

11/08/21

Dear School Board and Superintendent,

I see on the agenda and board docs that Angie Skillings has requested that the masking policy be changed tonight to have masks optional for all grades. She states, “the science does not establish that prolonged use of masks is safe or effective,” yet this is false. I see that David Styer has asked for the mask mandate to end on December 13. I would like to see the mask mandate end December 20<sup>th</sup> at the earliest.

I urge you to vote no to these and stay with the current mask policy of mandated masks for K-6 until this age group can be fully vaccinated. I think it should be December 20<sup>th</sup> due to the fact that although the FDA approved last week for this age group to be vaccinated, many people, including my child, have not yet been able to get our kids vaccinated due to there being no available appointments last week and this week. At the earliest, my child, and many other children will not be fully vaccinated until the week of December 20<sup>th</sup>. This is based on children getting their first vaccination next week, their second vaccination 3 weeks later, and then 2 weeks after that they are fully vaccinated.

I want to again state my support for the district’s gender support plan. In the past, one public member in particular has spoken about how because her religion does not support people who are LGBTQ+, that she does not, and neither should the community or the school. First, because of what most people understand as the separation of church in state, which is the Establishment Clause and Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a policy (or law) must not be adopted for a religious purpose and must not have an effect to advance religion. Changing – or getting rid of - the current gender support plan would do this.

Second, LGBTQ+ youth—and all people—deserve to be supported and affirmed in their identity and to have meaningful access to resources and supports that will allow them to thrive. LGBTQ+ youth, too often experience trauma due to bias, and discrimination, including within their family, in their communities, and from public systems (like schools) designed to serve their needs. Along with trauma, LGBTQ+ youth are more likely to have depression and to attempt and complete suicide. We need to do more – not less – to support and affirm them.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Quinn-Lee, PhD, MSW, LICSW