

From: [Emily Heldman](#)
To: [SPCSA Public Comment](#)
Subject: Board Meeting 8/14/20
Date: Thursday, August 13, 2020 8:42:08 PM

Good evening,

I am writing you this evening as the Dragons' Den Director for Doral Academy of Northern Nevada, as well as a parent of two students who attend the school. I was called into a meeting today to discuss the new guidance matrix that is being proposed and just could not sit quietly by. During the very beginning of this pandemic our school was one of the very first to close our doors out of an abundance of caution. Our school administrators and teachers alike worked tirelessly to come up with an outstanding plan for distance learning. A plan so impressive I had friends and colleagues from neighboring districts ask questions about. in order to bring back to use at their own school. I was so proud to be a part of such a team! Yes our students suffered from not being in the classroom, but not from lack of structured well thought out instruction. They suffered from the lack of social and emotional support they receive from being in the school each day. As the months went on and the curve flattened the city slowly moved into Phase 1, allowing our summer camp program to open back up. We were all nervous to return, unsure what to expect, but we did so having worked hard and with loads of knowledge having done our research. This gave the Admin team and myself a strong base in which to build a solid plan that would ensure our students and staff would stay as safe as possible. I can't begin to tell you the joy and excitement that washed over every one as the first kids came skipping into camp that day. They were so excited to be at school again, amongst their peers and with some degree of normalcy. Although it was impossible to see behind our masks, everyone was grinning ear to ear.

Students quickly got used to the constant hand washing and physical distancing enforced by their counselors. Face covering, small groups, carefully scheduled use of common areas as well as routine sanitizing have all become the normal way of life at camp. I am writing this letter to let you know IT CAN BE DONE!!! With the tools put in place, students and staff can stay healthy! The daily praise and appreciation I get from parents who are so grateful to have a place for their children to be kids again. To have a place they can feel protected and happy is worth so much. Now if there came a time when it was truly unsafe to open our doors, as a mother of two beautiful daughters I would be the first to acknowledge that! No one wants to endanger the lives of anyone in our community, but to unfairly set standards upon the charter school community, when our plans and protocols are leagues above those of the local school district is just plain wrong! Students need their teachers, they need the family like "whole child" nurturing environment our school provides while also giving them the safest possible opportunities to learn.

In closing I hope you take all of our comments and really hear them. We are all concerned about public safety, we are all cautious as we go about our daily life. We are all looking out for the greater good, and so WE as a state charter school MUST be allowed to follow the same rules and guidelines as the other schools in our area!!

Thank you very much for your time,

Emily Heldman

Dragon Den Director

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