their experience is their own, and everyone has a different one.</p> <p>Don't listen to the people who tell you that this isn't an issue.</p> <p>Do the right thing.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment - April 8, 2021 |
|-----------------------|---|
| Brittany R Polihronis | <p>After reviewing the last 7 months of board meetings, I believe that we owe it to the community to share how we got to where we are today, and ultimately what decisions were made and how. The misinformation of how the learning model was development needs to be set straight, for no other reason than we can learn and grow as a community.</p> <p>I ask that you update your transition timeline to be a real representation of what happened and why for example why was the decision made for hybrid to be 2 full days vs. 1/2 days, why were Mondays left off of full in person learning. In reviewing all fo the documents and notes, it is clear that Dr. Bein had bullets for consideration for each of these but ultimately made the decision of the model of learning with the ATA. This was not influenced by the BOE as their role is not be involved in the decisions of how the instruction is handled. We need to learn from this year and if provide families and community of how we got where we are today.</p> <p>“Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”</p> <p>In this same way we need to consider how we are going to examine full day Kindergarten as an option for our community. After last months meeting we need to stop over complicating and review what we have to make this a possibility. The thought of building a kindergarten building separate from elementary school seems counter productive and actually brings no value. After watching Rich Olejniczak video where he explains how we could make this happen by reviewing numbers and current models. I ask that you discuss keeping this as efficient as possible in exploring the options and the best way to move this forward. Additionally have we discussed full day implications on 1st grade by talking to teachers. I also believe we should make a timeline for when we could offer this to families. Our children, parents, and teachers deserve an exploration that makes the best use of the talent and resources we have.</p> |
| Nicole Joeger | <p>I have lived in Arlington Heights for the past ten years and have happily raised my two boys here - with one currently at Patton and the other at Thomas. Additionally, I have been a teacher at Thomas for the past 11 years. After my first year in the district I felt that d25 had to be the community and district for my husband and I to move our family in to. So, when it was time for us to buy a new home in 2011, we eagerly chose a d25 neighborhood. I anticipated a few challenges along the way with teaching in the same community that I live in and, as of this year, also having my own children educated in the building I work in. I was pleasantly surprised when these "challenges" didn't arise, until this school year. This school year and the ongoing pandemic have challenged us over and over again resulting in a divided community. I have always been a positive and hopeful person and each day I tell myself that things will get better, we will heal, we will come together again, we will move on. A small bit of that hope and positivity is still inside of me...barely hanging on. With the election past us I am hopeful that now is the time that our community will come back together. Now is the time that the parents, teachers, school board members, administrators, and community members at large will move forward and redevelop the respect, collaboration and trust that was once there - the reasons so many of us choose to live and teach here in Arlington Heights. I am asking the board to keep this in their minds as we all move forward. As we say so often at Thomas - We got this - we can do hard things! Let's do this together Arlington Heights, it's time to come back as one community stronger than before.</p> |