

First, I want to thank you for your concerns with the education of the students here at Cambria Heights. The board decision was not based on the survey results, but rather on the recommendations from the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Education's (PDE) guidelines for classifying counties based on weekly COVID 19 cases. The board was genuinely torn with this decision and they are very sympathetic to the plight of, especially, the working parents. There is really not a perfect plan in a pandemic. The board's goal was to try and choose the best plan to meet the instructional as well as health needs of all the kids. The initial plan for CH, as well as the entire region, was to reopen five-days per week in the traditional model with safety precautions in place. That all changed two weeks ago when Governor Wolf, the Department of Education and the Department of Health released a statewide, county by county chart, citing the number of coronavirus cases. Each county received one of three classifications based on the data. Cambria County landed in the "moderate" category with the recommendation that schools begin the new year in either the hybrid model or the full-remote model.

There were numerous meetings with area administrators, board members and state representatives. Governor Wolf refused to provide liability protection to the school districts as he provided to the healthcare industry. A spokesperson for the governor noted this past week that there are no plans to reconsider providing this kind of protection to districts. The state's insurance lobby supports the creation of a "safe harbor" provision that would protect schools. Governor Wolf has refused. We received notification from our insurance carrier that they will not provide liability protection to the district and its taxpayers in the event of a tragic case involving Covid 19 and/or any pending lawsuits. The board did discuss waivers, however, waivers still do not provide the district with liability protection. I met with PA Senator Wayne Langerholc and I am in continuing contact with his office as are all of the superintendents in his region to lobby the governor to change his position. Senator Langerholc is supportive and is continuing the fight.

Over the last couple of weeks, it became clearer that it was going to be difficult to bring our kids back to a face-to-face setting without some type of liability protection. Teachers and staff had been working to try and configure classrooms and cafeterias for social distancing, but the amount of students has made it nearly impossible.

Although the state announced that these "guidelines" are just that, guidelines, it made it extremely difficult, if not nearly impossible, for the Board to go against the recommendations from PDE and the DOH. In the end, the decision came down to, if we were going to 'error' it would be on the side of student and staff safety." Our number one priority at any time

is always the health and safety of our students. The administration believes we can make this hybrid model work. The position with our model is that students will not have to wait so long to see their teachers in person as is the case with other district models. This plan will be much better and more efficient than the on-line learning model we were forced to implement on the fly on March 13. It will provide more direct instruction and teacher contact. The teachers have been adequately trained and they are eager to get back to instructing their kids. Our hope is that if we can implement this plan successfully, we have a better chance, down the road, of a full reopening, hopefully sooner rather than later!

Once again, we truly sympathize with the parents' plight. We will provide after school childcare from 3:00-7:00, four days a week, free of charge. We are also in contact with local agencies to try and find childcare options for parents. My advice to any parent is to contact your local state representatives and voice your concerns. If the governor would be willing to provide districts with liability protection, you would see a significant number of schools reopening in a traditional model! The best chance of any kind of major change can only occur at the state level.

Sincerely!

Mr. Strasser