

Many parents are very angry today as we learned the news at noon Wednesday that NO students will be returning to Beaverton schools until April 5th at the earliest. Below is the email I sent to the Superintendent about this:

Superintendent Grotting,

I am absolutely fuming at the news that elementary aged students are not returning to the buildings until April 5th at the earliest (and only grades preK-2 to start at that time). Full disclosure, I am a teacher in the district and so I was told about this news yesterday. And, to add insult to injury, not only are they not going back until April - a full 13 months after they left the buildings - they are going back for a mere 2 hours and 15 minutes a day for four days a week? That is truly unreal. It's so small an amount of time that it is basically worthless. Not only do I teach in an elementary school (and have for more than a decade) but I have three elementary school aged kids of my own who have been at home for a year. Bringing them back 4 days a week for 2 hours and 15 minutes a day is like a slap in the face to them and to their parents. And, my 3rd grader and 5th grader (under this plan) won't be back until basically May! That is outrageous!

We have waited patiently as the rest of the entire country has sent their kids back to school. I know the district doesn't want us to compare them to anyone else, but that becomes really hard not to do when I personally know elementary aged students in NY, MA, CT, NJ, WA, CA, FL, OH, MI, TX and ID (this is just me personally - friends and family of mine) who have been back - not hybrid, full time - for months and months and months. I honest to goodness sobbed when I heard what our district was planning for my kids. It is surreal. There is NO science and NO data from anywhere in our country that is connecting large pockets of COVID cases back to public schools. Why? Because of the insane protocols you have to go through just to go to school. My own niece (who has been back full time since October in 3rd grade) has 22 kids on the bus total, has to enter through a certain door, has a blue painter's tape square on the ground that she literally spends her entire day in, has to go to the bathroom only at designated times in a designated bathroom, and on and on. They are a district about the size of Beaverton. Since October when all elementary students went back full time there they have had 3 COVID cases total.

I am already vaccinated (as a BSD teacher) since I fall into round one of the vaccination schedule. All round 1 teachers will be vaccinated for BSD by the end of next week. Science tells us that the round 1 shots are VERY effective. Here is a sample of the science:

"Dr. Chris Gill, an infectious disease specialist at Boston University, points out that a single injection of Pfizer's vaccine may be even more effective than this estimate suggests. Looking at data from a smaller window between the time the first injection should have started working and before the second injection kicked in, Gill says the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine **may have an efficacy rate as high as 80 or 90% with just a single dose.**

Moderna actually collected data from people who only received one dose of its vaccine, Gill says. Some 2,000 participants in Moderna's phase three clinical trial received just a single injection of either a placebo or the vaccine. In that population, **the efficacy of the single vaccine dose was roughly 80 to 90%.**"

So, at the end of next week, all BSD Round 1 teachers will have their first vaccine (keeping in mind that innumerable places all over the country have gone back for many months - full-time - with no vaccinations) AND the governor has given us the green light to go back AND the case numbers allow us to go back now (as a state). If the reason we are not going back after meeting ALL these benchmarks is

because BSD needs time to reallocate teachers around, that is absolutely insane. Send preK-2nd grades back Feb 8th in hybrid (with their teachers they've had all year who will now all have had one vaccination) and any students who want to remain fully online are going to have to do the asynchronous learning only until the district can figure out what to do with them. It is way too important that these elementary aged kids get back in school. It is so wrong and so hurtful and having such a negative impact on our children. They need to go back to school. Not in April, not in March, NOW.

A second email I sent this morning to the superintendent:

Superintendent Grotting and Mr. Simpson,

I would appreciate a response to the email I sent to you both on Wednesday morning regarding BSD's ridiculous and, frankly, outrageous return to school plan.

I know you have heard an outpouring of dissent from your community and to just ignore them is not only unprofessional, but also quite offensive to everyone who has taken the time to contact you.

I can tell that the district is just going to go ahead with the awful plan of April 5th for 3 grades for 2 hours a day, 4 days a week since staff just got an email saying that the deadline to remove their personal items from classrooms has been extended until March 26th. We are still in the month of January right now. It is mind blowing that BSD thinks it can not even try, just a little, to get students back into classrooms. This is quite literally a public health emergency and instead of acting like things are on fire (in which case you would move up the deadline for staff to remove personal items from classrooms), you decide to double down on your snail's pace plan.

Meanwhile, 19 students have committed suicide in Las Vegas and I just read many, many news articles that said that those suicides have been what has "picked up the pace" of the return to school plan there. I cannot imagine being a parent of a dead child and reading that my own dead child was what finally made school district officials realize they should have actually done everything in their power to bring children back sooner. It is unreal to read these headlines. The same thing has happened in the Bend/LaPine school district, and I have a friend who knows a police officer who responded to a suicide call for a nine year old in Portland recently. Children should not have to take their own lives en masse for public officials to realize that "oops, maybe we should have done everything in our power and used every single resource we had to get these kids back to school as soon as is humanly possible."

If you're simply going to ignore all emails and petitions and social media comments and double down on this horrible plan, then you should, at the very least, respond to those who contact you. Thank you.