Public Comment by League of Women Voters on IASB Resolution 2

My name is Madeline McCarren. I am from the League of Women Voters Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove. I am here to ask the Board to vote to approve IASB Resolution 2 at the 2020 Meeting. This resolution aligns with League’s position on Guns which states, in part, that we “believe the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.”

Teen suicide by gun and School shooters are headlines we all want to avoid. Resolution 2 is a simple step we can take to stand in the way of such headlines.

Resolution 2 would align Illinois child-safe gun storage law with laws covering the minimum age to purchase guns. Current Illinois law covering child-safe gun storage applies only when a person under the age of 14 might have access to the firearm. Minimum age to purchase a firearm is 18.

School shooters are typically current or former students between the ages of 13 and 21 with the majority being 14, 15, 16 and 17 years old, as you can see from the chart on the handout. In most school shootings, the shooter obtained the gun from family, a friend or relative who left the gun unsecured. Under current law, the gun owner can NOT be held responsible should a teen 14, 15, 16, or 17 commit a crime using an unsecured gun.

Unfortunately, the resolutions Committee voted a “Do Not Approve” disposition for Resolution 2. The reasons given for the Do Not Approve include that IASB does not have legislative resources to support such a resolution, and the IASB typically only deals with issues affecting the school district. A school shooter is in the district. The shooter is in the school. Regarding legislation, there are many gun violence prevention groups in Illinois, including League of Women Voters, ready to support this legislative change. An endorsement by the IASB would help with our lobbying efforts.

Additionally, I’d like to ask you to vote for the Equity belief statement proposed by Indian Prairie SD 204. League’s position on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion states, in part, “the federal government share, in part with other levels of government, the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education and employment”. School Districts are the largest social services provider in our communities and to achieve the ideals of our founders, we must begin with the schools.

On behalf of League of Women Voters Arlington Heights-Mount Prospect-Buffalo Grove, including Prospect Heights-Elk Grove Village and Wheeling, thank you. If you have any questions you can reach me at 224-764-1173.
IASB Resolution 2 – Background and Justification for Vote to Approve

Overview

The Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) annual meeting is coming up in November. It will be held virtually from November 18-19. Members of IASB will be asked to vote on several proposed Resolutions. Of particular interest for GVP supporters is Resolution 2 which simply asks the IASB members to support efforts to strengthen child safe gun storage laws to require gun owners to safely store firearms in a locked container if anyone under the age of 18 who does not have permission to would have access to the firearm. Current Illinois law only applies to children under the age of 14.

Background

Illinois state laws covering legal gun purchases for anyone with a valid FOID (Firearm Owners Identification) card are as follows:

- To purchase a handgun from a licensed gun dealer under federal law, a person must be 21 or older.
- To purchase that same handgun in an unlicensed sale, or to purchase a rifle or shotgun from a licensed dealer, a person must be 18 or older.

Illinois safe gun storage law currently applies when persons younger than 14 years have access. These laws should reflect the same minimum age requirements as for legal gun purchases. However, the Resolutions Committee has taken a “Do Not Approve” position on this proposal.

In Support of Resolution 2

Resolution 2 was submitted jointly by the Glen Ellyn School District and Carol Stream School District. It is well-written and provides all the rationale that is needed as to why these two school districts offered this proposal. (I suggest you read the full text of Resolution 2 at https://www.iast.org/IASB/media/Advocacy-Government-Relations/2020_resolutions_committee_report.pdf.) The Resolutions Committee declined to support this proposal because, as the IASB committee stated, its position statements typically only deal with issues within the school districts. School shootings happen at the school – clearly within the school district. School shooters are typically current or former students. In many school shootings the shooter more than likely obtained the gun used from family, friends or relatives who leave guns unsecured. School shooters are typically between the ages of 13 and 21. While shooters 18 and older can legally purchase and possess guns, we are concerned with those who are 14, 15, 16 and 17 years old – the majority of school shooters. See the chart below.

Most of the shooters were white boys or young, white men

Changing the laws to 18 from 14 would include the age groups between the vertical lines.

Past proposals that the Resolutions Committee approved have included arming of teachers and support of grant funding for SRO’s to defend against potential school shooters. Both or these proposals were in response to the possibility of an active shooter in the school. Committee support for these past Resolutions indicates a clear awareness and recognition of the potential for a school shooter. Schools should prevent a shooter from entering the school in the first place. An even better strategy is to prevent a potential shooter from obtaining a firearm in the first place. No firearm = no school shooting. Our goal should be to prevent a child from becoming a shooter by preventing access to a firearm. If we could implement this, it would save not only the lives of innocent students but would also save the life of the potential shooter.

Conclusion
Resolution 2 has everything to do with the safety of students in schools. Every school board in Illinois should be concerned about the safety of students and therefore should vote to support Resolution 2. It just makes sense.

Submitted by,

The Proposed Resolution 2

2. Gun Storage

Submitted by: Glen Ellyn SD 41; CCSD 93 (Carol Stream)

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Illinois Association of School Boards shall support and advocate for legislation which strengthens child safe gun storage laws in the state of Illinois, requiring gun owners to store firearms, whether they are loaded or unloaded, in a securely locked container, if a person under the age of 18 is likely to gain access to the weapon without permission.
Dear School Board Members,

In light of rapidly rising COVID cases, as well as a recommendation from the Illinois Department of Health that all Illinoisians stay home as much as possible for the next 3 weeks (all of which can be further referenced down below), we are writing to you as District 214 teachers and staff members, many of whom reside in the community and are parents of District 214 students. The IDPH is strongly discouraging group gatherings, athletic events, home gatherings, and using public transportation, among other recommendations. According to their documentation, “social distancing measures include limiting groups of people coming together, closing buildings, or cancelling events.” In addition to the aforementioned information, our immediate area has not only witnessed a 95% increase in new cases over the course of a fortnight, but also identified schools as the places with the highest potential exposure rates, doubling the potential exposure rates of restaurants in Region 10. With the upcoming holiday season, expected to amplify infection rates further, we support the Education Association’s recommendations for an “adaptive pause” until the spread of COVID-19 decreases significantly.

It is no secret that the state of Illinois is experiencing an alarming teacher shortage and according to an article from The Chicago Tribune, published Nov. 11, 2020, “More than a third of Illinois teachers surveyed said they’ve considered leaving the profession amid the safety concerns and debilitating stress of the COVID-19 pandemic.” Moreover, in an article from Reuters published on Nov. 9 2020, “Many COVID-19 survivors are likely to be at greater risk of developing mental illness, after a large study found 20% of those infected with the coronavirus are diagnosed with a psychiatric disorder within 90 days” including anxiety, depression and insomnia. We can not only consider the short-term effects of this virus; we must also consider the long-term effects on both students and staff. The stress of uncertainty caused by ambiguous and shifting metrics, changing schedules, and inconsistent attendance has cultivated an environment where it is nearly impossible for us to generate optimal learning conditions for our students. Put simply, we cannot maximize their academic and social growth when the targets are always moving.

The fact that this meeting is being conducted virtually, rather than in-person, speaks to our concerns. We ask that our voices be truly heard and that District 214 move to 100% remote learning for students and staff starting immediately.

As educators we teach science, we model equity, and we work tirelessly to create safe spaces for our students to learn and grow. Please make the
responsible choice - one that is backed by public health officials and reason, rather than driven by emotions. On behalf of our students, staff, and faculty, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stefanie McCleish
Maureen Snell
Kelli Lusso
Arlene Sikora
Amanda Sowa Bhansali
Beth Wells
Rachel Moyer
Joy Ruckolt
Cathy Pach
Michelle Marconi
Sean Radcliff
Stephanie Arroyo
Lauren Stenzel
Dominique Hernandez
Denise Chapman
Anna Schultes
Shirley Flickinger
Elizabeth Bennett
Erik Hodges
Maria Bakas
Ami Relf
Allison Feeley
Binh Huynh
Mary Fendley
Kim Gach
Rebecca Boorman
Lisa Cottrell
Jackie Gronski
Debora Utley
Donna Caponigro
Bruce Janu
Michelle Price
Elliot Olson
Eric Garneau
Frank Briody
Jay Heilman
Jeanne Wolowiec
Chris Wolowiec
Kristen Ray
William Stutzman
Ronda Whippo
Ann Syversen Bullis
Michelle Tantillo
Susan Hope
Rich Schram
Claire MacDonald
Andy Park
Michelle Fonsino
Dean Burrier Sanchis
Nichole B. Anderson
Lisa Halleen
Alex Bedoya
Aimee Schaap
Todd Schaap
Izabella Wnek
Corinne Larson
Jim Hamann
Jennifer Aguilar-Lannotti
Cynthia A. Pacyk
Rich Lane
Anna Pugawko
Eleanor Park
Sue Renner
Katina Frericks
Eve Weseman
Sindi Smith
Alex Niedden
Rebecca Silver
Tom Heldmann
Michael Kamedula
Martha Nava
Julie Bale
Julie Nilsen
Peter Eriksson
Christine Pacyk
Paul Schoenbeck
Shannon Tryba
Carmen Ruiz Bergman
Leslie Guimon
Laura Stock
Joanna Marshall
Cori White
Breanne Makovec
Gregory Wallace

*Disclaimer: these names were obtained from 9:00 p.m. 11/11/20 until 9:30 a.m. 11/12/20. Names will continue to be added and the full list will be sent to each individual board member at a later time.

Resources:

*Graphic was originally posted in March when we were full remote, and the IDPH has posted this same graphic again on 11/11/20.
Cases Breakdown By Potential Exposure Location

- School: 3794 (10.5%)
- Workplace - other than office
- Restaurant/Bar
- School
- Hospital or Clinic
- Business or Retail
- Office Setting
- Private Home
- Household
- Grocery Store
- College
- Factory
- Long Term Care
- Place of Worship
- Doctor Office
- Health Club
- Sports/Community Pool Facility
- Hotel/Motel/Inn
- Assisted Living
- Community Event/Mass Gathering
- Daycare
- Dental Office
- Construction Site
- Golf Course
- Inmate, Jail/Correctional Facility
- Resort
- Physical Therapy
- Mental Health Facility
- Developmentally Disabled Facility
- Group Home
- Casino
Social distancing is the practice of reducing close contact between people to slow the spread of infections or diseases. Social distancing measures include limiting groups of people coming together, closing buildings or canceling events.

**AVOID**
- Group Gatherings
- Sleep Overs
- Playdates
- Concerts
- Theater Outings
- Church Services
- Athletic Events
- Crowded Retail Stores
- Malls
- Workouts in Gyms
- Visitors in Your Home
- Non-essential Workers in Your Home

**USE CAUTION**
- Mass Transit Systems
- Visiting a Grocery Store
- Getting Take Out
- Picking Up Medications
- Playing Tennis in a Park
- Visiting the Library

**SAFE TO DO**
- Take a Walk
- Go for a Hike
- Yard Work
- Playing in Your Yard
- Cleaning Out a Closet
- Reading a Good Book
- Listening to Music
- Cooking a Meal
- Family Game Night
- Going for a Drive
- Stream a Favorite Show
- Check on a Friend
- Check on Elderly Neighbor

Questions about COVID-19?
Call 1-800-889-3931 or email dph.sick@illinois.gov
Illinois Department of Public Health - www.dph.illinois.gov

IDPH
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

1/12/2020
IDPH.jpg
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https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-mental-illness/one-in-5-covid-19-patients-develop-mental-illness-within-90-days-study-idINL8N2HS4ND
Dear Members of the School Board,

As you all know, the numbers currently don’t look good in our area. Number of cases is up, as well as hospitalizations, and positivity rate due to covid-19. The IDPH just updated their recommendations yesterday. They recommend only leaving the house for grocery store trips, the pharmacy, or other essential services.

The numbers and science currently suggest the best course of action is to return to remote instruction. The metrics used by the district suggest the same. We cannot in good faith teach our students mathematics and science, when the leaders and officials in our district are ignoring the numbers and recommendations by science and/or medical field experts. It is time to return to remote instruction until at the very least the end of the semester.

Sincerely,

Victor Gonzalez, NBCT
Wheeling High School
Mathematics Teacher
Math Team Coach
Assistant Baseball Coach
In person school needs to stop to protect the community

Candice Bauer  
To: julie.laskowski@d214.org

Thu, Nov 12, 2020 at 5:46 AM

As community spread of COVID is at all-time high levels in our district and in Illinois, it is irresponsible for District 214 to continue in person schooling. The IDPH advises that all employers allow staff to work from home for the coming weeks, and such advice should be heeded. Teachers and staff, as well as their families, need to be protected in order to ensure that we can resume to more normal "school" conditions next year. In person schooling should stop and staff and teachers should be allowed to resume working from home in order to break the cycle of COVID exposure and spread. Taking these steps now will save lives, that of our students and staff and their families. Please heed public health advice and the numbers showing the worst conditions we have seen here in our district.

We train our students so that they can look at data and make good judgements. How can we claim success if their very leaders fail to do so? What good is our education system then? Protect life... take a break from in person learning!

******************************************************************************

Candice R. Bauer, Ph.D.
Thursday 11/12/20 the Illinois department of Public Health released this statement: "For the next three weeks, work with your employer to plan to work from home unless it is necessary for you to be in the workplace. We ask employers to make accommodation for this"

They released this statement the same day that D214 has allowed more students back in the building. I implore you to face this reality, put the safety of the staff, students and families over the loud voices of a small minority who refuse to recognize what is happening in our state and in our neighborhoods. I did not become a teacher to teach this way. I wish things were normal and I miss my students. Following health guidelines is the best way to get us back to normal. When numbers are lower, let's move back to hybrid. Let's work together to get those numbers under control again. Keep students home until there is a lower positivity rate. This is not safe.

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Tiffany Kupkowski
Health Career Pathway
Math / Science Division
Rolling Meadows High School

Julie Laskowski <julie.laskowski@d214.org>
Thank you Julie! Hope all is well.

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To our board,

I write this as a D214 alumni, a current faculty member, and a lifelong community member. 2020 has been hard on all of us. I would love for school to return to the way it was before COVID-19, but that’s not currently possible. Remote learning on Zoom is not the same quality education, but neither is our hybrid plan. Teachers have been working around the clock to try and educate our students in the most effective way we can. By introducing hybrid learning, we have divided our attention between two different sets of students, who are learning in two completely different environments. This is not beneficial to most of our students, as most of our students have been choosing to remain home for a variety of different reasons. This is why we’re inviting more students to come in each day. Not because it’s safer, but because most students have chosen to remain home.

Many students have been able to learn effectively through the remote environment, but there are large amounts of students that would benefit from in-person instruction. Our district could have targeted those students, ensuring a safe, supporting, and nurturing environment for those who need it most. Instead, we have a system that will potentially widen the achievement gap. The students that have been attending in-person tend to come from families with higher incomes and many are already achieving academic success. In my school, we have a very small amount of students that are targeted to be in school every day, but the number is extremely limited.

I am asking for an adaptive pause, as the IDPH has advised that we stay home as much as possible over the next few weeks. Upon our return, I beg that we focus on the students who could use our help the most - those from the most vulnerable populations and those who would benefit most from returning to the building. I look forward to the day where we can have school the way we used to, but that might not be in the very near future. Because of that we need to make sure we have a plan protects, supports, and nourishes our students in a much more effective manner.

Thank you for your considerations,
Sean Radcliff - RMHS teacher, WHS graduate

Sean Radcliff
Social Studies/AVID Teacher
 Mustang Hangout Sponsor; Assistant Director of the V-Show
Rolling Meadows High School | High School District 214
RPL Education Fellow | Harvard Divinity School

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." - Lao Tzu

[Links and logos]
Hi Julie,

I'd like to submit the following to be read as a public comment at tomorrow's board meeting. Please let me know if there is any additional information you need from me.

Thank you,
Denise

Dear School Board Members and Dr. Schuler,

I am addressing you as a District 214 employee, community member, and tax paying resident. I am deeply concerned with the District's decision to continue hybrid learning while COVID-19 cases rapidly rise in our community. The Illinois Department of Public Health issued a statement on November 11th, 2020, in which they "recommend staying home as much as possible," yet at the same time the District is increasing the number of students in our buildings each day.

In addition to the alarming rate of infection in our community, the District's current approach to hybrid learning has taken a toll on both staff and students. As teachers, we are being expected to split our attention between students on our screen and students in our classrooms. This creates a less effective learning environment for all students. Many of our most vulnerable students continue to remain at home for various reasons, further widening the achievement gap. Additionally, the District appears unwilling to acknowledge the immense emotional burden their decisions have had on staff - who feel unsafe, unheard, and undervalued.

I have been a proud District 214 employee for nearly 10 years. We are compassionate and talented leaders in education, always striving for excellence. This is why I strongly urge the Board and Dr. Schuler to consider an adaptive pause until the community rate of infection has returned to below 70 cases per 100,000 residents, as was originally agreed upon in the Return to School plan.

Thank you for your consideration,
Denise Chapman

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Denise Chapman (Chitjian)
Social Science Teacher
Rolling Meadows High School
Pronouns: She/Her

"Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." - John Lewis
Dear School Board Members,

In light of concerning recent health statistics (listed below for your reference) as well as the strong recommendation on 11/11/2020 from the Illinois Department of Health that Illinoisians stay home as much as possible for the next 3 weeks, I am writing to you as a community member, tax-paying resident, and employee of D214 to ask that District 214 move to 100% remote learning for students and staff starting immediately and lasting at least through December 31, 2020.

Furthermore, the D214 Education Association recommends an "adaptive pause" until the spread of COVID-19 decreases significantly. They recommend fully remote instruction based on the 95% increase over the last two weeks in the D214 community of new cases (543 to 1063). Additionally, the holiday season is expected to increase community spread as the most occurs with households.

Please make the responsible choice - one that is backed by science and the IDPH- for the benefit of our community, students, and staff.

Most Sincerely,
Amanda Bhansali
Resident of Arlington Heights, IL
D214 Staff Member at Wheeling High School

Recent Health Statistics (for your reference):
* The measure of 70 cases per 100,000 residents was used to open the district. Current measurements are more than 7 times that number.
* The positivity rate in our attendance zone is far above the 8% threshold recommended by the IDPH.

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<th>D214</th>
<th>NU Daily IDPH Report (11/7 to 11/10)</th>
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<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>11/9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positivity Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Zip Codes Rate per 100,000 Weekly new case rate (last 7 days)</td>
<td>484.7</td>
</tr>
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* Region 10 statistics from the IDPH list "School" as the single largest place of "potential exposure"
Mrs. Amanda Bhansali
AP World History Teacher
Social Studies Teacher

Wheeling High School
900 S. Elmhurst Rd.
Wheeling, IL 60090

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." ~ Gandhi
Rereading the e-mail below, I see I have a typo – should be “first week in November” in the 2nd paragraph.

Thanks!

Across all high schools, for the first quarter of the academic year, compared to the same period last year, the number of Ds and Fs recorded on students’ report cards increased by 44%.

After students were permitted to return one in every three days, the return-to-school experience was managed so poorly that in-person attendance has been declining rather than improving – 35% fewer students chose to attend in-person during the last week in November than when classrooms were first opened. This averages out to 67 freshmen, 35 sophomores, 32 juniors, and 23 seniors per school, on November 5. (Note that I’m not considering November 6, when attendance was less than half that number, on the assumption it was an anomaly.)

Yet from the administration, families and the community only hear sunny reports of success. From the school board, nothing at all – no acknowledgement of any care or concern about the students whose education they have been charged with overseeing. These two facts were uncovered via FOIA requests, rather than honest district acknowledgement of the current situation.

Now the school board uses the justification of the governor’s order limiting capacities to 25, to move the meeting to virtual with no meaningful opportunity for public comment, merely the claim that “summaries” will be read – while at the same time, the simultaneous District 25 meeting is scheduled to occur as planned, merely with adjustments to capacities and the use of overflow rooms.

This is shameful.

As the district website continues to promise that the board will respond to citizens’ concerns, my question is this: have any members of the board taken any action to learn about or react to the problems students and families are experiencing, other than attending board meetings?
Finally, when this e-mail is summarized, I request that the statistic that Ds and Fs increased by 44% be clearly communicated to all listening to the livestream so that they have at least the opportunity to know this fact.

Regards,

Elizabeth Bauer

parent and district resident
Fwd: 11/12/20 Board Meeting
1 message

Rinn Knoepfle <rinn.knoepfle@d214.org> Thu, Nov 12, 2020 at 8:31 AM
To: Julie Laskowski <julie.laskowski@d214.org>

For this evening. Board and Dave received.

Regards,

Rinn

--------- Forwarded message ---------
From: Julie King
Date: Thu, Nov 12, 2020 at 7:19 AM
Subject: 11/12/20 Board Meeting
To: david.schuler@d214.org <david.schuler@d214.org>, dan.petro@d214.org <dan.petro@d214.org>, bill.dussling@d214.org <bill.dussling@d214.org>, mark.hineman@d214.org <mark.hineman@d214.org>, alva.kreutzer@d214.org <alva.kreutzer@d214.org>, millie.palmer@d214.org <millie.palmer@d214.org>, lenny.walker@d214.org <lenny.walker@d214.org>, Todd Younger, District 214 Board of Education <todd.younger@d214.org>, rinn.knoepfle@d214.org <rinn.knoepfle@d214.org>

Given that you are not permitting public comments at tonight’s board meeting, please review the following, which was to be presented there. Thank you.

As the parent of two juniors at Rolling Meadows High School, please consider these commitments to limit the damage that D214 is inflicting upon its 12,000 students since March.

**Dedication to in-person instruction**: In The Great Barrington Declaration ([https://gbdeclaration.org/](https://gbdeclaration.org/)), released last month, infectious disease epidemiologists and public health scientists around the world noted that “keeping students out of school is a grave injustice, and doing so until a vaccine is available will cause irreparable damage.”

Thank you for adjusting the Hybrid Instruction Plan to allow two groups to attend in-person simultaneously. We appreciate this positive move for students, teachers and parents on our slow quest toward normalcy.

As the district evaluates this hybrid learning phase, please move toward opening schools for daily attendance if possible, as originally outlined in your July 16 Return to School Plan.

Full-time, in-person instruction is necessary to promote academic progress and limit the significant declines and widespread cheating brought on by long-term reliance on remote learning.

**Facilitation of extracurricular activities**: Forcing students to stare at a screen, all day, every day – without school-sponsored co-curricular activities – has caused serious challenges in mental and social-emotional health. Students desperately need the important leadership, developmental and socialization opportunities from activities OUTSIDE of the classroom, more than ever this year.

Please find creative ways to make these a reality in some format, and thereby not deprive students from the enrichment of participation in sports, fine arts, clubs and more. While this may take extra effort this year, our kids deserve no less.
Commitment to reason, facts and common sense: In Illinois, politics painfully and persistently has replaced the truth regarding coronavirus. I ask you to rely on accurate statistics and science, and don’t automatically turn guidelines from ISBE and IDPH into absolute mandates.

The unarguable reality is that virtually all students and staff have a recovery rate from COVID-19 that exceeds 99%. The medical community, in fact, has noted that the flu is more dangerous to students.

COVID is here to stay, and we must prioritize in-person education, accepting that some risk is inevitable in life. Remote learning is woefully inadequate and should only be a last-resort, temporary substitute. And waiting for a vaccine to fully re-open schools is punitive and unrealistic.

Every district decision affects the academic progress, mental health and well-being of your primary stakeholders. As parents who are helplessly witnessing the devastation that closing schools and cancelling extracurriculars has done to our kids, we are pleading with you not to fail them.

Rely on common sense, resist fear-mongering and do what is right. Thank you.

Regards,

Julie King
Public comment on non-agenda item

Dear Dr. Schuler and the Board of Education:

My name is Lara Solonicke and I have a daughter who is a senior at Prospect.

For those of you who do not have students in the district, I would like you all to know that many of the D214 students are under enormous strain in these challenging times. Social distancing and remote learning have made them feel isolated and stressed. Many are falling behind academically, and many do not have a conducive environment to do school work at home.

High schools and colleges around the country are cancelling final exams and using alternative assessments in hopes of alleviating the stress on students. Finals cannot be equitably and fairly administered across the D214 student body, and I hope that you will also consider cancelling final exams in December.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lara Solonicke