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Vote on Masking August 9th

1 message

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Dear Members of Menomonie School Board

I'm writing in support of universal masking for students at the start of the school year, at least until vaccines are available for children under 12. I am particularly concerned about elementary aged students -- as the mother of two such kids, I am completely aware that they aren't old enough to make their own decisions on masking, and need guidance from their teachers and the school environment.

The current high levels of cases in Dunn County, and the high transmission rates of the delta variant terrify me as a parent. When I read about children on ventilators and in ICU's all over the country, I look at my own children and become paralyzed with worry. And when I see the statistics in Wisconsin and Dunn County, I am so fearful that we're headed down that path again. We have come so far -- I was so proud of our schools last year when we were able to make adjustments, cases were low, and students were able to be in school, without interruptions to their learning. We're almost there now! We know that masking, distancing, ventilation and filtration are all highly effective while we wait for vaccines for our kids.

After SDMA removed the mask requirements for summer school, I still sent my kids to school with masks. They came home with them on, but at 8 and 5 years old, I don't know if they were reminded to replace them when they slipped down. And I don't know how many other students were wearing them, or if my children were tempted to ditch theirs if their friends didn't have them. My 5 year old contracted Covid in summer school, after close contact with another student who had it. This could have been avoided! Apart from the fear I have felt for his health and safety, it also meant taking our 8 year old out of day camp, cancelling our babysitters for 4 weeks, and scrambling to suddenly find things for them both to do all day. As farmers and small business owners, it also cost us directly, as we lost markets and sales while we quarantined, and we're losing more as we continue through summer with no safe option for childcare.

Many people say that if we're worried about our kids, we can keep them at home and choose virtual school for our kids. That's true, though it comes at a cost, but it doesn't solve the problem. I'm not just worried about MY kids, I'm worried about ALL of the kids! And the families in our communities, where those kids may go home to spend time with elderly grandparents, or immunocompromised family members. Covid won't go away on its own, and it won't go away until we stop thinking only of ourselves. We all need to act as part of a community, and care about the health and well-being of our neighbors.

Please vote for universal masks for this fall!

Thank you,

Rachel Henderson