

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
**February 24, 2021 Board Meeting**

**8.1 Superintendent CLO District Update for the Board**

1) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 8:40 AM

Board Members,

I am writing to implore you to return our schools to 5 full days of instruction, once our county reaches red tier status and teachers have been given the opportunity to vaccinate. A year without in-person school is too long for the children in our community. Many districts in the state, neighboring states, and several local organizations have reopened full-time, safely. Or at very least have a plan and have communicated such plan on when they will be returning to full-time instruction. TTUSD, by contrast, seems to lack both transparency and urgency with respect to returning our schools to their intended operations. Why don't we have a "TTUSD's Safety Guidebook for Re-opening Full-time"? What metrics need to be met in order for this to happen in our community as it has in many others?

I was educated in TTUSD from kindergarten through 12th grade. I recall fondly my time attending the schools in this area and feel my educators helped prepare me for a successful future. There is no doubt in my mind that the district, during my time, was committed to excellence in education for all students. I fear that this same commitment does not exist for my children. I hope in your discussions that you will realize the impact this is having on the students and families in our community. As you know, the children of the community are your constituents, and we, as their parents and guardians are their fiercest advocates now and in the 2022 and 2024 election years.

Thank you for your time,

Jacqueline Anderson

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2) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 8:43 AM - Text highlighted over 500 words.

My name is Kim Furtado and I live in Glenshire with my two children ages 8 and 11 years old. I work full time from my home and vehicle. My territory ranges from the Summit east to the Utah border and as far north as Alturas, CA south to Gardnerville, NV. My Subaru is often the office space for myself and the classroom for my kids. I sacrifice my hotspot for them and sometimes none of us can use the hotspot due to topography. My husband is a fire chief - THAT career does not allow him to juggle child-rearing and teaching while on shift, therefore much of the responsibility falls on me.

You already know this is not sustainable. We hired a tutor. She quit in favor of online tutoring. The program we signed my 8yo up for lost its lease due to COVID. We've done everything right except quit our jobs, which we cannot do and is an unacceptable option.

My daughter is falling behind in math and I've signed her up for 3rd party help. Social media is a fantastic platform for bashing working parents right now, so for those that think "we want our babysitters back" I would strongly suggest you bite your tongue and consider we know our

kids aren't getting what they need. We know we are not their best teacher. For those that suggest this is a "character building opportunity" – it's not. We can character build life skills and social norms, but I'm not a great teacher. I know my children deserve better than this, better than me as a math, reading and writing teacher. In fact, the law requires it. We know that the naysayers patronize our businesses daily, unintentionally speaking out of both corners of your mouth by demanding our job performance in your daily interactions while simultaneously badmouthing us as substandard parents, likely because you do not know we are one in the same. We are your public servants and private service providers, so everywhere you go for the next week, ask yourself, where are their children? Could these folks effectively balance kids and Google Classroom while meeting my needs right now?

Placer County Health Dept meets today to discuss moving us to Red Tier. Per a Placer Co. Health Dept employee, we have all the school safety measures in place, and we know that teachers receive their vaccine booster on Friday, so it is up to the Board to determine if our schools will open, however the principle's response was, "The district is looking into what the state requirements are for returning to 5 days a week and how we can best meet those requirements".

I reviewed the CDPH link you sent out indicating these are the parameters you need to meet to open back to full time in-person learning. It is nearly 60 days old, so I would expect administrators had plenty of time to pivot and meet their outline.

Section 2-1: Has TTUSD onboarded with state-owned Valencia Branch Lab for PCR tests at 1/3 the mkt rate?

Section 2-2: Safe School Reopening says we have a 90-day supply of PPE

Section 2-3: Has TTUSD onboarded within the last 60 days to School Portal for Outbreak Tracking?

Section 2-4: Vaccination boosters will be completed Friday

Section 3: Where EXACTLY is TTUSD in the process of developing and implementing the COVID-19 Safety Plan? We have to believe you were taking action BEFORE Dr. Naomi Bardach, UCSF Pediatrician & COVID-19 transmission expert offered guidance and support NEARLY 60 DAYS AGO as leader of the Safe Schools for All Team. Where EXACTLY are we in the process?

Section 4: The CA dashboard indicates we are eligible to reopen. Does that only indicate hybrid or full opening? The COVID Safety Plan referenced on the map was written nearly 90 days ago.

Are there any portions of the COVID-19 Prevention Plan that TTUSD has yet to meet? If so, in the spirit of transparency, what are they?

TTUSD: You have a job because we need you. We don't need you partially, we need you fully RIGHT NOW. In-person. Full days.

FINALLY, for those families that do NOT want or CANNOT have their children back in school full time, we hear you and appreciate your concerns or fears and ability to support your

children while distance learning, but your story is not my story and I would hope that you would respect my position and my children's needs as much as I respect yours.

Kim Furtado

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3) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 10:37 AM

Good morning board members.

My children and I, as well as many other families in our area are very eager to return to our schools' full time. We are very hopeful with our numbers decreasing and with our teachers and so many others within our community receiving vaccines, and all of our new safety measures in place that we will be safe and ready to return to our classrooms full time. The kids have so much enjoyed seeing their peers and teachers in person. So much of their development comes from direct interaction. When we are distant learning from home there is so much disconnect and their motivation for school drops. They become less confident and more unwilling to learn.

They thrive on the face-to-face direct interaction with their teachers, they see the joy our teachers bring and feel more comfortable. Our youth needs to be back in "real school"! They are our future leaders, our future doctors and first responders, they are our future teachers! They are the ones missing out and hurting the most from this crisis, please, if you really in your hearts have the best interest in these kids, please give them back the opportunity to succeed in this ever-changing world and give them the best chances when we face the next crises. Please consider us going back to school full time, our youth is depending on us!!

Thank you,

Stephanie Howard  
Brayden Howard (12)  
Mason Howard (10)

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4) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 10:49 AM

I am writing to you to request that the TTUSD board add the topic of moving the 5th Grade students back to Tahoe Lake Elementary School and Kings Beach Elementary School for the 2021-2022 school year to their March agenda.

I am the parent of a 2nd grade student who struggles with emotional regulation and social interactions. He thrives in the elementary school setting because of the emotional support he receives from the compassionate and patient teachers and staff at Tahoe Lake Elementary. I fear that he and other students will suffer severe mental health problems if they are put in a middle school setting where they are expected to be more mature and where the teachers are unable to provide the nourishing setting that is more typical of an elementary school setting. I worry that with the current pandemic and the time that these students have spent in distance learning and away from the support of teachers that these effects will be even more severe.

I am sure that you are all aware of the mental health problems students experience, and this has been exasperated by the pandemic. Suicide rates have sky rocketed and I think our youngest students need our help now to give them the extra time and attention they need. We can start by bringing our 5th grade students back to Tahoe Lake and Kings Beach Elementary Schools.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I hope you will consider this topic at the March meeting.

Sincerely,

Michelle Allen  
TLE parent and TLE PTO President

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5) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 11:41 AM

Please update the community on the status for getting elementary kids back in school 5 days a week, with longer days now that the virus is spreading less in our community and now that teachers are vaccinated. It seems to me that the community has been very patient waiting for schools to be brought to the highest safety levels possible and now the teachers have as well.

These elementary aged children need to be back in school fulltime. The current in person hybrid level of teacher led learning is just 25% of previous standards. This unacceptable and hurting kids. There is NO learning happening in this current model (for my second graders) and my kids are suffering with a lack of education, lack of engagement, lack of structure and lack of challenging academics. They are deteriorating emotionally due to the situation and I worry the impacts will be long lasting within my family and in the larger societal context.

There must be some accountability by the district to address this massive learning loss and burden put on families and children.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Baceda (Glenshire mom---for now)

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6) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 12:05 PM

I am requesting that schools reopen immediately

Regards

Curtis Cain

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7) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 12:11 PM

Dear Board of Directors, Educators, and Administrators,

First, I would like to thank all of you for your hard work and determination to return to the hybrid model of in class learning.

Second, how incredible that our district is now vaccinated (as of Friday)! I was one of the 8 Registered Nurses who administered the vaccines, and the room was full of an array of emotions. Most of what I felt was relief and excitement for a more normal way of life.

Third, when will we be going back to a normal school week? Our students have suffered long enough in distance learning and a small amount of in person learning. Please make it the number one priority to advance the school schedule so that all students have a fair and equitable opportunity for education. Please present the timeline and communicate the plan for reopening as soon as possible. I will speak from personal experience; my kids need to be in school to learn at a normal pace. My 5- and 8-year-old do not work well independently and my husband and I work full time. On the days we are able to help they get more out of it but the days we don't they both suffer.

Again, thank you for working so hard to get our kids back to a normal school day as soon as possible.

Sonia Henry

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8) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 12:27 PM

Truckee Unified School District Board Members,

Please accept this request to open our school district to 100% in person learning.

I am the parent of two elementary school students in the district.

What other requirements or benchmarks need to be met in order to open? We have not received clear direction on what is required.

With our teachers and staff now receiving their second vaccine dose this Friday, what are we now waiting on? If parents do not want the schools to open, they have Cohort C option. Those parents who have their children in Cohort A and B want school to reopen.

Please publish the numbers/percentages of enrolled students who are in Cohort A and B, versus C. This should be public information.

Our children and parents are suffering, mentally, emotionally, and physically. Families are suffering financially.

We have several more months of school for the year, and our children deserve to be in person and have an opportunity to learn, socialize and grow. We are almost a year at home, whilst other school districts and private schools locally are back full time.

If our school district cannot take action, I am looking into alternative schools that are open for the coming school year.

Please reopen our schools and allow our youth start to thrive again.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Bradford

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9) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:10 PM

I think bring 5th grade back to TLE is a great idea and I fully support it.

Thanks,  
Kirstin Guinn, 1st grade parent

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10) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 1:37 PM

Hello,

I am writing to spotlight the issue of 5th grade in the district returning to Tahoe Lake Elementary School. There was momentum in the district prior to COVID to return 5th grade to Tahoe Lake and I would like that momentum and attention to return to this important issue. My hope is that the district leadership and the Board are simultaneously working on COVID mitigation and the post COVID plans in our schools so that we can rebound from this interruption in our kids' education as successfully as possible.

The previous relocation of 5th grade to the North Tahoe Middle school campus seemed to be an accommodation based on lack of space, not what is best for this age group. We no longer lack the space, let's do what is appropriate and in the best interest of the kids NOW for the 2021-2020 school year.

I am advocating for this change even more now since our children have experienced such a loss of learning and the benefits that a nurturing elementary campus offers. Please do not force them to adjust to even more challenges before they are emotionally and academically ready.

Returning the 5th grade to the Tahoe Lake Campus will elevate the social and educational experience for the 5th graders. These students deserve to be at their elementary school for their final year where they have all of the age-appropriate resources. From my perspective they are somewhat on an island at the North Tahoe Middle School campus, having only one another as peers since they are not fully integrated with the middle school. The transition to middle school is difficult enough, why are we fast pacing that transition by pushing our 11-year-olds' to be on a campus where they are exposed to students who are much older and more mature? The nurturing and supportive environment at Tahoe Lake EI will only increase the confidence and preparedness for our 5th graders when they do need to make the transition to middle school.

Thank you for your serious attention to this issue.

Kerry Paden (kindergarten & 3rd grade Mom Tahoe Lake EI)

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11) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 1:50 PM

Hello,

I would like to request that the district regularly communicate, at a minimum each week, the plan to reopen our schools 5 days/week now that all our teachers have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.

The cadence of communication has been somewhat slow and irregular. Please provide transparent weekly updates moving forward on the status, progression, plans and timeline to re-open the schools 5 days/week.

A monthly public meeting is not a sufficient status update.

Thank you,

Kerry Paden - Tahoe Lake Elementary mom

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12) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 1:51 PM

I am submitting public comment to the TTUSD Board of Directors as a concerned parent and community member. While I appreciate the many lengths TTUSD teachers and district staff have taken to open schools in the hybrid model, it is simply not enough for the mental wellbeing and academic progression of students. **Schools need to reopen at full capacity -- 5 days a week, full time.**

The path to reopening has included expanded safety measures that adhere to physical distancing guidance, mask wearing and hand washing protocols, along with the installation of air ventilation systems to keep everyone safe. These same precautions have kept pilots, flight attendants and airline passengers safe despite a smaller space and higher density of people congregating in one area. Many schools across the country -- even in our own state -- have reopened in full capacity safely. TTUSD teachers will receive the 2nd dose of the vaccine on Friday, Feb. 26 and per the CDC, they are now 90% to 95.6% protected against the virus. That means that by Monday, Mar. 8, schools should reopen five days a week to students.

The data supporting schools reopening in full capacity is substantial. Students who once thrived in school environments are struggling at home without the social aspects that only in-person learning can provide.

- The Center for Disease Control reports that emergency room visits related to mental health emergencies have grown -- up 24% for kids ages 5-11 and 31% for kids ages 12-17.
- The Washington Post reports that Teen Line, which is a helpline for teenagers, has been flooded with calls since the pandemic. Our teenagers are struggling with relationships and there has been a big increase in teens who are thinking of and experimenting with self-harm.
- A growing body of research indicates that distance learning is especially difficult for elementary aged students, widening learning achievement gaps.

- A lack of social interaction that grade-school aged children rely on means their social-emotional development is at risk. School environments are supposed to build a community and provide a sense of safety, and that cannot happen to the degree it needs to in a hybrid model.
- The Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University calculated a COVID slide that totals between 57 and 183 days of learning loss in reading and 136 to 232 days of learning loss in math (spring 2020 data).
- Glitchy software and poor internet connections leave students frustrated and filled with anxiety about virtual learning.

If TTUSD continues in hybrid only, what are the plans for summer learning programs? Private tutoring? Extended school years? How will you provide solutions to address the learning gaps? How is mental health being addressed among students beyond virtual counseling sessions? How will teachers be able to enforce grade standards that are no longer developmentally appropriate?

The option to return to school full time must be available for families and students in the Tahoe-Truckee community. Children will be affected by this pandemic for years to come -- learning losses, depression and anxiety increases, and lack of socialization is detrimental for our students. The ripple effect in our community -- and society as a whole -- needs to be looked at by your Board with students prioritized. I implore you to evaluate the substantial data that supports students being in school full time and make the appropriate changes this March.

Thank you,

Liz Bowling

Parent of two TTUSD students (Kindergarten & 4th Grade)

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13) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:30 PM

I am writing as Tahoe Lake Elementary school parent in support of bringing the fifth-grade class back to TLE from the North Tahoe Middle School.

There is a huge age and development gap between 5th graders and 7th/8th graders. Arguably, a 10-year-old would benefit from being the oldest in the school (at the elementary school) rather than the youngest in the school. Particularly where there is such critical emotional and physical development taking place between the ages of 10 and 13.

The benefit to all students at TLE is undeniable and I hope the board gives this matter serious consideration.

Kate Shaw

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14) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:11 PM

Greetings,

Our family would love for 5th grade to be brought back to TLE. It would be most beneficial to our daughters and secondly to our family with driving the girls to school. Thank you.

Lindsey Lewis

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15) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:31 PM

Hi Carmen and TTUSD BOD,

I would like to make the following public comment. Thank you ::)

Thanks again for your continued support of our kids and community in these challenging times. Our community is here to help to support TTUSD. This comment is to reinforce that we must continue to make forward progress towards 5 day a week school and a return to youth sports. TTUSD followed the science and trends to move to in person school against the wishes of some a month ago. This has proven to be the right decision as we see a continued decline in cases in the midst of a return to in person school. It is now time to carry that momentum to the next step closer to normality.

The last several weeks have shown that our schools CAN operate without an additional risk to our kids, teachers, and community as a whole. Please continue to make strides to get these kids back to in person 5 days a week. It is so important for the health and safety of them and our community. For those families that do not feel safe returning back to school, they still have the option to learn remotely. Schools across our country and world have shown that this can be done as many school districts have been back to school since last Fall in a safe manner. Please continue to follow the science and data on this front. Please avoid the trap of those in CA that are using our kids as a political tool to further their agenda.

It is also important that our community tries to maintain our decades long relationship with NV youth sports. Due to geographical location, commerce/business relationship, workforce commute, leisure travel, etc., our community is much more tied to NV than the Sacramento area. It is much safer for our kids and community to participate in NV sports league play than travel over the hill to Sacramento for games AND practices. We are not trying to circumnavigate CA youth sports, only state that we are a part of NV more than we are a part of Sacramento.

I think it's time we start prioritizing the health and safety of our local community versus taking the lead from county/state officials who have no vested interest in our area apart from a resort destination. It's frustrating to see tens of thousands of out of town/state visitors in our community weekly to ski while our kids are unable to attend school full time or recreate outdoors like our NV brethren 30 miles away.

It is truly unfortunate that teachers unions, lobbyists, and special interests are dictating CDPH guidelines versus using case studies of the other 40+ states that have shown that youth sports and full time school DO NOT add any additional risk to the community.

Please let us know how the backbone of this community can help TTUSD continue its forward progress!

Thanks for listening,

Aaron Abraham

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16) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:14 PM

Hello,

We would like to request that Tahoe Lake Elementary bring the 5th grade back to the school. I believe that 5th graders should be in elementary school, and then move up at 6th grade.

Thank you,

Jill Hall-Kossman & Kip Kossman

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17) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:21 PM

Dear Board of Education Trustees and Superintendent Chief Learning Officer Ghysels,

We are parents of three Tahoe Lake Elementary students, currently a 1st and 4th grader and our youngest will start Kinder next year. We are writing to voice support for the idea of keeping Fifth Grade at Tahoe Lake Elementary, starting with the 2021-2022 school year.

Fifth Grade is considered part of elementary school in virtually every other school district in the nation, including the Truckee elementary schools. While it made sense when there was a shortage of room to move Fifth to North Tahoe, with the new school I would be so great to have them stay.

Our family is so excited about the new school, and although there were delays, we were always supportive and felt like it was worth the wait! With everything the kids have gone through and missed in the last year, we would love for our Fourth grader to have one more year at Tahoe Lake Elementary. We also understand that with everything that has gone on this year this could be a big ask but appreciate your time to consider it.

Sincerely,

Cory and Wes Allison

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18) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:39 PM

Dear TTUSD Board,

I am writing to voice my request, and support, of keeping next year's 5th grade class at Tahoe Lake Elementary. As a parent of current 4th grader Quinn Zerrenner, I have a very real and personal reason for this request, but in addition to that, I would like to add these points for your consideration.

Quinn is our oldest daughter, so choosing a school to enroll her in was a new experience for us. As you know, we are fortunate to have multiple options in our area from which parents can choose - Creekside, TEA, SELS and for us the choice between Tahoe Lake or Kings Beach Elementary. As new parents, we did not take this decision lightly. Nor did we have any bias or

preconceived notions going into the process. We visited and toured each of the schools listed previously and met with the Principal and teachers.

When touring Tahoe Lake, we learned about the curriculum and the focus on math and science. This focus, coupled with the teachers we met, the Principal (Mrs. Foucek) and the overall vibe, culture and environment was extremely positive for us. We included Quinn in every step of this process - she toured each school, met the people, etc. Her voice was 50% of the decision, and her reaction to Tahoe Lake made it very clear which school was her first choice. We couldn't have agreed more...Tahoe Lake it was!

Of course, the renovation and move to Rideout was discussed during our tour, and we all know how that timeline turned out, but that was unforeseen at the time of our decision. While the relocation definitely played a factor in our decision, we felt confident in decision knowing that returning to the new facility would offer Quinn enhanced opportunities that she wouldn't be afforded at other schools. This was worth the sacrifice in our minds.

In addition, we knew our decision would affect our newborn at home and her education path.

Fast forward to today, and Quinn has spent a total of 180 out of 720 days in the Tahoe Lake Elementary school building - her Kindergarten year only. (This does not take into account this 4th grade COVID year.)

The reasons for the delayed renovation were unforeseen. COVID was unforeseen. Both out of anyone's control. What isn't out of our control is offering these kids the opportunity to be Elementary students again. COVID wiped out their 4th grade. Not only the in-person learning, but also the social development that goes with interacting with classmates and schoolmates as one of the "older kids" in school. Developmentally they haven't experienced being a 4th grader and all of the social lessons that go along with that. This is as much a part of the educational process as reading, writing, math and science.

By moving these kids to the Middle School next year, we are essentially moving students at the 3rd grade level of social development and placing them in a Middle School environment. This seems ill-advised and unnecessary.

While any decision comes with pros and cons from both sides, I do ask that we really consider what these kids have been through in their first 4 years of formal education and do everything we can to give them one, just one more year of a "normal" Elementary School experience. We owe it to them.

Thank you for reading and thank you for taking these points into consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Zerrenner

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19) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:40 PM

Good evening everyone.

Please bring fifth graders back to Tahoe Lake Elementary and Kings Beach Elementary.

There is sufficient room at both schools after renovations being completed.

Sincerely,

Katharina & Jorg Tonett with a Kindergartener at TLE

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20) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:47 PM

I believe that 5th grade should be at the elementary school, not the middle. Quite frankly if the middle keeps 5th grade, I'll be homeschooling my child.

Kim Boganes

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21) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:52 PM

I'm writing to support bringing fifth graders back to the elementary schools at TLE and KBE. It is my understanding that the transition of 5th grade to North Tahoe School was intended to be temporary. With the construction to the elementary schools complete it's time for the fifth grade to return to the elementary school. When the time comes, I would prefer my child attend fifth grade at an elementary school.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Heather Manzi

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22) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:48 PM

To whom it may concern,

I would like to let you know that I support for the 5th graders to stay at Tahoe Lake Elementary.

Truly,

Adriana Bermudez

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23) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:54 PM

To the Boardroom,

As parents of a past Tahoe Lake cub (Rylan Heslin- 6th grade) and a present cub (Bryce Heslin- 1st grade), we are writing in hopes that for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond, that the fifth graders return back to Tahoe Lake Elementary.

We feel that as ten- and eleven-year-olds, they are still quite young and it is appropriate to have them in an elementary school rather than a middle school. Entering middle school can

cause apprehension for young adolescents who face many cognitive, physical, social, and emotional changes.

In addition, we have read some research that 5th graders perform better in a K-5 environment than they do in a middle school environment with older kids.

We hope you can understand our position and will take it into consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt and Kim Heslin

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24) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:55 PM

Hello TTUSD Board,

Thank you for all you are doing for our students in a trying year. My name is Heather Zerrenner and my husband, and I have 2 children at Tahoe Lake today. One is in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and the other is currently in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I am writing to voice my strong belief that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade should stay at the Tahoe Lake Elementary for the 2021/2022 year and beyond. This class specifically has been in a situation where they have not been able to be in a school for a year. This has meant that they have missed a year of direct in person education and well as the mental, psychological and spiritual growth that occurs when they are with their teachers, friends, and peers. I am convicted that they are not ready for a move to middle school when they essentially stopped in-school education in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

For future years, the same will not apply exactly, but allowing the children to have one more year of development in an elementary school setting will only allow for slower and more focused growth.

Lastly, the Tahoe Lake school building is exceptional, and one of the main reasons why we chose Tahoe Lake. It would be an incredible learning opportunity and gift for these 4<sup>th</sup> graders to be able to experience learning in this school for 1 year since all others were missed. Thank you for your consideration and supporting the children in our community with this decision.

Heather Zerrenner

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25) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 3:56 PM

Hello,

I would like to show support for bringing the 5th graders back to TLE. As the Mom of a 4th grader, I would love for my daughter to have a chance to grow and thrive at this new beautiful school for another year before moving on to middle school.

TLE Mom  
Drkenny134

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25) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:00 PM

Dear School Board,

Hi, its Quinn Zerrenner I'm a fourth grader at Tahoe Lake and would love for fifth grade to be at Tahoe Lake next year! My reasons are because I haven't really been at the new school for too long. Another reason is the teachers there are really kind and sweet.

Thank you, Quinn.

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26) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:02 PM

Dear Ms. Ghysels,

I'm reaching out today to express my concern for our 4th graders that will be entering 5th grade the next school year. Myself (and every current TLE parent of a 4th grader that I know) feel strongly that our children deserve to stay at Tahoe Lake Elementary to complete 5th grade.

So much has been taken from our kids over this last year. Going through a devastating and isolating pandemic during this formative time in their lives will surely have a lastly impression. The very least we can give our kids is the support of being at a school with staff and a student body that is familiar and comforting to them. These children are nowhere near ready to be sent off to a brand-new school with 6th, 7th, 8th graders after spending most of their school experience since last March sitting behind a Chromebook doing distance learning.

Please, please consider letting our 4th graders return for another year at Tahoe Lake. We love this school and its teachers, and so do our kids.

Sincerely,  
Jamie Brown

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27) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:03 PM

Hello there,

I have a daughter in the 4th grade at TLE, Jasmine Shick. I'm writing to express support for and urge the board to make time to properly consider bringing 5th grade back to TLE. I understand the research project was underway prior to COVID and has been tabled with a high likelihood our kids will be forced into the high school campus for 5th grade.

Here's why our 5th graders belong in an elementary school:

- 2020/2021 didn't provide the 4th grade class with a full year of learning and development. As a result, they are behind emotionally and socially at best. Our students this year are less prepared than ever to step into a high school campus or mingle with 8th graders.
- Emotionally a 5th grader isn't ready to have interaction and exposure to junior high and high schoolers. 7th and 8th grades are trying and awkward times emotionally and a 5th grader shouldn't have to be exposed to the distraction.

- Socially a 5th grader shouldn't be exposed to the 8th grade experience with peer pressure to explore a range of issues from sexual development to independent rule following decisions on social conduct, drugs, etc.
- Physically a 5th grader is much more aligned to the games and pace of a 4th grader vs 8th grader. Mixing 5th with 8th likely exposes them to increased bullying and physical harm.
- Academically a 5th grade experience should be structured in a way more aligned with 4th grade vs 8th grade to align to proper academic pressure for their age group. Our kids have too much pressure to perform at high levels these days as it is, contributing to skyrocketing rates of depression and self-esteem issues.

While I appreciate the curve ball of COVID has forced our focus on logistics, you owe it to our children and your students to step up to the challenge, multitask and make the right decision to pull 5th grade back to TLE. We are all in the same boat and have had to take on more than we ever thought possible to both survive and thrive, including acting as teachers to our kids while we managed our own new normal professionally and personally. I expect the same stretch capacity from this district.

Thanks in advance for doing the right thing.

Heather Shick

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28) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:18 PM

Dear Board,

I am a parent of two children at Tahoe Lake Elementary, one first grade and one fourth grade. I would like to have the 5th grade stay at Tahoe Lake Elementary. It makes sense to have the 5th grade students remain at an elementary school and for middle school to begin in the 6th grade. I wholeheartedly support having the 5th grade at Tahoe Lake Elementary beginning next year and continuing into the future. I hope you will greatly consider this option and decide that it is the correct decision.

Sincerely,

Viktorija Rollston

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29) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:18 PM

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing to you concerning bringing the fifth graders back to Tahoe Lake Elementary. Currently, these kids are in a sort of limbo at the middle school. They are in a school where they aren't actually afforded the benefits of being in that school. No lockers, no dances, no school sports. The middle school is running out of room to accommodate these kids but with the renovations at KBE and TLE there is plenty of room to bring them back where they belong. These fifth graders are also at an age where academically, socially, and emotionally it can be pretty easy to start on a downward trajectory that may go unnoticed at a school with older kids who can have pretty big problems (vaping, drinking, sexting, etc.). Let's keep these kids just

that, kids, as long as possible by moving them back to a school where they won't be exposed to the aforementioned problems at such a pivotal time. It seems especially important now that our kids have barely seen a classroom in the last 11 months to keep them in the more nurturing environment of Tahoe Lake Elementary.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jenn Ragan  
Concerned parent and Chair of TLE Site Council

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30) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:19 PM

Hi,

I 100% agree with the 5th grade going back to TLE.

Corey Riley

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31) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:20 PM

Dear TTUSD Board and Superintendent Ghysels,

First off, let me thank you all for your hard work and commitment to our schools and our kids during these very trying times. There was a topic that was of very high importance to my family and many others in the Tahoe Lake Elementary extended family prior to this pandemic turning everything upside down. We appreciate very much that this very exciting prospect of keeping our 5th graders at Tahoe Lake is returning to your attention. Prior to the pandemic we showed our strong desire for this to happen to give our kids another year in the age-appropriate environment for them to grow and learn. Since then, our new school with increased capacity has finally opened and we feel it's ready to accommodate the 5th grade. I understand there are staffing and other logistics behind the scenes to factor in, but we know our Principal, Stephanie Foucek supports this decision as well, and we have all the faith in the District's ability to re-allocate staff or add positions to make this work. Our 4th graders and all students have barely been in school for what is almost exactly one year, and as you know they have missed out on critical social and emotional development opportunities with their peers. And while we know teachers are doing everything they can to keep students learning at grade level, it's just not the equivalent, and they are behind in their learning. So, while I was already in support of keeping 5th grade at Tahoe Lake before the world turned upside down, it is now even more important that these kids get another year at their amazing Elementary school. Please make this a reality for them and we would be so very grateful.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Portnoy  
Parent of a 2nd and 4th grader at Tahoe Lake Elementary

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32) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:27 PM

Dear Board members,

I am writing you today in regard to the fifth-grade classes being held at the middle school or at Tahoe Lake Elementary school. As a father of two, a current fifth grader at the middle school, and a kindergarten I am deeply passionate about keeping the fifth grade at Tahoe lake elementary. I believe Tahoe lake offers a great learning environment and also a chance for these fifth graders to ease into the transition of going to middle school. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you very much for your time,

Jon Bachmeier

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33) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:30 PM

Hi there- I'm sure you're flooded with emails about this but I'm emailing to help encourage the 5th grade be located at the elementary school. I saw some pretty big changes in my older son within days of him attending the middle school in 5th grade. These were changes I think would have been appropriate had he been a little older.

Not sure if it would/could work logistically but I, as a parent, would love to see it happen.

Lauren Chorey

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34) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:39 PM

To Whom it may concern,

My name is Lynn Downer, and my daughter is currently in 2nd grade at Tahoe Lake Elementary. My family has been part of the TLE family since 2011. I want to write a brief letter to voice my opinion on re-introducing fifth grade into Tahoe Lake Elementary School. We feel very strongly that fifth graders will fit in an elementary school setting much better than a middle school. At such a young age, we feel the move to a new school with much older kids is unnecessary. We feel the kids will thrive and feel more comfortable staying in the surroundings they are used to being in. Since the new remodel of Tahoe Lake Elementary, it seems there will be more than adequate space to accommodate the fifth graders.

I appreciate your time and consideration in this matter. If there is anything further I can do to have our opinion be heard please let me know.

Sincerely,

Lynn Downer

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35) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:40 PM

Dear board members

My son has gone to T-k and kindergarten at Tahoe lake. We have waited with great anticipation for the new school to reopen. No one could have predicted such an awful virus. Please allow my son to go to fifth grade and enjoy the new beautiful school we created for him.

Thanks

Eric Matises  
Kenzo dad

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36) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:49 PM

Dear Stephanie Foucek:

I first want to thank you for allowing us as parents and community members to reach out and voice our concerns.

I had the great honor yesterday of touring TLE while still under construction, WOW was it amazing! I'm so proud that the small town that I grew up in will be able to provide such a beautiful facility for my children and the future kids of North lake Tahoe.

I want to focus on the kids because in all my understanding our school district has always put the kids first. What is best for our 5th grade students? To me and 100% of the people I speak with the answer is easy, the kids belong back at elementary school. They are 10 years old; they are still so young and innocent and are still figuring out right from wrong and want to play on playgrounds and chase each other around. They need a safe environment to be free to mature at a reasonable rate and not be thrown into the more developed and mature state of the older middle schoolers. They need to feel like the "big" kids on campus, so their confidence explodes before as we all remember they go into the weird awkward dramas of the dreaded "middle school" years. I understand all that is currently in place to separate the older kids from the 5th graders, but it's still not good enough! What is right for the 10-year old's is to be at an elementary school that is totally set up to accommodate them. I'm so happy that there was a place for the 5th graders for the last few years but now that TLE has the space it seems completely ludicrous to not immediately put them back to their rightful school and place. We have waited long enough and been put through chaos the last 3 year while TLE has been under construction and I do feel very strongly that the children have been gyped out of their rightful elementary experience. And immediate changes need to occur to get it back on track.

I've heard that the plan is to wait for the 2021 school year to bring back 5th grade to TLE. Why in the world would we want to upset and stir up these kids, the school, the teachers two years in a row? If it is going to happen, which is better, it needs to happen when TLE reopens to our community in the fall of 2020.

The few very frivolous excuses I have heard at why the wait for 2021 are, councilors from North Tahoe School would be displaced or there would not be adequate councilors left at NTS. I do understand that this is a problem, BUT what is best for the kids? If we are truly acting with the intentions to do what is best for the kids, then this minor problem with

councilors and staff needs to be addressed sooner than later and figured out. I also sit on site council and we help fund extra staff with the help of measure "A" and we need to implement this to happen for fall of 2020. Why are we even having this conversation now when we have had 3 years of construction to figure out all these details? I'm obviously very passionate about getting the 5th graders back where they belong. I have also heard firsthand that having 5th grade at NTS has been hard on some of the teachers because there is not space, the teacher lounge is combined with a special ED room... this is not an appropriate space for learning nor a space to give our hard-working teachers a moment to decompress.

The other reason I have heard about not jumping on this is the need for the portables to be transferred back to TLE from Rideout. That is going to happen and the speed of which it does seems like a coordinating problem not a major reason to postpone what is best for the children. And with my own eyes I have seen that there is adequate space for 5th graders in the new building, because not all grade levels will be at max capacity and using 3 rooms. All the reasons for NOT moving forward seem like excuses to be lazy. It can happen, it is possible, we need to make movement to start the process of getting 5th grade back to TLE for fall 2020. It's the best choice for our children and we owe it to them to make this happen!

I also want to address the 8th graders who are equally getting gypped by this set up. The young adults of 8th grade are going thru so many changes and growth experiences and they should be in an environment that fosters them. They should not have to be concerned about running into an elementary kid on campus, or have their snack break postponed because the scheduling doesn't line up with avoiding the 5th graders. These 13/14-year-old need to also feel empowered that they are the upper-class students and feel proud. I heard that walk-a-thon the 8th graders walked in the woods because the separation from 5th grade was important. Well, what is that telling the 8th graders? That we look out for the younger classmen more? No, this is their last year before HS and they should be the leaders of the walk-a-thon, not banned to the woods.

The current situation of 5th grade at NTS does not benefit anyone, so why would we allow it to go on longer than necessary?

I have the blessing to work very closely with a large portion of our community. I speak with 100s of people and I ask what their opinion is about this exact situation. I can tell you that no one has said a supportive thing about the 5th Graders being at NTS. The parents, community, teachers, staff have all agreed that the best thing for the students is to be back at TLE, so why would we fail them for yet another year?

Please know that I am happy to help get this moving, I will do anything in my power to do what is right and really owed to our children.  
Tahoe Lake Elementary tk-5th!

Thank you for your time, and I if you have any questions or want further explanation of my comments. I'd be happy to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Tara Morrissey

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37) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:52 PM

Good evening President Szczurek and Board members.

My name is David Polivy, I'm a parent of a 6th grader at ACMS, local business owner who has been open, operating and interacting with thousands of random customers for the past 10 months and finally I am a Truckee Town Council member. I speak this evening solely on my own and do not represent any other entity.

I am here today to urge you to get our students back to full-time, in-person learning as soon as possible and no later than April 1st.

I would like to compliment and commend you on the amazing work and efforts the Board, TTUSD staff, all the teachers and everybody working in our school district has put in over the past year during this unprecedented challenge we have all been facing.

As we start to round the corner and all TTUSD staff that wanted a vaccine were able to have access to one, it is now time to start returning to full time in person learning.

I appreciate the hybrid model and believe it is a necessary step to getting the kids back full time and getting everybody comfortable, I still believe it's woefully inadequate for active learning and engaged teaching. My daughter tells me often that the teachers have a very difficult time teaching both in person and virtually. The virtual learners often get forgotten, there are no cameras on, internet bandwidth is not this Town's strong suit and it's almost impossible to do this successfully so it's nobody's fault, it's just time to move forward.

It is safe for our kids and teachers to return to full time schooling. One only needs to look as far as Western Placer County, all of Washoe County, Creekside Charter and so many others that are currently holding full time in-person learning. I sent Sup. Ghysels a link to a map on the SF Chronicle website that shows exactly where our district can pull examples from in order to get this done.

I also understand there are challenges with the school's unions and their agreements to get back to the classroom. The school district needs to insist it is time to return to the classroom now that employees are vaccinated. The TTUSD staff was prioritized for vaccines so that schools could go back to full time in person learning. Science has shown that kids are not spreading the virus, hospitalizations and death rates have plummeted. The long-term effect of being out of school for this long is taking a toll and causing other social and mental health issues. It is time to stand up for the kids and bring them back to school!

Please, direct your staff to move in this direction NOW. It is time and the kids are ready! Thank you for your service, it is very difficult and very much appreciated.

Thank you

David Polivy

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38) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 4:59 PM

Hello,

I am in FULL SUPPORT of 5th Graders returning to Tahoe Lake and I hope to see the Board address this soon.

Also, now that the teachers and staff of Tahoe Lake Elementary will be fully vaccinated with the second COVID-19 vaccine dose this week when are we going to reopen our school to full time in-person learning??

There is no vaccine on the horizon for children in 2021 and many schools have been open for in-person learning with very little outbreaks. I feel it is time our children go back to school and I've spoken to many parents who feel the same way. Enough is enough and this COVID-19 fear has dragged on long enough. It is time for the school district to put our kids back into school full time 5 days a week in person. Distance / hybrid learning is not working, and it is not the best we can do for our children. Children are distracted, unfocused and spending hours on a computer every day. My daughter used to love school and now she hates it. The distance learning option can be left available for families who have health concerns but GET OUR KIDS BACK IN SCHOOL IN PERSON!!!

Thank you

Jenny Bond

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39) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:04 PM

Good evening TTUSD Board,

Please add my name to the list of many parents wanting to return 5th grade to Tahoe Lake Elementary. Our 5th graders are at a crucial point where key emotional and social input from their surroundings can have a profound impact on their cognitive development and growth. With this past year and all its challenges for our students are all 4th graders at a mental place ready for even more challenges of mingling with middle and high school students? While I am appreciative of all the academic successes from this past year during distance and hybrid learning, I can't say with confidence that this year's 4th graders are ready for such a big leap into 5th grade at North Tahoe. Please take into consideration the past year these children have had, academically, socially, emotionally, and developmentally. Thank you for your considerations.

Warm Regards,

Julie Matises  
Parent from Tahoe Lake Elementary

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40) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:07 PM

Dear TTUSD School Board members and Superintendent Ghysels,

The Tahoe Lake Elementary Parent Teacher Organization board would like our voices to be heard in support of bringing fifth graders back into our lakeside elementary schools.

Last winter, many TLE parents sent emails to the district expressing this wish. Former TTUSD Superintendent Dr. Leri, and the board, decided to study the matter during the 2020-2021 school year and make a decision for the 2021-2022 school year. Understandably, this issue has not been able to be significantly addressed, due to the overwhelming task of re-organizing and re-opening schools.

There are many of us parents that are wondering where the district, and the school board, stand on this issue. TLE, KBE, and NTS are not in line with the other TTUSD district elementary and middle schools. Our TLE principal, Stephanie Foucek, supports bringing them back.

In a March 2, 2020 letter to parents, Dr. Leri outlined that there were several issues that needed to be addressed, including position reallocations and supplemental funding to backfill positions, as well as staffing concerns. This letter further notes that "students are the focus of all our decisions and that in the best interest of the students, we plan to consider this change carefully..."

As a board, we would like to ask the school board and Superintendent Ghysels, what is in the best interests for the students? What are the factors that the board and Superintendent Ghysels are using to base your decision on? What is your plan and timeline for moving forward?

We would like answers to these questions via email as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Kind Regards,

Tahoe Lake PTO

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41) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:10 PM

Hi,

Wanted to add my two cents - we are new to Tahoe Lake this year with our 4th grader. Would love the opportunity for him to attend Tahoe Lake for 5th grade as well so he can experience full-time in-person schooling at this amazing facility.

Best,

Stef Michejda

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42) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:12 PM

Hello School Board Members,

First off, I want to say thank you for your hard work during these difficult and strange times. I know the decisions you and the board have been making with school and COVID-19 decisions have not been easy. So, thank you for your work on all of this.

Secondly, I want to introduce myself. My name is Matthew Sonka. I live in Carnelian Bay, CA. I have a current 4th and 2nd grader at Tahoe Lake Elementary. We love the school. We love the teachers there, and we love the Principal Stephanie Foucek.

I would like to ask the Board to consider bringing 5th graders back to Tahoe Lake Elementary. I think it would greatly benefit all 5th graders both emotionally and educationally to stay in the elementary school environment.

Our newly renovated school can accommodate this expansion to 5th grade.

Thank you for your time. And I hope and urge you to continue pursuing this elementary expansion and bring 5th grade to Tahoe Lake Elementary.

Best,

Matthew Sonka

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43) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:15 PM

This email is to show my support in bringing 5th grade back to Tahoe Lake Elementary. There are many reasons why my husband and I feel this would benefit the kids. Most importantly, we feel staying at TLE allows the kids one more year to mature and thrive in learning at a school they feel comfortable and safe in. I won't pretend to understand what it would actually take to make this happen or if it would truly help the development of the kids, yet from a mother's perspective, middle school can be the most challenging time for our kids. (I certainly remember my middle school years). I would imagine the older they are they will mature; they have more time to build confidence in their learning, and finally have another year to strengthen important relationships with fellow students.

We thank you for considering this very important topic. We are happy to answer any questions.

Amber and Jeff Kijanka  
Parents/ 4th Grader at TLE

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44) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:30 PM

Dear TTUSD School Board members and Superintendent Ghysels,

In the best interest of all students, bring the fifth grade back to the elementary schools in the district. This important issue should be a priority discussion this year. I am the mother of a second and fifth-grader at Tahoe Lake Elementary and NTS. As a former middle school counselor and child advocate, I have had to work with children to mitigate the repercussions of the unnecessary pressures they encountered socially, emotionally, and academically. These were challenges unique to children that were forced to attend a middle school campus. But unlike our district's lakeside elementary schools, the district where I worked did not have the capacity to house the fifth graders at the elementary school. We do have the capacity, and yet

we still have not heard when the fifth graders will be brought back to the elementary schools where they belong. Thank you for considering this serious matter, which impacts the health of these children in our community.

Sincerely,

Cindi Sparks Norbutas

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45) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 5:31 PM

Hope you are all well. Watching our kids transition from Tahoe Lake to North Tahoe Middle school, as parents we feel it would be beneficial to have 5th grade at Tahoe lake. It's a big transition to middle school when you are an elementary age.

Best, Rachel Hekemian

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46) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 6:05 PM

What is your anticipated date to return to 5 days a week?? This is what families need and deserve to know. Telling us your meeting next week is not being transparent? We have been very patient. Please give us an actual date.

Thank you,

Angela Gardner

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47) Wed, Feb 24, 2021 at 6:37 PM

I wanted to take a minute and thank Superintendent Ghysels and our school board for all their hard work. You have faced many challenges and obstacles in the past year, and I know you have worked hard at navigating these unprecedented times.

I wanted to send this email as a public comment after sending it as an email to our Superintendent and school board.

I'm reaching out to discuss the matter of bringing fifth graders back to Tahoe Lake Elementary. Last winter, many TLE parents sent emails to the district expressing this wish. Dr. Leri and the board decided to study the matter during the 2020-2021 school year and make a decision for the 2021-2022 school year.

Of course, that was before COVID-19 and all the challenges that it is presenting.

There are many of us parents that are wondering where the district, and the school board, stands on this issue. When can this issue be on a meeting agenda?

In many ways, I feel that the pandemic crisis has increased the need to keep the fifth graders at TLE. It is inevitable that there has been and will be a learning loss for some students,

despite all the heroic efforts of our teachers and staff. They will need a more nurturing elementary school environment, in these unprecedented times. It is imperative to their academic, social and emotional well-being to delay this transition into middle school, considering the lack of social and emotional interactions that we've all had to experience during the pandemic. In addition, the school took two extra years to complete and with the significant loss of in-person learning, our students have basically not been able to utilize our incredible new science lab, music room, greenhouse, and all the other amazing features of our new building.

The situation at the middle school is unusual both in and out of the district. We essentially have two separate middle schools and a high school all on the same campus. We need to bring the 5th graders back in regard to age-appropriate assemblies, curriculum and district standards.

This was an important issue for our schools prior to COVID, and it is even more crucial now that our fifth graders are able to spend an additional year in their elementary schools, before being sent up to the middle school where they are separated and feel a loss of school community, which is something that everyone is already struggling with. And they need it now, not in two or three years.

In a March 2020 letter to parents, former TTUSD Superintendent Dr. Leri noted that he, along with school board members, were very interested in having fifth grade return to both Kings Beach and Tahoe Lake elementary schools. The priority, at the time, was completing the TLE school upgrade. He further added that there were significant staffing and financial issues to tackle. He also noted that the district would plan to start a process in fall of 2020 to consider this issue, and that they needed time to gather input from parents and staff members at our two elementary schools and North Tahoe School. Where is the district at in regard to this process? And how is the district going to move forward and make this change for the 2021-2022 school year, as was previously indicated by Dr. Leri and the school board?

We need to align with the rest of the district, and the huge majority of middle schools in our county and state. We have the space, and our principal supports it. I would appreciate an email response to these questions.

Thank you for your time.

Jessica Catt  
TLE PTO secretary and parent of a TLE second grader