

November 16, 2020

Dear Woodbridge Board of Education Members,

We are writing to express our gratitude to the Board of Education and the entire staff at Beecher Road School for a safe and successful school opening this year. The teachers and staff have truly gone above and beyond their call of duty. Our children have already made valuable connections with teachers and staff members and formed new friendships. It would be in the best interest of our children to remain at Beecher Road School and continue with full time in-person learning for the duration of the school year.

While we recognize that CASES of COVID-19 in Connecticut are on the rise, this increase cannot be attributed to students being in school. According to the World Health Organization, few outbreaks have been reported in schools. In the majority of cases reported in children, the virus was acquired at home and not from another student.¹ There is also no evidence to show that the hybrid model puts students and staff at any less of a risk than full time in person learning.²

Studies have also shown that closing schools did less to reduce cases than other interventions, like social distancing and hand washing.³ In any event, the COVID-19 safety guidelines implemented at Beecher have been highly effective, with only one positive case this entire year that was swiftly identified and contained. The dedication of the faculty, administration, and students to the guidelines has been nothing short of impressive and we would assume there would continue to be strict adherence for the remainder of the year.

More noteworthy than the lack of data attributing outbreaks to schools, is the social emotional well-being of our children - especially those at the formative, elementary school level. Our children NEED to stay in school with their peers. Any disruptions to their routines and instruction can and will affect their ability to learn.⁴ Not to mention that the implications for their mental health from another school shut down are yet to be determined.

Remote learning would also place a burden on families with two working parents. The loss of one parent's income or having to pay for childcare would make it much more difficult for parents to provide for their children.

Recently, the State Education Commissioner and the acting Public Health Commissioner wrote a letter to superintendents stating, "In-person education is too important for our children to disrupt their education further, unless and until local conditions dictate the need to do so." They also said that schools should not be closed preemptively.⁵ The decision to go hybrid or remote must be driven by data from the Department of Public Health, and not by fear in our community.

Governor Lamont has been quoted as saying, "I feel very strongly that if there's an opportunity for in-school option, it's the best option for these kids."⁶ We strongly feel that it is the best option for our kids as well. Please do not shut the doors for full time in-person learning again. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19-schools-transmission-August%202020.pdf>

2 <https://data.ct.gov/stories/s/mpdc-p8wg>

3 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642\(20\)30095-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(20)30095-X/fulltext)

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https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/risk-comms-updates/update39-covid-and-schools.pdf?sfvrsn=320db233_2

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<https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/state-offers-school-guidance-amid-rising-covid-19-cases-upcoming-holidays/358689/>

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<https://www.courant.com/politics/hc-pol-gov-lamont-where-we-live-monday-20200914-ilrjdm7v4rbcleeh2yo5gehdqi-story.html>

Sincerely,

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Kevin Cartee, 38 Manila Avenue

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Anthony and Patricia Santagata, 9 Manila Avenue

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