

Public Comments for Virtual School Board Meetings #189

I would like to provide: *	Written Public Comments
My public comments are related to: *	Virtual+ Plus Learning
Topic *	Re-opening our schools
Full Name *	Ashley Lombardi
What is your relationship to ACPS? *	Parent/Guardian of an ACPS Student
Enter your comments here OR upload below:	<p>Dear Dr. Hutchings and the School Board,</p> <p>I am writing to you as a student, educator and parent. Education has always been of utmost importance to me. I grew up right here in Alexandria, where I graduated as salutatorian of my class at West Potomac High School. I went on to study as an Echols Scholar and Phi Beta Kappa at the University of Virginia. As many lifelong learners do, I decided to dedicate my adult life to educating others and studied at Columbia Teachers College and worked as an English teacher at the Bronx High School of Science for seven plus years before turning my attention to educating my own three children, ages 7, 10 and 13. The past two years I have also served as the PALS tutor at my children's elementary school.</p> <p>Needless to say, education is the second biggest priority in my life. The first, however, is the health and safety of my children. I would NEVER encourage the re-opening of schools unless I felt that it was safe to do so. Given the most recent studies on COVID as well as learning about all of the great successes schools have had in re-opening classrooms, I feel it is time to allow ACPS students back into the classrooms. To not do so would, in my opinion, actually be a detriment to the mental health of children. Additionally, the toll that school closures is taking on their brain health as students must not be overlooked. My own three children were eager and successful students who loved to learn. Now, they are unmotivated, discouraged and lethargic despite my best efforts, which are likely more vigorous than most as a stay-at-home mother and educator. I have been very discouraged by ACPS's unwillingness to think outside the box when it comes to utilizing spaces and designing classrooms in a way that would safely and efficiently allow those students and staff who want to re-enter the classroom. All around us we see this being done effectively.</p> <p>As a lifelong student, teacher, and parent, I urge you to re-open our schools as quickly as possible.</p>