

March 16, 2021

Dear Albany Board of Education:

We write to ask you to collaborate and cooperate with our teachers and their union. We want to do our best for every student. In this time of pandemic, doing our best means taking the time and care to manage difficult limitations and tradeoffs. Please respect our expertise as parents, students, and community members. Please respect the expertise of our professional educators. Please honor your agreements. Please continuously check back in with the complex and diverse needs of all our students. Please support our teachers. Every student deserves our best. Thank you.

Estimado Consejo de Educación:

Les escribimos para pedirles que colaboren y cooperen con nuestros maestros y su sindicato. Queremos hacer nuestro mejor esfuerzo por todos nuestros estudiantes. En esta época de pandemia, hacer nuestro mejor esfuerzo significa tomarse el tiempo y el cuidado para manejar complicaciones y negociaciones desfavorables. Por favor, respeten nuestra experiencia como padres, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad. Por favor, respeten la experiencia de nuestros educadores profesionales. Por favor, respeten los acuerdos que se han tomado. Por favor, evalúen continuamente las necesidades complejas y diversas de todos nuestros estudiantes. Por favor, apoyen a nuestros profesores. Cada estudiante merece lo mejor de nosotros. Gracias.

亲爱的教育委员会：

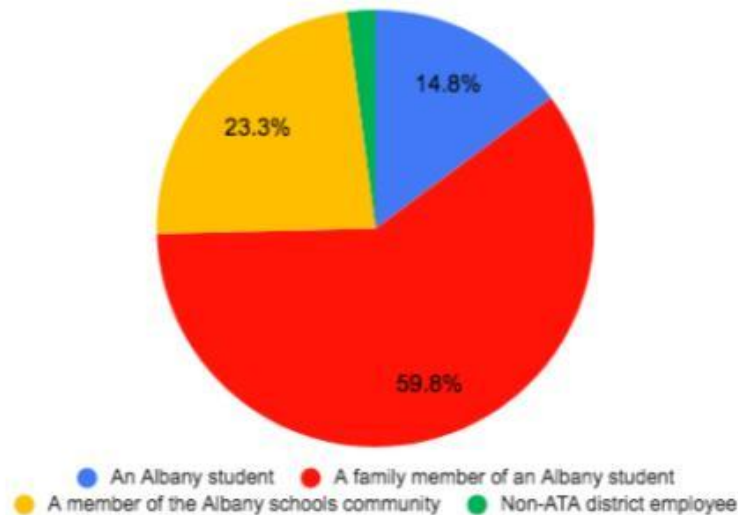
我们今天写信是想请您与我们的老师及教师工会一起协调合作。我们大家都想为每个学生着想，尽全力做到最好。可是由于因为大流行，尽最大的努力，同时也意味着，我们需要花时间和精力，权衡轻重，考量我们应该怎么处理种种困难的局限性。请尊重我们作为父母，学生和社区成员的意愿。也请尊重我们教师的专业知识。遵守您之前的协议。也请您继续不断地回头检视我们所有学生多样而复杂的需求。请支持我们的老师。每个学生都应该得到我们最好的帮助。谢谢您。

親愛的教育委員會：

我們今天寫信是想請您與我們的老師及教師工會一起協調合作。我們大家都想為每個學生著想，盡全力做到最好。可是由於因為大流行，盡最大的努力，同時也意味著，我們需要花時間和精力，權衡輕重，考量我們應該怎麼處理種種困難的局限性。請尊重我們作為父母，學生和社區成員的意願。也請尊重我們教師的專業知識。遵守您之前的協議。也請您繼續不斷地回頭檢視我們所有學生多樣而複雜的需求。請支持我們的老師。每個學生都應該得到我們最好的幫助。謝謝您。

*Signatures on pp. 2-4, Comments on pp. 5-13
(As of 3/19 at 11:30 AM)*

Count of (我是) (Yo soy) I am:



Ada Martin
Adriana Macias
Adrienne Cabanatuan
Alesia Eutsler
Alexander Class
Alice Zepeda
Altay Hodoglugil
Anastasia Steinberg
Andra Weber
Andrea Venezia
Andrew Chik
Angel Kuo
Angela Boyle
Angela Isaacs
Angelo Del Priore
Anna Golenberg
Anna Koscielniak Thiel
Anne-Marie E Hodges
Anthony Hale
Aparnaa Ghosh
Arjuna Ramgopal
Arthur Pazdan
Astrid Juengling
Athena Craig

Becky Hopwood
Ben Gripman
Benjamin Hensler
Betty Liu
Brandon Barchard
Brigid (Kennedy) Acuna
Brigid Acuna
Caitrin Connolly-Olszewski
Caroline Gould
Cayden Baldwin
Chloe Park
Christian Braudrick
Christine McLaughlin
Cristina Sutinen-Gonzales
Dahlia Wilson
Dan Lieberman
Daniel Cardozo
Daniel St Andre
Daniel Westcott
Daryl M Terrell
Dave Martinez
Dawn Marlette
Dayna Inkeles
Deborah Lee

Diane livoti
Dorothe Piluso
Elena Curreri
Elisabeth Lamoureux
Elizabeth Allison
Elizabeth Friedman
Branoff
Elizabeth Watt
Elliot Jones
Emily Ahvin
Emma Rosen
Eric Cicourel
Erik Olsen
Erika Ferguson
Erin Coyne
Evelina Du
F. Stuart Gripman
Finley M
Gina Rago
Hana Seidner
Harsha Ramesh
Hazel Horton
Heidi Lopez
Helene Class

<i>Hiromi Jones</i>	<i>Krista Huerta</i>	<i>Monique Torres</i>
<i>Isabel Samaras</i>	<i>Krista Markell</i>	<i>Myroslava Fisun</i>
<i>Jack Hayden</i>	<i>LaShunda Brown</i>	<i>Nate Ritzman</i>
<i>James Radkey</i>	<i>Laura Morgan</i>	<i>Neva Peskin</i>
<i>Jan Eiesland</i>	<i>Laurie Roberts</i>	<i>Nicholas Dey</i>
<i>Janet Chisholm</i>	<i>Lawrence Olson</i>	<i>Nicole Melwani</i>
<i>Javier De La Garza</i>	<i>Leela Hensler</i>	<i>Nuriye Hodoglugil</i>
<i>Jeanne Cajina</i>	<i>Leslie Gray</i>	<i>Pamela Radkey</i>
<i>Jeannie Dey</i>	<i>Linda Perez</i>	<i>Patti Kjonaas</i>
<i>Jeannie Paulovich</i>	<i>Lisa Keeley</i>	<i>Patty Fujiwara</i>
<i>Jehan Velji</i>	<i>Lisa Norman</i>	<i>Payal Sampat</i>
<i>Jena Regan</i>	<i>Lola Isern</i>	<i>Poppy Sheldon</i>
<i>Jenn Koscielniak</i>	<i>Lori Saaf</i>	<i>Rafael Torres-Gil</i>
<i>Jennie Dorman</i>	<i>Lourdes</i>	<i>Rick Markell</i>
<i>Jennifer Lilienthal</i>	<i>Lynn Giblin</i>	<i>Rudy Hayden</i>
<i>Jess Hutchison</i>	<i>Magnus Tangherlini</i>	<i>Runn Kiriruangchai</i>
<i>Jessica Cortes</i>	<i>Manny Lopez</i>	<i>Ruta La Franco</i>
<i>Jessica Petzold</i>	<i>Marcy and Pete Lauer</i>	<i>Ruth Radwin</i>
<i>Joan Bernier</i>	<i>Margaret Glendening</i>	<i>Sahara Powell</i>
<i>Joan Lippman</i>	<i>Margie Marks</i>	<i>Sahara Powell</i>
<i>Joanna Harris</i>	<i>Maria Riggio</i>	<i>Samya Ghuloum</i>
<i>Joshua Surowitz</i>	<i>Mark Rosenthal</i>	<i>Sangey Palshertsang</i>
<i>Judith Carey</i>	<i>Marta Folkman</i>	<i>Sarah & Steve McCartu</i>
<i>Judy Sinclair</i>	<i>Martha Reydon</i>	<i>Sarah Rathke</i>
<i>Julia Mass</i>	<i>Mary Rees</i>	<i>Sarah Serafimidis</i>
<i>Julie Dawson</i>	<i>Matt Fisher</i>	<i>Sarah-Elizabeth Barchard</i>
<i>Julie Hansen</i>	<i>Matthew Blaine</i>	<i>Sashi Chadha</i>
<i>Karen Larson</i>	<i>Mavi Hodoglugil</i>	<i>Sean Carey</i>
<i>Karen Nierlich</i>	<i>Megan Kellogg</i>	<i>Sean Morris</i>
<i>Karmina Newell</i>	<i>Melanie Mickelson</i>	<i>Serene Daro</i>
<i>Kate Toth</i>	<i>Michael Helmbrecht</i>	<i>Susan Adams</i>
<i>Katie Karaca</i>	<i>Michael Lippman</i>	<i>Suzannah Blattner</i>
<i>Kelly Vodnoy</i>	<i>Michela Azzariti</i>	<i>Tenzin Lakshey Norbu</i>
<i>Kimberly Feng</i>	<i>Michele Brusseau</i>	<i>Teresa Reyes</i>
<i>Kimiya Farzam</i>	<i>Michele Gomez</i>	<i>Theo Serafimidis</i>
	<i>Mike La Franco</i>	<i>Tom Michenfelder</i>
	<i>Molly Wahl</i>	

Tracy Pascua Dea
Truman Roberts
Ugur Hodoglugil
Valeria and Eddie
Romero
Veronica L Morales
Vicky Lilienthal
Wendy Frey
Windy Creath
Yael Bloom
Zela Hayden

Comments from signees: (as received)

My two children in the Albany schools have been kept on track academically this year by teachers who have gone above and beyond to modify their curricula and modes of teaching to be effectively delivered in a remote format. My children have been able to learn safely at home during a global pandemic because of the collective efforts of their amazing teachers. I am stunned by the school board's desire to pivot to a potentially less safe in-person format with less than 3 months left in the school year despite a legally binding MOU negotiated by the union.

We stand with Albany teachers and implore you to not go back on this long anticipated agreement with only two months left in the school year. It's distressing, confusing, chaotic, and disrespectful to the professionals tasked with the care and education of our children. Focus on summer offerings and most importantly a successful start to the school year in the fall.

The gains of attempting to roll out in person learning in the remaining weeks of this year are not sufficient enough to justify introducing this level of risk. Please don't.

I would be really worried about my friends who's parents have sent them back in-person if they go full time now.

Teachers, staff, and counselors on the ground know more about what my child needs than administrators do right now. A last minute change will only slow down implementation of the hybrid plan that's already been agreed to.

I would love our kids to get back to school safely, but I do NOT want to do anything which will make our teachers and school staff feel unsafe. In my opinion, we only have three more months of school this year and we've all pretty much gotten used to this imperfect situation. I am most interested in this time at getting through this year the best we can, and look towards getting back to school full-time in Fall of 2021. From my understanding there has been ALOT of time put towards coming up with the current hybrid plan which will start to be implemented March 15th. I think it is very disrespectful to all of you who have worked so hard to get us to this point, to now throw out the plan and try to rush kids back to school more days and hours. I want to support the teachers who work so hard for the kids.

Let's open the schools according to the March 5th agreement and let that help us learn what we need to do for a full, equitable and safe reopening in the fall.

We were so excited our 4 Albany students were FINALLY getting to go back to school safely under the well thought through current hybrid plan. Now we are heartbroken to hear that may be impulsively cast aside because of a few loud, and sometimes, hostile voices. If a fuller, less safe opening occurs with less distance, etc, our kids will NOT be returning, and that will be absolutely crushing news to tell them. Please don't do that to them. We have a good, though imperfect plan to return for the next few months, safely, and then I'm confident of a full reopening in the fall after the vaccinations take hold and it is much safer. Right now only 10% of Americans have been vaccinated and the new variants are clearly attacking children. Let's not make them Guinea pigs. Let's not be hasty. Let's stay the course and stick to this hybrid schedule and then a full return in the fall. Thank you!

I was not happy to be required to complete and send intent to return form before negotiations were settled with the unions. I felt pressure to be used as leverage for the District. That is why I chose remote. I also felt that based on recent history, schedules would be changed again and the lack of stability for the remainder of the school year was also a reason I chose remote and will continue to choose remote.

Mental health is the most important part of the kids education this year in my opinion. As I didn't love the 2 times a week proposal and my child chose not to go back in person. I heard after from counselors and therapists seeing AUSD kids that some of the kids don't have any social or educational opportunities to see peers. After hearing that, I rethought my position and stand by your original decision to have them come back twice a week. It is unfortunate that this has divided the community and that teachers are being made out to be the problem. I know this isn't the truth and want to protect them as well as my own children.

My brother teaches in Berkeley and I feel like I have a unique understanding of some of the teachers challenges for in person instruction. I didn't understand why simulcasting while teaching in the classroom would be difficult. It was good to hear from someone who I know wants to be back in the classroom and also has the kids best interest at heart. It would be great if the teachers could explain this more in depth to others as it might change their perspective. Maybe they have and I missed it. It is draining and upsetting to see all of the negative communication on Facebook.

I want my kids back in school too, but not at the risk of their health or the teachers. I hope that the BOE will stand by their decision.

The MOU has been well thought through. Changing these plans now is too disruptive to everyone, especially the children. It is far better to close out the remaining weeks of school with the MOU plan. The teachers are caring professionals with the best interest of our children at heart. They will adjust to kids needs as they see them. I would much rather have them spending their time on tailoring their lessons and interactions with the kids than having to readjust to changing schedules.

Our family have autoimmune deficiencies and we are concerned about the safety measures to reopen schools. It should be done in a well thought out plan.

These are difficult and challenging times for all. We would all like our students, teachers, librarians, counselors, speech and language specialists, para educators, custodial staff, and administrators to return to school sites, but to do so before it is safe would be reckless and dangerous. We are in the middle of a deadly global pandemic with a virus that is mutating. The Albany Teachers Association is working on behalf of its members, students and their families to ensure a safe return to school sites based on current research and recommendations. Please respect their professional judgement as they work with the district to reopen schools safely.

It seems every month I get the dreaded 'your child has been exposed to lice'. If we can't keep lice out of schools, how are we going to keep covid out!!?
It's simply, for lack of better words, not fair to give kids going in person a robust education while remote learners are stifled. While I am sympathetic to the challenges facing remote learners (we are also experiencing challenges) I find it highly unprofessional that the superintendent attended a protest in support of schools opening when remote learners equally need his support for a fair, equitable education. I simply don't see how this is possible in a simulcast or with different teachers.

I urge you to empower teachers by reconsidering their carefully crafted plan to provide the safest and most efficient instruction to their students and negotiating aspects of it that may need to be modified to meet the board's emerging needs. Successful leadership provides the tools and permission to team members to enact the necessary strategies to achieve the group's goals. Hastily discarding the teachers' plan to reopen in the fall does exactly the opposite, sows mistrust with the school board and leaves teachers feeling betrayed.

By demanding a new agreement immediately after a negotiated plan was finalized, the Albany school board has fecklessly abandoned any veneer of good faith.

I urge you to honor the negotiated plan and then proceed as the situation develops rather than discard the hard work, expertise and trust of the teachers.

We support the Albany teachers. They have put so much emotional and physical labor into supporting our kids during a pandemic that has also impacted their lives and families in very real ways. We need to find ways to support both teachers and students. Let's use this hybrid model to learn so we can thoughtfully work towards a full time in-person program. Moving too quickly can put our teachers, students and families at risk. Support teachers and students!

This is hard for everyone, but I trust in the long process of good faith negotiations that took place and want to respect that. I understand there are strong feelings from some parents and don't discount them - I do think it's reasonable to look at how things may have changed and see if there's an opportunity to do things differently - but I just want to make sure our teachers also feel supported and heard. If they really don't think it's wise to make some of these changes now (eg because they may interfere with learning in ways parents don't understand, or may interfere with the ability to get everyone back in the fall) then we need to really hear that and respect that. I believe the teachers truly want what's best for our kids and I stand by their decision, whatever it may be, after considering this new information. Thank you to the AUSD Board for the incredible amount of time and effort you've put into considering all sides and coming up with a compromise, which by it's very definition, won't please everyone.

I believe the already approved plan for slowly returning to school is the safest and most sensible way to transition during these still difficult times. I fully support this decision. We must remember that, though we are moving in the right direction, the pandemic is not yet under control and the numbers of vaccinated people are still low.

I have 11th grade twins at the high school who, like all students, have been greatly impacted by school closure during the pandemic. This is a critical year for my children, and their teachers have done an amazing job providing a quality education remotely under difficult circumstances. In order to see out the rest of the school year safely while also minimizing further damage to their mental health, it is imperative that the instruction model and their class teachers remain the same. Any further disruption will have a potentially catastrophic effect on learning, as well as on physical and mental health.

We very appreciate everything that teacher did during this difficult circumstance. It's only 2 more month left in this school year, Let's work together and focusing on full opening safely for teachers and students from the fall. We think keep changing plans distract us more than keep us moving forward.

Teachers unions = teachers = our communities! When you say that you love teachers but don't support the union, what we hear is that you love teachers who are quietly compliant and are denied the right to organize for their safety.

The fact that the school board is kowtowing to the interests of parents who are pushing for more time at school is ridiculous. This push for more time at school is willfully ignorant of the challenges that teachers face in providing adequate and safe education to their students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current reopening plan was agreed upon because of the many sacrifices made by students, parents, administration and especially teachers. Trying to change the reopening plan will only cause more stress, frustration and strife within our community.

Schools haven't been closed for a year. We've been open the whole time, albeit online, and it's not fair to make our teachers' jobs even harder than they already are. An approved, agreed-upon plan is much more effective than a cancelled one.

Prioritizing teachers and their needs is prioritizing our students.

My daughter has an IEP. We have worked hard to secure her current schedule. She does not have an immune system that can be compromised and it is not ok to think you can pull support providers after all of the work we have put in. I urge you to focus on returning in Fall, and let our kids continue to finish this school year virtually.

I am not understanding how we can pivot so quickly after months of thoughtful planning. I have yet to hear how special education (Resource and SDC students) fit into these models. I feel there has not been enough thought and planning around access. How will the students receive services and have access to Para Educator support in their general education classes particular at the middle and high school with class changes, multiple teachers, transitions, lunch...? How will the special education students (Resource and SDC students) who stay at home receive services and para educator support?

We -- my high school-age child and I -- were looking forward to taking this first step towards re-opening AHS, in the twice-weekly stable cohorts. Please don't get rid of that plan!

Even if opening up fully CAN happen before the end of this schoolyear, it's going to have to happen gradually. It may be hard for some parents and families to remain patient, but that's what it's going to take. Teenagers can spread COVID-19 at the same rate as adults, so they cannot and should not be pushed back into full-time attendance when so few of them are vaccinated yet.

ATA & the district came up with an agreement that they felt was safe and that would serve ALL students as equally as possible. Please honor that agreement. The new proposal from the district will make it even harder for students who unable to return in person. It is unethical to choose a plan that will benefit some students at the expense of others.

Please start with the agreed upon plan and if successful, then make plans for the next step.

It's morally and ethically important to honor agreements and not violate them.

As the parent of both a premature infant and a preschool age child receiving speech therapy though AUSD I strongly encourage that the distance option for this service remain available to our family and others. I support teachers and other staff who have high health risk family members going through issues like we have experienced with our preemie and also my pregnancy and I think it is important they have the option for continued distance learning. Thank you for your consideration of high risk families.

I trust my daughter's teachers.

As a para-educator working closely with AUSD teachers, I can attest to their dedication to their students. The Albany and AUSD community must trust their judgement.

Rushing to get children and teachers into a classroom setting puts lives at risk unnecessarily. Makes no sense this close to summer and with time to get people vaccinated and to be fully ready for Fall. It is likely that the infection rates will spike as a result of the State's reopening.

We need to support our wonderful teachers in doing their job in a sustainable and safe way. You have an agreement that is reasonable as possible and must honor it!

Please provide our teachers additional resources if we expect the dual teaching (in person and on zoom at the same time). We would need 2 teachers in the room to facilitate that type of course instruction effectively. Thanks

The current proposed schedule would be harmful to both teachers and students and would make my learning a lot more difficult.

A reduction in teacher instructional time would be detrimental to high school students whose classes require learning a specific set of content. Please, please don't reduce the time our upper level students have with their teachers. And please let's respect the risk/benefit balance already worked out with our teachers for the hybrid plan due to start on April 5th.

"Everybody wants to get all the kids back to school...but we've got to do it Prudently and Carefully." - Dr. Anthony Fauci March 12, 2021

Albany teachers have always done everything they can to support students, and it is our turn to support them and work together as a community, not against each other.

Fully opening schools without having the vast majority of the Albany community at-large vaccinated is reckless.

I would think by now this district and board would recognize that collaboration with the teachers and relying on their expertise would create a thoughtful and safe plan for reopening and pivoting reopening. I'm disappointed this board and district makes such haphazard decisions

My children have had many years in the Albany School System and I trust the Albany teachers implicitly to best serve all of the students. They have teaching expertise that, as a parent, I do not. They know what works for all of their students and have always demonstrated this. Please honor their collective bargaining agreement. I want all kids back in school safely and I trust these experienced teachers to know best how to implement this safe return.

Agreements are sacred. Period. Honor them. To do otherwise, causes irreparable harm.

I am and my wife are non-practicing medical doctors. Student's health concerns should be taken care of. We are aware that parents of primary school students pushing for school re-opening, but health concern and child care issues are totally different for High School students. Pandemia is not over yet. As of today, there are still 30-40 thousand covid-19 cases (real number is probably much higher) and ~1000 death US wide. Vaccines are coming, just give a little bit more time for better vaccination. Only 12% of US population are fully vaccinated. Will School Board take RESPONSIBILITY if my children get infected?. This is very critical

This is an extremely difficult situation. I support the proposed back to school plan as is, because it is a compromise that addresses the many desires of the community, not just the most vocal. It maintains the important teacher-student relationship in the morning academic time, makes progress towards social-emotional needs, is realistic about our facility limitations, AND keeps teachers, unvaccinated students AND unvaccinated parents safe for these last few months. Simulcast learning seems unworkable and the worst of both worlds.

We are so close...let's stay the course and move forward with the approved plan we have. We expect and look forward to in-person learning in the fall. Please target the school board/ administrator/teachers' energy towards keeping us all safe now, providing summer catchup programs for those that most need it, and preparing for a safe, full reopening in the fall.

It is most important to allow teachers to give the go ahead for when schools reopen for F2F. We must make sure that all teachers, staff and students are vaccinated and science is followed to allow for a safe reopening. It is foolish to demand teachers and staff risk their and their families lives in a rush to please a small proportion of families at AUSD. We have come this far, together, fighting this pandemic. Let's not ruin our good work and sacrifice now but instead take our time to slowly roll out school, that way all families, students, staff and teachers are protected and served.

My high school child really does not want to take unnecessary risks, especially as we have higher risk factors in our family, and he doesn't want to have less time with his teachers than he already has.

I have been a teacher - now retired.

I greatly appreciated all the Albany teaches during this difficult time!

I believe the needs and wishes of the teachers should be a top consideration in charting the path forward during these trying times. As a former teacher and supporter of both teachers, parents, and students, I hate the idea of forcing teachers to return to work. Teachers give so much at every turn and should be trusted to hold the best interests of all parties in making their decision to return to the classroom.

We need to support our wonderful teachers in doing their job in a sustainable and safe way. You have an agreement that is reasonable as possible and must honor it!

Thank you so much teachers and students. You were truly courageous and articulate tonight at the meeting. So impressed! Keep going...you guys got this. The majority of parents got your back.

Teachers have worked incredibly hard this year to create engaging online education. Asking them to pivot on a dime, with no warning or negotiation is unfair and inappropriate. Simulcasting will not work for the youngest students who need to stay remote. Please honor the deliberative process that was begun last year and support Albany's teachers so that we can keep great teaching staff in the district. Teacher attrition is likely to be a serious problem following the pandemic.