



## Should Parents Send Their Children Back to School or Keep Them at Home?

By Educator Barnes – July 8, 2020

Right now, in Indiana, parents, including my husband and I, are making a difficult decision. We have to decide whether we will keep our children at home to participate in remote learning or send them back to school during the coronavirus pandemic. My husband and I do not like any option, and we know we are not alone.

My twin sons will enter the fourth grade in Washington Township during the 2020-21 school year. Earlier this week, the district sent out guidance. Parents have to make a choice by Friday or the default will be in-person education. If we send them back for in-person instruction, they will have to wear a face mask and practice social distancing. On top of this, their elementary school is currently under construction. We wonder if that will have an impact on the ability to socially distance.

If we choose remote learning, we will have to commit for at least one quarter before switching to in-person if we don't like it. The virtual guidance states, "With the exception of kindergarten, students will receive a letter grade and standards-based grade for reading and math. A marking of satisfactory/unsatisfactory will be used for other content areas." Students could be assigned to multiple teachers during the course of remote learning and their current principal based on their boundary school may not be their principal.

In our respective fields, my husband and I are both administrators, so keeping our boys at home doesn't work for us. However, we have real concerns about sending them out into the world during a pandemic. We are Black, and Black people have a disproportionate rate of contracting COVID-19. Indy Star reported, "The data show that, while Black Hoosiers make up only 9.8% of the state's population, they've contracted at least 12.5% of COVID-19 cases. Hispanic/Latino Hoosiers make up 7.1% of the state's population and 11.5% of the cases." Although we practice social distancing when seeing grandparents, there is still a fear that because our sons are returning back to school they could somehow end up responsible for exposing loved ones. We have tried not to go doom and gloom but those statistics aren't just numbers to us. They are people we know or people our family members know, and unfortunately, some of those people died.

Keeping them at home would be okay if I didn't work since I am an educator. Washington Township will only assign letter grades for reading and math for the remote learning option, which makes us wonder about the quality of the education they would receive from the other content areas if this was an option for us.

Either way, there are issues. Parents have to figure out what is the best choice of two choices that have issues. In reality, we can all end up back at home. My advice to parents is to make a pros and cons list of what will work for your family. Then, pick an option. After picking that option, determine how, if possible, you will address the cons. For example, if you can keep your children at home, a con might be not having a well-rounded education. To address that con, you could find other educational opportunities to provide for your children a better

education. In addition to Washington Township’s plan, I have read my school’s plan, and another charter network’s plan, in addition, to listening to rants from teachers from across the United States about parts of their plans they do not like.

I’m really trying to be optimistic, but I’m also a realist.



A screenshot of a Twitter post from user S.S. Barnes (@educatorbarnes). The post features a GIF of a woman with blonde hair and red makeup singing into a vintage microphone. The text "MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR" is overlaid on the bottom of the GIF. The tweet is dated 8:35 AM on June 27, 2020, and has one heart. A lightning bolt icon and a link to "See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter" are visible at the bottom.

**S.S. Barnes**  
@educatorbarnes

A summary of COVID-19 school building reopening guidelines

**MAY THE ODDS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR**

8:35 AM · Jun 27, 2020

1 [See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter](#)

I miss my students, and I know my sons miss their friends and the normalcy of the school routine. I will keep this in mind as I move forward. This is not an easy decision, parents. If your decision does not work for you and your children, switch your option as outlined in the guidance from your children’s district or school.

