

## Sherwood Forest Elementary Perspective:

We would like to begin this letter by stating that Sherwood Forest teachers want to be back in person with our students but want to return in a safe and efficient manner.

We are a racially diverse school that includes a Dual Language (Spanish) program and a centered Special Education Program (PACIFIC). We qualify as a Title 1 school through a high percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. The PACIFIC program is a special education program for students with significant developmental/intellectual disabilities.

The PACIFIC program at Sherwood has been serving some students part time in person since the middle of September. During the transition to in person services, the PACIFIC and other special education programs filed a grievance against the district stating health and safety concerns. Concerns included inadequate (PPE) proper protective equipment, substitute shortages for teachers and para educators, and concerns about the safety protocols. It took Bellevue School District several months to address these concerns. This delay increased the risk for students and teachers.

As a racially and culturally diverse school, our community is filled with multilingual families. We are concerned that the communication from the district has not met the language needs of all families. We are also concerned that the narrative BSD has been communicating with families is not entirely transparent on preparedness. Our building staff is still working incredibly hard to address all the safety needs, in order to be prepared for in person services.

We recognize the disproportionate impact COVID has had on communities of color. We at Sherwood recognize that vaccines are an important part for the health and safety for our students, families, and staff. We are advocating that the district, in partnership with the union, continue to fight for teachers to be moved up the vaccination schedule before we return to school.

We would like families to be aware of the following concerns:

### **1. Impact on Student Well-Being and Learning**

- a. Students will have less instructional time with teachers. The proposed in-person model will reduce teacher-led instructional hours from approximately 17 hours a week (remote) to only 11 or fewer hours.
- b. Some students may not receive the individualized, differentiated instruction they need to meet their individual needs. This translates to all instruction being whole groups, which is inequitable as students who will be harmed by this the most are the very students furthest from educational justice.
- c. In order to adhere to safety requirements, the school day will be different: students will not be able to engage in small group/collaborative group work, sing, play with their friends during recess, or have snack breaks.

### **2. Equity Concerns for Dual Language families**

- a. There has been no information provided as to the number of Dual Language substitutes available. At Sherwood Forest, Dual Language teachers provide instruction in Spanish and in English and thus there must be substitutes who are able to provide Dual Language instruction to students enrolled in our Dual Language program.

### **3. Safety Concerns**

- a. Our educators and staff are being forced to return to school without access to a vaccine.

Signed 20 educators from Sherwood Forest Elementary