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Serious complaint about implementation of Hybrid model at Gibbs

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To: "kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us" <kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us>

Cc: "Marchesini, Danilo" <Danilo.Marchesini@tufts.edu>

Good afternoon,

I hope this email reaches you in time for this evening school committee meeting.

I would like to share my disappointment at how the hybrid model at the Gibbs school ended up being implemented. When parents, more than 5 weeks ago, were asked to decide between remote by choice or hybrid, we were given a model of the implementation of the hybrid model. We were told back then that the students would remain in class, not rotating from classroom to classroom, and that it was the teachers who would be rotating from classroom to classroom. This made a lot of sense, as it was the option minimizing exposure and movement of people by a great amount. Last week, on Thursday, when the Gibbs principal and vice principal had a meeting with the parents of the two cohorts of the hybrid model, we were informed, for the very first time, that it was going to be the kids who were going to be rotating, and not the teachers.

I find unacceptable that this big change in format was communicated only a few days before the beginning of the school year. I would be surprised if this were decided so close to the beginning of the school year, and I find the lack of communicating this important change in the hybrid model in a timely manner very serious. I also find unacceptable that parents were asked to make a decision based on a provided model, model that it was not followed at the end.

I am not a priori against having the kids rotating instead of the teachers (although I do find the latter a smarter choice). What I am mostly complaining about is the lack of timely communication of a significant change in the implementation of the hybrid model, that the change was implemented without informing the parents, and that parents were not given the opportunity to re-evaluate their decision of hybrid vs remote by choice in light of such a fundamental change in the implementation of the hybrid model.

Personally, I am also puzzled by the rationale of going from having the teachers rotating to having the kids rotating. It makes absolutely no sense from a health perspective. In the former case, teachers are the only individuals moving around the school, rather than a couple of hundreds of kids moving at once. Moreover, now kids have to disinfect with wipes the desks and chairs every time they move from one classroom to the other. This doesn't sound like an efficient way of implementing the hybrid format if we want to minimize risk of contagion, so it would be useful to know what was the rationale and the reasonings behind such decision. During the zoom meeting with the Gibbs principal, we were not given this information even if we asked for, and she encouraged us to bring this issue to the School Committee.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Best regards,
Danilo Marchesini