



STATE SENATE CANDIDATE STEVE CHOI
“OPENING SCHOOLS SAFELY”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRUMBULL 09/07/2020 – Steve Choi, the Republican candidate for State Senate in District 22, which includes the municipalities of Trumbull, Bridgeport, and Monroe, issued the following statement regarding the opening of the Trumbull Public Schools this week:

What was the significance of March 12, 2020 for Trumbull public school students? This was the last day both teachers and students were together in school buildings. It is just about six months to the day since our children have received traditional educational instruction from a professional educator.

In an article titled, “Trumbull may not have enough teachers to reopen school”, Acting Superintendent Iassogna stated, “School officials are in daily contact with local colleges seeking eligible candidates to hire as long-term replacements.” The Trumbull Public Schools website confirms the quote with the following statement: “We are now reaching out to colleges for potential candidates, particularly in light of the Governor easing certification requirements for college seniors. This change could not have been planned for as only the Governor could institute that order and did so during the summer.”

These statements raise the question, did the administration reach out to teachers and paraprofessionals with a deadline for them to decide whether to opt out while the plan to re-open schools was being developed? Alternatives could have been explored months in advance. Other public schools in neighboring districts, and most of Trumbull’s private Catholic elementary and high schools began planning for the start of the school year much earlier than Trumbull. Most of them have devised prudent plans allowing the return to a full-time in school class. This was a welcome relief to parents in two income households who rely on schools to stay open full-time. From the day Connecticut schools were shuttered, Trumbull Public Schools failed to act promptly and is now scrambling for a plan.

The hiring of unqualified, uncertified college seniors to teach in Trumbull classrooms will naturally have a detrimental effect on our school system. Just because the Commissioner of Education stated that Trumbull is permitted to employ college students does not mean Trumbull should do so. Our acting superintendent and the school administration have shown a serious lack of judgment with the present course of action. If they believe that substitutes and college seniors, just a few years removed from THS themselves, should be certified to educate our young students as long-term replacements.

It is troubling, that the current composition of the school reopening committee does not contain a single elected member of the Board of Education. The acting superintendent handpicked each community member and appointed them to serve on the committee. We have yet to be informed of the rationale behind the committee choices or receive an official report. The acting superintendent has claimed a report would not be necessary. This process is completely contrary to the basic concept of open and transparent representative government. Trumbull parents should be incensed that their elected BOE officials and trusted teachers were excluded from this discussion.

In mid-June, an elected member of the Trumbull Board of Education resigned her seat citing the futility in serving on, “a fragmented board with an obstructionist chair.” She stated that “the lack of leadership and robotic nature of anything pretending to be an action item will only continue,” with the current Board of Education. The resignation created a vacant seat, prompting the Town Council to set a date for a special BOE election on November 3rd. More administrative incompetence has now led to a new council resolution with an undetermined date for the BOE election. Trumbull taxpayers will now have to fund another election.

On Tuesday, September 8th, our daughter Samantha will be a senior and our son Mateo will be a freshman at Trumbull High and attending school two days a week on a hybrid model. To all the students, in both public and private schools, welcome back and good luck. Please accept my sympathies for the poor planning on the part of the Town of Trumbull.

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