

**LMTSD Board Meeting Comments and Questions  
February 16, 2021**

Name(s)	Comment/Question
<p>Serena Nguyen, Michelle Marti, Ruth Thomas, Sarah Jae Leiber, Pamela Lipschutz, Nicole Coletti</p>	<p>I am submitting the following comment as a member of the Pop the LM Bubble collective:</p> <p>Dear members of the school board,</p> <p>We appreciate the actions that you have taken thus far in writing up the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resolution and accepting community feedback. We do have one question, however - why is there so little time for members of the community to provide feedback on the final resolution?</p> <p>While we understand that community feedback makes the writing process longer, this resolution is not something that needs to be rushed. We ask that you give the community ample time to provide feedback, and put both the resolution and the feedback form on the school website, under "Announcements" (rather than just in an e-mail to parents), so that everyone can easily access both documents.</p> <p>We also would like to know what accountability measures are being implemented as a part of the action plan laid out at previous work sessions/meetings. The action plan is a start, but cannot be effective unless community members are made aware of what is going on, what progress is being made, and can hold the district accountable for the promises that have been made to them.</p> <p>Finally, at the last work session, we highlighted (through our comment) a situation brought to light by a Black mother during the 1/21 listening session. The school board gave absolutely no response to this situation at that meeting or in the public comment responses document. We ask that you address whether or not action has been taken to reach out to this mother and rectify this situation.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p><i>Response: Thank you for your comment. Feedback on the Resolution was asked for by Friday, 2/12 so that the Board would be able to consider it and prepare a final version for adoption at the 2/16 Public Meeting of the School Board of Directors. The next step is to formulate the District Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council who will then meet and put together goals, steps, and accountability measures that will constitute the 3-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion action plan. Monthly updates will be provided at the Work Session of the School Board of Directors.</i></p>
<p>Richard Ting</p>	<p>The Asian Pacific American Bar Association (APABA-PA) writes to express grave concern regarding incidents that involve texts expressing violence against Asian Pacific Americans being sent among a group of Lower Moreland</p>

Township high school students. Further, we find the response provided initially by the Lower Moreland Township School District (“School District”) to be inadequate and unacceptable.

We were informed that these texts were sent in March 2020 in a group text among Lower Moreland Township high school students, which stated:

“My dad just gave me a (expletive) facemask to take to states I actually hate asians”

“Facts like who eats a (expletive) bat”

“(expletive) stupid asians shouldn’t be in this country”

“Every Asian kid i see tomorrow in the halls gets a spear”

“They should be stoned then lychee [sic]”

“This is why minorities blow change my mind”

These texts were reported to a hotline, and while the incidents were referred to local law enforcement, the School District failed to inform parents, students, or the school community, nor did it take any other steps. Not until last month, when the issue was forwarded to another group, BlackPhillyStudents, did the issue come to light, and only then did the School District take further action.

We understand that the School District is now in the process of utilizing a consultant to review school curriculum and develop a plan, among other things. These are important steps and we urge the School District to continue moving forward on proactively addressing and dismantling the environment and systems that both permitted these texts to be sent, and that caused the failure by the School District to act immediately to combat the prejudice and hatred underlying the texts.

However, it is unclear whether the consultant has any particular specialty in working on and incorporating Asian Pacific American issues. Due to the specific anti-Asian nature of the texts, it is critical that Asian Pacific American issues be incorporated and considered in developing and implementing the path forward. Moreover, it is vital that the Asian Pacific American community be involved and engaged in this process.

Unfortunately, these texts reflect larger systemic and historic racism against Asian Pacific Americans and people of color that can only be addressed through proactive action with meaningful input from the community. The racist and xenophobic texts stem not only from a long history of discrimination against Asian Pacific Americans, but also reflect current anti-Asian sentiments across the United States, where the transition from hate speech to violent acts can be all too swift.

In December 2009, growing racial tensions culminated in almost thirty (30) Asian immigrant students from South Philadelphia High School being beaten up by fellow students, where several had to be hospitalized. In the investigations afterwards, it became clear that the school’s failure to act contributed to the escalation of violence

	<p>against Asian Pacific American students. APABA-PA became involved in denouncing the violence, advocating on behalf of the community, providing resources to Asian Pacific American students and their families, and building bridges between the students, community, school, and resources.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, Asian Pacific Americans have faced increased discrimination, harassment, and violence. Tragic examples include a 91-year-old Asian man who was attacked in Oakland, California and an 84-year-old Asian man who died after being assaulted in San Francisco, both in broad daylight. In this region, an Asian Pacific American pregnant mother and her 12-year-old daughter were attacked in downtown Philadelphia in August 2020, with the assailant calling the mother a “Chinese b*tch.”</p> <p>In recognition of the spike of bullying, harassment, and hate crimes against Asian Pacific Americans, on January 26, 2021, President Biden issued a Memorandum Condemning and Combating Racism, Xenophobia, and Intolerance Against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. The Memorandum condemns such acts, and makes clear that governmental bodies should take all appropriate steps to ensure that official actions do not exhibit or contribute to racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Pacific Americans.</p> <p>Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 require public schools to ensure that educational opportunities are provided on a non-discriminatory basis. School districts can and must both protect students’ First Amendment rights and prevent harassment, and ensure the right to freedom of expression and the right to be free from harassment are compatible.</p> <p>We urge the Lower Moreland Township School District to take all appropriate steps to foster an environment where all children can thrive and learn, including Asian Pacific American students.</p> <p>APABA-PA, an affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, represents the interests of the Asian Pacific American law students, lawyers, and judges and the Asian Pacific American community across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania by supporting the advancement of Asian Pacific American attorneys and promoting justice, equity, and legal access, especially for all Asian Pacific American communities."</p> <p><i>Response: Thank you for your comment. The district plans to have several Asian Pacific American students, parents, and community members on the District Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council so that their voices and experiences are heard and can inform the 3-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion action plan.</i></p>
Greg Kroll	<p>Is the board making longer term plans to ensure everything possible is planned for so that in person learning can begin again full time for Sept 2021? Writing off another school year after 1 1/2 years would be disappointing on so many levels.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>

Catherine Meehan	<p>When can ALL schools go back 5 days, in person?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Staci Gulotta	<p>What is the plan to open up for 5 days at Pine Road?? Other elementary schools are opening up 5 days/wk (Upper Dublin) adhering to 6 ft "when feasible" but not 100% of the day. What are Lower Moreland's "next steps" to opening up? Can we at least combine the blue and gold cohorts for 4 days/wk? "We have signed the attestation...." is not an acceptable answer!!</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Maura O'Connell	<p>Where are we in these discussions to open our schools more? I get the attestation, etc but other neighboring districts are moving forward successfully opening more days a week. Why are we not moving forward?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Erica Goldblatt Hyatt	<p>In light of the CDC working to revise guidelines around returning children to school and the Biden administration's focus on schools being "last place to close/first to open", do you plan on working with the County toward getting our kids on the ground in greater than a hybrid capacity?</p> <p>The blue cohort has missed out on a handful more of precious on-the-ground learning opportunities than the gold this year. How do you intend to provide more on the ground instruction for these kids before the end of the year?</p> <p>At the beginning of the year stakeholders were informed that curriculum would be provided to students under trauma-informed considerations, yet it is unclear to many parents how the year's enormous losses (both death-related and normative/developmental) children are experiencing are being addressed. Can you provide some examples of how this is happening within the school system?</p> <p>Is there any opportunity for the community to attend board meetings? The online form facilitates sometimes canned responses and the opportunity for an interchange between community stakeholders and board members would be appreciated. It has been nearly a year since we began turning to online modalities; the LMTSD community would appreciate the opportunity to interact in real time with our board.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p> <p><i>In the initial planning of the assignment of cohort days, care was taken to craft a schedule that would be equitable.</i></p>

	<p><i>Unfortunately inclement weather, coupled with scheduled school closures for holidays or in-service, have been impactful. Changes to the schedule are not anticipated due to the need for consistency in routines and schedules. These interruptions are not unique to the current environment and pose challenges even when in person on a daily basis.</i></p> <p><i>At the beginning of the year, teachers participated in professional development surrounding trauma informed teaching. The sessions were delivered by the Neurologic Division of Lakeside Global Institute and Ms. Cheri Lovre, Director of the Crisis Management Institute. The purpose of these trainings was to inform staff of the needs that our students may be presenting with due to the pandemic (whether in-person or virtual), to plan with sensitivity and to provide guidance for addressing student needs. A priority of the training was to assist teachers in establishing, building and supporting the classroom community while providing strategies for building relationships with students during a challenging time. Some strategies that staff may use to support student learning through this lens include, but are not limited to maintaining consistent classroom routines, allowing for extended due dates, providing opportunities for second chance learning, offering different ways to demonstrate mastery and facilitating recovery when students are struggling. Teachers continue to receive updated strategies and information about trauma informed education on a monthly basis.</i></p> <p><i>All three buildings have systems in place to check in with students and create opportunities for interaction that lend themselves to rapport building and personalized support. Many of these check ins are occurring on Wednesdays. Explicit instruction in relaxation techniques, zones of regulation, coping strategies, goal setting, motivation, reflection and resiliency is occurring. All students in the district experience Health and PE, so much of the explicit instruction is occurring through these classes. Social and Emotional wellness of students is a top priority and the health and physical education department has been working all year on incorporating the physical, social and mental health aspects of covid into their curriculum in age appropriate ways. Students have been encouraged to utilize physical activity to combat stressors and increase their mental capacity and overall well-being. Teachers have led students through activities including yoga, mindfulness and easily implemented movement and brain breaks. Students of all ages have participated in assessing their own well-being and have been encouraged and empowered to advocate for themselves. Student feedback has indicated that strategies they are learning help them to feel safe, less anxious and be more goal oriented.</i></p>
James Lee	<p>Members of the School Board,</p> <p>The open response period for the public to post feedback to the draft DEI Resolution lasted from Wednesday Feb 9th @ 4:39 pm (when the email was sent) “through Feb 12th.” For such an important document, this is insufficient time, and it appears that this will be the only opportunity for the public to have input on this draft document. Finalizing this resolution therefore appears largely one-sided.</p> <p>Please provide responses to the following questions regarding the public comment process, expanded from my written comment from 2/2/21 (which was not answered):</p>

	<p>What is the reasoning for such a limited window for submitting online written public comment? Many community members work and may not have access to any means for submission of comments during the hours of 12pm to 4pm on the day of a board meeting. This is overly restrictive. Additionally, written English may not be the best nor most comfortable medium for community members to faithfully express their concerns. A voicemail or video messaging mechanism can be established. If a written record is needed for the public record, a transcription can be generated.</p> <p>Please provide full transparency as to how written responses to public comment/questions are generated: Do all board members read all public comments? Who is responsible for writing the responses to individual comments/questions (there is no signature provided in the written responses)? Is there approval by the board of the responses to these questions before they are posted? Can individual board members provide their own response to individual questions if he/she so desires?</p> <p>Please provide a reasoning for when such comments are submitted: in essence, because they are submitted before the start of a meeting, public comments are in response to the board meeting discussion from two weeks prior. There is no contemporaneous discussion. Please try to more faithfully reproduce the public, real-time nature of board meetings in the pre-COVID era.</p> <p>Where are public comments and responses archived? It is not readily apparent on the SB website how to access past comments/responses.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p><i>Response: Thank you for your comments. Public comments are archived on the School Board page of the website along with the minutes and meeting videos.</i></p>
Gina Greenleaf	<p>What are the plans for 5 day in person instruction for start of school year 8/30/21?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Brian Hopkins	<p>Let's go, open the schools! It's been 11 months to get your house in order. Half of the board seems scared to death. I wager that all of conduct you daily business normally with a mask on (except the Dr who appears to be 100 years old). Teachers are the only profession that refuses to go back to work.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Igor Bogdanov	<p>What is being done to urgently re-open the schools for 5 days in person. Can parents see a list of daily or weekly tasks accomplished and planned to be accomplished?</p>

	<p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
<p>Jennifer Cannon</p>	<p>Good Afternoon,</p> <p>There is growing frustration in the community about the seemingly stagnant position our school district finds itself in regarding a move to more in-person learning days. Personally, I find it bewildering to see other districts in Montgomery County moving forward and planning in a transparent manner, while we remain in a model that is difficult for both students and teachers alike. And please don't take this to mean that I don't understand the explanations that have been provided as to why this is the case - I do, fully. But we may never reach the metrics that are being offered (not mandated) as guidelines for fully reopening, and it leaves many of us and our children feeling very hopeless.</p> <p>Furthermore, I'd like to implore you once again to allow for more community participation during Board Meetings. We do not feel like we are being heard. Stock responses to comments are not sufficient. In fact, the Sunshine Act, even in the time of Covid, states that, "" 'To the extent practicable,' local government agencies must provide for public participation directly through the teleconferencing or videoconferencing system used to hold the meeting, via email, and/or via postal mail (Ideally, agencies will accommodate all three methods and possibly others.)"" Lower Moreland is currently using only one of those methods of communication, and it is not enough.</p> <p>On this same note, I think it's time for the Board to begin meeting in person again. There is plenty of space in our buildings in the evening to accomplish this in the socially distant manner that you enforce. If a member of the Board can not attend for health reasons, that should, of course, be taken into account.</p> <p>Thank you, as always, for your time and consideration.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
<p>Jaclyn Kenny</p>	<p>I've been informed that discussion surrounding returning the kids to school is not even on the agenda. I'd like to know how that is not the #1 thought on the school board's mind. (I'm hoping I'm wrong in this) The arrangement currently is not working to the standards neighboring schools are setting. Our kids will be behind their ENTIRE education, because nothing is being done to move forward. Please explain.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
<p>Michael Hoch</p>	<p>I understand we don't have the capacity to allow for 5 day instruction for all schools, but we do have capacity for at least some of our kids (k-2). What specific metric(s) needs to be met for this to be considered?</p>

	<p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Kelly Fey	<p>Why is making a plan for 5 day in person not even on the agenda? Many surrounding schools are doing it successfully! Why haven't parents been asked who would return to in person and who would stay virtual? Please do better for our children!</p> <p>If you're going to send another computer generated response, don't bother! It's insulting !</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Irina Madorskiy	<p>When school teachers will be vaccinated and teach in person at schools? Our kids needs to go to school in person for 5 even 6 days ( because they missed a lot ) . What steps school board prepare to do?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Anna Yakubov	<p>I would like to know when Lower Moreland will start a five day a week option. Why it has not started since Council Rock and Central Bucks have already transitioned to more in person learning? Where is lower Moreland in that process? Parents need to know since we need to start planning for the next school year.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Polina Khrizman	<p>Hello. CDC recommendations are to have schools open and for students to attend school in person full time. There is plenty of available PPE and vaccines are available for public to register and receive</p> <p>There is no mention of kids going back to school full time. I would like to ask the school district as to their plans to get our kids back to school 5 days a week</p> <p>Many schools in surrounding districts are doing so w similar resources and space</p> <p>Private schools have done so since August 2020. Multiple non essential businesses are open and functional (ie casinos for example)</p> <p>What needs to happen to get our kids back to school 5 days per week</p> <p>Thank you</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>

	<i>agenda.</i>
Lana Maximova	<p>What is being done to open school more days? Why is this not on the agenda?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Gina Mamikonyan	<p>It is unclear to me why reopening the schools is not on the agenda. We are wasting Wednesdays. Perhaps the cohorts should alternate in-person instruction on Wednesdays? What can we do to re-open the schools like neighboring districts? Is there a plan for next school years? This is the topic that needs to be addressed at this every meeting until there is a solution.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Marina Misyuk	<p>Please open schools 5 days</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Beth Birenbaum	<p>Hello. Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment tonight. I would like to know why school cannot be open 4 or 5 days weekly for children in the younger grades. I know the answer that has been repeated in all of the previous emails, but this does not add up when other schools, other public schools within Montgomery county, are open 4 or 5 days a week for the younger children. Our children are losing out and are losing or not retaining skills that are essential for their continuing education. It has been shown that schools are not super-spreaders and the children are safer and less likely to contract covid while in school. Why is our district lagging so far behind other districts?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Sabrina Usonis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are we doing about getting the kids back to school in person full time? Why isn't this an agenda item? This should be the priority for our children. What needs to happen to get the kids back?</li> <li>2. Why can't we start to use Wednesday's for rotating blue/gold in person education?</li> <li>3. What is being done to ensure we are back to school full time in person in September 2021?</li> <li>4. What more can we do to improve education standards - using online sites for math and reading isn't good enough on Wednesday's. We can do better bc our children deserve better.</li> </ol> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Bob DiJoseph	<p>Why are schools not open 5 days a week?</p>

	<p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Justin O'Brien	<p>Why is it that every school district around us in open for 4-5 days in person and the ones who are not open for 4-5 days in person have set a date but we haven't even discussed this ?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Lev Yakubov	<p>Why hasn't the school district transitioned to 5 days a week in person? What is the plan to accomplish this?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Jovita Lapeikiene	<p>As a parent, I would like to know about the district's plans, timeline to open for five days. What is being done to achieve this?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Alexander Krasnitsky	<p>Why is the school district still not open for 4 or 5 days a week of in-school/in-person attendance/learning? Many, many, in fact the majority, of neighboring schools/districts are open 4-5 days/week.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Gary Sipman	<p>Per CDC guidelines, schools can reopen. Our schools have proven record of managing safety. With that in mind, when will you offer a 5 days in-person school week?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>
Malcolm Gould	<p>A question for the Board from a parent of three (middle school and high school students). What steps are being taken by the Board to independently review, evaluate and hold accountable the Administration's (especially the Superintendent's) performance of their job responsibilities, in particular the failure, for almost a full year, of PROACTIVE planning and efforts to get back to in-person teaching instead of REACTIVE responses only after other families (or "stakeholders" as you would probably call them) raise the fact multiple other surrounding, supposedly less well-funded, school districts, in less modern buildings, are already back to full in-person or will be back in-person in short order?</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>

	<i>agenda.</i>
Roxanna Senyshyn	<p>Opening our LM schools for in-person learning for either 4 or 5 days is important given the many known and established benefits of in-person learning. Why is this item not on the agenda at today's meeting? I understand that it is important to adopt and diligently implement actions to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 inside the school and out in the community. There has been more than enough time now to plan and implement these actions in our LM schools. We need to keep children at the center of our priorities and decisions. It is time to act and plan the shift to 4 or 5 day in-person learning.</p> <p><i>Response: The Board will discuss updated CDC guidelines, data, and planning under newly added item 14 of the agenda.</i></p>