Dear Renton School District Board,

I am writing to you today as a concerned parent and community member of Renton School District. After receiving the news that the Renton School Board voted to return to a modified In-Person learning schedule for students, without the vote of teachers, I was appalled.

I understand that there is no guidebook on how to parent, teach, and support our community during a pandemic, but I passionately believe now is not the time to make bets and gamble with the lives of our in-school staff, students, and community. I sympathize with those who are in desperate need to have an income back, and for those whose children truly need the benefit of in-school learning. However, are those individual needs that much greater than the entire Renton School District community to make a decision for everyone? We are already five months into school, students are adapting, and bonds are being made between students and teachers. Now is not the time to try to attempt in-school learning, especially when their teacher assignment is not a guarantee, and an outbreak could once again disrupt the learning schedule.

The pandemic is nowhere near contained, new strains are making the way across the country, and yet you voted to return without the input of the teachers or in-school staff. It seems, quite frankly, asinine to make this choice and present it to the parents without even knowing yet which teachers can return. And, to hear news that unless the staff member has an underlying condition to exempt them from returning, their options were to take a leave of absence or quit. How is this, in anyway, beneficial to our students? By forcing the hands of teachers and staff, and putting students in the middle, you are creating a rift between parents and teachers.

I am strongly asking you to reconsider plans to open the school, and at the bare minimum, do the following:

* Listen first to the teachers and in-school staff to determine what the actual return of teachers will be. No plan can be made without the consent of teachers and in-staff employees.
* Demand that Washington State Department of Health prioritizes vaccines to in-school staff employees.

Please take a hard look and truly reconsider. Our teachers and staff are invaluable members of our community. Vaccine rollout will continue to take months to administer to everyone, and by that time, the school year will nearly be over. Do not gamble with the lives of our community to try to reopen schools for everyone. Prioritize in-school sessions for those who truly need it (those with IEPS) and continue to support in-home learners, rather than uproot all the progress they have already made.

Regards,