

Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #148

I would like to provide: *	Written Public Comments
Select the meeting date: * *	Virtual+ Plus Learning
My public comments are related to: *	
Topic *	Virtual School Day is Too Long
Full Name *	Ginger Root
What is your relationship to ACPS? *	Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student

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Dear School Board Members,

I am the parent of a second grader at Douglas MacArthur, and I am writing to express my concerns that virtual school hours are too long. While I agree that it would take an enormous feat to reopen schools safely for students and staff, replacing traditional school with an equally lengthy virtual school day is not a sustainable answer. The amount of time online does not seem age appropriate especially for the younger grades. My child is really struggling. The teachers are doing a fabulous job, but the online format does not replace the stimulation of the classroom. Children that age were not exposed nor expected to sit through 4+ hours of lecture type instruction in the traditional classroom. They can't talk to their friends nor hear them laugh. When the teacher is sharing her screen or posting information they need to see, they can't see each other to have that positive peer pressure to sit still and stay engaged. There is also so much that happens in the classroom outside of directed instruction. Some of that is time for transitions, but a lot of that is also group work that teaches social and academic skills and independent work that allows the teacher to work with small groups and/or individuals. A lot of learning for the younger ages is disguised as games and fun activities. This is also really hard to repackage virtually. I worry that this format will greatly decrease children's ability to enjoy learning. I am starting to see that my son is losing his love of school. We can not expect elementary students to have the maturity to understand why this is important for their future. I really think that with targeted lessons we could finish virtual school in half a day. I already feel that I am having to prioritize what my child is really participating in and struggling with balancing his mental health, happiness and a continued desire to learn. I feel like we are going to quickly approach burnout for both students and parents.

Some suggestions and ideas.

1. Drop MTSS ASAP until small group and individual needs have been determined and can be implemented. Do not come up with filler activities for students who don't need this daily. Reading assessments should have also already started for students as to assess those with the greatest needs and get them additional support as quickly as possible.
2. Allow families to choose if they want to participate in virtual encore or submit an activity log instead. This could also be informal and based on the needs/desires on any given day. An individual, appropriate activity that could be logged would be an easy way to reduce time on Zoom without compromising

academic goals.

3. Split classes by having two of the same targeted sessions per day (an AM and PM session). Focus on reading, writing and math and use social studies and science where you can in these lessons. This will also reduce zoom session participants allowing for students to interact more in live sessions as many students are frustrated with how little they get to participate in these sessions. EL students, students with disabilities, and those below grade level could receive additional services from supporting teachers outside these hours.

I truly recognize and appreciate all the effort ACPS is making and believe they are trying their best. However, this model only works with the support of parents. Most parents can not devote the hours needed to make this successful. Most students can not sustain the screen time demanded. The current model was worth a try, but is not sustainable for parents or students.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Ginger Root
