

January 12, 2021

Dear Dr. Duran and the BSD Board,

We are writing to you as the **teachers** of Clyde Hill Elementary. We are unified on the positions noted below and are **fundamentally against** the plan outlined by Dr. Duran to return to the classroom in January 2021.

We have missed being in the classroom with our students and want the best for them and their families. As educators, it is our responsibility to advocate for what we know is best for students, particularly under challenging circumstances. Over the past four months, we have made strong connections with students and families, achieved significant academic growth, and seen innovation and resilience from children in ways that we haven't experienced before.

As of Jan. 11th, **90% of teachers** do not support the proposed K-2 return, while **85% of our teachers** do not feel safe to return into the classroom currently.

At this time, we are **advocating to delay a return to in-person instruction until the educational/support staff in the community can be vaccinated and proper PPE/screening can be implemented**. Unless and until a vaccine is available and in use in our community, we cannot advocate for a return to in-person instruction to face circumstances that would remain unchanged since we first took steps to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

To that end, we would like to share our concerns around these topics:

1. The **lack of safety** protocols to safely roll out this return is concerning. As mentioned above, 85% of our teachers do not feel safe to return to the classroom. As of Jan. 11th, King County is at **313/100k positive cases**. The current guidance is telling Washingtonians that it is not safe to gather in groups of more than 5, while at the same time telling teachers it's safe to go back to classes of 15 students for hours a day with no chance of enforcing distancing rules with our K-2 learners.

We are dedicated to our students' well-being and growth but are **not okay with being recklessly put on the front line** of this health crisis **without a vaccine and proper PPE/screening**.

King County is currently not testing quickly enough and not meeting the target of testing within two days of symptoms starting. Washington State does not collect or report coronavirus data specific to schools. BSD has not released information on how cases and outbreaks will be reported to the community. BSD's Back to Buildings Plan does not include testing for students or staff despite research showing individuals without symptoms play a significant role in transmission.

2. The **negative impact on student learning**. The proposed in-person model will reduce direct instruction from approximately 15 to 17 hours to only 11 hours a week. This loss of 76 instructional hours per student, especially those most marginalized learners, over the remaining 19 weeks of school is untenable. The circumstances under which we are being asked to teach in person are drastically different during a pandemic – school is not

the same as it once was. Due to the necessary safety requirements, a return to our school building means that teachers will not be able to implement many instructional practices that we are able to employ remotely. In addition, this schedule decreases instructional time and access to the critical peer relationships we are hoping to foster by returning to class. Has the board/district thought about the social and emotional repercussions of bringing students back to this highly restrictive environment, and what has the consideration been around this potentially negative impact? How is this message being communicated to families?

3. Even in the best of times, there has been a **shortage of substitute teachers** in our district. While we have one substitute assigned to our building, we predict there will be more than one daily teacher absence due to COVID or COVID-like symptoms. Given the risk of over-exposure, what is the plan to protect our substitute teachers who may be asked to teach in multiple classrooms? What will happen if more than one teacher requires a substitute on the same day?

Please know that it is our sincere desire to return to bring our children back to school. But with no change to the medical intervention available to us, a return to in-person learning prior to a widespread vaccination campaign will be harmful to all involved in a multitude of ways; most importantly, to the children we have promised to serve.

In Safety,

20 Clyde Hill Teachers