

Dear Timpview and surrounding community,

My name is Connor , a senior at our school. Last night we were addressed by our governor, who stated the incredible severity of the spreading of COVID 19 in our community, the overwhelming of our hospitals, and limiting social gatherings to strictly households. We are routinely breaking record numbers of cases and deaths in our state, Utah county being a hot spot.

Despite these deeply troubling facts, our school board has voted to start phase 2 of reopening schools beginning November 9th. This doubles the number of kids in our school at a time, doubles the time spent in school, and reduces the amount of space between kids in class. The space in our hallways is already insufficient to accommodate safe distancing. The average distance between desks in Timpview as it is currently is about 3 feet during phase 1; already half of what the CDC and state government deem a safe distance to avoid transmission of the virus. The move to phase 2 shrinks both these distances, our time being potentially exposed to the virus doubles, and the risk of contracting and bringing COVID 19 home to our loved ones increases exponentially.

The move to phase 2 also increases risk of transmission off of school grounds. When we see some of our friends we have not interacted with since the previous school year, we frequently make plans outside of school. Even during this pandemic, I routinely see my peers exit the building, remove their masks, and drive away in one another's cars. The move to phase 2 will only make these instances more common.

During phase 2, Our school will be the ideal petri dish for rampant spread of the virus.

Yet our school board thinks phase 2 is a good option while we are being warned of a gridlocked hospital system, uncontrollable spread of the virus in the community, and the incredible danger of close proximity to others. This is wrong. Now is not the time.

Social distancing and hybrid learning are hard. I so badly wish that we were able to return to normal, we could hang out with our friends again, and to return to in-person class full time. However that is not an option right now. I, like many of my peers, live with at-risk family members. I cannot bring the disease home; as hard as it is to make the sacrifices to stay safe. This is the case for so many of the students at Timpview. Hybrid learning is difficult for many, but we've been able to do it for this long, and we need to stay diligent in our hybrid studies.

We made a calculated decision in the beginning of the year that the hybrid platform was worth the mitigated risk of half-time in-person instruction. Why now, once the virus is

worse than it has ever been, does that balance change? Why do we not at the very least wait until the end of the semester, where those who decide phase two is not worth the risk can transition to full online instruction?

Dr. Montero recently sent an email outlining our move to phase 2, stating that the main metric our board is using to evaluate a phase transition is our positive case count, the average being 3.25. Dr. Montero immediately goes on to say *"During this recent surge of cases in the state of Utah, we have seen our cases reach a daily high of 13. As we proceed into Phase 2, our transition between phases will depend on the number of positive cases (15 will trigger an automatic evaluation of phase transition)"*

If this is the case, then why are we moving to a phase with innately increased risk of transmission when we are already almost reaching the threshold at which we consider moving to a phase with *less* risk during phase 1?

We were also just told that it is likely we will be transitioning between phases multiple times. Why are we moving to phase 2 if we are fully aware that we will have to transition back to phase 1? Is the extra instruction time worth the risk of sending our students home with a virus that has already claimed the lives of 235,000 americans?

By exponentially increasing the risk of infection in our school at this moment, we will also increase the risk of infection for every single member of our community. Our highschool may be a hub from which COVID 19 will spread to our homes, churches, and businesses; and the ultimate cost will be Utahns' lives.

This is about the safety of our community, students, and loved ones.

Now is not the time to move to phase 2.