

WEST HAVEN BOARD OF EDUCATION

August 17, 2020

Regular Board Meeting

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education was held on August 17, 2020 at West Haven High School Auditorium, McDonough Plaza, West Haven, CT. Cebi Waterfield, Chairperson of the Board of Education called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Alliance.

BOARD MEMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rosa Richardson, Vice Chair
Patricia Libero, Secretary/Treasurer
James Morrissey
Anne Heffernan
Andrea Talamelli
Robert Guthrie
Rosemary Russo

ABSENT:

Patrick Egolum

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Neil C. Cavallaro, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Anne Druzolowski, Assistant Superintendent
Matthew Cavallaro, Finance Director

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT: Mayor Nancy Rossi

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
PRESENT:**

Anthony Ventrella

B. Public Portion of Meeting

Kristen Scanlon - 77 Court St - see attached

Joanne Amato - 9 Chase Lane - addressed the board

Sandy McCauley, President WHFN - 86 Richmond Ave – Ms. McCauley gave an update as to the two resignations received from nurses listed on the agenda but to also say that two nurses have been interviewed to replace them.

Chris Vargo – 31 Hilltop Lane – COVID 19 caught everyone off guard, lack of technology infrastructure. Son is scared because he does not know what it will be like; Kids do not follow the rules. No doubt, we are working hard but he does not know what the plan is. Everyone on different page, medical, media, they all have different answers. I need a plan; other towns gave a plan layout. What we received is not a plan. It is a resurrection of other information. His son needs in person learning and social development. For those of you who are parents, what would you need to have your child comfortably return to school? How to open schools is your decision, the safety for my child is mine.

Kevin Campos, Representative CWA 1103 – on May 4 a Payroll Coordinator was voted on. You have a 10-month secretary doing payroll all summer. It does not make sense. Jolene Barnes, Personnel Director retired. The Communication Director is not in the union. You want to trade off positions. The language in the contract reads, “The Board agrees that for the life of the contract it will not seek to remove the position from the bargaining unit.” We talked to see if we could bargain. Then I received a letter that than job is out of the union. That was not enough notice. I cannot have my union stepped over. I am looking for a vacate or the salary will be lowered. Looks like an attempt to walk over the union.

Tom Lucas – 25 Great Circle Road – This is an extremely difficult position to be in. You have to trust the Governor but you get mixed messages. I would love my daughter to return five days a week. I do not understand the plan for 5 days if there is no reduction of kids. No reducing school size. Administrators’ sending them into an environment that is not safe. What is the different between five full days and five half days. The numbers are good now but as people return from vacation, it could change. I do not know why we are not returning with half capacity. I hope we have a Virtual plan in place.

Bridgetti Hoski – 326 Washington Ave – parent, Council member, coach. I am concerned on many levels. Daughter wants to go back, she is a Junior. She wants to get back to what life is. I agree with other public members. City Hall closed one-day a week for cleaning. How can we not close for deep cleaning? If City Hall cannot reopen, how can we? Not everyone is going to be satisfied. Temperature checks for adults should be done at home. Special needs children are not getting social interaction or therapy. It has to be a collective effort. Have we called our State reps regarding testing. We need to share more at a deeper level. I trust and respect you. We need to listen to everyone’s concerns.

Mary – Overlook St – is a nurse at Yale. The death rate is not small; I do not want to scare you. We need to make it safe. The disease is too new. It only makes sense to do a hybrid and deep cleaning. It’s hard to get cleaning supplies. I wrote to the Governor. Not sure what the plan is. I would prefer Hybrid. I don’t know what temperature checks can do. Plenty of people have COVID who don’t have a fever. Testing is only as good as the person doing it.

Frank – Anderson Ave – Where can I find remote learning for special needs children. Will the half-a-day include remote learning?

Marie Boyd – Carroll St – my child is moving to Carrigan, we have gotten nothing, no communication. My child digressed with Distance Learning. It was the worst three months. Mrs. Jodi Memmot went above and beyond. She drove by my house to wave to my child. She did an excellent job. I want her to go back. I have concerns of cleaning, class sizes. The Park Rec camp was excellent. Hoping to return.

M. Olsen – Winslow Drive – I am not frightened by this. Distance Learning was just a review. I would like to go back. The percentage is small. Looking at public health as a whole, not just the classroom. They need a social environment not just being isolated in the home.

Michelle Piascik- 12 Highview Ave – 4 ½ year old at Forest, phenomenal school but nothing has been sent out yet. What is going on with special needs? PPT services, my child has suffered. I want my child to go back to school. However, is it safe? Temperature checks are not required. I will make sure I check my son's temperature every day. Is it a safe place to go every day? If we do a full hybrid, my child will not start until Thursday with Plexiglas in between students. That is not what a first day of kindergarten is supposed to look like. I wish I had more information.

Heather Shea – 91 Rockerfeller Ave – my child wants to be back in WHHS. I am not confident bringing her back. The communication is frustrating. Not confident being on a bus. I implore you to improve communications.

Kim Kenny – 31 Downdraft Circle – Thank you to the Teachers, Administrators, staff. Schools didn't close, buildings did. I am concerned about bussing. I am eager to get back when it is safe to do so. Hoping everyone can work together. I appreciate Lina and the job she is doing. Can't emphasize safety enough.

Katherine Root – 371 Elm St – Distance Learning is challenging with working from home. It was all review. Not comfortable with the communication. I heard what it might be. We've heard nothing about remote learning. Presenting new material to a first grader. I can't do that. They need socialization. They will not comprehend not hugging their friends. Not comfortable sending my child to school, but not comfortable teaching either.

Aaron Charney – 146 Union Ave – Thank you to the public. Pre-school, how ¼ day is working. MLB sends out a hundred-page document. We are not temperature checking children. Ventilation, what are we doing. The twenty-three page PowerPoint raised more questions. We need information.

Patty Forbes – Third St – Want to know about sports. If in school, yes, you can participate in sports. If remote, you cannot be active in sports. Her not sitting in, can you rethink the option of sports?

Ruddy Morris – 92 Cherry Lane – My child is at Mackrille. I am very pleased with the services. My wife and I are both educators. I realize it is a moving target. Very difficult to communicate to us what the plan will be. Looking for special needs clarification of hours and number of day's child can attend. Hybrid model, we meet synchronously with student's every day. What is hybrid learning going to look like? Students need contact on a daily bases. You have to be able to see the student. School will be different. We need clarification of the hybrid. What will it look like for special needs students?

Chairman Waterfield read an email from Michelle and Ed Piascik – see attached.

James Morrissey – 305 Country Hill Dr – see attached.

Rosemary Russo – 115 Pheasant Rd – see attached.

Missy – 46 Dawson Ave – I have a daughter who works at Yale. I agree with Rose and Jimmy to do Distance Learning. But students should have socialization. Continue with sports but keep them home. We need to keep our children safe. None of this is safe if we as adults can't keep the children safe. We are a community let's do it together.

Ms. McManus – 62 Hines St – two of my in the high school has no problem with Distance Learning. The twelve year old thought it was a video game. I had to micromanage. I didn't know he had an issue. How are we going to communicate if a child is failing at Distance Learning?

Public Portion Closed: 7:44 pm

REPORTS

C.1.a. Administration/Status of Schools

Superintendent Cavallaro gave a review of the Reopening Plan. He has consulted with Dr. Williams, West Haven Public Schools Medical Advisor, Maureen Lillis, Director of Health for the City of West Haven and Jill Grego, WHPS Nursing Supervisor in making his decision.

C.1.b. Student Representatives' Report

C.1.c. Board

Patricia Libero – requested to revisit remote learners' participation in sports. Asked about the picnic tables. Wanted to recognize Leigh Hauer, Art Teacher at Mackrille for being the illustrator of the published book "Papa and Gigi's Day Off".

James Morrissey – thanked Neil for the presentation. Thank all speakers who came out tonight. Asked about air filters, buses and nurses. There is no right or wrong answer; it is something now to deal with. We are all in this together.

Rosemary Russo – asked about isolation rooms, Purell dispensers and water.

Andrea Talamelli- asked about bus monitors and supply of masks.

Anne Heffernan – asked about the teacher survey and a survey for parents

Robert Guthrie – asked about new guidelines for Music and Band.

Cebi Waterfield – Special Education services across the country suffered. We should look for student nurses to help. Asked about the amount of cleaning supplies and PPE, City setup a COVID testing area. Spoke about a new saliva test.

D.1. Approval of Minutes

D.1. the West Haven Board of Education Meeting was held via Zoom and YouTube on Monday, July 20, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve the minutes **D.1.**

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Andrea Talamelli seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Abstained: Cebi Waterfield, Anne Heffernan

Minutes **D.1.** were approved

D.2. Resignations: (Certified)

All-inclusive: 20-57 – 20-63

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve the resignations **D.2.**

Patricia Libero made the motion

Rosemary Russo seconded the motion

Discussion: none

All board members present were in favor

Resignations **D.2.** were approved

D.3. New Hire: (Certified)

All-inclusive: 20-64 – 20-71

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve the new hires **D.3.**

Robert Guthrie made the motion

Rosa Richardson seconded the motion

Discussion: None

All board members present were in favor

Items **D.3.** were approved

D. 4 New Business

20-72 West Haven Federation of Teachers' Contract

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve **D.4. 20-72**

Rosa Richardson made the motion

Patricia Libero seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor

20-73 Revised West Haven School Calendar 2020-2021

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve **D.4. 20-73**
Rosa Richardson made the motion
James Morrissey seconded the motion
Discussion: None
All board members present were in favor

20-74 Policy R5145./4118.112/4218.112 – Sex Discrimination/Sexual Harassment

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to approve **D.4. 20-74**
Robert Guthrie made the motion
Rosa Richardson seconded the motion
Discussion: Rosa Richardson – policy should be added for workplace harassment.
All board members present were in favor

Informational

Chairwoman Waterfield asked for a motion to adjourn
Rosa Richardson made the motion
Patricia Libero seconded the motion
All board members were in favor
The meeting adjourned at 9:19 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Tamara Mursko

Good Evening Chairman Waterfield, Board of Education Members, Mayor Rossi, Superintendent Cavallaro, and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Druzolowski.

I stand before you tonight to speak about my membership's concerns. We are here dealing with a once in a lifetime circumstance, and the teachers and students of West Haven are looking to you as members of the Board of Education to please answer our questions and alleviate our fears.

Safety –

Safety is obviously the number one priority of the West Haven Federation of Teachers and School Nurses. My members want to return to in person instruction, but only if, and when it is safe! I have repeatedly communicated this since day one of our district committee meetings. From the beginning, I have fought for PPE, cleaning equipment, and various sanitizing necessities. PPE was the first battle of many to come, and I'm extremely grateful that the district ordered additional equipment, but is it enough? Did we secure enough to last us for a few months, or will we have enough for the foreseeable future? I want to reiterate how important PPE and cleaning supplies are towards the basic functioning of our schools.

Ventilation –

I have continuously inquired about the air filters being changed and the HVAC maintenance, but how about the exhausts? Are all of the buildings' exhaust systems working properly, and when was the last time they have been serviced? Recently, our union sent a survey to all 550 members. The subject of ventilation came up repeatedly. The majority of respondents included the following three words in their written responses: **"poor air ventilation"**. Obviously, this is a huge concern for my members, and we need answers.

I have copies of the WHFT survey results for you to review.

Half days for students and not for staff during the extreme heat is a concern. Connecticut businesses that have good ventilation systems and air conditioning require their workers to wear masks. It is inconceivable that a student or staff member will wear a mask all day in 80 + degree heat without a fan or proper ventilation. Have you ever been on the 3rd floor of Washington School? How about the 2nd floors of Carrigan and Bailey, or the old building at the high school

on a particularly hot day? It is challenging during normal circumstances, let alone wearing a mask and having no air flow. I challenge anyone to teach or learn under these conditions.

During the discussions these past weeks, I was promised outside break areas with tents and picnic tables. Is this going to happen? It is apparent to our members and hopefully to you, that the students and teachers will require multiple mask breaks during school hours. Recently, the district committee was told that bottled water would be provided for every student as an alternative to touchless water fountains. Is this guaranteed?

Temperature Checks -

I have continued to fight for temperature checks since the reopening plans were initiated. I would think that the Board of Education would want this extra safeguard in place, since many students and staff come to school sick during a normal school year. I understand that most children are asymptomatic, which is why the teachers' union is willing to compromise in requesting temperature screenings for adults only. This particular safeguard will make the teachers feel safer and let's face it – it is better to discover an adult with a fever first thing in the morning than after the school day is over. This is when contact tracing comes into play. The act of screening has the ability to provide substantial peace of mind and protection to West Haven teachers and families.

Protocols/Policies -

From the beginning, I have been asking for protocols and policies for cleaning, safety, and in the event of an outbreak. Ladies and gentlemen, there are 14 days left. The teachers of West Haven need to understand exactly how contact tracing will work and how will information regarding a positive diagnosis be disseminated to their cohorts and coworkers. I have no doubt that West Haven parents will demand notification of exposures within a school.

I am also requesting for any of my members to receive free testing in the event of a possible exposure during the course of the school year. Will such tests be available at the West Haven High School Clinic or Occupational Health? Please let us know.

It is my understanding that Milford, Hamden and Stratford are reopening with a hybrid plan that closes buildings down one day a week for deep cleaning. What day of the week are we closing for deep cleaning?

Exposure -

It is unfortunate, but noteworthy that some teachers at the secondary level, specialists, as well as special area teachers, will be exposed to more adults and children than others. Certain teachers (e.g. Art, Music, Library, PE) will have contact with 200 + students daily, and some, who are in multiple buildings will be exposed twice as much. Obviously, there is a greater danger of cross contamination. In addition, Pre-K, special areas, and specialists will be directly exposed to Pre-K students who will not be required to wear masks. Teachers are repeatedly questioning and expressing anxieties over the possibility of exposure and exposing their loved ones to the virus.

Social Distancing –

The district website states the following: “Maximizing social distancing between student workstations, achieving 6 feet when feasible, when determining the classroom layout” The key words in that sentence are “when feasible”. In my opinion, it is not feasible because classrooms are smaller in most buildings, and we currently don’t know what the class sizes will be. It is disturbing to me and to our teachers that classroom desks will most likely be 2-3 feet apart. This information needs to be shared directly with families so there is no miscommunication.

Accommodations –

Many of our teachers have requested accommodations because they are at a higher risk of illness for contracting COVID. Why haven’t they heard from the district yet? With each passing day, these teachers are growing more anxious and upset because they have not been informed what they are doing, or if their accommodations will be granted. Good teaching requires planning ahead.

Furthermore, approximately 30-40 reading and math teachers have been informed that their jobs will possibly be eliminated. As of today, no additional information or communication has transpired to alleviate these teachers’ fears. This is simply unacceptable.

Nurses –

The district currently has many nursing vacancies to be filled. I know progress is being made, but it is quite alarming that we are still short 4 nurses, as well as 6-7 health assistants for school isolation rooms. How can West Haven Schools function under any reopening plan with a nursing shortage?

I understand this is an unprecedented time, and that reopening plans are “fluid”; however, the teachers of West Haven need answers. I think most of you know how dedicated and caring the teachers in our district are. We want to be in our classrooms with our students, but we need assurances that the Board of Education understands our concerns and is doing everything you can to provide a safe and healthy working environment for the teachers and students of West Haven. I hope all of you as a Board will take time to examine the reopening plans of other school districts in our region. There are many plans that encompass equal measures of safety and caution. We need your help, and we need answers!

-Kristen Malloy- Scanlon

President of the West Haven Federation of Teachers and School Nurses, Local 1547

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I grew up in West Haven. I started with Mrs. Aceto in kindergarten and worked my way through Forest School, Seth Haley, Bailey, and WHHS. In 2009, I completed my student teaching at Bailey with one of my favorite former teachers. The following year I started at WHHS, where I currently remain as a Union Building Steward and Mathematics Teacher. The start of COVID last year marked the end of my first decade of teaching in this district.

This district, especially the teachers, played a big role in making me the person I am today. My teachers helped me learn the difference between right and wrong. They taught me how to use facts and information to help me make decisions. They taught me that when you see something happening that is wrong, you should do something and that looking the other way can be just as wrong as the action itself.

Those who know me, know that I am a passionate person, especially when it comes to teaching. Recently though, I find myself struggling more and more to let my passion shine through the overpowering feelings of fear and helplessness.

I find myself in a constant state of conflict as to how I can adequately teach and instill these same values in my students, when the society we live in oftentimes does not hold true to them.

How can I teach about the significant importance of social distancing and following state guidelines to a room filled with 25-30 students whose desks cannot possibly be spaced 3 feet apart on all sides, nevermind 6 feet?

And if they ask why they are not spaced 6 feet apart, will I have to try to explain the technical difference of vocabulary with the use of the term "guideline" vs. "requirement" as justification?

How can I teach my students about self value and the importance of advocating for themselves and for others, if the majority of students in our district will be in rooms with no AC, no fans, and little to no air flow in 80-90 degree temperatures?

How can I teach them about the value of mathematics in decision-making, if statistics are now being used against them? "Less than one percent ..."

We have all heard it..."less than one percent..." Lives are being talked about as mere statistics in the "data-based decision-making" process.

Will even a single life lost be worth any value that can be gained through the in-person learning that is being suggested? Would the answer to that question be different if that life is yours or someone you love?

As elected officials of this board, you were all chosen by members of this community based on the trust and relationships you have built through your past actions. This community has chosen each of you to represent, serve, and protect us. This is the most critical time that someone in your position will possibly ever face. You are part of a small group that has the power to be part of a decision that will affect the lives of this entire community and more. We are counting on you now more than ever.

Dr. Fauci and other medical professionals have consistently said that proper ventilation along with masks and social distancing are critical in the ability of schools to reopen.

Has the board considered the increased risk our students and staff will face if any of these safeguards are not being met? Are you confident that all safeguards put in place will be consistently followed by all parties involved?

Can you assure this entire community that the appropriate due diligence has been made before making any decision?

I want to get back to my classroom and my students and give them the education they deserve. But I want to be safe and protected.

I thank you for your time and for allowing me to speak here tonight.

Joanie Amato

Tamara Mursko

From: Michelle Piascik <michelle.piascik@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 1:47 PM
To: Tamara Mursko
Subject: 8/17 BOE Meeting

CAUTION: The e-mail below is from an external source. Please do not open attachments or click links from an unknown or suspicious origin.

Ms. Mursko,

I would like to address the following to the Board, in the event that we are unable to speak at tonight's meeting.

In light of the CEAs revised Safe Learning Plan, what effect, if any, will this have on West Haven's reopening plan? I know we have already pushed the start date out until September 8, but now they are saying that, for one, school HVAC systems will need to be upgraded to improve air quality. Knowing that there is no AC at my son's school, what would this mean for his school and others like it?

They also state that children can readily become infected with and transmit COVID-19 to adults and children. Would you also revisit your decision to not temperature check students and staff at your schools?

Thank you,

Michelle & Ed Piascik

Let me start by saying I want to thank the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, administrators, principals, medical staff, union leadership, PTA, custodians, and anyone else who has been working on a reopening plan for our schools. I know that you have worked tirelessly and have taken each and every precaution imaginable to ensure the safety of our staff and students.

Personally, as a Board member I have been trying to do as much research as humanly possible to get as much information as I can to formulate my opinion on this matter. I have weighed the pros and cons of the plans that are on the table. Total reopening, hybrid's, and virtual learning. Quite honestly, in my opinion all have there positives and negatives.

Let me be clear. This is no way criticizing anybody who has an opinion about what plan they believe is the best for our schools reopening. Remember, we are all in this together and we must work with each other, communicate, understand and respect everyone's opinion.

I have wrestled with the plans for the last several months. There were just so many factors that came into play that it had my head spinning. Without going into detail about all of these factors, the one common denominator that kept coming back to me was the safety of our staff and students. I fully understand that our State is doing the best in fighting the coronavirus. We should be all be very thankful for that and must continue fighting this battle. As board members we were elected to make decisions and give our opinions. Some may agree and some may disagree but we chose to run for this office and the voters have put their trust in us.

With that said as a board member, I want to offer my opinion that I believe is the most effective plan.

I have chosen to support the virtual plan of learning. Basically it's the plan that the New Haven Board of Education voted upon at their special meeting on August 5th. It will be virtual for the first marking period which is the first 10 weeks of school. We can then reassess what to do from there. I pray that the COVID numbers go down and we can move forward. We all agree that we want our staff and students in the classroom as quickly as possible but most importantly as safely as possibly.

As I stated earlier, I respect everyone else's opinion but as a board member I wanted to express to you where I stand on this issue. Thank you.

James W. Morrissey

Good Evening Superintendent Cavallaro, Dr. Druzolowski, fellow Board Members, Principals, Teachers and Parents,

Today is August 17. Summer is quickly coming to a close and school is right around the corner. If 2020 was a normal year, parents, teachers and children would be anxiously waiting for the beginning of the school year. Instead this summer they have been worrying about whether school will open and more importantly will it be safe for schools to open.

As like every other district in the state, West Haven completed the 2019-2020 school year through Distance Learning. Our children were successful with this model. Our data showed that 95% of the students participated and completed their daily assignments. With this experience from last year and the purchase of additional devices for all students plus added programs to enhance and perfect this method of teaching, I would say distance learning in West Haven will be even more successful when needed.

Now, like every other district in the state we are planning for the 2020-2021 school year. Superintendent Cavallaro and his team have worked tirelessly and have come up with 4 plans.

Two of West Haven's Plans involve putting all children back into the schools 5 days per week. So that would mean approximately 2000 students and staff at the High School, 1000 kids plus staff at Bailey and Carrigan, and anywhere from 300-500 children plus staff at our elementary schools. I disagree with these plans. I feel that they are not safe, and both plans put too many people together in one place. Social distancing with these numbers is impossible. Not one building in the

state has fully open since the Pandemic began. Think about that for a minute, not one building in the state has fully reopened. I think I have a solution. Let's open City Hall and all public buildings. And then let's open the movie theaters, concert venues, sporting events, bars and restaurants to full capacity for the next 10 weeks and see how that goes. If this goes well then we can talk about opening our schools. Why should our children and teachers be the guinea pigs?

The other 2 plans consist of a hybrid plan and a total distance learning plan, which requires a waiver from the state. New Haven and North Haven have both applied for waivers to at least start the year. And as of today Bridgeport Board of Ed has scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday to discuss starting school remotely. I think this is the smartest approach. If the waiver is granted these communities will have the opportunity to see what happens in surrounding towns that do in fact open their buildings. They will not be placing any of their children or staff at risk. Most experts agree that at some point during the school year all schools will be returning to all Distance Learning. Why are we then willing to risk the health and well being of our own children and teachers for what may end up being a very short time? We have seen schools in the South such as Georgia, open only to see a spike in Covid numbers and close their doors within a couple of weeks. Is that what we want to see for our children and teachers? Isn't this more traumatic for our children? We all want our children to be back in school. I think we all want it to be normal again, but is this the right time? Nothing as far as the Corona Virus has changed since March. There is no vaccine there is no cure. Our numbers in CT are great because the state never fully reopened. Again I ask, why are we willing to open our schools first? Why are we willing to put our children and teachers at risk?

I have served on this Board for almost 7 years now. During this time I have seen our teachers and administrators take pay freezes, lose step movement, and be the first to go on the high deductible health plan. Our staff has made many sacrifices when we as a city needed them to. During these same seven years, I have also seen this Board thank and praise our teachers and staff for achieving huge successes with our children. We were all proud to hear that one of our schools was named a Blue Ribbon School and that several were named Schools of Distinction. We also were thrilled to hear about improved test scores. Teachers and paras are the driving force of our successes. Throughout these 7 years the one thing I cannot recall hearing is, our teachers asking us for anything. Today, however they are asking us for one thing, and that one thing is safety. They would like to go to work without being fearful that they are going to catch this sometimes fatal disease. A disease that they could easily bring home and pass along to their own families. A disease that quite possibly has lifelong effects. And sadly, our answer to our teachers and staff is No. I cannot believe that we are not considering another plan that would be able to give our children the education they deserve and at the same time keep everybody safe. I do not understand what the goal is in opening our schools right now. Do we believe that this is the first step to normal life? Is it really the best thing for our children or is it the best thing for the economy? Is it best for our children to start another school year just to have it end abruptly again? I am a teacher and I believe kids do belong in school, however not during a global pandemic. I believe we should begin the year with Distance Learning, it is the only safe choice at this point in time. As a New Haven BOE member said in their August 5 meeting, the hybrid plan is good... just not yet. We need to wait.

Rosemary Russo