

Video Public Comment

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Adam Gartenberg	Covid safety precautions (masks, eating outside)	I would like to strongly urge the Board to follow CDC guidance and the latest science on the highly transmissible nature of the Delta variant and require masks for all students and teachers for all grades. My high-schooler has an immune-compromised brother and mother and being around unmasked classmates puts not only him but his entire family at risk. I would also strongly encourage the Board to assist schools in making additional options for eating outside available, as eating close together without masks is a very high-risk activity. We want our kids, staff and their families to be safe, and this is the most assured way of giving them an uninterrupted and safe school year. Thank you.
Alexandra Flynn	KEEP Masks Mandatory	As a mother of three children who opted for the WCPSS Virtual Academy last year, I am asking you to put our children's health and safety above political agendas and keep the mask mandate in place. We feel that the benefits of in-person school with mandatory masks outweigh the inherent risks. I'm so thankful our kids can be back in the classroom this year, but we need to do all we can, as a community, to keep them there. I do not want our children to spend more time in quarantine/out sick than in the classroom. We know the data. We're not making our best guesses like last year. Please follow the science and require masks. Many thanks for your dedication to WCPSS.
Alexia	Masks	Strongly believe masks should be mandatory to keep our kids safe with the variant. Thanks.

<p>Alice Lin</p>	<p>Covid and 2021-22 School Year</p>	<p>My husband and I are both physicians in Wake County with two elementary-aged sons in WCPSS who are not yet eligible for a Covid vaccination. We have been watching trends in Wake County and nationwide closely for the past year in anticipation of sending them back to school this fall. We were so thankful to see that strict masking and distancing guidelines prevented significant spread amongst our teachers and students last year. Unfortunately, the rise of the delta variant (and likely more variants behind it) have made most parents hold their breaths again because we can't bear the thought of our children contracting Covid when vaccine protection, especially against hospitalization and severe symptoms, is so close. As physicians and parents, we know that the our children and the vast majority of WCPSS students need full, in-person instruction but it needs to be done safely. We urge you to continue to follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and the NCDHHS for universal masking as well as maintenance of the distancing guidelines from the past year, especially at lunch and recess. We hope and expect that the schools will remain open this coming year and that WCPSS has plans to keep children connected to classes and their learning should they need to quarantine. Thank you for supporting the safety of all of our children and our teachers.</p>
<p>Ally Hogans</p>	<p>Bonuses for Summer School Teachers</p>	<p>Dear WCPSS</p> <p>Please share with the public how many teachers will be receiving literacy bonuses. For those of you that do not know, WCPSS put an incentive in place, bring a student up to grade level reading and a teacher will receive a bonus per student.</p> <p>Who is measuring the program and that it is done with integrity and fidelity? How much money did teachers receive?</p> <p>Were the students being served?</p> <p>Its about the kids and Integrity is important.</p> <p>Thank you, Ally Hogans</p>

Amanda L Bien	Keep masks, reopen VA	<p>In light of current rising Covid-19 cases in Wake County, and the fact that children under the age of 12 are still not allowed to be vaccinated, I am asking that WCPSS continue to require masks for anyone in a WCPSS building - students, staff, and any other adults or children visiting, regardless of vaccination status. With the latest science showing that even those who are vaccinated are capable of transmitting the virus to others, the only way to have in-person school and keep those who cannot be vaccinated safe, and to slow the spread from school transmission is to continue to wear masks. Additionally, it would be ideal for schools to work on as many opportunities for eating to happen outdoors, since masks cannot be worn while eating.</p> <p>I am disturbed tonight of reports from the local anti-mask groups bragging about how they buy and wear fake masks. I do not know what can be done to enforce actual masks, but I would hope that Wake County can also come up with a standard of masks that can and cannot be worn in a school.</p> <p>In accordance with what the board stated last Spring, now that numbers are on the rise, I would also ask that the board consider reopening Virtual Academy enrollment at this point. I understand that there are huge challenges in staffing VA, but I have heard from many families who would appreciate the choice now that the Covid-19 numbers are back up in this county.</p>
Amanda Lynch	Continuation of the Mask Requirement in Classrooms	<p>Please continue to require the use of masks inside all classrooms in WCPSS. There is strong evidence to support that the widespread use of masks reduce the spread of air-borne illness including COVID-19. I have three children, ages 15, 12, and almost 10. My older two have been vaccinated but my youngest is still not able to be vaccinated, nor will any of the students who attend his elementary school be. He will be in a fourth grade classroom which will almost certainly have too many students to be able to provide social distancing so masks are really the only mitigation effort that he can benefit from. Studies have shown that masks help the wearer a minimal amount and the real protection comes from others wearing a mask to reduce the amount of virus any infected individuals can spread. Since vaccinated individuals can spread the Delta variant of virus at levels equal to unvaccinated individuals, I am hopeful that my older kids will also be in buildings with others who are masked so that they have a better chance to avoid bringing home the virus to their brother. Thank you for you careful consideration of this matter.</p>

Amy Hambright	Please keep universal masking	<p>Hello, I am a parent of two children in the WCPSS school system and I am writing to ask you to to keep masks mandated for everyone until all children in schools can be vaccinated. I am not feeling confident about choosing in person school for my children with the rise of the Delta variant, which we've seen can be spread much more easily, including by vaccinated people. We are already seeing clusters pop up in private and year round schools. With most children coming back into the school buildings this year, much of the mitigation measures that were used last year will be impossible. Keeping masks required is one measure that can still be implemented. Please follow the recommendations in the NC DHHS toolkit and keep universal masking in place.</p> <p>Thank you, Amy Hambright WCPSS parent</p>
Amy Marshall	Make Masks Optional Petition -4400 signatures	<p>Here is a link to our WCPSS Make Masks Optional Petition containing 4400 parent signatures. Your lawyers at Tharrington Smith advised the Lee County Board of Education that making masks optional protects them from legal liability. Should you not take Tharrington's advice for Wake, we will file suit against you. https://carolinateachers.nationbuilder.com/wcpss_make_masks_optional</p> <p>Also, any attempt to mandate non-FDA approved vaccines, or perform schoolsite medical testing on children, will be met with swift legal action.</p>
Amy Smith	COVID and School Year 21-22	<p>If students are to return to the classroom, it is imperative that masks be mandatory. Over the past 3 weeks, the number of COVID cases in Wake County alone has grown exponentially. To even consider allowing students (regardless of vaccination status) to attend in-person class without masks is reckless.</p> <p>Because VA is not a quarterly-option, parents are being forced to make decisions for their families that will potentially put many members of our community at risk. While it is may not be possible to offer quarterly VA options, it is entirely possible to require masks (actual opaque masks, not mesh masks) and ENFORCE the requirement.</p> <p>My son played soccer 4 days a week last fall, ALL WHILE WEARING A MASK. Wearing a mask does not make it impossible for someone to breath. It does, however, reduce the transmission rate of COVID (along with other germs).</p> <p>Please act on behalf of all students and teachers and require masks in all schools for the duration of the school year.</p>

Analemma McKee-Schwenke	Masks in Schools	<p>I have a child who is at high risk for COVID complications and too young for the vaccine. In the spring when we had to decide whether our children would attend school in person or virtual school, it was with the expectation that the vaccines mostly prevented transmission and that masks would be required of all students. It was a difficult decision as to whether our older, vaccinated child should attend in person, but the risk of him bringing it home seemed low.</p> <p>Now that we know that the Delta variant can be transmitted more easily by vaccinated people, the question of masks in schools becomes a life or death decision for children like my younger son. These children's lives are not disposable, and they are not acceptable collateral damage as people play political games. Please keep the mask requirements in place until all ages have ample opportunity to be fully vaccinated.</p>
Anastasia Grigoryeva	Mask mandates in schools	<p>Decision on masking children belongs to their parents, not to the state. Masks must be made OPTIONAL for our children. Children with no pre-existing conditions are at ZERO risk of death from Covid. Adults who wish to be protected can get vaccinated, vaccination is widely available and provides close to 100% protection against death from Covid. You must act in our children's best interests, this is what you were elected to do.</p>
Andrea Feiss	Support for the current Covid-19 Policy and Mask Mandate	<p>As a parent of two elementary students ineligible for the vaccine, I support continuing the current Covid-19 protocols to keep our kids safe and protected at school. Please follow the recommendations of the experts at the CDC and AAP when making decisions regarding our children's health and safety - especially when it comes to a mask mandate. Masks are a proven and effective strategy in preventing spread and infection. As you hear arguments about individual choice, I ask you to consider this... my choice as a parent is for my children to be protected and safe at school which the experts in public health and children's medicine tell us requires a mask mandate. To ensure my children keep their masks on at school, it must be a rule. Otherwise, peer pressure or child spontaneity will inevitably lead to mask removal. We cannot ask teachers to police which children are supposed to wear masks per parent preference and which are not. Teachers should not be burdened with enforcing this level of mask choice oversight, especially as they face enough challenges with the return to classroom learning this fall. I hope your decision supports effective public health measures as well as the teachers and what they need to successfully and safely teach our children.</p>

Angela Burkall	Masks mandates for middle and high schools	<p>This needs to be a choice. As long as a kid is healthy and vaccinated, the science proves that he or she will be fine. If a kid or parent does not feel comfortable with this, there is VA or mask wearing. Also, why are we back to masks if even Dr. Fauci's email stating that they do no good leaked out??? There is also the option to be tested regularly. We have to do that when traveling overseas. What about all the anxiety and panic caused by scaring everyone by mandating masks? Mental health is as important. We live in America, where we have free will and choice. Let's stop with the political control and fear, let's do what is right and a compromise.</p>
Angela Burks	Mandatory Masking	<p>Please consider the safety of our children and the greater community as the Delta variant rages. It is too early to let our guard down. Many will be hesitant to send their kids back to school without a solid prevention plan in place that includes masks.</p>
Angela Humphries	Educational Freedom	<p>It is past time for Wake County families to see all K-12 educational options. No family should attend Wake County Public Schools if they do not wish to. If the school is unsafe, find another option.. If the school is trying to force you against your own beliefs, then it is time to find another option. If you feel trapped, I offer you a key to your shackles. Links to all school options are listed at NCschoolchoice.com There are several free tools to help you search your area for religious or nonreligious schools. Many schools throughout NC did not require masks or execute closures in 2020.</p> <p>Additionally, there are K-12 Grants, or scholarships available for families who are income eligible. Many Wake families feel forced into wearing face coverings, however, they can reject this treatment and seek educational options elsewhere. Shopping for a new school is easy and parents are more than capable. Your children deserve the best you can give them!</p> <p>Wake schools have zero incentive to listen to families. The system prioritizes itself before students. Voting with your feet and rejecting any school which fails to meet your children's needs is what is needed when families are ignored ... as they are in Wake Schools.</p> <p>I am appalled families are told to enter a lottery to petition their government and redress grievances. The irony is, many on this board claim they cannot support schools of choice because of the use of a lottery. I hope the board sees their own</p>

		<p>hypocrisy and ceases limiting public interaction and involvement at school board meetings.</p> <p>Let the public in and end this nonsense. No child should be trapped in a failing school.</p>
Anita Fiore	Assistant Principal Requesting Items via Email	<p>Dear WCPSS Board of Education,</p> <p>I thought the point of Joining a PTA was too work with other parents and community partners to support teachers with assistance; this assistance can be monetary or volunteerism.</p> <p>PTSA would be the same idea, just including students as members, and volunteers.</p> <p>Why would a disciplinarian, an Assistant Principal be using the sign up genius feature to request items and volunteer hours from families?</p> <p>This seems to be overstepping. She is using email addresses and sending it out herself. She is requesting items be shipped to the school. Will this be reported as gifts to the system?</p> <p>We know that not everyone can give, and why is it not anonymous?</p> <p>Why is Ms. Mwanda not putting in a request to PTA and have them handle it.</p> <p>What is the policy that permits this?</p> <p>Those that can give money, or volunteer will be favored at that school. This should not be allowed. https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0f4aaaaf28a13-2122 Please review and look into this, thank you Anita.</p>

Ann Spencer	Athens Drive Community Library & Masks in Schools	<p>Members of the School Board, My family and I live in the Neighborhood next to Athens Drive High School and I am writing to express my dismay at the Suspension of ALL services at the Athens Drive Community Library. We have attempted to use the Athens Library during the pandemic but have been directed to Cameron Village at every attempt. Cameron Village is not easy for us to use and does not serve our needs - so we have quit trying. I understand that this is a unique partnership between the school system and the county that presents challenges - but there HAS to be another way to solve this. Is there a way to open at night or on weekends? I ask that you work with the community and the County Commissioners to find a way to keep Athens Drive Community Library Open.</p> <p>Also, since I have read that a number of Anti Masking parents are speaking today I feel compelled to add that they are the reason I and my children are NOT there in person to speak. So many students are too young to be vaccinated or have family members (like my parents) for whom the vaccine may not be as effective. Teachers and their family members need to be protected! I strongly encourage you to create a strong science based mask wearing policy for ALL students but especially for those in elementary school.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration, Ann Spencer</p>
Anne Young	Mask wearing in schools	<p>As a parent going through chemo, I implore Wake county to keep mandatory mask wearing for kids. My child suffered a lot of mental anguish during virtual academy last year, and her mental health has improved immensely since she returned to in person learning. However, if not all children are masked, she will be forced out of school again, due to my immunocompromised state. Please continue to make Wake county schools accessible for ALL families, not just those who think they are invulnerable.</p>
April Trus	Masks in schools	<p>Yes, we need to keep masks in schools until all kids can be vaccinated.</p>
Ariana Nester	Continuing Mandated Masks in Schools	<p>It is imperative to require mask wearing in schools PK-12 until COVID is under control and children of all ages are eligible for vaccination. Until this happens we will not have herd immunity and requiring masking for vaccinated and unvaccinated alike is the #1 way to avoid sickness and spread of COVID in schools and allow the children to continue to attend in person schooling without risking themselves and the vulnerable populations they may live with or be</p>

		exposed to outside of school. It would be irresponsible to allow masking to be voluntary, as non-mask wearers are not only risking themselves for all of those around them in and out of school.
Ashley Monaco	Yes to mandatory masks	Please keep our children safe. A minor inconvenience isn't worth the life of a child.
Ashley Shadoin	Masks	<p>With the increased contagiousness and severity of the Delta variant of Covid, I'm again writing you today to add my support for masks to be <i>*required*</i> for both children and adults in schools this coming school year (2021-2022). As a parent, I try to do everything in my power to keep my children safe, recognizing that not everything is within my control. To support our efforts, we then rely on institutions to put policies in place to create safe environments for our children when they are not under our direct care. One such policy that I hope the WCPSS <i>*keeps*</i> this year is a mask mandate for all, regardless of vaccine status, in our school system this coming year. My children are not in WCPSS yet, but their preschool follows the lead of WCPSS for policy guidelines.</p> <p>With the rise of more contagious Covid variants such as Delta, and the potential delay for vaccine availability for children under age 12 to be mid-Winter, continuing to mandate masks is a simple and often effective method to limit the spread of Covid, while allowing our children to gain the much needed benefits of in-person instruction. We've seen time and time again that masks have helped prevent the spread of Covid in school environments when individuals in our children's classrooms have tested positive.</p> <p>While we've seen that Covid may be more mild in children, we also do not yet know the long term effects of this virus on their still developing bodies and brains. Education is imperative to set our children up for mental success, so we should protect their physical health in the process. Please keep a mask mandate in place until all ages are eligible for the vaccine. Thank you!</p>
Audra Killingsworth	Masks	I am a parent, healthcare worker, and someone who represents others daily. It is our job as parents to protect our children, our job as healthcare workers to protect our patients, and my job to protect those I represent. For a few months I didn't wear a mask because it wasn't recommended for vaccinated people, however the unvaccinated have made it necessary to require us to wear them indoors again or in crowds. I wear a mask because it protects my children, my patients, and those I represent. I will follow the guidelines because it is the right thing, the patriotic thing, and the good thing to do. I hope you will follow the guidelines also and require masks for everyone indoors at school or on buses.

Bekah Brown	Please Keep Masks In Schools	<p>I am the parent of a rising fifth and tenth grader in the Wake County school district. I am deeply concerned about my children's safety, as well as all children, when they return to the classroom this August.</p> <p>Some time ago, parents were required to either opt to send students back into the classroom or commit to virtual learning for the entire school year. When parents made their choice, they did so under the impression that safety precautions would continue to be taken, including the wearing of masks. It was also a time when the presence and danger of COVID variants were not fully known. Data is becoming clear and alarming.</p> <p>With all recognition of the difficult decisions you are confronting, I respectfully ask that you err on the side of safety rather than listen to loud voices who find masks inconvenient.</p> <p>The American Pediatric Association, NC's strong schools guide, as well as the CDC, recommends continuing to use masks in schools. Maintaining mask use is especially important to our family who has immunocompromised people that could become seriously ill from the delta variant.</p> <p>If you choose to lift the mask mandate, it would only be fair that the board also open the option for families to opt back into virtual academy. Opening Virtual Academy back up would create an immense amount of chaos and stress for staff.</p> <p>Please maintain the mask requirement for all students and staff until such a time when vaccines are available for all ages and we have a better understanding of how best to fight this variant. Without continuing mask requirements, families that value the health of their children, and believe in an even greater level of scientific study and ability than eradicated polio, may choose to remove their kids from the classroom. Please don't permit that to happen.</p>
Beth Harris	Please require masks in schools to keep kids IN school.	<p>I have a student in middle school (not vaccinated b/c under 12) and high school (vaccinated). I want them to go to school in person this year. If masks are not required, the extreme rise in cases due to the highly contagious Delta variant of COVID will mean more quarantining and less schooling. Please help keep our students IN school and healthy by requiring masks for students and staff this year.</p>

Bethany Reeves	Choose the Least Disruptive Option for Students	The instability caused by repeated 14-day quarantines due to possible COVID exposure in schools will be so much worse for students than just having to wear a mask.
Bill and Janice Proctor	Dismantling the NCHSAA	<p>Dear Wake County School Board,</p> <p>How are non faculty coaches getting paid? Non faculty coaches are not showing up as paid government employees. They are not showing up on this website. You may search any teacher, administrator, principal, etc..... but non faculty coaches and assistant coaches are not present. Was the local high school boosters paying salaries?</p> <p>https://govsalaries.com/</p> <p>Parents in the community, especially sports families need to follow up on the dissolving of the NC High Sports Athletic Association, that has not done enough for our student athletes.</p> <p>Ms. Moore serves on this board of directors.....</p> <p>https://www.highschoolot.com/effort-to-dissolve-nchsaa-on-fast-track-at-legislature/19782359/</p>
Braden Christo	Masks	Please allow for masks to be voluntary. This should be a decision made by the student's family, not the district. Many, many teachers are vaccinated- let them at least wear masks voluntarily. Masking these students for so long has serious repercussions that we are seeing at home.

Bridget Kozlow	Mask Mandate in Schools	<p>I'm writing to share my deep concerns about the proposition to make masks optional in Wake County schools. I'm asking that you mandate masks in all schools, but most especially in grades where students aren't even eligible for a vaccination against COVID-19. The proposition to make masks optional goes against the guidance of both the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Furthermore, it ignores the science on COVID transmission in kids and on the effectiveness of masks. Finally, such a decision fails to give our youngest kids--who are not yet vaccine eligible but will be soon--a chance to evade infection after over a year of sacrifice. All available evidence indicates that SARS-CoV-2 will spread wildly in schools without mitigation efforts--including universal masking--firmly in place. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree; both agencies have released guidance indicating that schools should mandate masks for students, staff, and visitors. As a local leader, you should listen to them. Though infections in our state declined in the late spring and early summer as vaccination rates increased, new variants like Delta pose a serious threat. The Delta variant is much more transmissible than previous variants, and data from our local area reflect that troubling reality. Infections in North Carolina have increased roughly 641% over the past month alone, rising from a 7-day average of 320 on June 30, 2021, to a 7-day average of 2,372 on July 31, 2021. In addition, the age distribution of new infections and hospitalizations has also shifted downward, with young kids representing a greater proportion of infections and hospitalizations than in previous months. This will only get worse if kids return to school without required masking and other mitigation strategies in place. Families like mine are depending on you to follow the science and protect the health and safety of our kids and community. Our kids deserve to go to school without worrying about getting sick and spreading the virus to their immunocompromised, unvaccinated, or otherwise vulnerable family members, friends, and neighbors. We shouldn't ask our young kids and their parents to choose between going to school and staying healthy and safe.</p>
Brooke A Fogleman	Pro Mask Mandate	<p>As a health care provider and a parent I think we should consider protecting our new most vulnerable population. Children under 12 have no choice but to be unvaccinated at this point and we do them a disservice by not mandating the one thing we know could protect them in a school environment. All of the studies that people quote showing low transmission rates for Covid in schools were done with masking and distancing in place. Why not continue those conditions and try to prevent as much spread as possible? It is a clear risk versus benefit scenario. What possible long term risks come from wearing a mask when compared to</p>

		illness and possibly death? Our children trust us to keep them safe, please help us do that now.
Bryan Persak	Mandatory Masking for Children	<p>We can all agree masking children has a negative impact on children's physical and mental health. Did you know child suicide is up over 30% since these draconian masking and social distancing orders were put in place? How many in the Wake County School System? Children need to see faces and studies shows how important this is especially for younger children. Study after study shows children are at very low risk, no greater than the flu, if they are infected. John's Hopkins just released a study that healthy children have a 0.0% mortality rate. Studies also show children are not vectors for spread. My school was in person all last year and had 0 cases they could link to spread at school. What evidence do you have for necessary masking? I am not looking for CDC talking points, I would like to see your data you are using to validate mandatory masking. What studies has the state of North Carolina or Wake County done on the negative impacts of masking?</p> <p>You work for us not the other way around and I DO NOT consent to masking my children. I will make the decisions for my children just like every other parent. I look forward to the reversal of your decision as I do not send my children to school to learn to fear the world. Be the leaders our children need.</p>
Candice Brannen	Masks/face coverings do not replace social distancing and layering protective measures when masks cannot be worn as well as when in contact for prolonged periods of time.	<p>Our WCPSS is attempting to provide our children with in-person learning this year as most health agencies and pediatrician groups have stressed the importance. This is an awesome responsibility and with that comes the heightened need to double down on implementing layered protection measures to enable our schools to remain open - proper mask wearing, maintaining social distancing, and revising NCDHHS guidelines to be consistent with the spread of the Delta variant amongst children in school that we are seeing happening in WCPSS currently. WCPSS and families must continue to work together to ensure health and safety is the number one priority followed by quality education for the students.</p> <p>While the Governor removed the mask mandate, there still remains the recommendation from CDC, NCDHHS, AAP and other groups that children and staff in K-12 schools should wear a mask regardless of vaccination status as the Delta variant has been found to be as contagious as chicken pox and can be spread via a vaccinated host to the unvaccinated. Though wearing a mask is important, the fit and quality of the mask is also important. WCPSS has should go further than requiring masks in K-12, but also require that they are fit and of</p>

quality that meets CDC guidance. WCPSS (and the state of NC) has spent only 10% of the Covid relief monies provided to schools and this money could be spent to ensure proper masks are available for families and staff.

Though masks have been shown by data/science to be one of the most effective tools to slow the spread of Covid, masks/face coverings do not replace social distancing when masks cannot be worn as well as when in contact for prolonged periods of time. While balancing collaboration and social interaction is important to our children's health, at this time the priority is to reduce the spread of a potentially deadly variant that is now impacting our children more than the Alpha variant of 2020. It has been shown that spread within schools, through scientific publications and studies conducted by ABC collaborative, is highly likely during lunch. Lunch is an activity in which students both cannot wear masks and are in prolonged contact. WCPSS should consider returning to the policy for lunch that was taken last school year to help to ensure that the mask-less, prolonged contact does not become a super spreader event each day. Inside the classroom, though the students are wearing masks, they are in prolonged contact. WCPSS should require that the seating minimizes the direct application of respiratory droplets from one mouth (or nose) to another mouth (or eyes/nose) through requiring that the seats are arranged front to back. In my child's school the seats in his class are facing one another in a group of four to prioritize collaborative learning over health and safety.

While masks and seating arrangements likely reduce spread, there are other protective measures that have been recommended to reduce the spread of Covid: screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe. When masks and seating arrangements are layered with those other protective measures it then that we are taking a holistic approach to providing a healthy and safe environment for our children and likely able to keep the schools open with minimal disruption. WCPSS should provide for application of these additional layers, where feasible, and should consult with outside agencies and consultants on how to do so. As mentioned above WCPSS has only spent 10% of the covid relief monies provided for schools from various sources, this money can be used to address the layered approach as several items are costly such as screening testing.

<p>Cara Forrest</p>	<p>Keep Mask Mandate for 2021-2022 School Year</p>	<p>I implore you to PLEASE keep the mask mandate in place for all WCPSS students and staff, regardless of vaccination status. Without social distancing or mask requirements there is nothing to protect our students from the highly contagious and dangerous Delta variant—especially elementary students since they cannot be vaccinated yet. The dramatic rise of the Delta variant in just these last few weeks is extremely concerning, and frankly dangerous for our children. Continue to mask is a small and simple sacrifice we call all make for the safety and well-being of our children. Please, please keep this mandate in place at least until elementary schoolers can be vaccinated—for the safety & well-being of ALL our WCPSS children.</p>
<p>Carla Gregg-Kearns</p>	<p>Masks at school</p>	<p>As the school board considers its policy on masks in schools, I urge you to follow the guidance of the American Academy of Pediatrics which currently recommends: "All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use)."</p>
<p>Caroline Griffin</p>	<p>Keep Masks PK-12</p>	<p>I am writing in support of keeping masks in place PK-12 for this school year (for teachers and staff), at least until vaccines are readily available to all students. The CDC, APA, and similar organizations, including the local ABC Collaborative, all recommend mask wearing based on the scientific evidence. Students need to be in school, but they also need to be safe. No families can afford to have constant quarantines, and no parent wants their child to get sick. For some families, this may be life-or-death, work-or-unemployment.</p> <p>Vaccination may be a personal choice. But masking cannot--because my child is only safe if they people around them are masking.</p> <p>I trust that the board will make the right decision. Parents are listening, and we support you continuing to follow science!</p>

Catherine Campbell	Public Comment During Covid19	<p>Dear Wake County Public School System Board of Education Members,</p> <p>Do you read public comments? What I have found to happen during Covid19 has been cut the peoples comments short.</p> <p>Why would Mr. Sutton not read community members names and the Topic of there Public Comment? Board of Education meetings, rarely start on time as stated. To make up for your late start, Mr. Sutton or his administrative assistant will group and tally topics.</p> <p>I feel this is a violation of our rights. Where is the policy that states selective grouping to save time during board meetings is permissible?</p> <p>Remember you all were voted in.</p> <p>Thank you, Catherine Campbell</p>
Catherine Coley	Please require mask-wearing by all students, teachers, and staff in all schools for the health and safety of everyone	<p>AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS (7/19/21)</p> <p>"In addition to vaccinations, the AAP recommends a layered approach to make school safe for all students, teachers and staff in the guidance here. That includes a recommendation that everyone older than age 2 wear masks, regardless of vaccination status. The AAP also amplifies the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations for building ventilation, testing, quarantining, cleaning and disinfection in the updated guidance."</p> <p>https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/</p> <p>CDC (7/27/21)</p> <p>"CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status."</p> <p>https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html</p>

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION/AMA (7/27/21)

"We strongly support the updated recommendations, which call for universal masking in areas of high or substantial COVID-19 transmission and in K-12 schools, to help reduce transmission of the virus. Wearing a mask is a small, but important protective measure that can help us all stay safer."

<https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/ama-statements/ama-statement-cdc-s-updated-mask-guidance-combat-covid-19-spread>

AMERICAN HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION (7/27/21)

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today adjusted its guidance for fully vaccinated individuals, urging indoor masking in states that are labeled as "high" or "substantial" in their number of cases, including schools, where all in attendance should wear masks."

<https://www.aha.org/news/headline/2021-07-27-cdc-adjusts-guidance-fully-vaccinated-urges-masking-indoor-spaces-hotspot>

AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION/ANA (7/28/21)

"ANA Supports CDC's Updated Guidance on Masks to Mitigate Impact of Delta Variant"

<https://www.nursingworld.org/news/news-releases/2021/ana-supports-cdcs-updated-guidance-on-masks-to-mitigate-impact-of-delta-variant2/>

GOVERNOR ROY COOPER (7/29/21)

"Additionally, in accordance with the updated CDC guidance, all K-12 schools should require universal masking, regardless of vaccination status. NCDHHS is updating its guidance for schools to align with this recommendation."

<https://governor.nc.gov/news/north-carolina-require-vaccine-verification-state-employees-urges-other-government-agencies-and>

NC DHHS (7/29/21)

Tweets: "This week, the CDC updated its guidance, and we are recommending people in NC follow these health protocols. In accordance with the CDC, we recommend that all K-12 schools require masks for all their students and teachers."

"Also, everyone in a county with high rates of virus spread- including those who have been vaccinated – is encouraged to wear a mask in public indoor settings. That is already 80% of NC counties."

<https://twitter.com/ncdhhs/status/1420903446559875077>

WRAL NEWS (8/1/21)

News article: 'CDC: It's not safe for vaccinated people to drop their masks indoors in most NC counties, including Wake'

"New data reported on Saturday shows that even though Wake County has more than 66% of residents fully vaccinated, there's still "high" transmission of the virus."

"Over the past week, WRAL has reported on outbreaks in Wake County Public Schools and local summer camps. Five students at the Franklin Academy charter school in Wake Forest have tested positive for coronavirus in the past week, putting more than 200 others in quarantine."

Article Updated on 8/2/21:

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says it's safe for vaccinated people to drop their masks in only eight counties across North Carolina. All other 92 counties have "high" or "substantial" transmission of the virus, and the CDC says that residents of those areas need to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status."

		<p>Over the weekend, the state added seven more counties to the list — areas with high or substantial transmission of COVID-19. New data reported on Saturday shows that even though Wake County has more than 66% of residents fully vaccinated, there's still "high" transmission of the virus."</p> <p>https://www.wral.com/coronavirus/cdc-it-s-not-safe-for-vaccinated-people-to-drop-their-masks-indoors-in-most-nc-counties-including-wake/19804247/</p>
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Catherine Turner	In Support of Masks and Other Precautions	<p>Recently, my family was asked to quarantine. It was my intention to be physically present at the meeting, but this situation has made that impossible. My son, a first grader at Turner Creek, had only been in school two and a half weeks after finally stepping foot in his "big school" for the first time. His potential exposure came on the bus, like so many others. He was wearing a KN95 mask. I absolutely believe it's what protected him, as we've all tested and are all negative. There is currently no virtual option, so his only instruction are a series of Google slides. It takes him about an hour to complete, at most. The communication from the school staff was woefully lacking, and we were never contacted by the NCDHHS.</p> <p>As a parent, I fully support in-person learning if safety is put first. Delta has forced us to re-examine our approach to beating this. The data of cases in NC schools suggests that many young students are testing positive. Some local hospitals have seen Covid admissions quintuple. Clusters are being reported in at least two schools after less than a month of in-person learning. Two charter schools in NC have reported huge numbers of quarantined students/staff: over 150 in one, and over 200 in another.</p> <p>Please consider the below in support of continued masking, among other precautions, to help fight this deadly virus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-While many adults are vaccinated, the numbers are not high enough to provide herd immunity. North Carolina, at last check, was 27th in the nation for vaccination rates, behind Florida. Additionally, children under 12 cannot yet be vaccinated.-The CDC and AAP recommend that students be masked. This protects not only children, as Delta seems to be affecting them at a higher rate, but also other vulnerable populations. Masking protects the person wearing it, as well as others.-Though many will argue that the risk for children appears low, Covid is currently the 10th leading cause of death in children.-Death is not the only terrible outcome. Long Covid is a looming threat to children, especially given that they are still developing.
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		<p>-Delta is much more infectious than previous strains of Covid. The viral load present in the respiratory system is 1000 times that of prior variants, and carries an infection rate of 6-8 versus the 2-3 of earlier strains. The Delta variant is currently about as infectious as chicken pox. And now, as we speak, new strains are being discovered, with one being in Florida.</p> <p>Masks are the only line of defense for children under 12. Only about 25% of NC children 12-18 years old are vaccinated. Many adults cannot be vaccinated due to various health issues. I strongly urge you to consider mandating masks for all school populations, including adults, at all times. I thank you for your time and for everything you've done to keep our children and WCPSS faculty/staff safe during these challenging times.</p>
Chantal Wright	Masks in school	Please keep our children and staff safe by requiring masks in school this fall.
Chrissy Deal	masks	I strongly support the BOE requiring masks in all of our K-12 classrooms up until the point that the CDC alters its recommendation to allow for vaccinated people to go unmasked. I am sad, angry and frustrated that we are back at this point, but I hope the board members clearly understand this -- we're here because of ignorant, misinformed and dogmatic people who refuse to listen to reason and medical authority. Are you ignorant, misinformed and dogmatic? No? Then please do what's right. Listen to the medical experts, not the segment of our population who consider Aunt Karen, the internet or QAnon to be authorities. We are relying on your leadership. Thank you.
Christina Kaye	Masks in school	Please continue to keep our teachers and students safe by requiring masks. The Delta variant does not care who or what you believe in.
Christina Kaye	CRT	You cannot erase history nor can you deny it. I would much prefer my children learn the truth and develop empathy than to ignore what happened.
Christina Kaye	Gratitude	Teachers and board members do a thankless job everyday. It is much appreciated by my family. Im sure no teacher thought they would need to think about a situation in which they would have to choose between their passion for teaching and a deadly virus. You are appreciated.

Christina Rush	Athens Drive Public Library	<p>The Athens Drive Public Library will completely close this week, due to concerns about students intermingling with library patrons, during this time when we are seeing increased Covid numbers. This is certainly a legitimate concern, as we all want to ensure the safety of our Athens students. I count my own son among that number, as he is a junior at Athens Drive. The Athens Drive Public Library is an invaluable resource to our Southwest Raleigh community, which includes many of WCPSS's own students and families. There are a number of residents in our area who do not have the means to go to Cary or The Village District to access library books and/or programming. I believe that a solution is readily clear - the Athens Drive library can, and should, remain open when the students are not on campus. Community members and Athens students could then access the library in the evening hours and on the weekends. Thank you for your consideration of this request.</p>
Christine Dohrmann	Keep masks in schools	<p>Please follow CDC guidelines and ensure all people inside schools K-12 wear masks. Only 25% of students 12+ are vaccinated and children under 13 are unvaccinated. In a scene of vaccines, masking and social distancing are the only things we have to protect children and keep them safe at schools. The delta variant has changed the game for children and puts their life and health at severe risk. Children and infants are getting covid now. In Louisiana, one health official and doctor suggested 50% of all children who catch this will need assistance with oxygen in the ICU. Children do get long covid and many are getting diabetes shortly after contracting covid - even if they have mild symptoms. Until vaccinations are available and infection rates are down, removing masks in schools would be like throwing our children into the lion's den. It would be negligent, cruel, and unwise. Please do the right thing so we do not lose our children.</p>

Christopher Autry	Masking Requirement in Schools	<p>I'm the father of two elementary school children at Lincoln Heights Elementary School writing in support of continuing the mask requirement for all WCPSS students and staff while indoors on school grounds, regardless of vaccination status. During the last Board of Education meeting, it was my understanding that the plan of the Wake County Public School System is to follow the guidance of the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit.</p> <p>Per the Toolkit, all schools should:</p> <p>Require all children and staff in schools K-12th grade to wear face coverings consistently when indoors. Schools K-12th grade should make mask use universally required (i.e., required regardless of vaccination status) given that most of the student population in those grades are not yet eligible for vaccination. With the highly transmissible Delta variant and other potential variants on the horizon, it would be prudent for the safety of our children to require masks. Masks are the only current option to protect our children against the spread of Covid-19 in school. The entire elementary school age group is still not eligible for vaccination. While some of the middle school and all of the high school age groups are eligible, we aren't even close to getting half of that population vaccinated. If the goal is to keep children in school and not having to quarantine frequently or shut down the schools, it is important to continue the requirement to wear masks to reduce the spread of the disease.</p> <p>Please continue to follow the science as our knowledge evolves and keep our children as safe. No one has any right to make other individuals unsafe up to the possibility of death.</p>
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Christy Enterline	Required Masking in Schools	<p>We were forced to make a decision about in-person vs. VA months ago. At that time, vaccinations were increasing and cases were very low. We knew nothing of the delta variant. Given the circumstances at this time, with a very high spread rate even among vaccinated persons, I feel that the well being of my unvaccinated 11yo child is at risk. There has already been a cluster outbreak at her year round middle school (Lufkin Road), even with masks required. If we lift the mask mandate, there will be many more clusters, causing children to become ill and disrupting education for all those who will need to quarantine.</p> <p>I ask that the mask mandate be kept in place, and enforced, regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>I also ask that a new enrollment window be opened for Virtual Academy. I regret my decision to go in-person, but I did what I thought was best at the time. The delta variant has since changed everything.</p> <p>Additionally, I would like to have an outdoor lunch option at every school. My child fears removing her mask to eat lunch and intends to go hungry rather than remove her mask and risk COVID infection. Her school currently has lunch in the cafeteria at full capacity and will not allow her to go outside to safely have a few bites to eat.</p> <p>If my child is forced to remain in-person with unmasked students/staff, we will be withdrawing her from WCPSS.</p>
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Christy Tucker	Encourage masks and other mitigation strategies	<p>I encourage WCPSS to continue the requirement that everyone wear a mask while indoors (with appropriate medical exemptions), regardless of vaccination status. The Delta variant is spreading widely; children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated; and, recent evidence suggests that vaccinated persons are still spreading the virus.</p> <p>WCPSS should continue to require a layered approach with multiple mitigation strategies. While the ABC research and other studies have shown the effectiveness of masks in schools, no single intervention will be enough. It is critical to focus on ventilation, eating outside, and using outdoor spaces as much as feasible.</p> <p>Additionally, WCPSS should consider requiring regular testing, at least for unvaccinated staff and students. This would help catch cases earlier and reduce the impact of outbreaks.</p> <p>Once the community spread is lower and more people are vaccinated, these mitigations can be reduced (maybe masks will only be required for unvaccinated individuals, for example).</p>
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Claire Gordy	COVID safety policies	<p>The CDC and AAP have both recommended that children should remain masked at school. Our children have shown us last year that they are not only capable of following masking and other safety procedures, but that they thrived being back in person. I know this was true for my child -- despite her sensory processing issues, she never had any problem keeping her mask on, and being in the structured environment of in-person kindergarten dramatically improved her mental health last year. Continuing to require masks provides our children with the best chance at remaining in school in person without disruption.</p> <p>While children have generally been at lower risk than adults, the Delta variant is impacting children at a much higher rate, and they have not yet had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Please continue requiring masks until all children have had access to the vaccine.</p> <p>Continuing to require masks not only protects students and teachers and decreases disruptions in learning due to illness and quarantine, it also protects vulnerable family members (like me) and decreases community spread. Keeping this policy intact until children are vaccinated impacts the entire community, potentially saving lives by preventing our hospitals from running out of beds and staff to care for not only those ill with COVID-19, but those ill or injured due to other causes.</p> <p>Further, please address policies surrounding lunchtime. This is the most dangerous part of the school day, and there are specific ways to make it safer (outdoor lunch, eating in classrooms with windows open, further staggering lunchtime to allow for fewer students in the cafeteria).</p>
Clayton Henkel	Athens Drive Library	<p>Please keep the Athens Drive library open for general public. If that is not possible due to COVID precautions, please make sure the books-on-the-go service continues. It has been immensely useful for the whole community, especially the past year. Our community does not want to lose this resource. I do not have children at the high school, but have enjoyed access to the library and all it has to offer.</p>

Cori McKeon	Focus on PBIS not Prison to School Pipeline	<p>Dear Ms. Moore, Mr. Sutton and the Wake County Board of Education,</p> <p>This is information of from your district website Research-backed practices Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective (www.pbis.org). Introducing, teaching, and reinforcing positive social behavior regardless of the age of students is important as school-wide PBIS works to establish a climate where desired behavior is the norm.</p> <p>However we do not teach, re-teach, identity problems and work through emotions. We instead write students up for all sorts of infractions, causing shame and guilt of a young child, or a teenager.</p> <p>Its not that hard to support students.</p> <p>Thank you for this platform to write a public comment.</p> <p>Cori McKeon</p>
Courtney Wolfe	Masks	<p>I'd like to express my support for continued mask wearing in schools. This isn't an issue of politics or freedom. It is simply an issue of health and facts. Masks save lives and it is a fact that Covid-19 is still raging across our planet. I beg you to please keep the mask mandate for students and staff. Please don't give into the ill informed, but vocal public. Wearing masks is the right thing to do for our kids, for our teachers and for our community.</p>
Darolyn Hilt	Athens Drive Public Library Site	<p>I urge you to work out some type of compromise with the County to keep the AD branch of the Wake Co Library open, while respecting the pandemic-related needs of the school. This branch has been well-utilized over the years, even with the current restrictions of the pandemic. This community should not have to have this same fight every few years to keep this branch open. There should be some reasonable solutions possible. We are talking about the presence of a few library staff members, as the public has not been allowed inside of this branch since the shutdown began.</p>

David Pleet	COVID	<p>Please continue with all the COVID mitigation strategies. You have no doubt heard from people to do away with masks, distancing, and testing. Ignore them. The delta variant is running rampant. Hospitals are once again filling up and right now in NC children make up 15.3% of all new cases. This will inevitably increase once schools reopen. We need to do what we can to protect our unvaccinated kids whether it's masks, distancing, testing, eating outside, or purchasing air filters. And once vaccines are in available for children, please work to make the schools distribution centers. Thank you.</p>
Dawn Comfort	Masks (yes, please!) and keeping up in in-person school	<p>Given the current CDC and AAP recommendations and the COVID cases in schools in just the 3 weeks since year-round schools have begun, I would assume it's a foregone conclusion that masks will be required for everyone in schools for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>However, it would be helpful to try to foresee a future without masks by setting some benchmarks so that this requirement does not seem arbitrary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Until the vaccine is available for children under 12? - Until community rates are lower than xxx? - Until there is a system in place to accept proof of vaccination and a school has xx rate of vaccination? - Some combination of the above or other metrics? <p>Two other related issues that I have not seen addressed are related to keeping kids on track when they have to miss school due to COVID exposure or some illness with COVID-like symptoms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is COVID testing accessible for everyone? Since a negative COVID test is one of the quickest ways to get back to school, do all students and staff have easy access to a free testing facility with quick turn-around? 2) Missing a week or more of school due to quarantining will cause many students to fall hopelessly behind especially at the high school level. They do not have the remote option to log into this year. How are we going to not continue to lose kids' education to COVID?
DeAnna Conard	Covid Protection / Masks	<p>The CDC, as well as the US Education Secretary, have stated that students & faculty need to return to continue proper mask wearing in schools. We implore the WCPSS to follow this advice, and help protect our children while they learn. Along with academics & their physical health, their emotional & mental wellbeing is of utmost importance. A return to the classroom without the protection of masks will result in the spread of Covid, children quarantined, and ultimately the return to virtual instruction which is not ideal for our children in any way. Allow</p>

		them to safely enjoy the sense of community & support of in-person school in the safest way possible, as long as possible.
Deborah Fredrick	Vaccinations	Vaccinations should be mandatory for educators. This is not a violation of rights as certain professions require immunizations to perform their jobs safely. In this case, teachers need to be included to provide a safe learning environment for our kids that don't have the option.
Deepa Bharathi	Mask mandatory in indoor spaces	Let's keep the kids in school, in persons- masks are the only way we can move forward!
Denise King	Masks	Please follow the AAP recommendation and continue to require masks for everyone in schools. The youngest children are not yet eligible for vaccines, and we need to keep them as safe as possible. My family chose to move from 100% virtual last year to in-person this year because virtual did not work well for my child. I am still very concerned about Covid-19 and its impact on children like mine who cannot yet be vaccinated.
Dennis Bland	Mask MANDATE	We are a democracy. We elect our officials to vote on our behalf. We must get this in its proper perspective. God gave our children to us and it is not you or anyone else's right to make ANY decisions involving their mental, physical or even emotional health. There is no need to bring up all the lies and inconsistencies of the CDC because once we understand the above we can all start searching for solutions outside of you being God over our children.
Derek Skinner	No Mask Mandate	<p>As a parent of a child in the Wake County Public School System, Remove the mask mandate today!</p> <p>There is no scientific evidence masks reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The only thing masks do is impact kids ability to learn, stunt social development, and harm their mental health.</p> <p>All for a flu-like illness that impacts those under 18, 25 to 50 times LESS than the flu. Any decision other than removing the mask mandate is not in the best interest of the students.</p> <p>Let me state again, remove the mask mandate for students K-12 today!</p>

Diane Chandler	Masks Optional	<p>I am writing once again to ask that you make masks optional. I won't bore you with the statistics again because I know you've been given them before. But to summarize, children are not at risk from Covid, not even the Delta variant. They are also shown not to be spreaders. The argument for wearing masks was to protect others. Now that the vaccine is available for all adults, those vulnerable people are protected if they want to be. There is no longer the reason for our children to pay the physical and psychological price of wearing masks. Last year, I homeschooled my two children and we attended a co-op the entire year unmasked and without social distancing. It can be done and all involved can stay healthy. Because of life changes, I had to put my children back in public school. Yesterday was their first day and my son told me he had to bend down and hide as he took down his mask to breathe multiple times. This is a distraction to his learning. It does not make sense that children can be unmasked everywhere else but have to be masked in school where they have to focus and connect the most. Over 20 counties in NC have decided to make masks optional - join them! Parents who want their children to continue to wear masks can. That is their parental choice.</p>
Dustin Prescott	End Mask Mandates and keep kids in school	<p>I am writing you in support of removing the mask mandates for k-12 students for this school year. We know that COVID-19 was never a threat to our children and now that it has mutated to the current Delta variant it is even less serious for them than before. We understand that children will contract the virus. Those who do should certainly be sent home, but not their entire class. Our children are already so far behind after a year and a half gone. There should be no instance that these kids have to go "virtual" this year. Please follow actual data.</p>
Eleanor Helms	Masks	<p>Fear and hysteria are driving so much of public discourse these days. It is really common sense to see that the masks do not prevent the spread of any tiny droplets of a supposed virus. Mask manufacturers acknowledge this directly on the boxed containers. Numerous studies have documented this. Masks DO REDUCE OXYGEN breathed in by the wearer. So, children or adults wearing the masks are not preventing any disease spread but ARE affecting their own health negatively. In addition, such policies are psychologically conditioning children to disassociate from others. When they cannot see the facial reactions of surprise, joy or sadness of their peers, they lose some of their most beautiful human qualities. Covering the mouth is what slaves had to endure in the 17th and 18th centuries. Mouth coverings are degrading and humiliating. We as a society are much better than this. Let's move away from fear and toward uplifting our</p>

		precious children and teachers. Remove the masks or at least make this optional. This is the only humanitarian position to take.
Elizabeth Alley	Support for mask mandate and COVID safety	WCPSS school board members and staff: Thank you for your willingness to make hard decisions to protect our students and staff even in the face of opposition. Because of your leadership we felt comfortable sending our rising 3rd graders back to school in person come mid-August for the first time in a year and a half. Please follow CDC and epidemiology best practices and mandate masks for all, and strongly consider reinstating distancing and perhaps even an option for outdoor and/or distanced lunch where practicable. As one of the sizable minority of parents that are at risk (I am living with breast cancer), not just my children's safety but mine as well may be in your hands. Continue to be clear headed and courageous, and send a message that our schools are safe for all families, not just those with the good fortune to be in good health. Thank you for your service.
Elizabeth Bender	School mask policy	Please keep the mask requirement in place until COVID vaccines are available for all children. The American Association of Pediatrics expressly recommends this.
Elizabeth Brogan	Mask mandate	I would like the board to consider not only the staff and students but the families as well. My entire family is vaccinated but that will not prevent us from getting Covid it only reduces the symptoms. If I or my husband are exposed or contract Covid then we have to take time off from work. If we all wear masks it reduces outbreaks. It's not a cure we all know but by putting on your seatbelt it doesn't guarantee your safety but it reduces your chance of serious injury.

Elizabeth Galla, MD	Universal Masking K-12 is Essential	<p>I appeal to you today as a pediatrician for many and the parent of 3 WCPSS students. I have seen professionally and personally the negative impacts of school closures and virtual learning on our children's emotional and physical health. As a result of the social isolation and lack of routine with virtual learning during the pandemic, our offices are inundated with high rates of depression and anxiety at all ages, palpable parent stress, sibling rivalry, school failure, obesity, excessive screen/sedentary time with resultant lack of physical conditioning, poor diet, behavior disturbances, child abuse and the list goes on. We hardly have time to treat routine medical illnesses anymore, let alone Covid infections! I whole-heartedly agree with the AAP and the N.C. Pediatric Society in strongly supporting in-person education. To make this feasible, it is imperative that ALL students, school personnel and volunteers wear masks consistently and appropriately in all grades K-12. This will not only keep our children safe, but will protect the health of school staff. We are observing a dramatic increase in children testing positive for Covid-19, most likely due to the widely circulating and highly contagious Delta variant. The science is clear: Masking is effective, and poses no threat to the health of the mask-wearer. Surgeons and operating room staff can attest to the fact that they can mask all day every day throughout the duration of their careers and not experience any adverse health effects. Parents often comment that they are pleasantly surprised by their children's resilience and willingness to mask up, particularly when "everyone is doing it." If masks are optional, this will foster stigma, bullying, social division and conflict. Masking is far more effective when the infected and the vulnerable are both masked. So let's teach children the value of empathy and thinking beyond oneself by understanding that "masking not only protects me, but also protects you." The children < 12 who are unable to be vaccinated and the 75% of eligible children aged 12-18 who remain unvaccinated are all sitting ducks. Masking is easy. Explaining to the parents of critically ill or deceased children that science and guidance from medical professionals was ignored is difficult. Please do the right thing.</p>
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Elizabeth Hubbe	Athens Drive Community Library	<p>On Wednesday, July 28 patrons of Athens Drive Community Library were informed that the curbside Books on the Go program was being suspended August 6, 2021. This change means that our branch is closing with no known date or terms for reopening. Since summer of 2020, our library has provided Books on the Go services while patrons have patiently waited for a compromise for in-person public library use between WCPL and ADHS. We are outraged that our branch has been abruptly closed without community input or a compromise. I understand the current priority to limit the public on the ADHS campus during the school day due to COVID. I strongly urge he WCPSS and WCPL to find a compromise that allows library patrons to continue to have Books on the Go during non school hours, at a minimum, and/or access to the library during the evening and weekends.</p> <p>It is my understanding that the church Ekklesia continues to have access to ADHS, and perhaps other community groups as well. The patrons of Athens Drive Community Library should be afforded the same.</p>
Emily Izquierdo	Yes to masks in schools	<p>Please continue to support required masking for all staff and students in WCPSS schools.</p> <p>As a former teacher, current parent, and strong supporter of WCPSS I want to believe that the science we teach in our classrooms is also the science that informs our community's decision making during a pandemic. The current science demonstrates two obvious things - 1. Covid cases are soaring because of the Delta variant. 2. Masks are a simple way to mitigate case transmission.</p> <p>Continued masking for all staff and students would 1. Keep all parties safer - teachers, staff, students, and families 2. Keep students more steadily in the school building because of reduced transmission and reduced quarantines 3. Keep more teachers and staff safely in the building to educate our children.</p> <p>When I send my daughter to school, I'm putting her safety, and the safety of my entire family in the hands of the Board's and the school leadership's decision making. My second grader deserves the safest in-person learning environment, which at this point in the pandemic absolutely must include everyone masked. My family, including my 3 year old, myself, my husband, and our unborn child deserve the safest home life possible, which at this point in the pandemic includes our 7 year old, and all other students and staff masking to reduce COVID transmission while at school.</p>

		Thank you for continuing to keep all teachers, staff, students, and families in Wake County as safe as possible by voting to continue the mask requirement for everyone in the school building.
Emily Ready	Masks	Please continue to require masks. This is the only line of defense these unvaccinated children have.
Eric Hambright	Masks in school	ello, I am a parent of two children in the WCPSS school system and I am writing to ask you to to keep masks mandated for everyone until all children in schools can be vaccinated. I am not feeling confident about choosing in person school for my children with the rise of the Delta variant, which we've seen can be spread much more easily, including by vaccinated people. We are already seeing clusters pop up in private and year round schools. With most children coming back into the school buildings this year, much of the mitigation measures that were used last year will be impossible. Keeping masks required is one measure that can still be implemented. Please follow the recommendations in the NC DHHS toolkit and keep universal masking in place. Thank you, Eric Hambright WCPSS parent
Erin Davisson	Support for mask requirements in WCPSS	I am writing to express my support for continued mask requirements in Wake County public schools during the 2021-22 school year, particularly in elementary schools where students will not be eligible for vaccinations until mid-winter. My son, Jack, is a rising first-grader at Conn Elementary who is anxiously awaiting his turn to receive his vaccine, especially to help protect people who are more at-risk than he is and people who won't be able to be vaccinated as soon as he can (e.g., his baby brother, due right before school starts in August). We hope that the Wake County school board will trust the science and support continuing the mask requirement in our schools until all students have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated.
Ethel Mahan	Protect our children.	Please enforce mask wearing for all school staff and students. This new version is worse. Many homes have smaller children at home they can infect. God Bless You for caring about our children, teachers and school staff.
Gabrielle Rivera	Masks in school	It is imperative that the schools continue to require masks in school until there has been opportunity for the kids to get vaccinated. The kids need to be in a school environment but we must protect them. This isn't about rights this is about being humane and helping care for each other. I opted to send my kids back to

		school under the impression that masks would still be required as we continue to see numbers rise again.
Geeta Chowdhary	Masking should be required in Wake County Schools	I am writing to strongly ask the Board to keep masking and distancing guidelines in place in the Wake County Public School system. Our kids are not fully vaccinated today or not eligible yet and their lives and safety are and should be of utmost priority. We have kept them home for over a year and a half to keep them safe. All this will be in vain if we let our guard down. With the Delta variant surging, most recent cluster outbreaks in schools that have already opened we see the impact on our children's health and their education. As a mother and health care provider I wear a mask everyday to protect myself, my unvaccinated child, my family and more importantly my community around me. For the greater good of everyone please understand the gravity of the situation and please keep the mask requirements until it is safe and until our children are eligible for the vaccine. We cannot be selfish to appease those who see no harm. It is an unprecedented time and we need to all sacrifice for the greater good. To combat this virus we need to follow Science and what our health care providers deem safe. The American Academy of Pediatrics has issued the importance of masking in schools as has the CDC. Please follow this otherwise we will have caused more harm to the future generations and leave them scarred forever. We will be responsible for their lives and wellbeing. There will be more repercussions to mental health if we leave our children with permanent damage to their bodies from COVID. I do not see how an adult who is Vaccinated gets to make a choice for a child who is not eligible for a vaccine yet. Let's please keep them safe by leaving them masked. It is the only weapon for safety. Give them the only chance they have to fight this virus. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I make this appeal as a Mother.
Geetanjoli Chaliha	Masks in school	Please keep the mask mandate for all students and staff at wake county schools. It is extremely important to minimize risk and keep everyone safe, specially the children who can not be vaccinated yet.
Georgio Bruzzo	Keep masks in schools required	I elected wake county as the place to start and raise my family based on the research I made in the area. I will consider moving to Durham, or back to northern Virginia based on how you take care of my kids' safety (and everyone else of course, but I'm much more partial to controlling what I can control). Please do the the right thing. My kid has gotten used to it, and it would be a lot more work if another variant spreads more aggressively than delta.

Heather Gaudaur	KEEP MASKS IN SCHOOL	<p>Please keep masks in our schools. We need every single prevention method we have available to us to help curb the spread of COVID. Masks work. They are one small thing each of us can do to help protect each other.</p> <p>Let's do everything we can to keep our kids in school by continuing to require masks.</p>
Heather Goode	Keep universal indoor masking and social distancing mandatory in our schools	<p>I am writing to you as a concerned parent and member of the community to express my support that Wake County Schools follow the guidelines for universal indoor masking and social distancing in our K to 12 schools for the 2021/2022 school year, as recommended by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and StrongSchoolsNC issued by Governor Roy Cooper and the NCDHHS.</p> <p>Every child deserves to learn in school, in an environment where they will be safe – protected by a mask from the rampant spread of COVID-19 in our communities. We should do everything we can to protect our children. As adults, it's our duty to protect the young. Masks do not harm our children. What will harm our children is the removal of masks in our schools. I am troubled by the fact that as a community we are even considering not following the science and experts who clearly understand how quickly and ferociously COVID-19 is spreading in our schools and local communities. And, that we could potentially ignore the science of COVID-19 transmission in kids and the science on the effectiveness of masks.</p> <p>We must give the youngest members of our communities, children, who are not yet vaccine eligible, a chance to evade infection after over a year of sacrifice. This isn't about politics; it is about keeping children safe.</p> <p>Our kids deserve to have the opportunity to be vaccinated before entering an unmasked world, where the risks of infection remain high. Everyone deserves to learn in school and requiring masks in school will give everyone that opportunity. We should give young kids the opportunity to be vaccinated before asking them to enter our schools unprotected. The science supports masks for everyone, including kids. Wearing masks is a small sacrifice to ensure that our kids can remain safe while going to go to school, which we know is important for their intellectual, social, and emotional development.</p> <p>Please, follow the science and do the following to keep children safe:</p>

- Maintain universal masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors in K to 12 schools, regardless of vaccination status for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Enforce physical distancing in school settings, including a minimum of three feet between children, teachers and staff.
- Require at least 3 feet of distance between children and adults when children remove their masks to eat or drink.
- Ensure ventilation systems are effective and updated to increase air circulation and that they deliver clean, outdoor air as much as possible.
- Require CDC-recommended quarantine protocols for all individuals.
- Do your part as good citizens to encourage and promote mask wearing and COVID-19 vaccination for everyone, these are our best defenses against COVID-19.
- Require WCPSS personnel who are unvaccinated, or choose not to disclose their status, to undergo regular testing.

These requests aren't new – they align with the guidelines we've heard all along. Furthermore, they are for the safety of everyone in a school setting. I know you care deeply about the health and safety of children – that's why you are in the position you are in today. Please, do your part – don't let my children down, make masks and physical distancing mandatory in school.

Regards,
Heather Goode

Heather Koons	Supporting a Mask Requirement	<p>As a parent of a WCPSS student, I am writing to support policy to require students and staff in Wake County Public Schools to wear a mask to protect our community from Covid-19 until conditions are such that the medical community states that masks are no longer needed. With the highly contagious Delta variant swamping the health care system and in light of CDC guidance on masking in indoor spaces, it makes health sense for students and staff to wear masks.</p> <p>My whole family received the Covid-19 vaccination months ago. I have started wearing a mask again because science has shown us that vaccinated people can both catch and spread Covid-19. Regardless of a person's stance on getting the vaccine or that I think it is extremely irresponsible for people who live in a community to disregard the health of others and not get vaccinated, masks are a simple, effective way to protect everyone from Covid-19.</p> <p>Every person who gets Covid-19 provides the virus with another chance to mutate into a worse variant. Requiring masks for everyone whether they are vaccinated or not, will help reduce the spread of Covid-19 and help us stop this awful virus.</p> <p>Thank you for all you do for our kids, teachers, and community!</p> <p>Respectfully, Heather Koons</p>
Heather Nadeau	Keep masks on!!	<p>Please, it shouldn't even be a question at this point of the pandemic, keep the mask mandate in place for our kids, staff, and visitors. Our children are resilient and aware of the importance of masking. We constantly preach "patience" to our kids and it is time for the adults to practice it until everyone is eligible to be vaccinated.</p>
Heather Passineau	Mask Mandate	<p>Findings raise significant concerns, both medically and legally, of the current mask policy in place. Masks are ineffective for the purpose claimed by the mandate, potentially harmful, and only authorized for use by an EUA. It's a myth that masks prevent viruses from spreading. The overall evidence is clear: Standard cloth and surgical masks offer next to no protection against virus-sized particles or small aerosols.¹ A single virion of SARS-CoV-2 is about 0.1 microns.² The pore size in a surgical mask is 200-1000x that size. Consider that the CDC website states, "surgical masks do not catch all harmful particles in smoke." And the size of smoke particles in a wildfire are ~0.5 microns which is 5x</p>

the size of the SARS-CoV-2 virus! Wearing a mask to prevent catching SARS-CoV-2, or similarly sized influenza, is like throwing sand at a chain-link fence: it doesn't work. There has been one large randomized controlled trial that specifically examined whether masks protect their wearers from the coronavirus. This study found mask wearing "did not reduce, at conventional levels of statistical significance, the incidence of Sars-Cov-2-infection."³ There have been hundreds of mask studies related to influenza transmission done over several decades. It is a well-established fact that masks do not stop viruses. "Part of that evidence shows that cloth facemasks actually increase influenza-linked illness."⁴ Bacteria are 50x larger than virus particles.⁵ As such, virus particles can enter through the mask pores, yet bacteria remain trapped inside of the mask, resulting in the mask-wearer continually exposed to the bacteria. All parties mandating the use of facemasks are not only willfully ignoring established science but are engaging in what amounts to a whole school clinical experimental trial. This conclusion is reached by the fact that facemask use and COVID-19 incidence are being reported in scientific opinion pieces promoted by the CDC and others.⁶ The fact is after reviewing ALL of the studies worldwide, the CDC found "no reduction in viral transmission with the use of face masks."⁷ Additionally, Children have been repeatedly shown not to be drivers of this contagion. It is well accepted that children have a statistically zero chance of dying from COVID.⁸ Any intervention, especially one that is prophylactic, must cause fewer harms to the recipient than the infection. Since children have the lowest death rate from COVID infection, the cost-benefit of requiring children to wear an investigational face-covering with emerging safety issues is especially difficult to justify. Regardless of the lack of safety and efficacy behind the decision to require a child to wear a mask, it is illegal to mandate EUA approved investigational medical therapies without informed consent. Mask use for viral transmission prevention is authorized for Emergency Use only.⁹ Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA, means "the products are investigational and experimental" only.¹⁰ The statute granting the FDA the power to authorize a medical product of emergency use requires that the person being administered the unapproved product be advised of his/her right to refuse administration of the product.¹¹ This statute further recognizes the well-settled doctrine that medical experiments, may not be performed on human subjects without the express, informed consent of the individual receiving treatment.¹²

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<https://www.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?doi=10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.422>

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Heather Stover	Masks	<p>Due to children under the age of 12 who cannot be vaccinated, this is the only defense we have in schools to help protect our students, which in turn protects the teachers, staff and everyone’s family. Please keep the mask requirement for K-12.</p>
Heidi Worthington	Masks	<p>As masks continue to be the hot topic of discussion, I greatly hope that you will consider continuing to have all students and staff wear masks regardless of vaccination status. As the data is showing, the delta variant infection rate is rapidly increasing mainly among the unvaccinated, but also among the vaccinated. Please do not put our kids at an unnecessary risk for developing this disease based on complaints about wearing a mask. It’s a proven fact that masks work to help prevent the spread. Please, look at the data and help to keep our kids safe by continuing to have them and all staff mask up!</p>

Holly Higgins Wicher	true biological nature of our bodies and ending child abuse now	<p>Good evening. My name is Dr. Holly Higgins Wilcher. I am the parent of an eight year old in the Wake County school system. You've heard me and others speak countless times about the harmful virus mitigation mandates causes trauma and abuse to our children. It's been over 600 days now. You've heard likely hundreds of testimonies at this point – covering it all, the science, logic, reason, physical and emotional harm, data, mask research, statistics, infection rate data. As I've mentioned before, I have formal education and training in child development and biological sciences, neuroscience, and early childhood social and emotional health and so I've specifically shared my concern about our early childhood mental health crisis, child abuse, violations to international Codes and Declarations, breaches of medical ethics and informed consent.</p> <p>I came in here in the beginning of this year with such faith and hope. I thought to myself, all I and others must do is share the full picture. They must not have heard it before. Surely, if we can just hear the knowledge, they will change their minds, and when they KNOW what they're doing is not good for children, they will do something DIFFERENT! So, I started with the most related facts, mask data and oxygen deprivation effects on the developing brain, then I moved to ECMH, trauma. I knew it would change your mind and have you put a motion before the board immediately. Several months go by and I keep thinking, surely, they've heard enough from parents, experts, like myself in the field of child development pleading with you to do the right thing. I was wrong.</p> <p>What I've come to understand now, a valuable lesson I've learned in this year is that this is psychological battle, not an intellectual one. I've watched you almost a year now glazed over for up to an hour of statistics and studies are shared. I likely would do the same if I kept hearing the same information repeated. regardless of the studies and the data, you're not going to change your mind with any amount of research or data we share. So, tonight I'm going to start taking you back to school. I'm going to start teaching you about truth of which you are unaware. Knowledge I learned that required unlearning of different kind.</p> <p>Before I do, I want to remind you of who it was in the Hans Christian Anderson's story who finally broke the illusion of consensus. You remember the folk tale, it was the child who broke the spell because he was unafraid to say out loud the emperor's fine gown didn't exist, that he wasn't wearing anything at all! Data didn't break the illusion, all it took was the eyes of a child, the bravery of a boy with the courage the speak out. I'm that child tonight. Simply sharing data with you will not the power to break the spell you are under. I didn't think I would have to go to this route of the science, this past year because I thought our relentless advocacy to end child abuse was enough. I learned it's not, so I'm returning to</p>
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scientific method. Not the bastardization of science we've seen play out over the last 600 days. Today I'm sharing more, however different you've likely never hear, not science with false assumptions, however science with integrity-observable repeatable, measurable, science. And from here on out I will continue to educate you in this science, not necessarily so that you will believe me, rather, that you will investigate for yourself. You will start to question. you will begin to learn for yourself how your brilliant body is designed to heal.

JFK said,

"The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie--deliberate, contrived and dishonest--but the myth--persistent, persuasive and unrealistic. Too often we hold fast to the cliches of our forebears. We subject all facts to a prefabricated set of interpretations. We enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought".

You see a virus is not living thing. It has no nucleus, no mitochondria. It is the dead and decaying tissues of our cells healing themselves. The truth is that no pathogenic virus has ever been properly isolated or proven to exist. Only, generated by computer models. Dr. Stefan Lanka explains we have a misinterpretation of what virus really is. You see virus is excrement of a cell, not something "attacking" a cell. It cannot mutate, change etc, as it is not living. You won't see it in mainstream, however there are thousands of doctors and scientists illuminating, truth right now, standing up being brave, teaching about the REAL biology of our bodies. The true etiology of illness and disease of our bodies. An easy place to start, the lost chapter in the history when you learn the science with integrity, when you understand Pasteur was a fraud and only won the day, and Bechamp had the correct theory, you realize this should end right now! A simple google search for free PDF download of Ethel Douglas Hume's "lost chapter in the history of biology" is science that does not fear investigation or questioning. The science, just like many of the atrocities suffered by our black and brown brothers and sisters, was never taught to you in school, and it nullifies the never ending virus mitigation strategies sure to be driven by an endless alphabet variant narrative for years to come. I am standing up today saying we are wrong about our mainstream understanding of what a virus is and the true biological nature of our bodies. It is incumbent upon you and all of us to understand the truth about what really makes us ill and understand this truth.

Finally, the most important communication you will hear this evening is not from me, anyone talking to you. It is the communication between your head and your

HEART. Are you brave enough to listen to these two organs communicate in your body! Have the eyes of a child. Thank you for your time this evening.

Footnotes*

As of July 30, 2021: 90 institutions and offices in 24 countries/jurisdictions have responded thus far, as well as study authors and none have provided or cited any record describing “SARS-COV-2” isolation/purification.

Here are 5 compilation pdfs containing FOI responses from 79 institutions in 22 countries/jurisdictions, re the isolation/purification/existence of “SARS-COV-2”, as well as emails from authors of studies that claimed to have “isolated the virus” and an email from the Head of the Consultant Laboratory for Diagnostic Electron Microscopy of Infectious Pathogens at Germany’s Robert Koch Institut, last updated July 13, 2021:

“Effectiveness of Adding a Mask Recommendation to Other Public Health Measures to Prevent SARS-CoV-2 Infection in Danish Mask Wearers : A Randomized Controlled Trial”

<https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M20-6817>

“More Than a Dozen Credible Medical Studies Prove Face Masks Do Not Work Even In Hospitals!”

<https://visionlaunch.com/more-than-a-dozen-credible-medical-studies-prove-face-masks-do-not-work-even-in-hospitals/>

“German Neurologist Warns Against Wearing Facemasks: ‘Oxygen Deprivation Causes Permanent Neurological Damage”

<https://www.sott.net/article/442455-German-Neurologist-Warns-Against-Wearing-Facemasks-Oxygen-Deprivation-Causes-Permanent-Neurological-Damage>

“COVID-19 Masks Are a Crime Against Humanity and Child Abuse”

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/covid-19-masks-crime-against-humanity-child-abuse/5726059>

“Masks, false safety and real dangers, Part 3: Hypoxia, hypercapnia and physiological effects”

https://pdmj.org/papers/masks_false_safety_and_real_dangers_part3/

“Flaws in Coronavirus Pandemic Theory by David Crowe”
<https://theinfectiousmyth.com/book/CoronavirusPanic.pdf>

“Antibody Testing for COVID-19 by David Crowe”
<https://theinfectiousmyth.com/coronavirus/AntibodyTestingForCOVID.pdf>

“The Infectious Myth – Stephen Bustin on Challenges with RT-PCR”
<https://infectiousmyth.podbean.com/e/the-infectious-myth-stephen-bustin-on-challenges-with-rt-pcr/>

“The Infectious Myth – Simplifying RT-PCR”
<https://infectiousmyth.podbean.com/e/the-infectious-myth-simplifying-rt-pcr/>

“Comparison of 33 FDA-approved RT-PCR COVID-19 tests.”
<https://theinfectiousmyth.com/coronavirus/FDATestSummary.pdf>

“Isolation versus Purification”
<https://theinfectiousmyth.com/coronavirus/IsolationVersusPurification.php>

Recommended books to read that challenge the germ theory with scientific references.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/1673104037>

<https://www.skyhorsepublishing.com/9781510764620/the-contagion-myth/>

<https://www.torstenengelbrecht.com/en/virus-mania/>

Hope Murphy Tyehimba	Mask requirement	<p>I strongly urge the Wake County Board of Education to vote in favor of continuing the mask requirement for all Wake County Public Schools for teachers, staff and students. Unfortunately, with the increase in the number of COVID-positive cases in Wake County and beyond, and the lag in obtaining sufficient vaccination rates to reach herd immunity for Wake County, North Carolina and the United States as a whole, masking is necessary in order to protect our children and our educators. Though this issue has been made a partisan one, following the guidance of public health experts regarding how to ensure the safety of the citizenry in this county, state and country is not a partisan one; rather, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a threat to the health and safety of individuals regardless of their political affiliation and it makes good sense to follow the guidance and recommendations of public health experts who have conducted research regarding the rates of transmission of the virus and the threat to public health posed by COVID-19. Opponents argue that requiring children to wear masks will impact their mental health. Though the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the mental health of some children and adults alike, the loss of life which could result from contracting COVID-19 is of greater concern. In addition, the data currently shows that children and younger people are being impacted by COVID-19 in increasing numbers; hospitalization rates are also increasing in our community. Though my entire household and high schooler are fully vaccinated, I am concerned about the possibility of transmitting the virus to those who are unable to be vaccinated and the creation of more variants that the COVID-19 vaccine will not protect us from. We have a responsibility to protect the health of all in our community. For these reasons, it is in the best interests of the Wake County Public Schools System to implement a mask mandate for the protection of all.</p>
Ingrid Donaldson	Masks	<p>Please continue to require masks for under age 11 until they are eligible for vaccination.</p>
Jacquie Simmons	Masks	<p>I ask that you do not repeal the requirement for mask in school. Kids, teachers, staff should all be masked to keep everyone safe and schools open. Thank you.</p>
James Dorff	supporting a mask requirement	<p>WCPSS should require face masks for all persons in PK-12 schools for the fall/winter of 2021. This is urgent not only for the health and safety of our students and educators, but for the health of the community.</p>

		As a safety issue, requiring face masks for in person school is no different than required behaviors in the carpool lane. Safety requirements can not be an "individual choice".
Jason Fogleman	Masks in School	Please keep our children safe and require masking in schools. Your decision will either save or cost lives. Please choose to save lives. COVID is killing people.
Jay Brown	Masks should be mandated in WCPSS for students under age 12.	Masks should be mandated in WCPSS for students under age 12. They are unable to be vaccinated and rely on us to preserve their safety. If masks are not mandated under 12 for unvaccinated students then I will seek to switch to remote learning. Thank you
Jay Kim	Masks	For the health and safety of all teachers, students and staff, all schools should institute a mask mandate.

Jeffrey Kite	Athens Drive library closure	<p>I just wanted to express my sadness and surprise about the temporary closing of the library at Athens Drive. I understand the student safety concern with having visitors inside the building, but with the books on the go program, library patrons do not actually enter the building when they pick up books. We just pick them up from the stoop under the building overhang. (This is even less invasive than the church that meets at the school. https://ekkleciaraleigh.org)</p> <p>A compromise could be to just allow books on the go on the weekends and possibly after the school closes from something like 5-7pm on weekdays. No patrons would enter the library, be near students, and the community would still have easy access to books. The county librarians would also not have to be there during school hours.</p> <p>As for costs, I do not understand the significance of the savings. I understand that no library staff are being terminated but are being reassigned. Utilities, etc. will all stay the same being that the school is still in operation. The real savings could be transportation costs moving books from library to library. However, if some books are still being stored at Athens, then that savings would likely be less than anticipated.</p> <p>The Athens Drive library is part of the glue that holds our neighborhood together. There are no other libraries that are easily accessible to the southwest Raleigh area. This compromise would provide a great service to the area at a minimal cost, no patrons entering the library/school and allow the Athens Drive library to remain in the hearts and minds of the community until it can finally reopen safely. But most importantly, the children of all ages in our community need an easily accessible place for books. Long congested drives to Cameron Village or the Cary branch are just not feasible for many families.</p> <p>I ask that you do what you can to help keep the books on the go open at the Athens location in at least some form.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Jeff Kite 1508 Pineview Dr Raleigh, NC 27060 919-971-9434</p>
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Jen Shorter	Please keep masks	Please keep the mask mandate in place for our schools. If I could vaccinate my children I would, but they are not yet eligible. I want to do everything I can to keep them safe, and I hope you feel the same way. I am following the advice of the AAP in sending them to school for not only learning but also their emotional and social well being. Please do the same and follow their advice for masking. There is no harm from wearing masks, despite what some say, but there is a serious risk for not. Keep schools as safe as you can.
Jenn Viklund	Continue Public Health Safety Measures	Even with a mask mandate, WCPSS is already seeing rapid spread and clusters of the Delta variant of Covid 19. It is imperative that masks remain a part of safety measures and WCPSS should seriously consider returning to lunch within classrooms rather than the cafeteria. In the last three weeks alone, just in year-round schools that started in July, there have been over 130 cases (that have been confirmed/reported and likely not inclusive of all cases) including 3 large clusters and 7 cases with campus links. It is clear that this variant of the virus is causing exponentially more harm in schools than we saw in the Spring. Kids need to be in school and masks and safety measures are the only way we can keep them there and not in quarantine or worse until all have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated.
Jennifer Collins	Masks in school	Until it is possible for all school aged children to receive a vaccination for COVID, the mask mandate in schools should remain in place. A mask is currently the only defense our children have against this disease.
Jennifer Curtis-maury	Masks	I strongly feel that all children and adults in elementary schools (regardless of vaccination status) should wear masks for the time being. The delta variant seems to be able to be spread amongst those vaccinated and masks are effective. Social distancing should also be practiced when possible. If the school board decides to relax mask wearing, I will be forced to have my child switch to virtual.

Jessica Dixon Kirtley	Require Masks	As of Monday, given the number of new daily cases match where we were in late February of this year (and vastly climbing), kids, teachers and staff should be required to wear masks in school. Kids can be carriers to and from adults where positive cases disrupt the school setting. Our kids and teachers have been through so much change over the last 17 months, and they deserve a stable and consistent environment. My kids and their friends play with masks and do not even remember to take them off when they are not together. I'm vaccinated, and still wear masks in public places indoors to protect others. Additionally, we know that Virtual School wasn't for everyone. If schools are open, an environment should be available for everyone to feel comfortable being onsite. If we truly care about our community, our kids' education and the sanity of our teachers, we should support masking. I'm tired of wearing masks too, but it far outweighs the only negative of discomfort.
Jessica Kelly	Lunch/snack procedures	Please go back to the lunch and snack procedures as they were last year when kids ate in the classrooms and socially distanced as much as possible. It is their most vulnerable time and with Delta, I believe more spread will take place during this time. Our children need to be protected! It is our duty as parents, teachers, staff and school board members!
Jessica Wilkerson	Mask policy	The school board should follow the recent guidance by the CDC and require masks for students, faculty, and staff at K-12 schools regardless of vaccination status.
Jill Pappalardi	Makes masks mandatory for K-8	As an adult hospitalist physician that routinely cares for hospitalized adults with Covid, I know all too well the precautions needed to keep people safe (namely, masks), and how patients get sick with covid (unmasked and in close proximity). It is crucial that elementary children have the right to go to school in a safe environment, which means universal masking for ALL students and staff. Children are left vulnerable without vaccines and without masks. Universal masking of all students and staff K-8 is the recommendation by the AAP and is likely the only way the children will stay safe, healthy, and in school this year. It would be unfair to send them to school in a hazardous situation where masks are optional and covid will spread. Please follow the science, not the politics, and keep our children safe.

Jillian Hauser	Maintain Mask Requirements	<p>Please keep in step with American Academy of Pediatrics and maintain the mask requirements for students. It is simple, they have already done all the research for you.</p> <p>https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/</p> <p>This is the safest way for our kids to stay in school and will prevent a need for a school shut down. The numbers in Wake County alone have increased over 200% alone in a day and there is not an end in site. I don't want my child to end up in the hospital because wearing a mask is uncomfortable for someone. We have seen outbreaks already with just the year rounds starting so if anything you should be making it stricter. We should be back to where it was last year including no eating in the cafeteria.</p>
Joanne Londe	Keep masks in all schools	<p>Regardless of your position on vaccines, there is one effective, simple way to keep everyone in our schools safe. Everyone wear a mask at all times indoors. We did it last spring and our in person students did GREAT! They understood it showed care for the health and lives of others, and it just wasn't that hard. Yes we could still "see" their smiles 😊. Kids get it- but it needs to be a rule. That's why we have school rules- to keep us safe. We want covid to be over but it just isn't. I'm counting on our school board to choose everyone's safety over individual comfort/convenience. Please keep masks in all our schools. Thank you.</p>
Joy Wood	Response to Juul Activism - Edibles on Rise	<p>Dear WCPSS BOE,</p> <p>Although it is greatly appreciated that you are willing to act against Juul and the effects on vaping it is about 4 years overdue. Will you be doing the same, for the CBD/THC candy like edibles that are in the hands of our middle and high schoolers? The school is not doing enough to speak of the harm of these substances to the growing mind. WCPSS is well aware of the marijuana waxing use, and the THC oils that are now being inserted into cartridges of the the vape/Juul.</p> <p>Will we have to wait another 4 years, or will you step up and really start addressing drug interventions during advisory on high school students. Lets try to save some students lives and intervene.</p> <p>Lets be innovative and step in support students, and hold vape stores accountable.</p> <p>Thank you Joy Wood</p>

Judith W. Moreno	Keep Athens Drive Library open	<p>Please keep our community library open. I understand the concerns regarding school children being possibly exposed to covid but I suggest it be kept open evenings and weekends when school is not in session. It is unfair to have other public libraries open and to close ours. I think that this will be the 3rd time our library has been attacked in this waysince I moved to this area. I am 80 years old and depend on this library. Wearing masks is not a problem to those of us that care about our health and health of others. This could be a mandatory condition of using any public building.</p> <p>PLEASE KEEP ATHENS DRIVE LIBRARY OPEN!!</p>
Judy Fredlin	Covid protocol in wcpss	<p>Thank you, school board members, for giving this opportunity to share my thoughts on the covid protocol in WCPSS. It is essential that masks be worn, and other safety protocols be maintained until ALL students are eligible for the vaccine, plus the time to be considered fully vaccinated. This is likely for the entire 2021-2022 school year. It is unreasonable to think that children will not get, or carry, the virus, and therefore not continue the spread. I recognize the desire to be in class in person, as I am sending both of my children to in-person school this year. Unfortunately, only one of my children is of age to receive the vaccine (and has). I worry for my younger student and for all students who are not yet eligible or able to get the vaccine. The number of cases continue to rise, and most of them are the newer, more infectious, and virulent strain. It is of utmost importance that we continue to protect the children and their family members who are unable to get vaccinated from the coronavirus. It is really such a little thing to ask that people wear a mask, wash their hands, and keep personal space personal.</p> <p>Thank you, Judy Fredlin (Scientist)</p>

Julie Dolan	Social distancing in schools	<p>Please re-evaluate social distancing at schools. Covid outbreaks at wcpss are looking scary these days- there were 36 cases reported on August 1st- 10 of which were from the same school. There were clusters at several schools in wcpss reported last month in July. This is scary! This goes to show that with this new delta variant, kids ARE spreading covid to each other and it IS happening at schools. even during peak of covid last school year there were far less cases and clusters at schools- even though my son did virtual academy, I followed the dashboard closely. The difference? Social distancing!! Please give our children a safe place to learn by following the science and doing what we know works to help prevent the spread of covid- the 3 Ws- wear a mask, wait (6 feet apart), and wash. Ignoring social distancing during lunch, is an outbreak waiting to happen. My family has not dined inside a restaurant since covid started, since we know that dining indoors, with our masks off, near others (also with their masks off) is considered a high risk activity. I was surprised to learn from friends with kids already back in school that they are eating lunch in crowded cafeterias without masks, and in the classroom they are facing each other, with no effort to distance desks. This is horrifying to me. My family has made so many sacrifices to keep our family safe over the past year and a half, I really want to feel confident in my decision to send my 2nd grader back to school this fall. As cases and clusters keep rising in wcpss, it is making me worry more and more, and I worry if I made the wrong choice. Please! We know what works to keep our kids safe in schools. You all did an amazing job following the science last year and keeping the students and teachers safe. Don't let our kids down now! We are only a few months away from a vaccine available to all school age kids!</p> <p>Thank you for your time!</p>
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Julie Savage	Danger	<p>I would just like to share a letter from a NC doctor in reference to your overreaching CO2 respiration trash muzzles. You don't listen to the parents of the children, perhaps you will listen to a NC physician. What you all are doing is evil. The mask has always been a bridge to push the mRNA shot and that is a bridge to push the technocratic vaccine passport which will eliminate all who do not participate in obedience to the oppressive tyrants. You truly do need to repent. You all need Jesus.</p> <p>"NC physician report: Read on...</p> <p>The Medical Evidence for Unmasking our Children</p> <p>I was asked to write a letter to explain our position regarding keeping our students in masks in school during the next academic year. It is important, in doing so, that I share our credentials with you. I am a pediatrician that has practiced medicine for over 30 years. I have been Board Certified in my specialty for 26 years and have worked in various settings, to include emergency rooms, urgent care centers, hospitals and private medical practices. My husband, Dr. David Stein and I have owned our pediatric clinic, International Family Clinic which is located in Burlington NC for almost 22 years. The mission of our Clinic is to serve children and their families, no matter their socioeconomic, cultural or ethnic backgrounds. My practice valued treating all patients with equality and respect, before equity became popular. Dr. David Stein and I have served on multiple Boards because we consider the child's wellbeing to be of utmost importance for the future of our Nation and our communities. We also generously donate our time and financial resources to helping organizations that promote excellent outcomes for families and children. In short, we have dedicated much of our lives to our youth, in hopes that children will be given opportunities to have healthy and productive lives. It has come to our attention that various Boards of Education across the State of North Carolina, but in particular Alamance County, will be voting regarding whether our students will be required to wear masks in the coming school year. I will share with you what we have observed regarding COVID-19 transmission, masks and children since the pandemic began. It is important to explain that my husband and I did not close our Clinic at any time during the pandemic. We practiced in person medicine throughout 2020 and this year without a furlough.</p>
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We kept all of our employees on our payroll and gave them the option to take extended time off with pay, if they chose to.

As you see, our experiences with this pandemic are our basis for our assertions. First of all, we saw very little transmission of Covid-19 from child to child nor child to adult throughout the pandemic.

Children generally have limited symptoms and severity of illness from Covid-19. In the entire time since the pandemic began, only 2 of our 5,000 patients were hospitalized due to acquiring Covid and becoming sickened from it. Both recovered and are doing well today without medical sequelae. This is a much lower rate of severe illness and hospitalization than what we generally experience with Influenza. Many medical studies have asserted the same conclusions.

When mask mandates were initiated, in the summer of 2020, we observed no changes in transmission of Covid-19. We encountered no increase in severity of illness in the community nor among our children and their families. When mask mandates were lifted this spring we did not encounter a spike in the number of cases of Covid-19. It is our conclusion that masking has not been helpful whatsoever in limiting the transmission of the pandemic. Again, you may avail yourselves of numerous studies performed in different locations that have asserted the same outcomes.

Many effects have occurred due to masking and social distancing that have negatively impacted our children. Our patients have become more depressed, anxious and withdrawn. Their mental health has suffered, resulting in spikes in psychiatric hospitalizations, suicide attempts and deaths due to suicides. This is a well known and cited outcome to Covid management including mask wearing and social distancing in children.

Our patients have developed an increased frequency of facial rashes and skin infections since wearing masks. They are exposed to higher CO2 levels, resulting in higher heart rates and intolerance to heat and exercise when required to wear masks for hours at a time. There are many accounts of physicians reporting similar outcomes in their patients as well.

In short, it is not in the best interests of our students to be mandated to wear masks for extended amounts of time as they can cause harm to the health and mental well being of our children.

It is our conclusion that masks should not be imposed but rather an option, so that the parents may decide if they are comfortable having their children wear them.

		<p>It is our hope and prayer that our students have a successful and wonderful school year and they are not limited by anything that would encumber them.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Rosemary Fernandez Stein MD David A. Stein MD International Family Clinic Burlington, NC"</p>
Julie Waddle	Save the kids - mandate masks	<p>Again, thank you for your service in a difficult time. I am sure you're doing the best you can. I just want you to know that there are people out here who support a mask mandate for our students.</p> <p>I support a mask mandate for all students under the age of 12 until at least one month after a vaccine is approved for them. The risks of mask wearing are small - the 'too much CO2' is bull, the study was retracted last week. The benefits of it are huge - COVID's Delta variant is gaining ground, with positive testing % and hospital admissions both on the way up. Masking is one of the most effective ways individuals can protect each other.</p> <p>Delta's here. It's harming younger people, unvaxxed people, and our kids are right in the cross hairs. You can help save their lives. Please use the power we have given you to do this.</p>
Kalie Acquarulo	Keep the mask mandate in school	<p>Please require masks in school until all children have the opportunity to be vaccinated and until we see a significant decrease in co-vid spread. Studies show that the wearer of the mask is not adequately protected unless both parties are wearing the mask, so optional masks will not protect the wearer to the same extent. *Studies show masks have a risk reduction of 70% for those that always wore a mask. As a second language teacher, I can assure you that my students' performance last year was not hindered by masks. What did hinder students' performance was virtual education and without a mask mandate, students and teachers will be more likely to quarantine, with a guarantee to have a greater impact on their education than that of wearing a mask.</p> <p>*https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.03.31.20048652</p>
Karen Knight	Closure of Athens Drive library	<p>I am very disappointed in the decision to close the library in my neighborhood. It's been a great resource to our community, those with kids and those without. I</p>

		strongly urge you to reconsider, even if it means adjusting hours to meet other needs. Thank you.
Karen Santamaria	Keep current mask requirements until all kids have the opportunity to be vaccinated	<p>Good evening,</p> <p>I want to express my support for the existing mask requirements, and ask that we keep these safety measures in place until all our children have the opportunity to be vaccinated. WCPSS's current mask requirements are in line with the latest guidance from the CDC, and it is crucial that while we deal with the faster spreading and more dangerous delta variant that we protect those who are currently the most vulnerable. We did a great job protecting our teachers before they were able to get a vaccine, now let's do the same for our kids. Please keep requiring ALL students, teachers, and staff to wear masks this school year.</p> <p>Thank you, Karen Santamaria Lake Myra ES Parent Chair, Precinct 10-05, Wake Democrats</p>
Kat Kornbau	Masks in schools	<p>We all love to believe in fairy tails and magic. However, wishing upon a star is not going to make Covid disappear. We need to trust the science and protect everyone. Get vaccinated, wear masks. They have been proven to reduce transmission. If they dont work, then why do Drs. And nurses wear them in surgery? A child won't be "smiling" when they are in the hospital Dying from the disease. The individuals that want to get rid of masks in schools as the same ones that are not being careful or wearing them in public either. They have an option, to keep their child virtual. Let's do our part to stop the spread and end the pandemic for good. Not just wish on a star and hope for the fairy tail to have a happy ending!</p>
Kate Wilkes	Continue Required Mask Policy	<p>As the parent of an incoming kindergartener, I am writing to implore you to keep the mandatory mask mandate for Wake County Public Schools. Given the current state of COVID-19 in our state and county, and that young children cannot be vaccinated, wearing masks is the only hope we have to keep our children and staff safe in schools this fall. Children need to be in school - and they demonstrated this spring that they are capable of learning and making friends and having fun all while wearing masks. Without masks, we would be looking at numerous classroom quarantines and time away from school which is so hard for</p>

		kids, teachers and working parents. Please make the sensible choice and continue the mask requirement for in-person school. Thank you.
Kate York	School mask requirements	Please do not remove the mask mandate from Wake County public schools. There are many small inconveniences that we demand of our children to ensure their safety. We ensure they wear seatbelts, we require that they are up on their vaccinations, and we take them to the dentist twice a year and to annual physicals. While I understand that some kids don't like it, our children are enormously adaptable and we should never put convenience ahead of public health. The fact that we are trusting parental opinion over the health recommendations of the best and brightest in the country cannot be tolerated. This would set a precedent to allow push back for other school mandates related to public health. Many of us chose where we live because we entrust WCPSS to provide safe environments for learning, please do not prove us wrong. Also, if we remove the mask mandate, we will have higher rates of COVID infection and therefore more quarantines and interruptions to learning. My daughter has been back to school and is masked everyday and she noted that she barely thinks about having her mask on. Don't let an adjustment that could take a week impact our kids health and learning progress for months to come.
Katherine Garcia	Vote on Mask Mandate for Children Going Back to School	The children understand what is going on. They have been wearing masks to the date. If they do not have a vaccine available to them, then they should be wearing masks - no question. Children that cannot wear masks should have some form of covering at the responsibility of the parent. My child (age 7) had to go to the Y last year during the shut downs, and she wore her mask with no problem. My honest opinion is, if we continue to debate on this issue, there will be more room for confusion and heated arguments from parents who are for/against the vaccine and mask wearings. If the Board were to follow the CDC regulations of "...those who are not vaccinated must wear masks" (like in various public buildings), then that should be the end of it.
Kathryn Bermudez	Masks k - middle	I believe it is critical to have mask wearing mandatory for the elementary and middle schools due to the increased threat of the Delta variant. In order to keep our unvaccinated children safe, masks are needed in the schools. In addition, I'm concerned how lunch will be handled with in person learning and would like to learn more about how the schools are addressing this.
Kathryn Langan	Masks in School	Please continue keeping our kids safe by having them wear masks in school!

Kathryn Punch	Keep Mask Mandate	<p>Please follow CDC guidance and keep masks mandated for all students. If the mask mandate goes it puts our children who cannot yet be vaccinated at risk. My child has been back in person since July 8th and is thriving. I need to keep her as safe as possible from Covid while meeting her needs of in-person learning. Please keep my child safe by keeping the mask mandate.</p>
Kathryn Thompson	Importance of continued mask wearing in schools	<p>I am a parent of two WCPSS students, and I am also a WCPSS educator. Last school year was my 15th year as a WCPSS teacher, and it was my 1st year as a virtual teacher. It was the hardest year in my teaching career. I know that it was also incredibly challenging for students and families because I saw how challenging it was for my own children.</p> <p>My roles as a parent and as an educator inform my perspective on why it is so important that we protect our school communities by continuing to wear masks in schools.</p> <p>As a parent, my own children will be returning to the school building. I am so happy that they will get a more complete educational experience and will have more time with friends. That said, my kids are unvaccinated, so they will be wearing masks to reduce any transmission they might convey to others, contributing to the preservation of health and stability of our school community. Everyone who values our learners, educators, and school communities should do the same.</p> <p>As an educator, I will be returning to in-person teaching this year, and I am so excited to be in the classroom again-- learning, laughing, and building strong relationships with learners and their families. Educators know that in-person learning is the best way to provide meaningful, effective, and dynamic learning that meets the diverse needs of our students. In order to provide deliver on that dynamic in-person learning, we must make sure students are able to be present in school as much as possible. We must prevent COVID transmission as much as possible so that fewer people will have to quarantine and miss multiple days of valuable, in-person learning. Wearing masks will not only protect people from becoming ill, it will also help us to provide stable, in-person learning environments.</p>

		<p>Until all members of our school communities have had the opportunity to be vaccinated, masks should continue to be worn to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to maintain consistent in-person learning for students.</p>
Katie Norcross	Masking in schools	<p>As a parent of two elementary school students, I support continuing the masking requirement for all staff and students in schools for the upcoming school year. It goes without saying that until our children can be vaccinated, we should continue other public health behaviors that have been shown to reduce transmission and masking is most effective when it is practiced consistently by everyone. We should be doing everything we can to ensure our children can remain in person for the upcoming school year.</p>
Katie Surber	Masks for 2021 school year	<p>Hello! Thank you for your hard work this past year and for making decisions that have kept our children safe. In the past, those decisions have been made on the guidance from the CDC and the scientific community. Please continue to follow those guidelines and requires masks for our children in the 2021 school year. Optional masks would not protect our children and teachers from the new variants of COVID. We all desperately want a fun, healthy school year and this is one of the easiest ways that this can happen.</p>
Katie Williams	A Plea to follow CDC Guidelines	<p>Dear Board Members, I urge you to review to the most recent data provided by the CDC that shows a high level of community transmission of Covid-19 in Wake County. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view</p> <p>Please also review the CDC's most recent guidance that states: Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the guidance for fully vaccinated people. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.</p> <p>My children, ages 3 and 6, are desperate to return to school, to learn and to be with their friends. But we need them to be safe and healthy. Please help protect my children. They are ineligible to be vaccinated against Covid-19. Your protection strategies are all we have. Listen to the CDC. They are the experts. Require all individuals to mask. Reinstate classroom lunches. Maintain social distancing rules. Help keep my children alive.</p>
Keira stojin	Mask usage	<p>Please slow down the spread of covid19. mandate masks in schools for students and staff. Wake county is already overcrowded we need masks to help with the</p>

		ongoing pandemic since most classrooms cannot distance nor do they have proper ventilation.
Kelli Greene	Request for mandatory masks in schools	As I parent and public health practitioner, I respectfully and strongly encourage the Wake Co Board to approve mandatory use of masks while indoors at school. The CDC and Academy of Pediatrics have made this recommendation and believe this is necessary to keep our students well while learning on site in schools during this time of high covid infection rates and in the presence of the delta variant which is highly contagious. Many eligible people have elected to not be or cannot be vaccinated for many reasons. There is also a huge section of our school population which is ineligible for vaccination at this time. Even vaccinated people can unknowingly be infected with the delta variant and spread it to others. The virus that causes covid will continue to evolve and infect our children. It's science, not politics or exaggeration. Data from rigorous scientific studies demonstrate masks are effective at preventing transmission. Masks are not overly burdensome and ensure our children may learn onsite and get some sense of normalcy while guarding their health. Please follow the science and guidance of public health agencies when making this decision. Thank you.
Kelly Gauger	masks in school	<p>Please maintain the mask requirement for both children and adults in schools. I'm trying to keep my children safe, and they need to be physically in the schools. I'm relying on the school to keep them safe while they are away from home.</p> <p>The Delta variant is more contagious than previous variants. The vaccine is expected mid-winter for children 5-12. Continuing the mask mandates is a simple and effective way to limit covid spread, while allowing the children to be in person. Masks also reduce the time children may have to quarantine. Recent clusters in local schools have forced mandatory quarantines for many students. Masks are simple way to reduce the number of students forced to quarantine.</p> <p>Although covid may be more mild in children, we don't know the long term effects of having covid. Does it cause any long term damage to children? We don't know the answer yet. The American Academy of Pediatrics says that school should be in person with masks required. Please listen to the experts who are saying that we needs masks in place.</p>
Kelly Hodges	Masks for WCPSS	I believe that if you do not require all students to be vaccinated that masks are an absolute must if we want to have our children in school this year. This is not what

		any parent had hoped for but it is where with are with the delta variant. This virus continues so we must try and keep our students safe and in school. No brainer!
Kim Gaetz	Keep masking requirements	I have 2 kids in the Wake County Public Schools system and am a public health professional. We signed our children up for in person school this year, trusting that Wake County Schools would continue to hold our children's health, wellbeing and continued learning in person, in their highest priority. To remove the mask mandate in schools would be sacrificing our children-- who have no other option yet to protect themselves from the virus while taking part in the classroom learning and socialization that is so important for elementary school children. With half of our school in virtual learning, we still struggled last year to keep Brentwood adequately staffed due to teachers getting sick. How long will in person school last with the Delta variant rapidly spreading, no masks, and most kids back in person? My husband and I urge you to keep the masking requirements until elementary school children are able to receive the vaccine and our COVID-19 case rate is below 2%. We also urge you to look at the lunch and snack policies to ensure that children are spread out while eating and other times when they have mask breaks, to avoid transmission in the cafeteria.
Kim Wyman	Masks	Masks are necessary with the increase in cases to keep kids and others safe. Without them we end up with kids constantly quarantined when exposed and essentially out of school again.
Kimberly a day	mask mandate	I am concerned about a mask mandate in our schools and believe it should not be required. There are many adverse health risks to keeping our children in a mask all day. And if you actually do some real research (beyond political pressure of the CDC) you will see that only secure fit (non cloth made masks) or potentially N95 masks have better effectiveness. We are locking our children in masks all day and only fostering other infections. It should be parent choice and not school mandated. Kids will get sick, some will get covid. That is a fact of life and we need to learn to live again.

<p>Kira Kroboth</p>	<p>PETITION: Wake Residents for Masking in Schools</p>	<p>WCPSS School Board Members, Superintendent Moore and Staff -</p> <p>Thank you for all of your hard work, research and diligence throughout the pandemic to keep our students safe. Residents of Wake County support the Board in the continuation of required masking by all students and staff K-12.</p> <p>Via this public comment, I will be submitting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Wake County Residents petition for Maintaining Mask Requirements in Schools: www.change.org/wcpssmasks2. A video hearing from kids themselves, of all ages, talking about how masks make them feel in schools: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUI-w51NR_c&t=2s3. Link to our Virtual Rally to Keep Masks and Safety Protocols: https://fb.me/e/1Tmt8rHLX <p>Please consider this the official delivery of our petition in support of masking: www.change.org/wcpssmasks. We have intentionally kept politics out of our discussions. We believe this is about data, science and the health of our students. We are reaching 5,000 signatures today, with purely grassroots efforts from parents and residents.</p> <p>We asked a group of kids what their thoughts are on masking in schools. It's their voice we need to all hear! IPlease view the short video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUI-w51NR_c&t=2s.</p> <p>There will be those in support of masks and increased social distancing and protocols present at the meeting today. Many of us, like myself, have high risk family members at home. We have children that are not vaccinated and will not gather in large groups that we know are unmasked and likely unvaccinated. What we support does not align with an in-person presence at today's meeting. But we want you to know we are here. Therefore, we are hosting an online virtual rally via Zoom. Media will be invited. Link to the public Facebook event: https://fb.me/e/1Tmt8rHLX (More are signed up from the Private FB Group).</p>
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Kirsten Hagopian	Please maintain mask mandate in WCPSS	<p>We love our children. We love our educators. In-person learning is invaluable and in order to keep schools safe the CDC and AAP recommend a multi-layered approach to Covid protection, of which masks are a critical piece. Kids are less likely to get very sick and die, but they are not less likely to spread Covid. With the delta variant 200% more transmissible, new Covid cases on the rise, only 55% of the population in Wake vaccinated and no vaccine available for kids under 12 yet, mandating protections in schools is the only responsible public health policy decision to make right now- for our children, educators and our community.</p>

<p>Kirstin Morrison</p>	<p>Please Continue Mandatory Mask Wearing</p>	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>Thank you for your continued service and careful decisions during this time. I would like to respectfully urge you to continue to implement mandatory mask wearing in WCPSS schools.</p> <p>My year-round second grader returned to school THIS MORNING after a week of quarantining due to an exposure at school. He sat next to a student who tested positive for covid, but thanks to both students masking properly, my son was able to return to school both negative for covid and also having missed only 5 days of instruction. Had he become positive for covid, he would have missed much more schooling, and we may have been the source for spreading covid to a local daycare via our younger child. Masks work. Period.</p> <p>There is no plan for virtual instruction during quarantine. Thus, students receive only whatever their amazing teachers can put together while also managing their in-person classrooms. This is not a system that can sustain equitable access to high quality instruction with any amount spread causing extended absences for sickness and quarantine. We simply cannot afford for covid to spread in our schools. Diligent mask use must continue. Our students deserve to be in school in person.</p> <p>I would venture to say that those who are screaming loudly “free the smiles” are the first who will line up to complain when their child misses 24 days of instruction due to sickness. For the good of the whole WCPSS community, those who are vulnerable, and those who are not yet eligible for vaccination as a result of their age (not by their choice), mask use MUST continue.</p> <p>Mask use must also be implemented during meetings with staff when students are not present (PD, training, etc) because unvaccinated employees can easily spread as well.</p> <p>If mask use is eliminated or made optional, our family and many like us will need an option to return to VA (which is not the best for our son’s mental health). If that option is not presented, then we will be forced to consider other schooling options outside of WCPSS. All students deserve to be in person, knowing their safety is protected by the district.</p>
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Kristen Conner	Covid safety in schools	<p>I implore the school board to adopt mandatory masks in all WCPSS school buildings, as well as stringent social distancing protocols at all times, including lunchtime. My child is currently a student at Turner Creek ES and is presently quarantined at home due to the Covid cluster spreading through our school. Current practices have obviously been woefully inadequate to deal with the highly transmissible threat posed by the delta variant. Aside from being a mother, I am also an epidemiologist by training. From both a personal and professional capacity, I ask you to take extremely seriously the threat our unvaccinated children are facing and strongly urge the school board to take swift and decisive action to protect them while in school. Making masks and social distancing mandatory at all times is vital to keeping our kids and our staff safe. In addition, please institute further lunchtime safety protocols including spacing and no talking without masks. If these safety measures are not adopted swiftly, our children, staff and their families will not be safe in schools and the current explosion of Covid cases will undoubtedly increase exponentially.</p>
Kristen Eaton	Masking for Fall '21	<p>“As we start the 2021-'22 school year, a large portion of students are not eligible to be vaccinated and there are COVID variants that are more contagious. Because of this and because we want to have all students in school, the AAP advocates for all students, teachers and staff to wear masks while indoors in school.”</p> <p>-Sonja O’Leary, M.D., FAAP, chair of the AAP Council on School Health Executive Committee</p> <p>The decision to mask or unmask should be influenced by medical professionals and medical professionals only.</p> <p>As a parent to three unvaccinated children under the age of 12 it seems like a risky time to even consider unmasking when the delta variant is known to be more contagious and schools are unable to provide the distancing measures that were upheld last year.</p>

		For the safety of our children and staff, please do not consider unmasking at this time.
Kristin Beller	Safety and Stability	<p>Good afternoon, Superintendent Moore and Board members.</p> <p>Scientists and doctors have shared that the COVID-19 virus only mutates when it is hosted in a human body. It is less likely to have that opportunity as more people become vaccinated to protect themselves and others from virus transmission. With the rise of the delta variant in NC and Wake County and the fact that all school-aged children do not yet have access to the vaccine, it will be incredibly important for all students and staff to work together to prevent transmissions in our schools. Luckily, we have access to so much more knowledge now than we did last year at this time. We know that besides getting vaccinated, the most effective way to prevent COVID-19 transmission is wearing a mask. We know that we can expect exposure to or transmission of COVID-19 in indoor spaces when students or staff are unvaccinated and unmasked. Knowing these things means that we can do more to prevent transmissions and create more stability for sustaining in-person learning. All reasonable adults want safety and stability for our students and the staff that teach and support them.</p> <p>Let's apply the lessons we learned last year towards a safer, more stable 2021-2022. We need to wear masks indoors, even if we're vaccinated, and we need staffing solutions that provide students more space during lunch or other unmasked periods of time while also protecting the instructional roles and responsibilities of teachers and other instructional support staff.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kristin Beller Wake NCAE President</p>
Kristina Quinn	Masks for Cross Country Running	Please consider no masks for cross country running. It will be extremely hazardous if runners have to wear a mask during a meet. To subject them to such a thing would cause dangerous consequences. These runners have to run many miles in the heat. They are already experiencing stress on their bodies. To make them wear masks would be dangerous! This can not happen to children! It will have dangerous consequences if our runners have to wear masks outside.

Lakshmi Ganesh	Mask should be mandated due to the surge in COVID cases	Mask should not be made optional unless there is a medical concern. The delta variant is surging, this is not the time to let our guards down. For the very sake of our kid's who's learning and social skills were lost this past year by being virtual, if they don't mask up, we will be end up with our children quarantined at home once again.
Landon Stone	Changes to Procedure for In Person Public Comment	<p>Dear WCPSS, and Communications Department:</p> <p>It would have been respectful to the community and parents at large to send a district wide text, alerting parents that a procedure has been changed on speaking at board meetings.</p> <p>I shall hope that 20 speakers will be speaking later today, for you to shut down the public in person comment form. No where on this procedure does it state the request to speak in person will stay up later in the event less that 20 people sign up.</p> <p>We know at times you will only have 2-3 speakers go to the podium.</p> <p>Once again, it is an epic fail. Please look at your job responsibilities from outside your cubicle. Regards Landon Stone</p>
Laura Bass	Mask Policy	<p>With the delta variant circulating and clusters already emerging in school with mask protocol in place, please do not relax the mask requirements. If anything, I hope to see further precautions taken. Our kids have already sacrificed a year+ of their childhood to this pandemic and we should be listening to the CDC and AAP recommendations to keep our children and teachers in a safe learning environment. Children need school, and not only do they need it to be a safe environment, they need as much consistency as possible after the last year and half and as evidenced in charter schools that have started the year mask optional and already have hundreds of students+staff in quarantine, relaxing precautions will only serve to make this year chaotic and more difficult for everyone involved. Please keep our kids safe by requiring masks and enhancing safety protocols for the new school year.</p>

<p>Laura Browning</p>	<p>School Mask Mandate</p>	<p>Please require masks to be worn by all school children pre-k through 5th grade. As witnessed by the surge in unemployment and hardships caused in 2020 due to schools being closed, I feel it's imperative we do all that we can to keep students and teachers healthy and thereby schools open. It's hard enough for teachers to keep up with the fast-paced curriculum and regular classroom management, but now we need them to bring the kids up to speed from a wonky year and a quarter. Students dipping in and out of the classroom because of exposure concerns or actual sickness is disruptive to everyone. The answer is so simple. Masks should be mandatory. Keep teachers and kids healthy, schools open, parents working. Thank you.</p>
<p>Laura Carver</p>	<p>PCR tests, students rights, masks optional</p>	<p>I am disappointed that no action to remove the face covering requirement has been taken since the previous meeting. It is unacceptable to coerce the use of an experimental medical device upon children in order to gain access to a public education. Medical experimentation without consent of the parents is a human rights violation. My child is currently being denied an in person education at a Wake County elementary school, because the school will not honor a religious exemption from a face covering since it is not listed in the "toolkit".</p> <p>All elected officials take an oath to uphold the Constitution and laws. However, the Constitution seems to be a meaningless document when it comes to the perceived emergency of this virus. Our rights are not supposed to be taken away for any reason. No law, mandate, or policy can be in violation of the Constitution.</p> <p>According to the North Carolina Constitution, Section 15 "The people have the right to the privilege of education, and it is the duty of the State to guard and maintain that right". Why is this not being honored? Denying my child an education that our tax dollars pay for is unacceptable. Let me also share Section 13 Religious liberty "All persons have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience."</p> <p>Why is the Superintendent and school board members ignoring their oath? Why are students being denied an education without informed consent?</p>

As it relates to RT-PCR testing, are you aware of the recall issued by the CDC? The PCR test has been found to be unable to differentiate between SARS-COV2 and influenza. Remember last year when health officials told us the flu was gone because we all wore masks and social distanced? I believe that was a false statement. The flu still existed it is just that the PCR test was unable to distinguish between different viruses. How many cases of the flu did we call covid last year? Are you also aware that there is no certified reference material used in the PCR test to calibrate the results? The PCR test is not based on an actual isolated and purified Sars virus as stated in CDC documents but rather a digital sequence generated by a computer model.

Are the health officials going to make sure anyone with symptoms is first tested for Influenza A & B to ensure we do not accidentally characterize the flu with SARS and provide falsely reported numbers that further place restrictions on our rights and freedoms in the coming months?

The inventor of the PCR test, Kary Mullis stated the following about PCR tests “a process that’s used to make a whole lot of something out of something. That’s what it is. It doesn’t tell you that you’re sick and it doesn’t tell you that the thing you ended up with really was going to hurt you or anything like that.”

Another comment he made was that The PCR, if you do it well, you can find almost anything in anybody,” Mullis once said in a public address. “If you can amplify one single molecule up to something you can really measure, which is something you can do....So that could be thought of as a misuse of it.”

Remember that unreliable PCR tests are being used to drive a “casedemic” and other extreme measures restricting our freedoms. Also be aware that the Delta variant is not able to be detected with a PCR test. Only a small sample like 5-16 PCR tests per week are being sent to the CDC for genomic sequencing. To make broad statements that everyone has the Delta variant is simply not true because it has not been isolated and purified from every person in the state that receives a standard PCR test.

As you carefully consider the policy relating to face covering in school please remember the oath you all took to the Constitution. Remember our inalienable rights granted to us by our creator. Our children are the property of the parents not elected officials. We care for their health everyday and should be respected

		<p>enough to be able to make the right health decision for them when it comes to face coverings. Please stop requiring healthy, asymptomatic children to wear face coverings at school.</p> <p>Thank you. Laura</p>
Laura Chintapalli	Masks for All in WCPSS	<p>Hello, a brief comment to advocate for the continued use of masks for all students, staff & visitors in all in WCPSS. If any thing less than masks for all, this decision would be placing our schools in grave danger. It would be a life or death mistake. This is not an exaggeration or an unjust response. It is the truth. Covid has caused over 35 million cases and killed over 613,000 in the US. The Delta variant is quickly spiraling out of control. Please protect our schools. The parents protesting against masks do not speak for the majority of parents in the WCPSS.</p>
Laura Fiorilli-Crews	Support for masks in schools	<p>I am asking the school board to KEEP the requirement for masks in Wake County schools until a vaccine becomes widely available for children under 12. With the emergence of the Delta variant, our youngest students are at greater risk than at any earlier point in the Covid-19 pandemic. Masks are an easy and essential solution. Watch the data and news coverage: Delta is rolling up through North Carolina from states that have been more permissive and are now experiencing the tragic results. Louisiana has wisely brought back its mask mandate. Let's not get to that point before we act.</p>
Laura Wood	Please continue with masks!	<p>Dear Superintendent Moore and Board members, As a parent of two elementary age children, and working at a different elementary school, I implore you to continue the mandate of masks! You have listened to the science thus far and I hope that you continue to stay strong against these new political moves aimed at creating fear and spreading misinformation. You are doing the right thing to protect staff and students, especially given the increasing cases with this new Delta variant and its faster rate of transmission. Thank you for all of your dedication, hard work and perseverance during this tense and difficult time period!</p> <p>Sincerely, Laura Wood, parent and staff member</p>

Lauren Crowley	YES to masks in schools!	Please continue to require masks in all WCPSS buildings, for all individuals who are medically able to wear one! Schools were shut down in March 2020 when there was only a few cases in Wake County. We are now seeing numbers skyrocketing after the statewide mandate ended and I do not believe that is a coincidence. At the same time, many students and parents struggled with virtual academy last year. We need to safely return students to school, and masking is crucial to this. Please mandate masks for all!
Laurie Randolph-Adams	Mask Mandate	As the parent of a rising second grader at Green Elementary who keeps a close watch on the news, I am concerned with the idea of removing the mask mandate. My child had no issues with wearing a mask last school year and we know scientifically that wearing masks, while slightly uncomfortable, greatly reduces the chances of virus transmission. Since no elementary students can yet receive a vaccine, this is incredibly important to keep everyone in the building safe. Thank you for continuing to prioritize safety!
Lindsey barbee	Masks in schools	Please keep the mask requirement in schools. At least a few more months until there is a vaccine available for kids as young as 5. Once I can protect my child with a vaccine, then allow people to choose. Right now masks are the only thing keeping kids safe and in person school. We can't do another year of virtual achool.
Lisa Bendz	Continue Mask Requirement and COVID-19 Safety Measures in WCPSS	<p>I support the extension of the mask requirement and continued COVID-19 safety measures in WCPSS schools. Public health decisions should be based on current scientific evidence-based information. The Centers for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and NC Department of Health and Human Services all recommend: 1) universal indoor masking for teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, and 2) layered prevention strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated (students, teachers, staff, and community members).</p> <p>COVID-19 cases have significantly increased in the past several weeks in Wake County. On 7/29/21, Wake County had 406 new cases, similar to the number of new cases per day in February 2021/November 2020 (source: NCDHSS COVID Dashboard). On 7/29/21, WCPSS schools had 19 confirmed positive COVID cases (source: WCPSS COVID-19 Metrics google doc). Children under 12 are unable to be vaccinated and thus are unprotected from COVID-19. Given the current surge in Wake County cases and vulnerability of many WCPSS students,</p>

		the mask requirement combined with COVID-19 safety measures are needed to ensure a safe in-person learning environment for students, teachers, and staff.
Lisa Ellis	Mask requirement in schools	Please KEEP a mask requirement until kids can get vaccinated - Covid cases are rising, especially with the Delta variant.
Lisa Knickerbocker	COVID-19 mitigation measures	<p>COVID-19 remains a threat to the health of our communities and students. We are now dealing with variants of the original virus that transmit more easily between individuals and can be transmitted even by people who are vaccinated. Sustained transmission of the virus in the community endangers both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals and can cause the emergence of variants that are resistant to immune responses from both vaccines and infection. More children are being hospitalized with the delta variant than previous variants. It is therefore important to keep mitigation measures such as masks, enhanced ventilation, and cohorts in place until such time as we are able to provide safe and effective vaccines for all students and staff. We still don't know the long term consequences of infection from COVID-19, and it is vital that we take the measures that we can to protect children from this disease. Providing a safe environment for students to learn in will allow more students to attend school in person.</p> <p>I have seen people complaining that students won't be able to see people smile and that it is damaging to their mental health. Psychologists do not support this idea. People are able to understand the emotions of others and feel supported in many ways, and a smile is not the only way children feel support. Mask wearing takes place in many settings and communities and has for many decades without any harm coming to children from it. Masks are vital to safety, and students are able to receive support and emotional information in ways other than seeing smiles.</p>

Lisa Knickerbocker	Education in history	<p>I am troubled to see the teaching of accurate history being represented as teaching “critical race theory”, “teaching America is evil”, or “teaching kids to hate white people”. None of these are an accurate representation of what is being taught or why it is being taught.</p> <p>It is vital for us as a nation to teach children history accurately and unflinchingly.</p> <p>Teaching accurate history doesn’t always paint our nation or those who have been in charge of our country in a favorable light. That doesn’t mean that it’s to be avoided. It is not teaching students to hate anyone. It is teaching them that mistakes and bad decisions have been made, and we have to teach those things in order for students to understand why we are where we are so we can do better in the future. It means teaching the history of people of all races including the ways they were treated without omissions to make us look better. That isn’t “critical race theory” or “teaching hate” it’s just teaching history.</p>
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<p>Lori Del Negro</p>	<p>Please continue to require masks in public schools</p>	<p>I strongly encourage WCPSS to continue to require everyone to wear protective masks while indoors in our public schools. I acknowledge there there will be appropriate medical exemptions to this policy, but I believe that masking should continue for everyone regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>Recent recommendations from the CDC as well as the American Association of Pediatrics emphasizes the increased risk to children from the Delta variant, both in number of cases as well as the severity of the illness. Recent evidence also suggests that even vaccinated individuals are spreading the virus, though they may have no symptoms.</p> <p>We need the board to act on behalf of those with the least power to protect themselves. Children under 12 are not expected to be eligible for vaccination until "mid-winter" according to the latest estimates. Many students 12 and older may wish to be vaccinated, but must abide by their parents decision, which may or may not be the same. And teachers want to serve their students, but they cannot choose to teach only vaccinated students, they teach everyone. This is an issue of collective risk, which can only be addressed through collective precaution.</p> <p>We know that risk is a product of the hazard and exposure. When students and teachers return to school in the fall, we will not know from day to day, classroom to classroom, or school to school what the true hazards are. Many of the individuals in any classroom may be ill, asymptomatic, shedding virus while vaccinated, or recently exposed. What we can control is the level of exposure, and we know very well what steps to take to minimize exposure - wash hands frequently, keep a safe physical distance, wear a mask. These precautions will not prevent every case of transmission or cluster outbreak, but we know they will dramatically reduce the number, which keeps everyone safer.</p> <p>Reducing risk works best with multiple layers of precaution. WCPSS should also continue to evaluate ventilation, procedures for students eating lunch and snacks, and using outdoor spaces as much as possible. But none of these measures reduces the value of requiring masks for everyone in the school building.</p> <p>WCPSS should also consider regular testing/screening to help catch cases earlier and reduce the potential for outbreaks.</p> <p>With cases rising alarmingly around the state and in Wake County, and with the proportion of cases among children and the proportion of serious illness in children both rising, I urge WCPSS to continue taking all the precautions possible to protect our students. As a parent of students in 3rd and 8th grade, I have seen both the challenges and the benefits of the precautions taken last year. My sons</p>
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		are far better off when they are able to be in school in person, so long as they don't have to risk their long-term health to do so.
Lyndsey Cavola	Require Masks	Please continue to require masks for all K-8 students as they do not have the opportunity to be vaccinated yet. With rising case levels, it would be dangerous to remove the mask mandate at this point.
M Lee	Wearing masks in school saves lives.	Given the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and that a much larger volume of students returning to campus, it's critical to require wearing masks in schools to prevent further spread of the disease. The data to date clearly shows that the public health measures taken at schools previously (e.g., masks for all, keeping the distance) have prevented potential clusters at schools. With more recent trend in increasing transmissions among children in schools with easing restrictions and more students coming back, it's becoming more important to keep the safety measures as much as we can. With more students returning to campus, keeping the distance between students/teachers/staff will become a lot more challenging, and keeping the mask might be our only mean of preventing further spread of the disease. Please, the lives of our children, teachers, and staff of our schools (and their families/neighbors) are precious, so let's do everything we can to protect them.
Maegan Serra	Keep our children protected by keeping mask mandate in place	Please keep our mask mandate in place to protect our children from COVID-19. The delta variant and additional variants appearing due to the misinformed failure to get vaccinated are on the rise and it is our duty to protect our children, our communities, and the immunocompromised. Masks and social distancing protocols like socially distanced or outdoor lunches are the best way to keep our children in schools. Let's continue to listen to the science & APA suggestions to continue to mask indoors.
Maija Christensen	Mask wearing at school	As per the cdc, all children should absolutely be required to wear masks at all wake county schools. Particularly with the delta variant, which is more contagious and has increased effect, children and their families need to be protected. Even vaccinated people are at increased risk of breakthrough cases with the delta variant. I am horrified at the notion that wake county schools would put our children and families at risk.
Maija Christensen	Mask wearing at school	As per the cdc, all children should absolutely be required to wear masks at all wake county schools. Particularly with the delta variant, which is more contagious and has increased effect, children and their families need to be protected. Even vaccinated people are at increased risk of breakthrough cases with the delta

		variant. I am horrified at the notion that wake county schools would put our children and families at risk.
Malcolm Levine	Masks in school	We need to be safe at school and the best way to do so would be to have everyone wearing masks and following proper safety guidelines.
MaLi H Burnett	Keep masks in schools	I'm writing today to urge you to maintain universal masking in our schools. The CDC, AAP and the NC DHHS ToolKit all recommend universal masking in for K-12. We know that masks decrease the transmission of respiratory diseases- not just COVID-19 but also the flu, common colds and RSV. We also know our students are better served when attending school in the Least Restrictive Environment- in person rather than involuntarily virtual. WCPSS needs to prioritize the health and safety of the students- especially those who cannot be vaccinated as well as faculty and staff. Masks, regardless of vaccination status, along with frequent hand washing will do so as well as distancing as much as possible. There are already COVID clusters for our year-round students. With the increased transmission of the Delta variant, one can expect these clusters to increase- and to increase greatly if precautions are not maintained. This is not only stressful for our students and teachers, but ripples through our community as families must miss work to quarantine or care for a quarantined child. Mask wearing will help keep our schools open- allowing teachers and staff to do what they love and allowing our students to blossom. As the mother of a soon-to-be-kindergardner with asthma, I'm particularly concerned for our students too young to be vaccinated and those at higher risk for complications. Help keep our students, teachers, staff and larger community safe. Maintain universal masking for K-12 and WCPSS staff. We need everyone healthy to keep our schools going and to support our future generations
Marcus	Wake County School Face Mask Requirement	Masks should be required for all students and staff. Check the numbers and the facts and keep our kids safe.
Margaret Fyfe	In favor of mask mandate	Please absolutely have children in middle and elementary school wear masks until they can be vaccinated. This is for the health and safety of everyone, in addition to not having schools close due to Covid clusters and outbreaks. I have two children in Ligon Middle-- one is too young to be vaccinated, and the other is vaccinated. I'd also urge you to do what you can to encourage vaccination-- this is a well-tested vaccine, developed with decades-old technology and has been given safely to hundreds of millions of people. We have the privilege of

		eradicating this virus, unlike many countries, and it's shameful that politics are preventing us from coming together to stop this pandemic.
Mariann Kromenacker	Masks help keep our kids safe	The cases of Covid are again on the rise due to the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Children are getting sick at a higher rate than with previous variants. Masks still remain an effective, affordable, and simple tool to protect our children and our community. Since children 12 and under are still unable to be vaccinated, please do not abandon the mask mandate this fall. This mandate is critical to keeping our children protected until they can be vaccinated.
Marilyn Tshiyamba Muteba	school transfer for my children	WCPSS refused to transfer my children to the school that is close to our new adress. I won't be able to drive them to their old school, what should I do now? Last year they were taking the bus. I really need help please...
Markell Lynch	Protect our children and community by mandating masks	While children have milder and even asymptomatic cases of Covid-19, allowing them to become infected creates a breeding ground for new, adaptive, and more dangerous variants while also spreading infections well beyond the school grounds to those who are at-risk. To. day the data regarding long-term impacts on those with mild/asymptomatic cases include permanent lung damage and neurological issues including loss of fine motor skills. By not mandating masks you are, essentially, creating a generation that will live with and have their quality of life decreased by these chronic conditions. You sentence these children to a lifetime of suffering and struggle if you do not mandate and enforce masks in schools.
Martine Goldman	We need masks	We are still in a pandemic, and the pandemic has ramped up with a new variant that is affecting children at a higher rate. People focus on death and hospitalization, but long Covid is very real and affects children and their quality of life as well. We must protect our children and the immunocompromised, and one of the best ways is to mandate masks for everyone. This is a public health concern, and we must act accordingly. Masks work. Our children deserve to go to school and be kept safe. Masks and appropriate school protocols are crucial! Please think of our children, teachers, staff's safety and require masks for everyone.
Mary Daniels	Mitigation Strategies	I know that mask mandates have been at the forefront of most comments but even with mask requirements (as evidence by the Covid cases and clusters already in WCPSS) I fear this will not be enough to reduce spread of the delta variant given the increase of contagiousness. Please revisit ways to increase social distancing especially at lunch and snack time in the classroom and cafeteria. Ways to eat outdoors or in places with increased ventilation will help.

		Also, consider keeping classes in cohorts as much as possible. Thank you for your consideration.
Mary Simmons	Masks	Please keep mandatory masking in place for all students, regardless of age or vaccination status.
Maryjo George	Keep masks and social distancing in schools	I am writing in support of masks in our schools. I feel it is necessary to continue mask wearing and social distancing. Adults, regardless of vaccination status and children should wear masks at all times in schools both inside and outside. With cases and variants rising, it seems prudent for the board to recognize that the safety of all is better served by mask wearing and social distancing.
Matt Tyler	Please Keep Elementary Schools Masked	<p>I am about to send two of my children into classrooms for the first time since March 2020, and quite frankly I am worried about the current state of our community and where we are headed. I have watched in slow motion as the Delta variant tore through India, Israel, and the UK, and I've been reading what epidemiologists, virologists, and even air quality experts from around the world have been saying for months. It is no surprise to me that cases are skyrocketing around the US. I'm watching in horror as surrounding counties are removing masks from schools while pediatric units at hospitals in South Carolina and Oklahoma are filling up with unvaccinated children. Please do not do this to Wake County.</p> <p>I know that not all of you will agree with me. This subject has disappointingly devolved into an argument between political perspectives, and while we try to score points over "the other side", we are risking the health of those that can not yet take steps to protect themselves. The CDC is slow to react. Our Governor is slow to react. Unfortunately, case numbers and other statistics lag behind what is happening in real time. You are in a unique position to tread cautiously and maintain a high level of risk mitigation in our schools, and I beg that you ultimately decide to do so.</p> <p>I, and many that think like me, are quiet. We have a deep trust in the scientific method and in the data that is being studied. We are unlikely to show up at your meetings. We certainly will not be outside protesting with large signs. The loudest voices in your room will likely not be the voices of me and my like-minded fellow citizens. I understand that there will be tremendous pressure to please those that will be shouting to remove masks from the schools. I can not confirm where these people get their information, but I certainly can speculate. Please, I beg</p>

		<p>you to stand strong in the face of disinformation and misinformation and keep the children as safe as possible. After all, even if masking were not beneficial, which it is, it is not detrimental in any way. You will do no harm in taking extra care.</p>
Matthew Turner	Masks in Schools	<p>Would prefer my 5 year old son to be as safe as possible when in any setting, home, school or otherwise.</p> <p>Firmly believe that for him to be as safe as possible when attending public school that he, and those around him, should have appropriate face coverings to prevent the spread of this virus as best we can.</p> <p>There is no greater priority to me as a parent than to keep him as safe and healthy as possible.</p>
Megan Dary	Mask requirements	<p>I am writing to encourage the board to continue the mask mandate of all students and adults in schools. Requiring a mask is so important and such a small thing to do to keep our children safe. With the number of Covid cases rising with the Delta variant it is prudent that we keep children safe by protecting them however we can. I feel strongly that all students and adults should remain masked in schools. Children are becoming more at risk due to the Delta variant and rising case numbers. Children under 12 are unable to be vaccinated at this time and its terrifying to think of sending my children to school and putting them at risk when they don't have the chance to vaccinated at this time. I understand it is a controversial topic but the safety of students and staff should be the priority. Masks should remain in place until everyone has an opportunity/choice to be vaccinated.</p>

Megan Delaney	Covid Precautions in Schools	<p>This comment is to express support for the teachers and staff who are charged with managing the Sisyphean task of educating our children during a global pandemic. I urge Wake County to maintain masking requirements and any other reasonable precautions that have been proven to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>My child is among the children at Lufkin Road Middle School who has been impacted by the cluster there. He was in school for less than a month before being exposed to the virus. When he developed cold symptoms, we kept him home and had him tested—sure enough, he tested positive. He has been out of school for going on 10 days now, and his classmates have either been kept home due to exposure or a positive test result. According to the Department of Public Health guidelines, his 8-year-old sister may need to be out of school for 24 days simply because she lives with someone who tested positive. She has no symptoms and tested negative.</p> <p>Our children are looking at another year full of disruptions, disappointments, and health risks. While some of that may be unavoidable, we as parents and educators must do everything we can to keep our children safe and mitigate the damage done to their academic and personal development.</p> <p>WCPSS parents need to stop interfering with school leaders who are managing the mess created by this virus. They didn't sign up for this. Teachers and administrators are reeling from an excruciating hybrid school year; they have not received hazard pay for teaching during a pandemic and building the plane while flying it.</p> <p>I urge the board to lead with science and data, and to exercise an abundance of caution. Parents demanding mask-free schools are ignoring all that we have learned in the last two years. Their demands would put our children and teachers at risk.</p>
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Megan Dosmann	Mask Mandate	I honestly can't even begin to understand why this is up for debate. It's simple science. Masks MUST be mandated in schools. They have proven effective in reducing the spread of COVID. It's pretty simple science. Our children are not even eligible for a vaccine and they rely on adults to keep them safe. Masks do just that. Until ALL school aged children are eligible for a vaccine AND case numbers are steadily and consistently decreasing in our communities, we must continue to wear masks in schools. Currently, cases are rising and schools without mask mandates are experiencing outbreaks. Please keep our vulnerable children as safe as possible (and continue the mask mandate in schools). It's your job to do so. Shall masks become optional, we will without hesitation, remove our children from WCPSS for their safety. Thank you.
Meghan Melo	COVID-19	I have a rising kindergartner and second grader. I am very concerned about the spread of COVID-19 among children and the new Delta variant. I would like to see WCPSS require masks for all students for the 2021-2022 school year.

Mel Mealey	We just want choice!	<p>I have 4 children attending North Carolina public schools. Due to the overwhelming evidence indicating that children are largely unaffected by COVID, are not drivers of spread and are actually harmed by mask wearing, it would be wholly inappropriate (if not criminal) for any district to mandate masks for the coming school year.</p> <p>The recent recommendations put out by the American Academy of Pediatrics suggesting all children 2 and older be masked at schools should be viewed in the context of the fact that one of their biggest funding sources at the moment is Pfizer. This is a direct conflict of interest. I do not want the pharmaceutical industry dictating what my child's life at school should be like and the school system should avoid aligning themselves with groups who are essentially foregoing science-based decision-making in favor of industry funded propaganda.</p> <p>Allow parents to make the decisions that we feel are best for our children. Masks impede learning and teacher-to-student and peer-to-peer relationships. There are no long-term studies done to show that masking in children for extended periods of time is safe. To the contrary, studies are showing that masking is unsafe. Children are not seriously affected by COVID nor are they vectors for spreading the virus. All teachers and staff who choose to have the vaccine have had ample time to be vaccinated. The idea that one child needs to wear a mask to protect another child is a lie. There is no data supporting that. We do have data, however, showing that masks do not protect against viral transmission and therefore do not protect others.</p> <p>Masks are also not approved medical devices. They are emergency use authorized. Reference 21 US Code, 360bbb-3 which states that no emergency authorized medical product can be forced as individuals have "the option to accept or refuse administration of the product." (e 1 A ii III). This includes masks, PCR tests, and COVID vaccinations.</p> <p>As you are probably already aware, there are 33 districts, and counting, that have already voted to make masks optional and more counties voting in the coming weeks. There are multiple private and charter schools that have also voted to make masks optional. Other states across the US have either stopped requiring masks or never required them at all. There are only 10 states in the U.S. that are still requiring masks in schools; one of which is NC. All other states</p>
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		<p>are leaving the decision to the local school boards. There are at least five states that have banned mandatory masking policies in schools.</p> <p>Again, please vote to make this an individual parental decision. There is no one size fits all. Every parent should have choice.</p>
Melanie Nunn	MASK OPTIONAL FOR ALL GRADES & WCPSS STAFF	<p>Superintendent Moore and School Board Members,</p> <p>When does this end? Parents want to know when the restrictions like masks and quarantine will end. What specific metric is guiding decisions regarding your policies?</p> <p>We have told our kids have to wear masks until everyone that wants to be can be vaccinated. The CDC has admitted that those who have been vaccinated:</p> <p>Still get infected Have the same or higher viral load as an unvaccinated person Can transmit the virus</p> <p>The virus is NOT going away. The decision to mask or not, should be made by parents and families. As should the decision to vaccinate.</p> <p>We have told our kids they have to wear masks because they are at risk of COVID, but data shows their risk is less than from other respiratory viruses like influenza.</p> <p>Please explain why we are forcing our kids to wear masks and quarantining them for a virus when they have no symptoms to avoid a virus no worse than the flu?</p> <p>We need YOU to fight for our kids to get back in school in an environment conducive to learning by ending the unnecessary requirement for masks. There is no state mandate or Executive Order for masking. We will never achieve a 0 community case or 100% vaccination rate. STUDENTS OF ALL GRADES AND WCPSS STAFF SHOULD HAVE THE CHOICE TO WEAR A MASK.</p>
Melissa Mulauski	Require masks!	<p>Masks should be required in all schools particularly schools that have unvaccinated children.</p>

Melissa Raasch	Masks	Please make all students and staff wear masks until everyone has the opportunity to be vaccinated. Right now children under 12 are not eligible for vaccination and we must protect them.
Meredith Crews	Keep masks!	Keep the masks and protect our children!!
Michelle Craig	Keep masks in schools	I am a parent of two WCPSS students, a former WCPSS classroom teacher, and will rejoin WCPSS as an instructional assistant this year. Our children must come before self-interest so I ask that we keep masking in schools and reinstate other safety precautions that were loosened. We must trust science and prioritize the well-being of our younger students who have not had the opportunity to be vaccinated. The NCGA gave \$500,000 to the ABC Science Collaborative to study COVID-19 in schools. They concluded that proper masking is the most effective way to prevent the spread of COVID when vaccination is unavailable. The Delta variant is extremely contagious, and it is infecting our children at a higher rate than COVID was previously. We must protect our students and keep masking in schools and make reasonable plans for social distancing at meal times. Vaccines are coming, and we need to respect our students by continuing to wear masks and take other precautions until then.

Michelle Lattke	Masks and Social Distancing in Schools	<p>I am in favor of mask wearing and social distancing during lunch/snack time until immunizations are available for all school-aged children. I ask that as a school board you please retain mask wearing in WCPSS schools until kids have the opportunity to vaccinate.</p> <p>I have two children aged 7 and 11 in WCPSS schools who are too young to be vaccinated. With the delta variant causing new spikes and more contagious than before, please don't put their lives at risk over inconvenience. I chose to send my kids back to in person school in the fall based on the responsible way that WCPSS handled keeping masks in school last year. It gave me the confidence to move away from virtual and get my kids back to the social interactions that they need in school. If you no longer require masks, you are putting my kids' health and safety below others' inconvenience.</p> <p>Our children are the most precious responsibility, and the small inconvenience of wearing a mask for a short time more is worth the effort to save them from the risk of a deadly pandemic until they can be vaccinated. We don't stop wearing seatbelts because they are uncomfortable and restrictive. They save lives - so we wear them. The American Association of Pediatrics and the CDC are recommending universal masking for schools, and we should be listening to experts as we make decisions. We know that masks help stop the spread of the virus and helped prevent outbreaks last year in schools, so can't we just keep wearing them until our kids can be vaccinated?</p> <p>Further with the delta variant as contagious as chicken pox and creating outbreaks in schools and camps across the state, I ask you to consider lunch in the classroom or other lunch options that ensure that when masks come off to eat that we are still keeping kids in a safe situation for their health. Packing kids in the cafeteria elbow to elbow facing each other to loudly talk over the noise of the cafeteria is not conducive to safely removing masks to eat. I know there are space challenge but please think creatively for the benefit of our kids. You can do it. I believe in what we can accomplish together.</p> <p>Thank you for thinking of my kids and others like them who don't want to get sick when you vote on mask use and social distancing for the fall.</p>
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Michelle Raquet	Mask Requirements 2021-2022 School Year	While I agree that the Carolina Teacher's Alliance should have their opinions considered and heard about the issue of mask wearing, the Wake County GOP should not. Masks and the health our children are not political decision. It should be a health decision. Masks should be mandatory until vaccinations are available of children under the age of 12. The Wake County GOP claims that "requiring masks for some students, but not others" will lead to "bullying and an unequal learning environment." Isn't the same true for those that choose to wear masks? My children will be wearing masks. Our family has kept our children (ages 7 and 10) safe with masks. We wear masks as a family. Camps, sporting events, indoor activities all require masks for us as a family because a vaccine isn't available for them. My 10 year old is often questioned "why". He understands the "why". I don't want him to have to answer that same question day after day when attending school. I want schools be continue to be a safe learning environment for all students. Masks are not foolproof, but they can offer a layer of protection to our children at all grade levels. Masks should be mandatory.
Michelle Ryan	Keep children protected	Please maintain the mask mandate as is. We should be doing everything we can to keep our children safe. This should be a logical and scientific decision, not an emotional or political decision.
Michelle Shields	Continued Masking and Enhanced Protocols	I currently have 2 children attending Wake County Public Schools. After a year of virtual we opted to attend in person this year. Please continue requiring masks for all staff and children in schools regardless of vaccination status. Year round schools have barely been open and yet there are numerous Covid cases and concerning clusters. The Delta variant has increased our need to be much more vigilant and careful when it comes to protecting all the children who are still too young to be vaccinated. Delta's ability to spread quickly and efficiently, even among the vaccinated, makes masking and increased social distancing a must. The AAP, and CDC have both recommended the use of masks in schools. With cases again rising day by day, schools need to rethink their protocols in order to better protect our kids. Having desks grouped together and cafeterias full with no option for social distancing only makes it easier for cases to spread in our schools. WCPSS needs to keep these kids safe until families are able to fully vaccinate their children.

Mika Scarlett	Yes to masks in schools	<p>The way I see it if masks are mandatory then we have succeeded in creating a safer school environment for teachers and students. It has been proven over and over that masks keep the virus from spreading. This in turn keeps students and teachers healthy and in school.</p> <p>If someone is opposed to wearing a mask then they have the choice to either come to school with s mask OR choose a different schooling option - homeschool, private school, Virtual Academy.</p> <p>However, if masks are made optional then you have taken that choice away from a significant number of families. There are many of us who for financial and/or health reasons cannot catch this virus. If masks are optional we cannot come to school. There is no choice to make. It is not a matter of preference or irritation for us - like it is for those who oppose masks. It is literally a matter of life or death. People can die from this virus.</p> <p>Keep Schools safe. Require all students and all staff (EVEN IN HIGH SCHOOLS) to wear masks inside the buildings. That gives everyone a choice to make. If wearing a mask isn't the right thing for your family then you can opt for a different choice.</p> <p>Wearing a mask will not cause harm to anyone, but not wearing one most certainly will.</p>
Milan Mehta	Health and Safety Protocols in Schools	<p>While the focus of many discussions has been masking in schools, we feel that universal masking in schools is the bare minimum. The Delta variant is 200% more transmissible than the original SARS-CoV-2 virus and those infected have viral loads 1000 times higher. With the current mask requirements, there have been over 150 cases reported in schools in the past 3 weeks and increasing daily. It is highly evident that additional health and safety protocols must be implemented in combination with universal masking. We ask that schools also implement the following: 1) Lunch in classroom and not in cafeteria; 2) Classroom orientation where desks are spaced out and children are all facing the same direction and not facing each other. Plexi-glass barriers on each desk should also be provided; 3) Improved ventilation in classrooms which can include cracking a window and having a fan in each classroom; 4) testing strategy that includes daily symptom reporting and weekly antigen testing; 5) Transparent communication in which all families of a school are actively notified of a case in the school in a timely manner. 6) For families that are uncomfortable with current</p>

		or future health and safety measures, a virtual option should be offered, especially for elementary school kids, until they can receive the vaccination.
Mimosa Hines	Please Continue to require masks	I implore you to continue to require the wearing of masks for all elementary and middle school students. Especially with the delta variant spreading, we need to be and vigilant as possible to keep everyone safe. I will not be comfortable with in person schooling if masks are not in place at this time. Thank you for your support and for putting the safety of kids, teachers, staff, and families at the forefront.
Misty Howell	Masks in schools	Regarding masks- the unfortunate reality is that our kids need to wear masks to protect themselves from breakthrough cases even if they are vaccinated and to protect the unvaccinated. Obviously , I would prefer they not have to wear masks, but that was only an option if enough students were vaccinated by the time school starts. Our students are not only exposed to each other, but siblings that can not be vaccinated, immunocompromised family members, and family members that can not afford to miss work from break through cases. I want our kids to be able to stay in school for the entire year without clusters of Covid 19 that could potentially cause everyone back into virtual classes. Wearing a mask keeps everyone in our community safe- and when did public health become optional?

Monique Fuller	Mask Mandate in Public School buildings	<p>I am writing to formally to request that the School Board consider maintaining a mask mandate in public schools. I recognize that there are some exceptions as some children with specific health issues or those with special needs that preclude them from wearing masks may need to be made. However, I sincerely hope the Board will consider that wearing a mask is for the physical safety of children and permits them the safe, fair, healthy, and right to accessible education without fear for their safety. I mask for my children and elderly relatives because I want them to remain safe. Wearing a mask is such a small contribution and is one of the reasons I felt comfortable enough to send my kids back to school in person. My children range from elementary to high school and have made mask wearing a staple in our household due to the unvaccinated status of the elementary age children.</p> <p>I (along with each of my precious children) sacrificed in person education for their safety as well as their own right to socialization and appropriate emotional and educational development. It is extremely concerning and disheartening that there are so many people who would rather not wear a mask than permit all children safe and equal access to an in person education. It is privilege that affords people to say one can stay home. I am lucky enough that I can choose to keep my children out of stores if masks are not mandated but I do not feel as if I can keep them home, guarantee they will receive the education they deserve and work full time. My children deserve a safe in person learning opportunity, with an emphasis on safe.</p> <p>Pediatricians have indicated through science and review of the data that wearing a mask in schools helps limit the spread of COVID-19. Although we are not seeing what some may think is significant community spread in schools, we are starting to see clusters. I attribute the few cases at many of the schools to the safe practices in schools and mask wearing of adults and children. Nationally we are seeing breakthrough cases and until such time that all members of the population irrespective of age can access a vaccination if they so choose, I respectfully request the Board consider maintaining the mask mandate. Data doesn't lie and science routed in data and fact should outweigh the personal feelings of individuals who do not want to put the needs of the greater good head of their own wants. Needs should outweigh wants. Thank you.</p>
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Natalie Brickell	Keep Masks in Schools Until Vaccines are Available for Kids	<p>Hello!</p> <p>I am a parent of two WCPSS year round students, a second grader and a Kindergartener. My Kindergartener is just now having his first school experience as his preschool was shut down last year due to the pandemic. All he's ever wanted was to attend school with his big brother. His big brother, a second grader, has spent more hours learning virtually than in person, having school shut down the morning of the big school Fun Run he had worked so hard to raise money for.</p> <p>We did all the right things. We followed the science and we stayed home to keep our community safe. We saw our teachers in drive by parades and ordered groceries at home. We waved to our parents through our windows and had countless video calls. We waited our turn for the vaccine and got it as quickly as we could. We have waited so long for the day when we could see friends, teachers and family again safely in person. And now it's finally here and they are delighted. They couldn't appreciate school more. My youngest son got the same teacher the oldest had for Kindergarten so we were finally reunited with her after a year and a half.</p> <p>Yet there are so many people willing to risk that opportunity by asking for masks to be optional in schools right now. When the Delta variant is bearing down on us and threatening to reset everything we have worked so hard for, people are asking to risk our children's health and safety in the classroom. That doesn't sit well with me. I can't sit idly by while others threaten my children's opportunity to finally attend school as safely as possible. Those who have followed the guidance and done their best to protect others have sacrificed immensely while others could not be inconvenienced to do so. And now those same people want masks to be optional during a FOURTH wave of this awful virus. Dropping mask requirements now would undoubtedly lead in more sick children, more missed school, less learning, and potential harm to students health. Not to mention how will kids who wear a mask be regarded by their peers? Why pit them against one another in this ridiculous debate?</p> <p>If masks are worn to protect others, then optional masks is just as good as no masks at all.</p>
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Nathan Hymiller	Masks	All students need to wear masks 100% of the time while at school. Covid is simply too contagious to consider other options.
Neha Pancholi	Please maintain the mask mandate on school premises	It is s our duty to provide the safest possible learning environment to our young kids who are not eligible to get vaccinated. Following CDC's guidelines is the least we can do to . Please maintain the mask mandate in elementary.
Neha Pancholi	Please maintain the mask mandate on school premises	It is s our duty to provide the safest possible learning environment to our young kids who are not eligible to get vaccinated. Following CDC's guidelines is the least we can do to . Please maintain the mask mandate in elementary.
Nicholas Kraft	Masks	Thank you to our school board members for their diligence throughout this pandemic in keeping our children safe and making their health a priority. My wife and I ask that you continue to keep our children safe by requiring masks indoors at elementary and middle schools where many have not been able to receive COVID vaccinations, but are required to sit and eat in very close quarters. Our fourth grader has 32 children in his classroom. Since social distancing is not possible, masks are the only precaution helping to prevent COVID spreading in the air. The AAP and the CDC are both recommending masks for children over three indoors. Please heed their advice.
Nichole Baldrige	Masks and school	Please please please listen to the cdc and who when it comes to covid and our children. Make masks mandatory and enforce social distancing at lunch. Help our children vaccinated or not be safe. Help protect children and vulnerable people living in the homes of school age children. Masks are an easy way to slow the spread, enforce a mask mandate for all(regardless of vaccine status).

Nicole Yates	Require Masks in WCPSS schools	<p>Many studies have proven that multiple layered mitigation strategies, especially masks, limit transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in children in the school setting. In order for masks to work, everyone has to wear them, not just the person who wants to be protected. Please do the right thing to protect vulnerable children like my 9 year old who has virus-induced asthma and is too young to be vaccinated. Please make masks mandatory in WCPSS schools.</p>
Norman and Cynthia Jones	HS Coaches Conduct and Red/Yellow Cards	<p>Dear Wake County Board of Education:</p> <p>Where can a parent find out how many prior infractions of yellow and red card infractions a coach has occurred in its past. How many is too many? Who is holding coaches responsible for their actions? The screaming, shouting, and obnoxious mannerisms is not what our youngsters need to be around. Who is keeping track of these poor sportsmanship like conduct? Students often get reprimanded but never the adults.</p> <p>Thank you, The Jones Family</p>
Olivia Phelan	VA/Mask	<p>With the resurgence of the virus coinciding with the beginning of a new school year, I want to thank the school board for allowing us parents an option for virtual school. While keeping my children virtual for an additional year was not an ideal, easy choice, I am happy it was a choice I had none the less. I know not every parent that was virtual last year, chose the same route as us this year. When we were offered this option, things had looked more optimistic than they do now. Last year there were so many protocols in place to keep students safe, many thought that those protocols would be carried over. While I know teachers and school staff can not sustain cohorts and all the safety measures, an easy safe guard to keep us the mask mandate. Students and staff will be safer and in line with what the science and data are showing us. Though my children are home, we still live in this community, and are at risk when we leave our house if there is a large surge of the Delta variant due to lax masking policies at school. I look forward to the day the vaccine is available for the students under 12, so we can keep them as safe as possible, but until that time- please, please, please help protect them by requiring all bodies in a school building to mask up.</p> <p>Health and happiness all to all.</p> <p>Olivia</p>

Patricia Batchelor	CDC quarantine guidelines and masking	According to new CDC guidelines for exposure, those exposed to covid19 while MASKED do not have to quarantine, regardless of vaccination status. At what point will WCPSS adopt these new guidelines? The current rules for exposure are excessive and create unnecessary stress on the student. At this point, our delicate society needs to shift to these kids and doing what's best for them.
Patricia Knautd, MD	Covid precautions should include masks	I recommend that the AAP guidance and the NC DHHS Toolkit be followed in all Wake County schools. Specifically, masks should be required for students and teachers. The transmissibility of the delta variant, current infection rates, and lagging vaccination rates all conspire to increase the risk of a covid cluster if other precautions are not implemented. This could shut the schools down for in person learning, which will have a very detrimental impact on the psychological health and educational trajectory of too many families. Let's listen to the scientific community and implement best-practice policies to protect our children from illness and keep them learning and growing at in-person schools for the entire academic year. I work as a psychiatrist in Cary and have seen a negative impact of prolonged virtual schooling on children and their families. Thank you.
PJ Chuaypradit	Safety of children who are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine - WCPSS	As a parent of a child who is not yet eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19 (younger than 12 years old) I would like the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) to require masks for students, teachers, and staff while indoors. The Delta variant of the COVID-19 coronavirus has been hitting our communities and communities worldwide hard and our children who are not yet eligible for the vaccine are very vulnerable and more susceptible to contracting COVID-19. WCPSS should do their best to protect this vulnerable population and requiring masks while in-school should be a district-wide mandate. Schools with children ages less than 12 should also have safe options for lunch venues (e.g. set up tables outdoors, eat in well ventilated spaces). Your decisions affect countless lives in the near-term and certainly in the long-term. Please do what is right. Thank you.
Pooja Bhardwaj	Maintain Mask requirements in school	Covid is easily transmissible, if wearing a Mask is going to protect my child and other, we must continue to do so. With case numbers rising, now is not the time to change course especially for kids that aren't vaccinated, Masks are the only protection they have against Covid!

Poppie McNierney	Masks	When the board was asked before about lifting the mask mandates for students, staff and teachers, the board replied, they needed to follow the mandates set forth by the governor and the NCDHHS school tool kit. The governor's executive order requiring masks in schools has expired, and the governor has chosen not to extend this executive order. Therefore, there are currently NO MANDATES from the governor requiring masks in school. The NCDHHS tool kit has been updated to RECOMMEND masks in school. Therefore, in all schools masks should be RECOMMENDED, but NOT REQUIRED. That would be following the public health directives by the state, which this board claims to have followed throughout the entire pandemic.
Preethi chada	Make mask compulsory	Mask required
R J	Virtual Learning	Even with masks up, elementary students in year around school are getting infected by the new variant. This is an indication that cases may surge with traditional school opening and request the board to continue virtual academy for the upcoming school year at least until vacation are available for elementary kids.
Rachel Love	Student (and teacher) safety	Please continue to make masks mandatory inside school buildings for all WCPSS students and staff (while students are present). The positive cases in Wake county have been steadily rising. Please protect our children. There are countless families who have children both under 12 who cannot yet be vaccinated and older kids who have. It is a big concern of mine as a parent that my vaccinated high schooler could unknowingly (as many kids are asymptomatic when positive) bring home Covid to her 10 year old sister. Please continue with the current mask policy until both the younger kids can be vaccinated AND the positive cases in Wake county plateau at a low rate again. Thank you for your time.

Raymond Foxwood	Intro Letter in Employee Handbook	<p>Dear Ms. Moore,</p> <p>I recently read your intro letter to the employees of Wake County Public Schools. This letter can be found on the downloaded employee manual. 2021-2022</p> <p>Our graduation rate is the highest in the district's history, at 90.8 percent. African-American students, English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities exceeded the district's overall growth rate.</p> <p>What does exceeded the district's overall growth rate mean? Who did you get this data point from?</p> <p>Where are all the missing students that have dropped out of WCPSS? We know they exist.</p> <p>What are the numbers of students that the district lost to home school, and private?</p> <p>By now you know who has opted to come back to school, year round has started, it is past the 10 day mark. Please share this is a concern to the community. Ray Foxwood</p>
Rebecca Spillmann	Make masks required for all K-12 students and staff	<p>The CDC recommendations and the published peer-reviewed science is very clear. Wearing masks and being vaccinated stops the spread of COVID. Our young kids, including my 5 year old daughter starting kindergarten, aren't eligible for the vaccine. Her education shouldn't have to suffer and my husband and I shouldn't have to take time away from our jobs when inevitably there is an outbreak due to others poor choices. Their so called freedom should not override my daughter's right to attend school safely and with as minimal risk as possible to catch COVID. Please follow the science and make masks mandatory for all students and school staff.</p>
Reid Overton	Masks	<p>Please continue to require masks and follow CDC recommendations since we still don't have vaccines for our elementary age kids and too many people are refusing to get vaccinated. Let's give the kids the best, most normal year possible which means wearing masks so we can stay in school. After only 2-3 weeks in, year round schools already have clusters and that is with masks. I can't even imagine the numbers without masks.</p>

Renda Dennie	Face masks in school	<p>As a parent of a rising 1st grader I am deeply concerned about the risks of having him attend in person classes to due the recent rise in Covid -19 cases and the Delta variant. I chose the option of in-person school over another year in VA even though he is not able to get a vaccine because I believe it is developmentally appropriate to have him with his peers but also because I trusted that WCPSS would do everything they could to keep our children safe. This includes requiring masks for all teachers and students, especially those who are the most vulnerable and unable to get vaccinated. Please do the right thing and require masks for all this school year.</p>
Renee Sekel	Masking in schools	<p>I am writing to urge you to vote tonight to adopt the Staff's recommendation that masks be mandated for all people in preK-12 schools. This is a scientifically supported, common sense solution that helps keep our most vulnerable students safer in schools.</p> <p>When school buildings started reopening last year, we knew that there were three key factors in keeping kids safe: distancing, ventilation and masks. Even with almost half of all students enrolled in virtual academy, we quickly saw that distancing was not possible in many spaces despite the best efforts of educators. I am still not entirely sure that all of our classrooms have the ventilation necessary to remove the virus from the air. But we do still have masking as a possibility. I urge to you maintain mask requirements until (a) all students have the opportunity to become fully vaccinated, (b) vaccination rates among students and staff approach the threshold required for herd immunity, and (c) the rate of community transmission of COVID-19 is low.</p> <p>I have one more ask: please ensure that a mandatory masking policy clearly sets out minimum standards for the kinds of masks allowed, and please ensure a consistent, fair enforcement mechanism. In the last two days, I have seen a disturbing number of anti-mask activists urging followers to defy mask mandates and/or to purchase fake masks made of mesh or other materials that would ensure that they and their children could continue to spread COVID-19 to others. That I even have to write this paragraph is almost unbelievable, but here we are. A non-zero number of Wake County parents are so thoroughly convinced that COVID-19 is benign that they are plotting to infect people out of spite for WCPSS and any efforts it makes to keep students safe. Please remain aware of these efforts and do your best to close out the possibility for such evil.</p>

Renu Lal	Masks in schools	Please mandate masking in schools at least until the vaccines are available for the kids and most of the kids are vaccinated. The unvaccinated, including our children, remain at risk. We cannot take this risk, especially with the delta variant. If you want kids back in school, safety and thus masking is necessary. Thank you for your consideration.
Renu Lal	Masks in schools	Please mandate masking in schools at least until the vaccines are available for the kids and most of the kids are vaccinated. The unvaccinated, including our children, remain at risk. We cannot take this risk, especially with the delta variant. If you want kids back in school, safety and thus masking is necessary. Thank you for your consideration.
Rita Gibson	Follow CDC guidelines	<p>We all hoped this school year would be a non Covid year. The vaccine is available. Many chose to take it to protect the community including the children who are not even eligible. Too many have not been vaccinated. So once again it will be on the shoulders of teachers to protect our children.</p> <p>Please follow the CDC guidelines and require masks for all students, faculty, and visitors. Now is not the time to forego best practices. Thank you.</p>
Rob Nester	Mask wearing mandate for WCPSS	As a parent of two children in the WCPSS, and in light of the ongoing developments pertaining to coronavirus variants and their dangers to children, I would implore the board to mandate that all students, teachers, faculty, and support staff wear face masks inside of all school facilities.

Robyn Dezern	Free The Smiles	<p>Greetings from a teen parent of wake county public schools highschooler, who was failed virtually so now attending summer school to pass; even though he started HS in 2020 as a middle school honor roll student. He did go to the classroom as soon as WCPSS Board permitted it, and he excelled so thank you for opportunity to go daily instead of every 3rd week. While my son had to have virtual therapy with weekly counseling for his existing IEP anxiety heightened by the forced isolation, he has now engaged in a team sport to enhance his confidence for fall.</p> <p>However, as he is an athlete with asthma, I still do not believe it is the position of the NC Governor, State Health Department, County Board or even HS Principal to decide he must be vaccinated to remove the mask. While I was glad to hear masks can be removed over age 12 now so appreciate that allowance, it is still within my custodial right only to decide if he will receive the vaccine or not; and because of the health drawbacks publicized about this drug issued just for emergency use without FDA approval on the market, I am hesitant to allow it. Nor will I have my anxious-ridden teen be ridiculed for still wearing a mask when a mask requirement CANNOT BE LEGALLY ENFORCED at schools. I fail to see how NC remains one of only 10 of 50 states which requires masks when the other 80% of the country has optional masks as the choice. Again, my whole point is writing is to request that mask wearing be an option for the family members to decide without being forced to follow government mandate which does not even exist in this case since the DPI toolbox is strictly a guideline not a rule.</p> <p>On that note, how can an exemption be obtained as I will find a physician who agrees with the potential harm of causing additional damage to my boy's asthmatic lungs by forcing him to breathe in the CO2 that is breathed out intentionally. He wore his mask indoors for summer school but based on Governor Cooper's own words in his press conference I will not have my child resume mask wearing for months when he is a young athlete with no breathing repercussions yet and I CHOOSE AS HIS MOTHER to free his smile and let him go maskless. Youth rates of COVID were NEVER the issue, so why the emphasis now other than to further push the vaccine agenda on our youth aged 12 and above. If you follow the science, between masks and shot; I feel he is safer with neither so don't tell me to pick one.</p>
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Roger Sommer	COVID policies for new school year	<p>In light of current levels of transmission of the Delta variant of SARS-coV2, it is imperative that we keep the masks on faces for everyone as they gather in classrooms and/or large groups. Nobody under 12 is vaccinated yet. And current evidence suggests that even vaccinated youth and adults can be asymptomatic spreaders of the virus.</p> <p>Don't let people that are grumbling over their vanity and comfort prevent you from making the right choice on this topic. Folks who refuse to participate in keeping the community safe by following rational public health measures can be the ones to stay home, instead of pushing community minded folk with safety concerns into remote options.</p> <p>Getting kids to in-person school is important. Protecting them while they are in school with with a well-rounded safety plan that includes: masks, vaccinations (where possible), sensible protocols for limiting groups size, and maximizing outside time are all necessary for a COVID safe school environment.</p>
Russell Currie	Masking in schools and Teaching American History and traditional core curriculum	<p>I respectfully request the board to not to make face masking mandatory for students and staff/faculty. Based on the science and lack of substantiated evidence, I believe masking should be a choice.</p> <p>I also want express that traditional American history and core curriculum subjects should be taught in our public schools. Anything that resembles critical race theory (CRT) should not be taught. I believe CRT is divisive and indoctrinates our children/grandchildren and teachers on values that do not reflect the principles of the constitution as written by our founding fathers.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Sam Hershey	Masks for Elementary School Students	<p>Given the recent surge in Covid cases and the vaccine not yet being available for those under 12, we strongly encourage you to require masks at elementary schools. Once the science is released regarding vaccinating young kids, it would be appropriate to revisit the mask and vaccine policies. Until that time, this is really a no-brainer. Inconveniencing kids for another few months is far better than potential negative side effects of the Delta Variant.</p>

Samantha Bertucci	Covid Summer Cases Where is Data?	<p>Dear WCPSS Board of Education,</p> <p>Where is the data from Summer School on the number of kids having to quarantine? I understand the board had a weeks off, and we focus on high achieving students more than the middle of the road or students that struggle or may have diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities. We are still trying to come out of a pandemic!</p> <p>How many weekly cases of Covid were present? Many social media platforms complained they were not receiving the information from there school. No one from the school board spoke up.</p> <p>Do you no longer want to spend the money on contract tracing? How many kids missed summer school this year, because of quarantine? Where is the data?</p> <p>Jim Martin please drill down and look this information over and share with the public. You seem to be the only one driving numbers with the public.</p> <p>Thank you, Samantha Bertucci</p>
Samantha Ewens	Masks in Schools	<p>Please require masks, at the very least for elementary schools where the children are all too young to get a vaccine. It should be required everywhere to protect those kids who cannot be vaccinated - they deserve to be safe at school, too.</p>
Sandra Broadwater	Mask mandate	<p>We have to make responsible choices for our children because most are unable to or lack the wisdom to make the right choice. A masks protects both parties. That's the goal. That's how we reduce spread. It's common sense.</p>
Sandra Luihn	Optional masks	<p>For the 21-22 school year, masks should be optional for all Wake Co students. There is no accurate science to support that masks help slow the spread and there's no proof that our children are at any greater risk with or without. Many are vaccinated now, it's unfair to ask those who have taken all the necessary precautions to continue to mask for the ones who aren't comfortable. If they want to wear a mask, by all means wear one, but allow the freedom of CHOICE.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Sandra Turner	Keep masks for schools indoors amid rise in cases	<p>Dear board members,</p> <p>As a parent of WCPSS students who aren't eligible to get vaccinated against Covid yet I ask that you keep the indoor mask requirement for students and staff until a vaccine for the 12 year olds receives a EUA. The continuing increase of cases in Wake county and the state as well as the emergence of clusters in multiple public schools and hundreds of students being forced to quarantine in not just public but also private schools makes the continuation of the indoor the most sensible choice. We must protect the young unvaccinated students until they/their parents have had the opportunity to access vaccines if they so choose. On top of that continued indoor mask requirements will hopefully limit community spread and as a result disruption of education of quarantined students' education as well as their parents' employment.</p> <p>Thank you again!</p> <p>Sandra Turner</p>
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Sara Carter	Masking and Other Safety Protocols	<p>Board Members and Superintendent Moore,</p> <p>Thank you for the work you do for the wcpss students and staff. I am writing in regard to a number of concerns I have as a parent of a wcpss first grader.</p> <p>*The first is universal masking. I am in full support of masks throughout our schools and I am not going to go into a detailed explanation as to why. At this point in the pandemic it seems obvious that the need for masking remains. The AAP, CDC, and NCDHHS have given us clear guidance regarding masks and I expect the board to follow their recommendations. Further discussion seems ludicrous.</p> <p>*I would also like to address the spread we are seeing in our schools. This is alarming. In the month of July alone we have had approximately 150 *confirmed* cases in our schools with 30 of those being a result of secondary transmission within our schools and/or transportation. The means 20% of the cases in our schools resulted in transmission at school. Last year, we had 34 cases of secondary transmission reported in the covid case count spreadsheet from October through June. Anyone can see the writing on the wall here. We have relaxed protocols too soon. In addition to relaxed mitigation strategies, we now know the impact that the highly contagious Delta variant has on our schools. We are seeing it play out in real time in our schools. I want protocols around spacing, lunch/snack, buses and daycare vans, and recess to be revisited asap. I have thoroughly read the studies that have come out about in school transmission from the 2020-2021 school year. I know that they were basing their guidance on the data they had at the time. It did look good. It is how I came to opt for in-person schooling for my child this year. Delta has changed this and we need to face it and respond accordingly.</p> <p>*One area of great concern to me is guidance and protocols around the lunchroom. I am very uncomfortable with the fact that we do not have consistent mitigation strategies in place in our lunchrooms across the district. My son's school is utilizing half of the cafeteria at lunch time. The other half remains unused. The students are not spacing at all. They are unmasked for the entire 30 minutes. They are talking the entire time without masks on. How is this any different than eating indoors at a restaurant? My family has been very safe throughout this pandemic. My children have not stepped foot inside a restaurant as they are considered high risk environments for spread. One difference in an elementary school is that none of our children are vaccinated. A restaurant style setting with a zero percent vaccination rate. I am not comfortable with this at all and I want lunchroom protocols updated immediately. Last year, we had strict protocols in place- masking when not eating, not talking unmasked, and space-</p>
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		<p>we loosened these and now we have significant spread in our schools. It's not a coincidence.</p> <p>*We need a plan for instruction for our students who are quarantining. I would like guidance on this for the entire district. A lot of teachers are feeling frustrated that no clear expectation has been set and communicated to them.</p> <p>*Lastly, I am urging the board to consider opening enrollment up for VA again if the cases in schools continue to climb. Many families made the best decision they could with the information they had on hand in the springtime. Many of us did not expect the new variant to wreak so much havoc in our schools. Many of us also assumed the district would continue to keep safety measures in place (ie. masks, distance, etc.) until, at the very least, our youngest students were eligible for the vaccine.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Sara Carter</p>
Sara Hardin	Mask wearing	<p>Simply put: by wearing the mask to prevent spread of vaccine resistant strains, you are preventing evolution of this virus, and you are preventing the need to keep making these vaccines over and over again.</p> <p>Please, wear a mask if you're not going to get vaccinated.</p> <p>Please, help us protect our kids under 12 and make mask wearing mandatory for grades k-12.</p>
Sara Venkat	Mask requirement in schools	<p>The CDC is recommending all K-12 students wear masks when they return to school, including those who have been vaccinated. As a physician and mom of a WCPSS child with a pre-existing condition, too young to receive the vaccine, I urge you to follow this science based guideline, and make masks indoors mandatory for all elementary aged students. The delta variant is quickly causing a surge in cases, and will likely cause another school shut down this year, due to preventable COVID outbreaks, if masks are not made mandatory early on. Masking has always been known to limit disease transmission and save lives. Please follow the scientifically based guidelines and do what is necessary to best protect our children's health.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Sarah Bowen-Pasfield, MD	Masking for Return to Classes	<p>As a physician and mother of two students in the WCPSS, I absolutely support the wearing of masks for ALL during the 2021-2022 school year. I support mask wearing for both the unvaccinated and vaccinated students, teachers, and staff (except when eating and drinking) inside all WCPSS buildings and buses. The Delta variant is more contagious and will spread further if masks are not used by all people in the WCPSS when school returns in a few weeks. WCPSS has already seen positive COVID cases this Summer. This will only increase if masking for everyone is not enforced. Unvaccinated people make up the vast majority of the hospitalized COVID patients and of those who have died (over 94%) since May 2021 here in NC. While the chance of breakthrough symptomatic and severe COVID infections is low in the vaccinated, vaccinated people can still spread COVID (even asymptotically). Masking will protect everyone, but especially the unvaccinated and those at otherwise high risk of severe COVID complications. Masks are a simple, safe, and effective way to keep others safe. We need to protect everyone. We are neighbors and we should help each other. Please vote to have everyone in the WCPSS wear masks this school year. It will save the lives of many and that is so worth it. Thank you.</p>
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Sarah Coggins	Support of Face Masks Requirement in Schools	<p>As a parent of 2 children in year-round Wake County public schools, I want to share my voice in favor of required face masks for the current school year. They both attended in person (as allowed) during the previous year and returned to the classroom this week with Track 4.</p> <p>My oldest received his first COVID vaccine the day after his 12th birthday in July. So, he's started the process, but not considered fully vaccinated yet. In his middle school only a percentage of the students are old enough for vaccination and, even then, not all will get it. This makes it impossible to have high enough vaccination rates to support removal of face masks even if we weren't facing a new, more contagious variant.</p> <p>Our youngest is in elementary school and, like her peers, below the vaccine age requirements. Face masks are the only protection this young group has to help keep them safe.</p> <p>My kids flourished in their return to the classrooms last year and are looking forward to being in school again this fall. The last thing I want to see is something so simple taken away, the virus allowed to spread and impact our schools, our children, and their education. They deserve as normal of a year of school as possible and face masks can help make this happen.</p> <p>I am asking you to follow the recommendations of the Governor, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Please require face masks to be worn by all (students, teachers, staff, visitors) when students are in the school buildings and on school transportation. Our children's health depends upon it.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my input into consideration regarding this important matter.</p>
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Sarah Geary	Advocating for mask choice in WCPSS	<p>What's the very first thing that comes to mind when you're trying to calm an anxious child? "Take a deep breath." There's good reason for this, too. It regulates blood pressure, calms your brain, improves emotional control, positively impacts your memory, and boosts your immune system and metabolism - to name just a few. It isn't just beneficial in that one moment, its impact has long-lasting and system-wide effects.</p> <p>Logic is fast, science is slow. We know - without reading a study - that if we cover our nose and mouth, it's harder to breathe than if the barrier isn't there. You can make the argument about to what degree, and to what impact, but it's just physics at that point. What breaks my heart most about this fight is that none of us know. The "powers that be" have had 18 months to do safety and efficacy studies, to establish safety standards across different populations (risk factors, age, etc.) They haven't done it. I haven't seen a single study looking at the impact of masking in schools that has a control group. Tom Nicholson (a researcher at Duke University) penned an OpEd in the Wall Street Journal criticizing Duke's "research" that determined that masks can prevent transmission in schools. He closed by stating that because there was a complete lack of a control group, "the researchers might as well have attributed the low Covid rate in schools to wearing shoes".</p> <p>Is that what we're calling science now? Only studying the intervention we want to try, never looking at the results if the intervention never existed in the first place? Only looking at the single factor of Covid - never mind unintended consequences on social, emotional, and all-cause physical health outcomes? We have decades worth of research on the impact of breath/oxygenation on the body, how facial recognition supports social development and education, and how bacteria grows in damp/warm environments. Do we not care, or can we not open our minds to the potential risks?</p> <p>As a community, we can't be at each other's throats arguing who's right and who's wrong. The fact is - we don't know. It's unacceptable that mandates are carried out, while state and federal research budgets continue to not be allocated. I have researched this to the ends of the earth, and believe strongly that *not* masking my child is in both her and her community's best interest. Other parents may do the same and come to a different conclusion. I support and stand by their right to do so.</p>
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		There is no "one size fits all" solution for each individual. I hope that we can take a deep breath, and trust that we are all making the best decision we can with the information we have at this time. Today I ask WCPSS' Board of Education to allow for parental choice for face coverings.
Sarah Glova	Masks are safe and effective	COVID is dangerous. The Delta variant is extremely contagious. Children 12 and under have not been vaccinated. We should absolutely require masks in schools to help stop the spread of the virus and to protect children who cannot yet be vaccinated.
Sarah Prenovitz	Masks in Schools	I am the parent of a WCPSS student, and am writing in support of mandatory mask wearing in all WCPSS buildings. My child is under age 12 so cannot be vaccinated, and neither can her classmates. In the absence of vaccinations for this age group, masks are a key component in mitigating the risk of COVID-19, allowing our children to have an in-person school experience that is as close to normal as possible.
Sarah Thompson	Keep mask in for all grades	Please keep mask mandatory for all grades. Teens have a low vaccinated rate and littles can't get the vaccine. The only way to keep them safe is to keep the mask. I do worry about lunch rooms. I think you need to find a plan to keep the numbers low in the lunch rooms.

Scott Hazard	Support for Masks in Schools	<p>As a parent of two children (one vaccinated, one not yet vaccinated) attending WCPSS schools and a concerned citizen and taxpayer, I would like to voice my support for the continuation of the mask mandate in WCPSS schools.</p> <p>I support masks being required in public schools for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -As stated on the WCPSS website: "Our top priority in all decisions is the health, safety, and well-being of our students, employees, and school communities." Mandating the wearing of masks by students, teachers and staff in schools supports this priority and helps fulfill the health of the community. -With the current increase in COVID infections and the Delta variant being much more transmissible than the previous variants, masks are the best way to limit transmission of the virus between children/teachers/staff in classrooms over the course of a school day. -While some who are critical of the need to wear masks in school are concerned about masks being uncomfortable or distracting, from my perspective, any minor discomfort is well worth it to help each school's community stay healthy. A school being temporarily shut down due to a COVID outbreak is more of a distraction to school life and learning than wearing a lightweight fabric mask. -While some critical of the need to wear masks at school maintain that it comes down to a parent's right to make decisions about their child's health - they are missing the crux of the issue. What the WCPSS Board of Education is addressing and responsible for is the health of the WCPSS community. This is not about just a parent's particular child/children. -We all, especially our children, need to be able to make what is a very small effort in the scheme of things - wearing a lightweight fabric mask - to learn and master the small amount of resilience and fortitude needed to overcome and get used to a very minor distraction and discomfort to function and thrive in the classroom. We need to ask that children attending Wake County Public Schools wear masks to support the health of themselves, their families and their community. -Thank you for your work on this topic!
Shana Hamill	Masks in schools	<p>I am a mom to two children enrolled in WCPSS and I am writing today to express my support for masks in schools regardless of vaccination status. Children under 12 are not eligible for vaccinations and we should be doing everything we can to protect them from SARS-CoV-2. My 10 year old son has asthma and respiratory</p>

		infections are especially dangerous for him. It is my hope that WCPSS will follow the guidance of the AAP and CDC and require masks for everyone.
Shannon Dingle	Masks	Our younger students, those under age 12, are too young to be able to be vaccinated. The Delta variant is causing a significant increase in cases. We need kids to be safe, and right now the only way to do that is with masking. Also, people say that COVID isn't so bad for healthy children, but WCPSS has plenty of students who aren't healthy; those kids are forgotten or dismissed by those opposing masks. Finally, all the claims by those opposing masks are using specious and often disproven information to do so.
Shanon Douglas	Covid Safety in Schools	I was very upset to realize that many of the Covid safety policies have been relaxed in the schools this year. I voiced my concerns that the close seating, students talking and laughing right into each other's face in the cafeteria, along with the classroom desks facing each other and the lack of proper mask wearing would result in school outbreaks. Three weeks into the school year and we have multiple Covid clusters and many more isolated infections in our schools. With the Delta variant surging, and so many children unable to receive a Covid vaccine, even the thought of not mandating masks in all schools is irresponsible. Reducing the spread of potential SARS-CoV-2 respiratory aerosols, by covering breath holes, is basic common sense. For the good of everyone, please mandate masks in all Wake County schools.
Sharon Lord	Masks should be worn in schools	Looking at the latest CDC news and numbers in our community, and the clusters already occurring, I ask that the School Board continue and enforce the policy of all humans in school buildings wear masks covering both nose and mouth. Consistent enforcement and experience with wearing masks quickly accustoms all of us to the new sensations, just as we all wear seatbelts in cars. Community safety is individual safety in dealing with COVID-19.
Shaun Pollenz	Masks/Vaccines	You all know I support masks in classrooms during these difficult times. I implore you to not only to require masks for students, but to also implement other safety measures to protect children, families, and our entire community. I've heard that many students are in classrooms without even 3 feet of distance between students. Students have their desks pushed together in clusters, and guess what...That has led to Covid clusters. At this point, the regression in policy is alarming, and I beseech this board to return to more stringent measures.

I also wanted to take a moment and share with you some comments made by an administrator at Brier Creek Elementary School. He is an assistant principal named Loren Pinkney and this is a direct quote from his Facebook page.

"MANDATED VACCINES ARE THE GROUNDWORK FOR THE ANTICHRIST SYSTEM

The Bible has told us for several centuries that this day was coming. It told us about the Antichrist system that is coming on the earth. In the Antichrist system, people will have to get a mark that they will not be able to buy or sell without. Even though the vaccine is probably not the mark of the beast it is the beginning of the beast system. The purpose of the beast system of the antichrist is to set up a one-world government and a one-world financial system. Many people told everyone when the coronavirus started that it would lead to mandatory vaccines and people not being able to buy and sell without having the vaccine. People called us conspiracy theorists. Now, here we are. This is a war on humanity that is using FEAR to steer people. Is the coronavirus really a pandemic? Are many people that you know falling dead in the streets? If that were the case, I would be supportive of a safe vaccine. The problem is that the vaccine is not safe and the coronavirus has other good treatment options. It's gotten to the point that people who are not taking the vaccine are being called murderers. Think about that! What is happening is a plan that has been in the works for several decades to control the world population. The next step is that governments will take people from their homes who have not taken the vaccine and put them in vaccine quarantine sites. These sites are already being built. My question to you is this. Are you going to stand for this happening to your fellow Americans? Are you supporting this attack on humanity from this antichrist system? Please pray for God to give you discernment about this issue. God is a God of freedom. People should have the freedom to decide whether or not to take a vaccine that supposedly will prevent them from dying. PLEASE PRAY AND DO NOT SUPPORT THIS SYSTEM THAT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE ANTICHRIST SYSTEM THAT WILL GET PEOPLE CONDITIONED TO NOT BE ABLE TO BUY AND SELL WITHOUT A MARK WHICH IN THE BEGINNING WILL BE PROOF OF VACCINATION BUT LATER WILL BE THE MARK OF THE ANTICHRIST!!!"

Now I understand that you all believe public comments are an inappropriate forum for criticizing staff, but it is a clear violation of the First Amendment to suggest that factual information regarding administrators is off limits for public

		<p>comments. This man is out of his damn mind and should be monitored for both his mental health and his influence over the children at Brier Creek.</p> <p>I implore the school system to impose a mandatory vaccine requirement for all WCPSS staff, subject to a rigorous medical exemption policy. If folks won't take the vaccine for religious or medical reasons, they should be reassigned to a single school and stuffed in there with a bunch of other anti-mask, anti-vax morons. The intelligent, caring, and concerned community members who wish to stay safe should be given the best opportunity to do so, while leaving the others to put themselves at risk in their own bubble.</p> <p>Thanks for your consideration. People's lives are literally at stake. My family has lost 3 to this virus and I expect my leaders to do everything possible to prevent such outcomes moving forward.</p>
Shelby Strickland	Masking	<p>Please keep the requirement for faculty, staff, and students in all levels of public school to remain masked while on campus. In person education is critical for many of the students, and we must maintain safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We experienced the success of these mitigation efforts in the 2020-21 school year and the DELTA and potential other variants are a threat. As long as elementary aged children aren't offered the vaccine, and only 59% of eligible people have been vaccinated, we need to continue to mask and distance to protect vulnerable populations. This includes immunocompromised people who are unable to receive the vaccine or couldn't develop antibodies and young children. Please help keep them safe</p>

Shelley Peele	Make masks optional	<p>The risks posed from prolonged mask-wearing no longer outweigh the benefit of protection from Covid.</p> <p>One consistent fact about Covid is that kids do not typically experience serious symptoms and rarely die from Covid. We are now learning they are less prone to spreading Covid than originally thought. A child has more chance of dying from a car ride to school than from Covid.</p> <p>All adults have now received the vaccine if they wanted it. Even with the delta variant, death rates are much lower because what we've done has worked. Those most at risk are protected and hospitalization rates are about 100,000 lower than they were at their peak in January (nowhere near exceeding capacity, which you may recall was the original goal). Mortality rates continue to decline with CDC reporting 8006 in July 2021, compared to 23,811 same month last year and 97,384 in January 2021. We should be relieved. Instead, we are letting sensationalist media shape our social and health policies, all of which are doing far more harm to our children today.</p> <p>Long-term mask use in children poses many risks. Contamination of the upper respiratory tract by viruses and bacteria on the outside of masks has been detected by many hospitals. Masks make many people feel claustrophobic and make breathing more difficult. This can lead to increased heart rate, nausea, dizziness, and headaches. Face masks can increase stress which long term can have a negative impact on immune resilience and often escalates to mental health problems. Various studies show significant increase in mental-health related visits for kids and increases in teen suicide and suicidal thoughts. We are putting masks on kids already stressed, furthermore debilitating them with the inability to communicate and connect effectively. We are dehumanizing our kids in a way that was never meant to be sustained long-term.</p> <p>Covid is not going away. We need to become comfortable that people will get sick and seasonality will increase case-loads. What we cannot become comfortable doing is following the same draconian measures necessitated a year ago in a very different world. We cannot risk our children's health for the sake of political propaganda.</p> <p>Masks must be optional. They cannot be contingent on vaccines (an experimental drug for a low risk population). Finally, school shutdowns should</p>
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		never be considered an option ever again. This is best way we can protect our kids. We are long overdue to free the smiles.
Sherrri Bolton	Please keep masks required in schools!	Between Delta, anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers, we need to keep masks in schools for an added layer of safety.
Sherrri Brown	Mask requirement for schools	Schools are supposed to be safe places for students. This includes safety from public health threats. Elementary and many middle schools students remain inelligible for the covid vaccine as we enter the 2021-2022 school year, and need the school board to do everything in its power to protect them from COVID-19. A mask mandate for students and adults in schools for children under 12 is the most logical and responsible action at this time. Please protect our children and families.
Sherry Miloscia	Masks in the schools	Please make masks in the schools mandatory to protect our teachers and students.
Sheryl & Ronald Guerard	Gifts to the System	<p>Dear Mr. Sutton, Ms. Mahaffey and WCPSS Board Members,</p> <p>How are gifts to the system reported to the board?</p> <p>I see that a document is attached in simbli, but how often does the local school need to submit to the board?</p> <p>I have seen dollar amounts from 5 dollars, to thousands of dollars.</p> <p>What if they don't submit it?</p> <p>Is it voluntary to report or mandatory to report gift to the system?</p> <p>Who is sending off the list? Head Principal?</p> <p>What if they do not report? We are looking for our donation to be reported and we have not seen it yet.</p> <p>Can someone address this in a board meeting?</p> <p>Thank you, Sherrri and Ron</p>
Sini Abraham	Masks in elementary school	Please require masks for all students, teachers and admin

Sowmya Narayanan	Masks are needed	<p>Please ensure everyone at elementary and middle schools wears masks this Fall. This is the only way to keep unvaccinated kids safe and keep case count low enough that we don't have to go virtual again! Our kids deserve safe schools. Thank you!</p>
Stacey Burns	I support Masks in Schools!	<p>As a mother of two children in the Wake County PSS and a former teacher I am strongly in support of the school district wide mandate for masks in our schools for the foreseeable future. With the delta variant of Covid-19 on the rise and many positive cases being listed each week on your case spreadsheet I feel that it's a crucial part of keeping our children safe while they are in your care.</p> <p>I also would like to see a return to emails and texts being sent out by the school district to families when positive cases pop up at my child's school. We were not informed that that protocol would be changing and I was extremely disappointed when I found out that it was.</p> <p>I am counting on WCPSS to do the right thing here and follow all CDC guidelines to keep my children safe from this deadly disease. Masks are a necessary part of this safety protocol as is a thorough and open line of communication about case counts and mitigation steps. Thank you for your time.</p>
Stacy Sliwinski	Mask wearing in school	<p>I am writing to you on behalf of me and my 2 children. I have an incoming freshman and a rising junior in Wake county. They have both spent the last year and a half learning virtually and doing their part to stop the spread of Covid 19. While awaiting a vaccine, we made the decision to keep them home to protect not only them, but the high risk family members in our home. We decided not to send them back when the schools reopened because we didn't trust that all of their peers would mask up. This whole time I have worked directly with Covid 19 patients at UNC. I have seen what this virus can do and how it can devastate people with no past medical history. As soon as we could vaccinate everyone in our household we did so, hoping we could get back to school, activities and our family. This is at risk yet again as people are not vaccinated and not wearing masks. Mask use has proven effective in slowing this virus. Please follow the science and CDC recommendations and require mask use at every level. If parents feel this is too much to ask to keep everyone safe, they have the option to keep their children in virtual academy. Follow the science and not politics. I promise you this virus doesn't care if it's host leans right or left.</p>

Stephanie Lormand	In Support of Masks	<p>Regardless of the opinions of a select number of vocal anti-maskers (who also refused to be vaccinated and have refused to practice any method of social distancing since Day 1) it is in the best interests for both the health and education continuity that masks continue to be required in ALL WCPSS, K-12.</p> <p>Every day I drive my kids to school. Every day I see students older than 12 wearing their masks without complaint.</p> <p>Is wearing a mask fun? No. No it is not. Would we still need to have this conversation if the people complaining about it now would have worn them and would take a vaccine? No.</p> <p>Do I care what a few dozen anti-vax, anti-mask, COVID denying "parents" think about masks in schools? Not really. Part of why I want masks to be a continued requirement is because those parents send their kids to school with my vaccinated, been-doing-this-since-March-2020 kids.</p> <p>Keep them ALL masked.</p>
Stephenie Manns	Mandatory masks for school-aged children	<p>I am writing in support of our children wearing masks for the upcoming 21-22 wake county school year. As the delta variant of the coronavirus is proving to be more contagious and virulent than previous strains, younger unvaccinated populations like our children are and will be more susceptible.</p> <p>I am the mother of three Wake county elementary school-aged children, but I am also a pulmonary and critical care physician who has been taking care of Covid patients the entire pandemic.</p> <p>Please follow the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for masking K-12 students this year to keep them safe.</p>
Sukhi Singh	Please uphold the mask mandate until children can be vaccinated	<p>Please have the mask mandate remain in place until our children under 12 have the chance to be fully vaccinated. Covid doesn't discriminate regardless of political affliction so keep politics far away from the health of our children, families, friends and community at large. As a healthcare professional, we have been seeing a large number of children in the hospital with the delta variant. The only way to stop the spread is masking and vaccinating! AHA and AAP recommend that too, so does CDC.</p>

Susan Book	Mask Mandate and other Safety Concerns	WCPSS School Board please keep our children safe. Masks are essential for keeping the virus at bay especially for kids who don't qualify for the vaccine yet. As we are watching clusters already unfold, please think deeply on how we can stop more clusters in schools. Whether it be strict seating guidelines or whatever is recommended by medical professionals. Quarantines are inevitable. Make sure you have plans for the those kids too. Finally, this is not a matter of public opinion. It is a matter of science. It isn't a matter of most signatures, local air time, or loudest voices at a meeting. We must listen to the science as a matter of policy.
Susan Hunt	Masks	I'm begging you to vote yes to wearing masks in school. Please protect our children and staff. With the numbers increasing each day it is vital. It will help slow the spread which in turn will keep more kids in school rather than home in quarantine. In the Apex area we have had two clusters and school has only been in for three weeks. I appreciate your help in keeping everyone safe.
Susan Lamatrice	Support of Masks in School	Hello! I have 2 kids in WCPSS, both are fully vaccinated but I am in support of continuing to require masks in K-12 schools. For our kids to be able to remain in school IN PERSON, masks give us the best chance of reducing COVID spread. We are in District 8. Thank you!
Suzanne Stanard	Masking in schools	<p>I'm a parent of two children in the Wake County Public School System, and I am very concerned for their safety at school this year. PLEASE maintain the current COVID-19 protocols — including required face coverings — until all students have the opportunity to receive the vaccine.</p> <p>My younger daughter will be one of nearly 600 children under the age of 12 at her school. They will ALL be unvaccinated at the start of the year, which is terrifying, especially with the relentless spread of the new Delta variant. Please do all you can to keep our children safe. Please keep them masked.</p>

<p>Tamara Avant</p>	<p>Masks</p>	<p>I am a WCPSS parent of a child with medical conditions that make him at-risk for complications related to COVID. While watching the live-stream of the last meeting, I was disgusted at the lack of empathy and overwhelming ableism I saw from fellow parents. They quoted statistics that 99% of children are fine, followed by Bible verses they felt supported their stances. As a parent of one of the children in the 1% of children who would likely die as a result of contracting COVID, I struggle to understand their perspectives. While it may be a slight inconvenience for their children to wear masks at school, it certainly isn't fatal. My child is too young to be vaccinated, and research shows us that masks work best when worn by everyone. Their unwillingness to comply with a simple policy that protects the lives of children like mine shows a lack of compassion and empathy that I cannot fathom. I cannot imagine justifying any severe illness or death of children, and I most certainly cannot understand why they feel so passionately against children showing empathy for others and doing everything in their power to keep other children and teachers/staff safe from a deadly virus. With cases of the delta variant soaring in the US and the AAP, WHO, and CDC suggesting that masks be worn, it would be irresponsible and reckless to make masks optional. Masks should be required for everyone until children have the opportunity to be fully vaccinated. It takes a village to raise and protect our children. Please protect mine.</p>
<p>Tami Ashraf</p>	<p>Make Masks Optional</p>	<p>The overwhelming evidence shows that children are at very low risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19. The evidence also shows that child-to-child transmission of COVID-19 is minimal. There is NO scientific evidence that supports the masking of children in school settings. These children gather together EVERYWHERE outside of school without masks, and they have been for many months. Requiring them to wear masks in school is causing harm to our children for the sake of the placebo effect of calming people's fears. PLEASE, follow the lead of our surrounding counties and make masks optional for ALL students and staff in Wake County schools.</p>

<p>Tammi Mandel</p>	<p>Universal Masking Grades K-12</p>	<p>I am a community family physician who takes care of the children of Wake County. I am also a parent of children in the Wake County Public School System. I stand in solidarity with and in support of the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC recommendations for universal masking in the K-12 population. I strongly believe that in-person learning is one of the most important things we can do for our children during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that in-person learning is the best way to provide consistent, safe spaces for students to grow and learn. But for the benefits of in-person learning to be realized, schools must remain open. And the available data shows that schools remain open when proven mitigation techniques are employed. Until our K-12 students achieve a sufficient threshold of vaccinated children and adult staff, we must continue our evidence-based efforts to maintain low transmission rates in schools. Masks remain an integral part of a multi-faceted approach in protecting our children from COVID-19, especially as the Delta variant spreads across our globe. We know that masking works. Last year, Wake County was able to welcome thousands of students safely into the classroom with masks and additional mitigation efforts. We are incredibly fortunate to have the Duke-led ABC collaborative locally to help guide our schools, and we should continue to take advantage of their data and guidance. Their most recent summary indicates that masks are the most important means of curbing spread in school, which allows students of all grades to attend full, in-person instruction. I am thankful to the Wake County School Board for their continued thoughtfulness, effort, and hard work in keeping our children and staff in a safe, productive school environment.</p>
<p>Tiffany Debnam</p>	<p>Mask Mandate</p>	<p>Please protect those children who do not have the option to be vaccinated. I have not encountered a single child who complains about having to wear a mask in school (or anywhere for that matter)-- it is the parents who are making what should be a non issue a big issue. These children have the right to be in school with their peers while being as SAFE and PROTECTED as possible. Making masks optional, especially for young children, puts them at unnecessary health risks when we are still very much in the midst of a pandemic with a new, highly contagious strain. Removing the mask mandates also puts staff and teachers at risk and that is not fair to them. Virtual school would be almost impossible for me as a full time working parent but removing the mask mandate makes it so that I have to remove my child from in-school instruction to protect her. Please respect ALL children and keep the mask mandate as mandatory in WCPSS.</p>

Tiffany Gibb	Mask for returning K-12 students students	With 2 children in the wake county public school system returning to in person instruction in the fall, I feel it is imperative that all students and teachers be required to mask this fall. The delta variant is spreading in Wake county, students under 12 are not able to get the vaccine and too many people that are of age and medically able to get vaccinated against covid 19 are choosing not to. it is for the safety of the students and staff that mask be mandatory in the school setting. This is in line with the CDC guidelines at this time.
Tracey Powell	Keeping the mask mandate in place	First of all I would like to thank each member of the Wake County Board of Education for their time and dedication in what has been an incredibly difficult 16 months. I applaud your efforts in seeking to make the best decisions possible in the midst of a global pandemic and all of the many ways it has impacted our families. I have been hearing and reading about those parents who want the mask mandate lifted, and I want to go on record to say that I fully support the mask mandate. I believe that wearing masks is essential in order to stop and slow the spread of COVID-19, particularly the Delta variant. If you delve into statistics you will notice that this variant is spreading rapidly, particularly among the unvaccinated. Because our students under age 12 are not yet eligible for a vaccination, we must do everything in our power to protect them. It is the responsibility of the Board of Education to ensure the safety of our students first and foremost, and in order to do that, we must continue to enforce wearing masks in schools. I know that not everyone agrees with this opinion, but if we can't take every possible measure to protect our students, then we will be failing them. I think it is irresponsible to lift the mask mandate, especially with the recent surge in cases. Thank you.
Tricia Williamson	Please keep masks in our schools	I am the mother of a 6 year old and an 8 year old. Neither child can be vaccinated yet, and the best way to protect them and their peers is to keep masks in our schools. Last year during the height of the pandemic, masks helped curb the spread of Covid. We're so close to being on the other side of this terrible time, but that just won't happen if we allow the unmitigated spread, and possible mutation, of Covid. Please make masks mandatory for the 2021-2022 school year.
Tyler Neave	Grievance Policy	Dear Ms. Moore, Mr. Sutton, Ms. Mahaffey, and all others serving on the Board, Please revise the school board grievance policy. It is antiquated, not clear and concise. It does not work. People are leaving the school system to home school. You chose to run to for office start to make a difference. Fix this policy.

		Ty Neave
Ushma Shukla	Masks in Schools	A few weeks ago, I wrote to all of the school board members regarding the continued use of masks in schools. Thank you for your individual responses. In light of rising case counts and hospitalization due to the spread of the Delta variant, I am again reaching out to ask that you please continue to require that masks be worn at school by everyone regardless of vaccination status. Our children who are too young to be vaccinated and those students and staff who are unable to be vaccinated due to health conditions deserve to be protected from the accidental spread of Covid by vaccinated individuals. I have personally lost friends to this virus. As a scientist and mother of two children, I firmly believe that we should continue to follow CDC guidance with regards to masking. We rely on you to make decisions to protect all of our families. Thank you for hearing my concerns.
Victoria Williams	Masks	<p>Please help protect our students and continue the use of masks indoors. CDC recommends the use of masks for students indoors. The number of cases have gone up in NC and there have been reports of clusters in schools including one of mine. Vaccinations are not available for children under 12. All students and teachers need to continue using masks to help protect everyone so they can continue to attend school in person. Students also need to maintain a distance of at least 3 feet. I attended a meet the teacher last week and saw where 2nd graders would sit 2 at a table. They would be close enough that just one could reach out and touch their neighbor. That is not following CDC guidelines.</p> <p>If you drop the mask requirement then you need to reopen enrollment for virtual academy. At the time we decided to go back to in person, masks were required. If you drop the requirement then this would be a change in which you need to allow families the option to keep their students safe.</p>
Will Langdon	Top Biden Covid advisor admits on CNN yesterday that cloth masks aren't very effective against Covid.	<p>Top Biden Covid advisor admits on CNN yesterday that cloth masks aren't very effective against Covid.</p> <p>https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=bAdNz6BwU8c</p>

William Krayner	Mask Mandate	<p>I have raised two children through the Wake Country School System and now I have an 8 year old grandchild making her way through. I find it incredible that these unvaccinated children are being used for political propoganda for people whose attentions to their liberties negates everybody else's. This delta variant is spreading at a higher rate of infection than the original. Only those who have not taken the vaccine are getting sick and dying. Until there is a vaccine for these kids, their only line of defense is the mask.This board is debating taking that away! That makes no logical sense.</p> <p>The need to see a child's smile do not outweigh then right's of all children to avoid COVID-19 and it is the responsibility of this board to use every reasonable option to protect these children. At the worst possible time, our nation is spiking and the inconvenience is one the board must mandate. If only one child, one administrator, one other person is kept from COVID it is a job well done.</p> <p>The Wake County School Systems have been through a lot over the last decade and does not need to start the new one by making wrong life or death decisions. Our children need your authority to make their schools safe. Don't let them down and vote for the mask mandate so we can see all those smiling faces, next year when this is finally beaten.</p>
William Sheppard	In Favor of Mandatory Masks	<p>Given the ongoing surge in COVID and inability of students under 12 to be vaccinated, I urge Wake County to continue to do the responsible thing and keep masks mandatory for all students until vaccines are available to all those enrolled.</p>

Adam Turner, MPH	Masks in Schools	<p>Dear School Board Members,</p> <p>I am uncertain if there is still a question as to whether to require masks in schools right now. If the decision is still up in the air, I strongly encourage you to keep the mandate to require masks of teachers, teens, and children.</p> <p>I am a parent of two elementary aged school children in Wake County and a public health professional trained in epidemiology. Regardless of how we all feel about wearing masks, it is one of the only defenses we have against COVID, particularly for this age. After my son started back at Sycamore Creek recently (with masks), he was one of the first exposed during their lunch break without masks. He was rightly pulled out for quarantine because of the possible exposure.</p> <p>With that said, how many more kids would have been exposed and sent home if there were no masks for the whole day? It would have been far worse and likely the entire class would be out or potentially infected. With the more contagious delta variant tearing through the community, how can we justify going masks optional and putting entire classrooms and teachers at risk? I understand the sentiment to allow there to be options, but unfortunately, masks work best when worn by everyone. The data from numerous research studies have proven this beyond doubt at this point. There will be a time to go to masks optional, but I strongly encourage the board, please do not go in this direction right now. The slow the resurgence, we need more restrictions, not less. I believe that if we go mask optional, the number of increased exposures that we will have to deal across the entire county will be far more detrimental to children's emotional wellbeing and educational productivity than masks. I say that from first-hand experience with only three weeks of being back in school.</p> <p>If parents really want their kids to not wear a mask in this current environment—increasing the risks for all around them—I would suggest they be allowed to shift into virtual options made available to them. This allows them to get their way and not impact an entire community with their decisions. There may be other alternatives that gives them choice while not endangering everyone around them.</p> <p>I appreciate the hard work you all are doing in guiding our children's education. I know these decisions are not easy and I encourage you to continue to prioritize the health of the entire community as you come to your conclusions. I appreciate your</p>
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		<p>time in reading this. I'd be happy to speak further with anyone on the school board if desired.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Adam Turner, MPH Senior Research Program Manager The American Board of Pediatrics</p>
Ali Eyuboglu	Virtual Academy	<p>Please open up virtual academy enrollment again. The situation has changed dramatically here in Wake Co since the Virtual Academy was offered. Additionally, masks must be mandated in schools to keep our community and our most vulnerable safe. Thank you very much.</p>
Alisa Haggard	Masking in schools	<p>I agreed to send my kids to in person school based on the assumption that the school district would continue to follow CDC guidance and not be subject to the whims of the disproportionately vocal minority. We need to base our direction on science and not on who screams the loudest.</p> <p>When the masking requirement was lifted in public venues for vaccinated people, it seems masks disappeared altogether, or at least at a volume disproportionate to the percentage of our population reporting as vaccinated. We have repeatedly seen that people cannot be trusted to do the right thing.</p> <p>I have heard the argument that people who want their children masked should just keep them home/VA. The argument works both ways. If parents do not want their children to wear a mask, please keep them home. My vaccinated children will be masked because others can't be trusted to act responsibly on their own.</p>
Alison Russen	Keep mask wearing at school	<p>Please do not lift the mask mandate in school. Community spread is currently high and so many school aged children are not vaccinated.</p>
Allen Johansson	Masks *should* be required for all students and staff.	<p>As a long-time WCPSS teacher, spouse of a WCPSS teacher, and parent of a student in WCPSS, I would like to express my support for continuing the policy of required masking for all students and staff on campus during the school day. The CDC's recent statements on increased transmissibility and break-through infection prevalence of the Delta variant suggest that the safety of students and staff are best served by maintaining this preventative measure in WCPSS schools until CDC guidance suggests otherwise. I continue to appreciate the Board's focus on the science behind creating a safe and healthy campus environment through meaningful mitigation strategies amidst this ongoing pandemic.</p>

Allison DelPiano	Mask Policy	I am concerned with the mandatory mask policy. I feel in particular younger learners should have more opportunities for learning without a mask. It can be difficult for younger learners particularly K-3 to distinguish visual cues as well as hindering speech development. Masks muffle voices and sounds and do not allow for viewing lips. Masks have also increased anxiety, stress, feelings of isolation, and fatigue when communicating in my children. With the high rate of vaccination within the county and the science showing that children are not affected as severely I feel that masks should be optional.
Allison Strickland	Masks in the classroom	We chose VA last year out of concern for our children and high-risk family members. It was an incredibly difficult decision as we saw how this impacted our children both academically and more importantly socially and emotionally. We have been back in the classroom for one week and we have already seen our children thriving back in the school. We felt safe having our children return knowing that WCPSS was taking precautions like wearing masks indoors. We ask that for the safety of our unvaccinated children, that Wake County continue to require masks to be worn inside. It's one small action we can all take that will help prevent outbreaks and force the return to virtual school.
Amanda Bowden	Covid Precautions and Transportation	Please keep the schools open for in person learning as long as is safe by continuing to require masks, social distancing, personal and environmental hygiene. Parents who want to walk their children to and from school should be able to do so regardless of nearby bus stops. To bring my child to and from Holly Springs Elementary School, a walking route is safer for us than getting in the car and driving. The road has opened up to be a straight shot to school, and the development on the same street as us can walk while we cannot (less 5 minute difference in walking time). I can get there and be home in less time than it takes to sit in carpool and have a safer commute for my child. I do not want my child to ride the bus.
Amber Sauer	enforce masking in schools	Only 25% of our 12-18 year old population is vaccinated according to Gov Cooper. There is no distancing in schools and often poor ventilation. Masking is the last line of defense to protect vulnerable populations and those that cannot be vaccinated. Minor inconvenience seems a small price to pay for lives saved from the more virulent Delta variant which is now the dominant strain in the US according to the CDC

Amy Garbade	Keep Masks for WCPSS staff and students	We need to keep masks in place and follow guidelines put forth by scientists and medical professionals. We are now dealing with the Delta variant which spreads much more easily than the original virus. In addition, it has the potential to cause more severe illness in unvaccinated populations. Since a vaccine has not been approved for children younger than twelve, mask mandates and social distancing guidelines should remain in place for students and staff in WCPSS. Please continue to use science to guide decisions that impact the health and safety of all WCPSS students and staff.
Amy Skorich	In support of mandatory masking and social distancing	Our family wants mandatory masking for all students and staff, and social distancing for lunch and snack times in every school in Wake County. This needs to be enforced unilaterally. YR schools tracks 1-3 have been in person for 3 weeks and I have already heard of cases in a number of schools as well as 2 clusters in one school, not from WCPSS but from other parents and educators. There is also no clear understanding of how we continue to provide the required education for those who are sent home due to exposure and well enough to continue with schoolwork. If there is a plan, every parent and educator I have spoken with does not know it so the plan needs to be better communicated. Please help us provide safe learning environments for all children in the county. Thank you for your time.
Anantha Kanuri	Masks Mandatory	The masks should be mandatory for the kids and everyone inside the school building.
Andra Thomasson	Masks in schools	I have a 10 and 8 year old who will be attending Cary Elementary school in person this year. I believe in choice and I also believe it is the responsibility of Wake County to offer my child the safest school environment possible until everyone can make the choice to vaccinate or not. That means masks in schools until kids under 12 can be vaccinated. While I do believe the science that proves vaccinations are good for the entire community, the choice to vaccinate is really only directly affecting my children. The choice to not wear a mask while we are in a time of substantial and high transmission in Wake County has the potential to negatively impact our entire school community, it is not a choice that only affects one person like a vaccine. Please follow the science, the CDC, and NCDHHS guidelines and require masks in school until everyone has the choice to be vaccinated.
Andrea Shipman	Mandatory Masking K-5	Please keep the mask mandates in place for children who do not have vaccines available to them. Numbers are increasing in NC again and the public at large refuses to either get vaccinated OR wear a mask. Please protect my only child and those people who aren't able to get the vaccine.
Ann Diaz	Covid	Please require masks to keep our kids safe

anna bickley	Masks in School (Pro)	<p>I encourage the school board to mandate masks during the school year to protect children/staff/teachers and to lower the chance of COVID-19 spread. The more chances we can keep the children in school, the better, so let's implement this measure to increase our chances of having a successful school year.</p>
Anna Watkins	Covid	<p>We are getting very nervous as school gets nearer and covid cases are headed back up. We have a multigenerational household with two unvaccinated elementary students. I have a friend whose vaccinated grandma is in the hospital with Covid and may not make it and it seems like the number of children in the hospital is rising. It's also seeming much more likely that Covid will spread among schools even with masks.</p> <p>That said, masks need to be mandatory for anyone in a school building.</p> <p>I also think it's time to reopen discussions on how to make schools even safer with the increased contagiousness of the Delta variant. How are we keeping safe during lunch, snacks and water breaks? How are we limiting the number of students/staff each child comes into contact with.</p> <p>We really don't want to go back to virtual academy, and I don't know what options are truly available, but I'd personally prefer a remote hybrid with some in person small groups. Or perhaps one week in person and two weeks remote to lower class size. I feel this could even be optional. Allow those who want a full-time, full capacity class do that. Then allow those who want reduced class size be in a class together. I'm also nervous about students eating together, so I'd also be a proponent of half day classes and leaving before lunch, though I doubt that's feasible for most families.</p>
Anthea Fok	Masks should be an essential requirement	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>We chose to allow our kids to return from virtual to a somewhat normal in person with the comfort that WCPSS would make the best decisions to keep our kids and families safe. This variant is not entirely known and different from last year lets not get ahead of ourselves and then force everything to close down again all because of a mask.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional,</p>

		please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.
April Giancola	Masks in schools	As the mother of an 11 yo son who is starting his middle school experience, I implore you to keep our mask mandate for all students, staff, teachers and visitors for the foreseeable future. Thousands of students in WCPSS cannot get vaccinated by no fault of their own. It is irresponsible to put them in harms way when we know the science behind his DELTA variant and how contagious it is. I do not want to see WCPSS or any school in our State to have to close again. The cost to our children's emotional and physical health are on the line. Please do not succumb to the political pressure from people who are not doctors, scientists or public health professionals. It is YOUR JOB to keep our children safe to the best of your ability. Do do that, we must require masks be worn indoors by all people present in the school community. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Ashleigh Brothers	Make face masks mandatory in schools	I'm deeply concerned about children — including my child — attending school in person without everyone wearing face coverings, especially with the highly transmissible Delta variant of COVID-19. Please ensure the health of our students and staff by making face masks (and other CDC- and American Association of Pediatrics-recommended hygiene practices) mandatory in all Wake County public schools. It's the responsible thing to do.
Ashley Pelfrey	Data regarding Covid Cases over Summer School	Dear WCPSS BOE Where is the data, and numbers of students that have had Covid cases over summer school? Has contract tracers stopped working? Have those positions been eliminated? We have not heard any updates from the school board. However we know students were sent home for sneezing in their mask. Please provide our community updates. Thank you, Ms. Pelfrey
Autumn Robinson	Masks for all until our state is safe and stable	It is not an easy time to try to appease everyone, especially both sides of this debate. However, please be mindful it is your duty, as the Board of Education, to protect all staff and students on campus and in our community. With that said, there is no way to keep our children and families safe without requiring everyone, regardless of vaccination status, to wear a mask, socially distance and wash their hands regularly. The delta variant of the coronavirus is ravaging our state, southern region and country. We need mask mandates until our community is safe and stable from this deadly virus. Thank you for keeping my babies safe - they are my entire world!

Becky Robak	Masks	I understand that you have an impossible decision to make regarding masks. But if you truly are going to follow the science that indicates that Covid is not affecting kids then please let the parents decide if a mask is right for their children and make them optional. Thank you for your time.
Bethany Reeves	Continuing mask use in schools	<p>My daughter is a heart transplant recipient. She is severely immune-suppressed for life to protect the heart. Recent data shows only 33% of solid organ transplant recipients make any antibodies after being fully vaccinated from Covid.</p> <p>A study by Johns Hopkins researchers found that fully vaccinated organ transplant recipients were 82 times more likely to get a breakthrough Covid-19 infection compared to the vaccinated general population, and 485 times more likely to be hospitalized or die from Covid-19.</p> <p>I'll ask you to consider these non-typical students--and teachers and staff--in our school system. Several groups are immune suppressed: transplant recipients, people fighting cancer, those with Down syndrome, people with HIV, and those with autoimmune diseases like Type 1 diabetes, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis.</p> <p>These individuals deserve free, appropriate public education, and they deserve to be safe at school. And the most effective way we can keep them safe is to continue wearing masks at school. Thank you for your time.</p>
Betsy Rubenstein	Keep our kids in masks in schools	<p>The science behind masks helping to minimize the spread of Covid-19 is solid. The latest numbers of cases in our area are high as going higher and are high enough to warrant concern for our children in WCPSS. Please keep the in-school mask mandate in effect. The kids do need to be in schools, virtual learning is not a one size fits all solution. The safest way for this to happen is to keep our kids in masks and eating in classrooms each day. I realize there are people whose choice is to not wear a mask. How is my kid safe in that situation? We stayed home and wore masks this long, and if the people on the other side of this argument did as well, we wouldn't be in this position. But here we are, and my kid deserves to be in school learning just as much as any other kid. Do I send him masked when others are not and expect him to not get sick? What have you learned from Turner Creek Elementary? How many are quarantined there? Franklin Academy - 200 in quarantine. What type of learning will our kids actually get in quarantine? Keep the masks, keep the distance (at lunch at least when they can't wear a mask) and help keep our kids safe. We have entrusted you with their safety. If you don't do right by them, and their families, you're going to see a mass exodus of students from the district. That's not a threat, it's a fact.</p>

Breiana Wagner	Masks in schools	<p>Please make wearing masks required for all students and staff and visitors K-12 for the Fall and winter. Cases of Delta are skyrocketing and children are for the most part unvaccinated and unprotected. Kids need to have the chance to stay in schools and not have to shutdown because of overwhelming cases and overwhelming of the local healthcare systems. Those of us that have been doing our part to protect our families and communities should not be sacrificed to the childishness of those that refuse to do their part. Kids especially must be protected. If you make masks optional I will be taking my kids out of school and I'm sure many others will do the same. My kids won't be sacrificed to placate the selfish. Make masks mandatory for all. Thank you.</p>
Brittany Bouwer	Masks	<p>Kids matter too. I'll say it again, kids matter too. The fact that keeping them safe this upcoming school year, prior to their chance to have the opportunity to be vaccinated, is even up for discussion completely baffles me. Unvaccinated individuals are the people who are being affected by Covid - delta specific. Our children are unvaccinated and don't have the opportunity to be otherwise. Many of us have kept our kids home and spent a year and a half protecting them. The decision to send them back was when NCs curve was on a good trend. The decisions were also made under the impression that masks weren't debatable until a vaccine is released for them (AND they have the time to actually get it, get both doses, and have time for it to become effective). Research has solidly shown that vaccinated adults can and do spread the delta variant. So all individuals who come in contact with our children need to be correctly masked. We NEED to keep masks in school for our children's health and safety. A collective approach is FAR more effective. Having the option for parents or students to choose isn't an effective means of preventing the spread. Among many other reasons, it's a total cop out and a failure to make solid decisions that are in the best interest of our children but simply a political pushed decision. Please, please help us protect our children and keep masks in schools. Make a solid decision, not a decision that goes back and forth for months. Put your foot down and decide that the children matter. Their education matters. Having them safely in school matters. All of this can be better accomplished by keeping masks in schools. Show parents that the health of students, especially during a pandemic but all of the time, is a top priority. Show us you care.</p>

C. Harris	Please keep masks mandatory in schools	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>
Camille Kauer	COVID safety!	<p>For the protection of our community we must protect each other by wearing masks! With only 43% of wake county being fully vaccinated and the number of new cases rising. It's imperative to follow the CDC guidelines of masks being required indoors. Until our vaccination rate is about 70% we should try to keep our children and community healthy!</p>
Candace MacNaughton	Wearing Masks	<p>As a grandmother of 5 children in the WCPSS, under the age of 12 yrs, I feel it is mandatory that all children wear masks and that desks should be spread out to avoid infection. The Delta variant is too contagious not to require this in the schools.</p>

Casey Purdy	Lack of Critical Covid Mitigation Measures	<p>I have two high school students and they, and the rest of my household, are vaccinated. We did Virtual Academy all last year but are committed to going in-person this year. We are trying to trust that WCPSS will keep our kids safe but are losing faith quickly as we watch what is happening right now in the schools that are already in session. As the CDC just said, the war has changed. Policy must change with it. Failure to do so will cost, from classroom time lost for countless quarantines, to the health (short term and long term) of our children and their households. Delta has changed the landscape and I see no adjustment being made by WCPSS. Your decisions have been consistently too little, too late and Delta will and already is taking advantage of that. We need you to step up and be considerably more proactive because of how much more contagious Delta is. If you wait until you have (even more) clusters, it will be too late. We now know that vaccinated people who get breakthrough Covid, even if asymptomatic, can spread Covid to others as easily as unvaccinated people can. We know that Covid transmission in schools usually happens in spaces like lunch, where students are no longer distanced and are unmasked while eating. I am a former WCPSS HS teacher and current sub, so I know well the challenges you face in providing a safe environment with the number of students and teachers you have. But you must employ all the mitigation measures in the toolbox in order to maximize the safety of the environment. At minimum, you've got to require masks in all situations, regardless of vaccination status, indoors and outdoors, until our local Covid numbers get and stay low again. I know it's unpopular to say so but you've got to bring social distancing back. It's another layer that helps. Use the guidance on what that distance needs to be and make it happen, even if it's difficult. Tell the teachers to quit putting desks side-by-side, address lunchtime distances, anything and everything you can think of. If cohort rotations have to come back, so be it. Nobody wants it, I know that. But do what must be done. Our Covid numbers are rising to levels that made WCPSS need to go all-virtual last school year. Again, I know nobody wants that, and I know you're scared of people pulling their kids out and taking the money away from WCPSS that goes with each kid, but do not let that fear get in the way of doing what you need to do. Lead boldly and you'll restore the trust from households like ours.</p>
Cassandra Fishback	Masks	<p>The rate of death in kids may seem small, but the rate of death in kids is small overall. Covid is a top 10 leading cause of death for kids and the CDC AND American Academy of Pediatrics says school populations should be masked. We're already seeing outbreaks in our schools. There's a cluster at an elementary in Cary and Franklin Academy in Wake Forest.</p>

Catherine Hale	Concerned for the health of the unvaccinated	<p>My son has been doing virtual school since WCPSS offered it. He really needs to go back for in-person instruction this year so I was sending him back this August under the impression that everyone would be masked. I'm extremely concerned because anytime he gets sick with anything it turns into asthma and heads to pneumonia. Covid-19 could kill him and he is only 9 and unable to be vaccinated until it is approved. Please follow science and give our unvaccinated children a chance to safely return to school with masks in place.</p>
Christin Phelps	Retain Mask Mandate	<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that all K-12 schools retain mask mandates for the foreseeable future, as they also recommend getting as many kids back into the classroom as possible. The CDC and North Carolina DHHS both also recommend that all K-12 schools retain mask mandates. The ABC Science Collaborative in a report published this week continues to recommend universal masking in K-12 environments for full in-person instruction. The board trusted these four organizations to guide their decision making last summer and throughout the prior school year. I respectfully request consistency, and that the WCPSS school board retain the mask mandate at the present time.</p> <p>I watched many of the school board meetings last summer and the presentations given then by the ABC Science Collaborative were referenced as justification for much of the board's decision making processes. Much of the data referenced in those presentations came from summer camps that utilized sanitizing, social distancing, and mask use extensively. The ABC Science Collaborative recommended, based on that data, that schools utilize masks and social distancing to curb the spread of the virus and encouraged reopening. They were right - with effective sanitizing measures and consistent mask use, NC did not have as many outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools that many feared. However, if you've seen the news lately, you've no doubt noticed the numerous outbreaks of COVID-19 and the extensive quarantining that have been necessary due to summer camps dropping their masking requirements and the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant. We can use the same logic this summer as last - if we're seeing from summer camps that dropping mask mandates leads to outbreaks and, subsequently, extensive and disruptive quarantines, then it only makes sense to continue requiring masks in classrooms.</p> <p>If the board chooses to no longer require masks at a time when transmission rates are rapidly increasing, then the board should re-open enrollment for the Virtual Academy. Parents chose in-person or virtual at a time when rates were steadily</p>

		decreasing over multiple weeks, masks were still required in schools, and paperwork was filed to approve the vaccine for children. As no vaccine is yet available for students under age 12 and rates are now increasing, parents must be given the choice to switch to Virtual Academy if safety measures are now dropped.
Christina Ankney	Masks in school	Please continue to require masks for students. With rates increasing and the virus changing it will help protect our children and slow the spread to our community. Thank you
Christina Eyuboglu	Virtual Academy Enrollment	Given the new information regarding the Delta Variant, the transmission rates in the county and current year round school outbreaks in wake co, please open up virtual academy enrollment again. Parents didn't have the information they have now back when VA was first offered for the 2021/22 school year. We are in a different situation this year and many parents want to keep our kids safe. I think there's many parents that would prefer to resort back to VA until a vaccine is available for our children. Thank you for all you do to keep our kids safe.
Christine Kraft	Requiring masks in schools	Thank you to our school board members for their diligence throughout this pandemic in keeping our children safe and making their health a priority. My husband and I ask that you continue to keep our children safe by requiring masks indoors at elementary and middle schools where many have not been able to receive COVID vaccinations, but are required to sit and eat in very close quarters. Our fourth grader has 32 children in his classroom. Since social distancing is not possible, masks are the only precaution helping to prevent COVID spreading in the air. The AAP and the CDC are both recommending masks for children over three indoors. Please heed their advice.
Christopher Davis	School Masking	<p>In regards to school masking in general and for the younger school population who are ineligible for the shot specifically, the universal maskings should be kept in place until a vaccine has become available for all school children, and sufficient time has been given that all children have had a chance to receive the necessary number of doses. In short, the CDC guidance should remain in place.</p> <p>Our children's safety should not be discarded just because some find it uncomfortable or want to score political points. Additionally, we expect that the safety of our children given into the care of the school system take priority especially since the window for virtual academy has long since closed and goal posts should not be moved for parents at this point.</p>

Chuck Tryon	Require Masks in Public Schools	<p>I am writing as the parent of an 8-year old to urge the school board to require masks in all public schools for students, teachers, staff, and visitors. The Delta variant has proven to be highly contagious and especially so for children under 12, precisely the group that is not yet eligible to be vaccinated.</p> <p>This is a major public safety issue. Not only can children contract the coronavirus, but they can pass it along to others, including family members who are elderly or who are immunocompromised and unable to get the vaccine for themselves. Children, especially middle and high school students also are exposed to a LOT of other students, often in crowded classrooms where there is not sufficient ventilation. With the block schedule, a typically student might be exposed to over 100 classmates in a typical day. Add lunch and after-school activities, and that compounds the risk. Masks have been proven to reduce transmission, so they are our best alternative if we want to maintain in-person schooling.</p> <p>I know that the students can handle this. I know that most of our teachers want this. Let's do the right thing and keep everyone safe. Thank you.</p>
Clair Cooper	Required masking in schools for ages younger than 12	<p>Because children under 12 are unable to receive the vaccine, masks should be required in schools. This should be a no-brainer in order to protect children who come to schools who are more medically vulnerable. Please keep mask requirements of teachers and children under the vaccine allowed age of 11 and under.</p>
Courtney Gonsalves	Masks	<p>Our children's health and safety should be the most important thing always. Until all children are able to be vaccinated the mask requirement should stay in place. Taking away masks is the same as telling us that our lives mattered before but theirs do not matter now that adults have been given the opportunity to be vaccinated. No one likes the masks, but they are necessary and shouldn't be removed from schools until all our children are fully vaccinated.</p>
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Crystal Whittenton	Masks should be required	<p>My son is eager to get back to in-person school at Hunter. I promised him I'll make decisions that keep him safe. I cannot keep a child too young for vaccination safe if the adults around him do not make appropriate decisions.</p> <p>Mask guidance is clear. They are useful and necessary until the pandemic is under control. We need distancing and masks from all at the school per CDC guidance. School leaders who reject expert leadership and science cannot be entrusted with the safety of children.</p>
Cyndi Soter O'Neil	Please continue to require masks at school	Please follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and most experts and medical professionals — extend the policy requiring all students, faculty, staff and visitors on WCPSS campuses to wear masks/face coverings regardless of vaccination status. Even though both of my children are fully vaccinated, our family has continued masking up when indoors in public spaces because it's what is safest for everyone. While my kids think it's annoying, they understand that it's the right thing to do.
Daniela Worden	Masks	The delta variant is surging. Now is no the time for politics, now is the time for science. Children under 12 are still unable to be vaccinated from Covid-19. As long as a vaccine is unavailable, then masks and social distancing requirements need to stay in place for the safety of our children. Our children need to go back to school, but in a safe and smart way. The safety of our children need to be 1st priority. Follow science, not insanity.
David Ableidinger	Everybody masked in school	I'm in elementary school. I would feel safer if everybody was wearing masks in school.

David Munn	Require masks in schools	Masks are the last and sometimes only line of defense for my unvaccinated child. Until everyone is vaccinated masks should be required.
Debra Hoffman-Pahl	Mandatory masks in schools	I urge the school board to make masks mandatory in all schools for teachers, staff, students and visitors. Do not make the mistake of exempting the vaccinated. The science has changed and everyone needs to be masked. Voluntary compliance of the unvaccinated does not work.
Devin Shulman	Mask requirement in Wake County schools	I have a 1st and 3rd grader in Wake County schools and I am fearful that the screaming voices of a minority group asking to make masks optional might ring louder in your ears than the quieter majority who has faith that you will take our children's health into the forefront of your thoughts when making your decision this week. Our children are too young to have the choice to vaccinate and should therefore be given every opportunity to protect themselves from this ever changing disease. Unfortunately too many families are not taking this illness seriously or simply believe that they should not be responsible for the health and safety of those around them. By removing the mask mandate in schools you are opening up all those children to a much higher risk of catching Covid in an environment that they need to be in. School is not optional. This is not another extracurricular that could be skipped until the world is safer for these kids. We need them to be in school and it is our duty, your duty to make it as safe as possible for them. Please follow the science, the advice of the CDC and the ABC collaborative. These kids are capable of so much and that includes wearing a mask and still learning and having fun with their peers. Please support our children and follow the science. Thank you.
Dhivya Wagner	Mandate masks for all or reopen Virtual Academy	Hello School board - Please either mandate masks for all in K-8 schools in Wake county or else please open up the registration for virtual academy. With all the risk posed, we cannot afford to put our kids lives in danger. Please do the right thing, we need to collectively keep our children safe. Thanks!
Diana Mann	Please keep masks mandatory in our schools	While my child has been vaccinated against Covid, this delta variant is too unpredictable. I am immunosuppressed. I am vaccinated but more susceptible to getting sick. Kids deserve an in person education and the safest way to do that is with masks. Don't let the anti vaccine and anti mask minority steam roll public health. The science backs masks. Please help keep our kids and community safe. Keep the mandatory mask requirement in place. Thank you.

Diane England	COVID-19 Prevention	<p>Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board. As a parent of a WCPSS elementary student, I want to formally express my strong support for mask mandates (including vaccinated individuals), vaccine requirements (COVID and standard childhood diseases) with only medical exemptions, and implementation of other COVID-19 prevent protocols (such as social distancing, limiting class sizes, no large indoor school gatherings, etc.) for the 2021-2022 school year. The absence of a currently approved vaccine for 12 and under, the rising number of COVID cases in our state, and the rising number of breakthrough cases of the Delta variant in the vaccinated population all argue for the continued implementation of the COVID-19 prevention measures implemented during the 2019-2020 school year. Required vaccination, once a vaccine is available for 12 and under, will be essential for stopping the spread of COVID-19. Please put the safety of our children and community first and continue to implement strict COVID-19 prevention protocols within the WCPSS.</p>
Dixania Rivas	Keep masks in schools	<p>I'm writing you today to add my support for masks to be <i>*required*</i> for both children and adults in schools this coming school year (2021-2022). As a parent, I try to do everything in my power to keep my children safe, recognizing that not everything is within my control. To support our efforts, we then rely on institutions to put policies in place to create safe environments for our children when they are not under our direct care. One such policy that I hope the WCPSS <i>*keeps*</i> this year is a mask mandate for all, regardless of vaccine status, in our school system this coming year. My children are not in WCPSS yet, but their preschool follows the lead of WCPSS for policy guidelines.</p> <p>With the rise of more contagious Covid variants such as Delta, and the potential delay for vaccine availability for children under age 12 to be mid-Winter, continuing to mandate masks is a simple and often effective method to limit the spread of Covid, while allowing our children to gain the much needed benefits of in-person instruction. We've seen time and time again that masks have helped prevent the spread of Covid in school environments when individuals in our children's classrooms have tested positive.</p> <p>While we've seen that Covid may be more mild in children, we also do not yet know the long term effects of this virus on their still developing bodies and brains. Education is imperative to set our children up for mental success, so we should protect their physical health in the process. Please keep a mask mandate in place until all ages are eligible for the vaccine. Thank you!</p>

Donna Kostandy	Masks	<p>Dear Wake County School Board,</p> <p>I am a parent of a 4th grader at AlstonRidgeES. I am also a two time cancer survivor and am immune compromised. My son is currently attending in-person school after a year Of virtual school last year. I am begging you to consider all students and err on the side of the most safe protocols for all families in your decision around masks. Children under age 12 are not eligible to receive a vaccine. Therefore the most safe method to protect children ages 11 and younger is to continue to wear masks indoors.</p> <p>You know the science by now about the delta variant; but as a reminder it's as contagious as chicken pox and more transmissible than the common cold. Do not let a minority of loud politically driven people change your mind on what is safe. Masks are a simple and easy way to limit transmission. A minor inconvenience in the most extreme case at this point.</p> <p>Finally, I work in clinical research and know that vaccines currently under the EUA are in phase 3 trials for children under age 12, so we just have to be a little more patient and wait for it to be eligible for all school age children. Please don't remove the mask policy until all school age children are eligible to receive it. Please think of the health and safety of all children under your care. Do not be influenced by the political groups funding a small noisy minority making this into a political issue instead of a health and safety issue. I beg you to think about those of us who are relying on you to make a decision to stop the spread of this pandemic. I beg you to research what happens to people who are sick with COVID, have long term neurological issues, persistent fever, lung scarring long after COVID has left the body for months at a time. This is what I see every day as scientists all over the globe are racing to find a cure or therapeutic that still remains elusive. Please keep masks in place.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Donna Kostandy 2108 Glade Valley Lane, Morrisville 919-389-3532</p>
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Dr. Colleen Fuller	Maintain mandatory masks in schools	<p>I urge the board to maintain a mask mandate inside k-12 schools, to have students eat lunch in their classrooms, and to continue all sensible precautions against transmission of Covid-19, until all students are vaccinated. The delta variant is far more transmissible, can lead to more serious disease in children than prior variants, and may even be transmitted by vaccinated people. Masking and social distancing should continue for the protection of our children and their families, including immunocompromised family members, and to help reduce the opportunities for a possible new, possibly even more virulent and dangerous mutation of the virus to occur. Please enforce the advice of the CDC to keep masks as a requirement for all people in school buildings.</p>
Dr. David Barnhart	Keep requiring masks at schools	<p>To the Wake County School Board. My name is Dr. David Barnhart, Ph.D in microbiology and immunology. I have two children in Wake County Public Schools, and for the first time in a year, they are going to in person schooling. The Covid pandemic has caused a great deal of suffering for students, teachers and staff with distance learning that pushed many to the brink, and your dedication to bringing students back should be applauded. However, that comes with the need to maintain the protections necessary to prevent continuing the pandemic while we wait for the vaccine to approved for all. In this case, requiring masks and appropriate (3-foot) distancing is the easiest and safest choice for all.</p> <p>Contrary to a number of protestors, any mask provides protection for both the user and the people around them. The argument given is that a mask is too porous for the virus, which as a microbiologist I can easily refute. The Covid coronavirus can only remain active in a water-based suspension in the air, which results in droplets that are far too large to pass through masks. This provides the benefits that significantly reduce spread between students.</p> <p>Another argument is that masks cause physical and emotional distress. Again, you can simply see hundreds of careers, with people wearing masks for hours without undue stress or physical limitations. Entire societies wear masks regularly to protect themselves, and are well established as safe for all.</p> <p>I implore you to maintain the safety of students and staff by continuing the appropriate safety measures that have been proven to protect everyone, especially as an even more contagious version of the pandemic spreads across the country. I join every other parent wishing their children back into school, but only if the simplest of measures, that cause no harm to anyone, are taken to protect both student and staff.</p>

Elizabeth Moran	Please require masks	<p>Until all children are eligible for a vaccine, masks should be required in school. The CDC currently recommends masks indoors in Wake county, even for those who are vaccinated.</p>
Elizabeth Parent	Prioritizing the Kids	<p>My eldest was in the Smart Start, Title 1, Pre-K program through the county at FVES 2019-2020. When the world went into shutdown, his Pre-K class met once a week for a virtual session. I was provided the materials and I had to teach him the contents...while caring for his 3 year old and 2 month old brothers. For the 2020-2021 school year, we chose to homeschool independently because virtual school for Pre-K was such a rough experience. I knew my eldest would have had more of a difficult time focusing and learning via VA with a baby and and little brother at home. It would have been more of a battle than a benefit.</p> <p>We homeschooled and it was not easy. I was homeschooled as a kid. From K-12, I swore as a kid and as an adult I would never homeschool. Then the pandemic happened. I'm not a teacher, I'm not a speech therapist. Teaching my son to read was difficult, teaching my son who has a speech delay was impossible for me. I had no idea what to do.</p> <p>My son's speech has not progress as much this past year as it would have if he was in in-person school. I doubt my son's experience is the only one like that. I desperately want my kids to go to school and receive a good education. But if their health, their safety is in jeopardy. I will need to homeschool again.</p> <p>Last year my eldest would have been in Kindergarten. This year I will have a first grader and a kindergartener. They are currently enrolled at SLES. If they catch COVID, they could have life long complications that would keep them from pursuing professions that they are passionate about that would rely on the lungs, heart, cognitive abilities.</p> <p>Protecting our children fromm COVID is prioritizing the future of this country over false information and selfish ideals. Protect our kids, protect our future, provide a safe education that follows all of the social distancing guidelines. Wear a mask, stay six feet apart, wash your hands often.</p>

Emerson Wolfram	Keep Masks in School	<p>Dear Wake County School Board,</p> <p>People think the Coronavirus isn't that big of a deal. But it is. Everyday, all over the world, people are dying because of this disease. Because some people don't take this problem seriously. Some people are vaccinated, but that doesn't mean we're safe. So that's why we have to take this problem seriously or it will just keep getting worse and worse.</p> <p>I want to be able to go to school and learn. But I also want to be safe. I don't mind wearing a mask if it keeps everybody safe, because I don't want people to get sick and I don't want to get sick.</p> <p>I believe we can overcome this pandemic. But in order to do so we have to wear masks. We have to be safe and keep everybody else safe or the risks will just get higher and higher.</p> <p>I'm sure about 80% of parents want their kids to go to school, but they also want their kids to be safe. And we can do both.</p> <p>Here are some things we can do to help make schools safer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wear masksEat outsideStand six feet apartHave your own deskDon't share objectsHave kids sit apart and bring their own materials to school <p>This is why we need to be more careful.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Emerson G. Wolfram: Age 9, 4th grade</p>
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Emily Burkhead, Ph.D.	Pandemic Mask Requirement	<p>I am writing to implore the WCPSS school board to maintain the masking requirements for schools to protect everyone's health, particularly those most vulnerable in our community. My children are in elementary school, where essentially no students are yet eligible for vaccination, and I am equally concerned about middle school and high school students and system-wide staff and faculty who cannot be vaccinated either.</p> <p>The CDC recommends that masks be required in schools. Data has consistently shown that masking is incredibly effective in reducing the spread of this infection when everyone wears one properly. I cannot conceive of the burden on school employees to try to attend to a regulation that only some folks in the schools (such as unvaccinated individuals) are required to wear masks.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and attention in this matter, as well as your continued support of all WCPSS students.</p>
Emily Jividen	Keep mask requirement in schools	<p>I respectfully request that the school board keep our kids as safe as possible in their schools by maintaining the mask mandate for all students, staff, and visitors until all students, regardless of age, have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.</p>
Emily Sourisak	Masking requirement	<p>I am a mother of a rising 4th grader and rising 2nd grader at Underwood Elementary and a healthcare professional. I am a strong supporter of keeping the mask requirement in our schools. Per the ABC Collaborative, a group of Duke Scientists studying Covid transmission, "Going forward, masks will remain essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools, particularly as younger children remain ineligible for vaccines and the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus spreads throughout the U.S." The CDC and the APA have also recommended universal masking at school. We know masks work and we know it is important that everyone wears the mask to prevent transmission, especially the carrier. It is not effective for just those children who choose to wear a mask to wear one. My children do not have access to a vaccine yet and it is their right to attend school in-person in an environment that is safe for them. Sharing an indoor environment with unvaccinated children without masks is not a safe learning environment for my children. Please vote to maintain the universal mask requirement for the 2021-2022 school year to keep our children safe.</p>

Erica Kitchen	Keep Masking Policy in Place	<p>I have two children in WCPSS - a 6th grader at Pine Hollow Middle School and a 4th Grader at Sycamore Creek Elementary School. They are on track 3 of the year round calendar, and in the first three weeks of school both children have had confirmed cases of COVID-19 in their classrooms. It is essential that masking remain required indoors for all students and staff no matter their vaccination status. Children under 12 still cannot be vaccinated and the vaccination rate for children 12-17 is staggeringly low. There absolutely will continue to be COVID cases in our schools, and the only way to protect children is by requiring masking. Classes are too large to keep all children 6 feet apart. Children who are eligible to be vaccinated and not being vaccinated at high enough rates. The Delta variant is extremely contagious and is showing higher rates of breakthrough infection in the vaccinate population. Mask are proven to work. Optional masking will not protect our children because unvaccinated individuals are not voluntarily wearing masks. I am concerned about my own children, but mostly I'm concerned about far more vulnerable populations. If my healthy children get COVID, they will probably be fine. However there are immunocompromised children in our schools. Our children will spread cases to other adults who have refused to be vaccinated and cases will continue to go up. I am concerned that optional masking in our schools will absolutely increase community spread. WCPSS has done an incredible job keeping our kids safe during the pandemic. I want all children to be able to attend school in person. But this success with in-person learning will only continue to be possible if masks are required for all indoors. The Centers for Disease Control agree. The science shows masks in schools are the right thing to do for our entire community. And the kids can handle it. They have gotten accustomed to masks. They can handle this small sacrifice to keep each other safe. The kids are learning to put the safety and the good of their entire community first. Please keep masks in place for everyone!</p>
Erin Bridges	Keep masks	<p>Keep masks in schools. Every public health expert, epidemiologist, and the pediatricians are saying all kids over the age of 2 need to be masked in schools. It's bad enough you have removed the distancing requirements. Do not take away the only significant mitigation measure in place to keep kids safe. Kids DO catch COVID. Kids DO spread the virus. Vaccinated adults DO spread it. Young people are filling hospitals. Removing a mask requirement at this time would be irresponsible.</p>

Erin de Freitas	Covid precautions	<p>The Delta variant is here. It is extremely contagious and kids are getting sick. Spread is happening in WCPSS. The board must reinstate a mandatory mask mandate including in outdoor areas of school grounds and for vaccinated people. The board must also go ABOVE and BEYOND the mask mandate. Children are being exposed at lunch. Precautions vary widely between schools. We need a virtual option for a short time until the vaccine is available. Schools ought to be implementing standardized precautions. Windows open, outdoor lunches, barriers on desks for inclement weather, open classroom doors, better spacing, frequent surveillance testing, face shields at lunch. Parents are willing to raise money to purchase items. Vaccinated parents are willing to chaperone lunches. We have come this far and the vaccine for kids is within reach. Delta is a much more dangerous virus and we must increase our efforts even more than last year. Our family (4 elementary kids) is considering homeschooling for one semester if VA is not reopened.</p>
Erin Schultz	Keep Masks in Schools	<p>The rise in cases of covid-19 throughout our community and within the school system, points to a need to keep masks in schools. The CDC has now recommended that everyone in schools wear masks inside at all times. This is in line with the AAP and NCDHHS.</p> <p>I would also strongly recommend that children return to eating in their classrooms or outside when possible, instead of the cafeteria. The cafeteria provides an opportunity for children to spread covid beyond their classroom, increasing the risk.</p> <p>We really want our kids to be able to continue in person learning and masks are going to be integral to accomplishing that goal.</p>
Fanella Tague	Concern	<p>Please require masks of all students to protect teachers and students. While mine our vaccinated with the numbers increasing and the new variant it is concerning and if masks are optional I don't feel confident that all non-vaccinated would be wearing them as there is no way to know :-)</p>
Frank Shorter	Masks and vaccines	<p>I'm writing you today to ask you to continue to follow public health guidelines which require masks for all individuals when they are indoors regardless of vaccination status. Furthermore, just like you currently require all students to be vaccinated against several communicable diseases (tuberculosis, etc), it is important to require covid vaccines for all age groups that the FDA has approved emergency use as part of the standard immunization record (exceptions with doctors note OK). Also, please ignore the individuals who are bafflingly motivated by partisan politics who are urging you to reduce the health posture in our schools. It is dangerous and unsafe for the children teachers and staff alike to be unmasked at this point in the pandemic.</p>

Franklin Longest	Masks in school	<p>My son is an elementary student at Vance. I'm asking that you please enforce the CDC mask guidelines of wearing masks indoors. The kids at the elementary level are all unvaccinated due to age. Therefore, masks, hygiene and social distancing are the kid's only defense. If everyone who were eligible to get the vaccine would get it then we probably wouldn't need masks in schools.</p> <p>Thanks, Glover</p>
Gabrielle Barnes	COVID precautions	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Gabrielle Barnes. I will be sending my child to WCPSS for the first time this year. My children have been home with me since March 2020 as we have tried to keep our family as safe as possible. Now, as I send my first to school, I'm relying on you all to keep him safe. I've heard from other parents how some schools handled COVID well during last academic year: required mask wearing, social distancing, lunches with students all facing the same direction, etc. with the delta variant being so contagious (just as contagious as chickenpox and measles) there is no reason these same protocols should not be followed. It is in the best interest of the students AND the families they go home to.</p> <p>Families should also have the choice to enroll in virtual academy. When I enrolled my child in April, delta wasn't a thing and strict protocols were still in place. The world's circumstances have changed. Families deserve to make a new choice based on the current status of the virus.</p> <p>I either want maximum Covid protocols so I can send my child to school in-person OR the ability to choose virtual academy on a semester by semester basis.</p> <p>We all have made it too far to loosen restrictions now. Let's keep everything in pace until ALL students have the opportunity to receive a vaccine. Anything less is negligent. We cannot say we have students' best interests in mind if those interests don't include their health and safety.</p> <p>If you all cannot take the appropriate measure to keep our children as safe as possible (or offer virtual academy again), I will be forced to withdraw my child until further notice. Do the right thing.</p> <p>.</p>

Gail VanMatre	Mask mandate	Please enact and enforce a mask mandate for all students and staff in k-12 schools. The delta variant is highly transmissible and impacts children more than previous variants. Additionally, students under 12 have not had the chance to be vaccinated. I want students and staff to be safe, healthy, and in person. A mask mandate will help this to happen.
Gayle Lemons	Mask requirement	I am a grandmother of a rising 4th grader and rising 2nd grader at Underwood Elementary. I am a strong supporter of keeping the mask requirement in our schools. Per the ABC Collaborative, a group of Duke Scientists studying Covid transmission, "Going forward, masks will remain essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools, particularly as younger children remain ineligible for vaccines and the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus spreads throughout the U.S." Also, the CDC and APA are recommending continued masking requirements for children in schools. We know masks work and we know it is important that everyone wears the mask to prevent transmission, especially the carrier. It is not effective for just those children who choose to wear a mask to wear one. My children do not have access to a vaccine yet and it is their right to attend school in-person in an environment that is safe for them. Sharing an indoor environment with unvaccinated children without masks is not a safe learning environment for my children. Please vote to maintain the universal mask requirement for the 2021-2022 school year to keep our children safe.
Genevieve Baley	Keep the Mask Mandate to Protect Our Kids	As members of a society, we have an obligation to protect those of us who are unable to protect themselves. Right now, masks and social distancing are the only measures of protection that we can offer our kids against the delta variant of COVID, which is ripping through unvaccinated populations and threatening all the progress we've made against this virus. Our family opted to keep all four year-round, elementary/middle school aged kids in virtual school last year, and we are now dealing with learning gaps and social impacts from that disruption. They were thrilled to go back to in-person school a few weeks ago, but unfortunately our daughter was exposed to a positive case (now an official cluster) at Lufkin Rd MS, and is under a mandatory 14 day quarantine with no virtual learning plan in place. This is all happening with a mask mandate in place- imagine the consequences of allowing this virus to spread freely in a vulnerable, unvaccinated population. I honestly can't even believe this it's even under consideration as the positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to climb. I implore you follow the science and keep the mask mandate in place for the 2021-22 school year or until our children can be vaccinated.

George Bouwer	Masks	Keep masks in school. It's science not politics. Don't let our kids down now. Let them get vaccinated and get some protection. Keep masks!
Gerri Corbett	Wearing masks	"Please don't be swayed by the emotional propaganda of a few vocal parents with another agenda than the health of students and staff. Please follow the recommendations of experts like the AAP and the CDC: require masks for all students and staff."
Heidi Collins	Make masks required	Please make masks required for K-8 at the very least. It's the simplest act of protection against COVID-19 (especially the Delta variant) available to us, and it will prevent more clusters and higher case numbers. It's well worth whatever inconvenience the masks are for some to protect the population at large. Quite frankly, if you vote to make masks optional for K-8, I will withdraw my child from the WCPSS.
Heidi Worthington	Masks	As masks continue to be the hot topic of discussion, I greatly hope that you will consider continuing to have all students and staff wear masks regardless of vaccination status. As the data is showing, the delta variant infection rate is rapidly increasing mainly among the unvaccinated, but also among the vaccinated. Please do not put our kids at an unnecessary risk for developing this disease based on complaints about wearing a mask. It's a proven fact that masks work to help prevent the spread. Please, look at the data and help to keep our kids safe by continuing to have them and all staff mask up!
Hilary Peterson	Mask Mandate	I have two kids in Wake County Schools- 3rd grade and 6th grade. When my husband and I made the decision to opt into in-person school, we did so with the believe that protective measures, including a mask mandate, would remain in place. My children are both under the age of 12 and are not yet eligible to get a vaccine. A mask mandate is needed to protect students, faculty, and staff. Please enforce a mask mandate for all grades K-12.

<p>Hudson Smithfield</p>	<p>WCPSS Surveys to Students Especially High School</p>	<p>Dear WCPSS</p> <p>Why is it permissible to ask questions in a survey what there gender identity is? Why is it necessary for a school to know this information before a parent? The surveys that are sent out, how do we know they are not flagged to an individual. Where is the policy on surveying students? Where is the policy of providing survey results to parents? How do we permanently opt out of these studies?</p> <p>Students have rights! Parents have rights!</p> <p>https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra</p> <p>Mr. Smithfield</p>
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<p>Ian A. Villanueva, MD, FACS, FASMBS</p>	<p>Universal masking in WCPSS</p>	<p>Members of the Board:</p> <p>I write as a concerned parent and physician. The COVID delta variant has become a real and present threat to the health of our children and community. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends universal masking for all students older than 2 years and all school staff (their recommendation included below). Until vaccination becomes more widespread, universal masking is the simplest and most effective action to take to protect our children from this dangerous variant. I implore the Board to require universal masking in Wake County Public Schools until the COVID delta variant threat is contained in our community.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Ian A. Villanueva, MD, FACS, FASMBS WakeMed Specialists Group-General Surgery and Trauma Assistant Professor of Surgery, Campbell University School of Osteopathic Medicine Adjunct Assistant Professor of Surgery, University of North Carolina School of Medicine</p> <p>From American Academy of Pediatrics COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).<ul style="list-style-type: none">o The AAP recommends universal masking in school at this time for the following reasons:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccinationo protection of unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and to reduce transmission▪ lack of a system to monitor vaccine status among students, teachers and staffo potential difficulty in monitoring or enforcing mask policies for those who are not vaccinated; in the absence of schools being able to conduct this monitoring, universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without the added burden of needing to monitor vaccination statuso possibility of low vaccination uptake within the surrounding school communityo continued concerns for variants that are more easily spread among children, adolescents, and adults
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Jackie Jones	masks	<p>I want to encourage the Board to continue following the guidelines recommending that masks be required for all students, staff, and teachers in K-12. With the numbers rapidly rising, and this Delta variant revealing itself to be much more aggressive than expected, this is the best possible protection for my unvaccinated 11-year-old. Thank you.</p>
Jackie Vanderbilt	Please maintain COVID-19 safety measures	<p>The number of children attending school in person this year is much higher than the number that attended last year since so many virtual learners are now returning to the classroom. This makes social distancing much more difficult, if not impossible. At the same time, COVID-19 is rapidly spreading with variants that are more contagious and more dangerous to our children. This is not the time to be taking away any more layers of protection.</p> <p>RESEARCH FINDS MASKS CAN PREVENT COVID-19 TRANSMISSION IN SCHOOLS. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC recommended that all children over the age of 2 wear masks when returning to school this year. The AAP, which said it's important for children to return to in-person learning this year, recommends that school staff also wear masks. With masking, the schools clearly can safely deliver face-to-face education for children and adults.</p> <p>I want my kids to have as normal a school experience as possible but frequent school closings due to COVID-19 outbreaks is not supportive of a normal childhood.</p> <p>Please vote to maintain mask mandates until the vaccine is available to all. We will not be able to eradicate the pandemic unless we maintain or build up all layers of protection, particularly during times of high spread.</p>
Jake Adams	Masks should be required for K-12	<p>I would like to register my strong desire that masks be required for ALL students and staff at K-12 institutions in Wake County. The country has already experienced 630,000 deaths from COVID-19 so there is no question that it is an extremely dangerous, novel pathogen. Meanwhile, there is no evidence that wearing a mask has any significant impact on learning or health. While COVID-19 has thankfully been relatively less dangerous for children, how many children's deaths would we trade to avoid wearing a face covering? Moreover, with the uncontrolled spread of the current variant, further mutations are likely to arise that may threaten new populations, including children. Regardless, children under 12 and their parents have not yet been given the opportunity to be vaccinated and we should seek to protect them until that choice is available to their families. Finally, many children will return home to immuno-compromised family members or newborns (as in my family's case) for which</p>

		<p>COVID is still a significant health risk. As a scientist myself, I cannot fathom that we, as a society, would allow demagogues seeking personal profit and fame to control our public health policy.</p>
Janie DeVeau MD	Covid + school	<p>Enormous efforts went into returning students to the classroom in April 2021. We must utilize all mitigation efforts to keep our students (and especially high school) in the real classroom for 2021-22. Remote learning carries significant risks to kids academic growth and mental health - far greater risks than wearing a mask to school right now during this very real, contagious Delta variant surge. Wake county is 64% fully vaccinated and yet back in the CDC red zone. Our frontline healthcare providers need our entire community's support to reduce the Covid cases that they will have to care for. Our frontline health care providers are fatigued, and we need to do our best to care for them. Thank you.</p>
Jasmine Lauer	Masking and Lunch Policies	<p>Hello, everyone! First, and foremost, thank you for your continued service and dedication to Wake County's public school staff and students. As a teacher and parent, I am so grateful for all you have done to continue keeping us safe during the pandemic. You have made difficult decisions for which I am grateful.</p> <p>Tomorrow, you have another difficult decision to make. It may be the most important for the health of our students. Last year, I reported to school in person with my students in October and my daughter began in person kindergarten at the same time. During the school year last year, I had one student test positive for Covid 19 and my daughter didn't have any contact with Covid. This year, we have been in school for 16 days. In that time, I have had two students test positive for Covid and 40 students (and 4 teachers) exposed to Covid. My daughter hasn't had a case in her class yet, but I anticipate that call soon too.</p> <p>I am vaccinated, as are most of my colleagues. My students seem to have about a 50% vaccination rate based on the number of students who have had to quarantine after exposure. Of course, my daughter is not eligible to be vaccinated yet. We both mask regularly. In fact, my daughter often leaves her mask on well after she is in the car. I often have to remind her she can take her mask off when she is home. Masking is NOT harmful to her at all. She has even said, "I think we should keep wearing our masks because it keeps us safe." Please uphold the masking policies to keep our children safe!</p> <p>Each day, I watch as hundreds of students sit in the cafeteria shoulder to shoulder with no masks on. They laugh, they talk, they share food and drink. It is great to see their smiles, but these students are exhibiting high risk behaviors. We desperately</p>

		<p>need some changes to our lunch procedures. Last year, it wasn't fun when students couldn't talk while they were eating, but it was definitely safer.</p> <p>When you meet tomorrow, please consider upholding the current masking policies and revisiting the cafeteria policies.</p> <p>Thank you so much for your continued support! Stay healthy and safe!</p>
Jean Batts	Removal of mask mandate for schools	<p>I urge you to keep the mask- mandate for Wake Co. schools in place! I'm incredulous that you are even considering it's removal given the new COVID statistics we are experiencing! Additionally, it's proven that mask- wearing saves lives. I have to question your motivation for removal!</p>
Jean Batts	Removal of mask mandate for schools	<p>I urge you to keep the mask- mandate for Wake Co. schools in place! I'm incredulous that you are even considering it's removal given the new COVID statistics we are experiencing! Additionally, it's proven that mask- wearing saves lives. I have to question your motivation for removal!</p>
Jen Foster	Continuing mask requirements in schools	<p>After a year of virtual learning, my 3 children have all returned in person to modified calendar schools. I ask that you please retain masking requirements for all students until everyone has had the opportunity to be vaccinated and this current wave of infection from the Delta variant has lessened.</p> <p>My oldest child was born with congenital heart defects and is considered high risk for severe disease if he were to contact COVID. During his first week on campus, this high risk teen was already exposed to a COVID positive classmate. While we're hopeful that vaccination and masking will help protect him from infection, we're still quite concerned.</p> <p>No single strategy will stop a pandemic. But the evidence shows that wearing masks works best when everyone does their part. Please retain the existing mask policies and consider reinstating the reduced capacity in lunchrooms when students cannot wear masks.</p> <p>Thank you for helping to protect our students and staff.</p>
Jen Swindell	Masks in school	<p>On behalf of my kiddo with cardiology issues, please help keep all our kids as safe as possible so they have a school option. If we are wrong, masks unneeded is a better side of wrong than sick, hospitalized, or worse for kids.</p>

Jenae Delayen	Masking in schools	<p>I am writing to you all to please keep masking requirements in schools for K-12 for students and staff regardless of vaccination status. It has become apparent that the delta variant is more transmissible and more children are becoming infected with covid 19. It is imperative that we protect our children, especially those that cannot be vaccinated, while also offering them a solid education. We have seen from schools who made masks optional, that they are a massive amount of students in quarantine and infected. Many schools have reversed their mask requirements, like Thales in Raleigh due to this. There will be children in quarantine, however, unmasking children and staff will create unnecessary amounts of children to quarantine which not only creates a needless burden for working families but also and more importantly, creates an environment for children where they are not only not in the classroom but they are also not receiving direct instruction. I am sure you all have read the most recent recommendations from the CDC and APA, so I will not reiterate those, but I will ask that those recommendations be followed.</p> <p>I also noticed at the last BOE meeting, all the members of the board were wearing masks, regardless of vaccination status. So, you all were at least protected once by masks and almost 95% by vaccination yet, there is a consideration for students to return to school unmasked who not only cannot be vaccinated, but they also might be spending before care, school day and after care in an indoor setting.</p> <p>It is paramount that children are in school and that it is done safely. Unmasking children is a reckless decision. Thank you for your time, we appreciate everything that you all do for the school district.</p>
Jenna Jordan	Masks need to stay!	<p>This is not the time to be discussing an end to masks in schools. The numbers for last year (in-person, low Covid in schools) are good BECAUSE OF the masks. Those numbers are proof that they work. Nothing has changed for the kids who are too young to be vaccinated. They are still living in the world that we all were a few months ago when masks were required everywhere. The only difference is that now there is a more contagious variant that affects children at greater rates. This is a clear no-brainer. Masks must stay until kids have had a chance to be vaccinated.</p>

Jennifer Conaty	masks in schools	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>
Jennifer Cotner	Masking	<p>I urge you to follow the American Academy of Pediatric's advice and keep mandating masks in schools regardless of vaccination status. My six-year old is too young to be vaccinated yet, but it is so vital for her to be in school in person. The kids in her kindergarten class last year did great with masks, and the science is clear that masks are safe and help mitigate the spread of the virus. Please keep our kids safe! It could literally be a life or death decision for some children and their at risk family members. Thank you for your consideration.</p>

<p>Jennifer Everitt</p>	<p>Require Masks in Schools</p>	<p>Dear School Board Members,</p> <p>I am a parent of two children in the WCPSS system – a 7th grader at Heritage Middle and a 4th grader at Heritage Elementary. While my 7th grader (12 year old) was able to be vaccinated, his younger sister is not yet eligible. My children were both in Virtual Academy all of the last school year to protect them, their teachers, and their community from this deadly virus. They desperately need to be back in the classroom, but they need to do it safely which means requiring masks for all K-8 students.</p> <p>I realize that you have had very vocal opponents appear at your school board meetings to complain that somehow wearing a mask hurts their child. This is utter nonsense and those parents do not represent the majority of parents in Wake County.</p> <p>Children have no issue wearing masks if they are told so, they just want to be back at school. The CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit all agree that unvaccinated children should wear masks at school and urge K-8 schools to require masks. This will stop the spread of the virus, especially with the Delta variant that is more contagious and dangerous to our kids, and keep our kids in the classroom learning where they belong, not sick or quarantining at home after exposure.</p> <p>We need to ensure that our children are able to go to school safely and uninterrupted this year. If parents have a problem with their children wearing masks, then I suggest that those parents keep their kids home this year and have their turn at Virtual Academy. So many of our kids sacrificed this past year by staying home, and they should not have to fear catching COVID when returning to the classroom this year because a small minority of people don't believe in science or social responsibility.</p> <p>It is telling that public universities here in NC, including Duke and NC State, are requiring masks for their students, especially considering all of their students are adults and can get the vaccine. Here we are talking about children that have no option to get a vaccine. The vaccine is right around the corner for kids under 12, so we should stay the course and do all the things that we know stop the spread of the virus now and keep our kids in school.</p>
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Jennifer Ferrell	Masking for all WCPSS K-12 schools	<p>Considering the public health news from NC DHHS yesterday (7/29) that our state is now back to February 2021 levels of Covid19, 80% of cases being the Delta variant, this is no time to ease up on our WCPSS K-12 school mask mandate.</p> <p>With more factual data that comes out daily about the Delta variant being more transmissible & problematic for those who are unvaccinated, we trust in you to make safe & sound decisions for all of our families.</p> <p>My rising 6th grade twins & our family chose Virtual Academy again for this upcoming school year as they are not eligible to be vaccinated. We simply do not trust the actions of others around our community at this time to feel safe for them to attend in person. We are thinking of our teachers, staff & other families to keep them as safe as possible within our school buildings.</p> <p>If there is enough interest among Virtual Academy teachers or applicants, hopefully WCPSS will consider opening VA up to families depending on the school's availability and/or principal approval. Or have at home virtual learning for all back up contingency plans similar to 2020.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to express public comments in this way as you continue your important WCPSS board business.</p>
Jennifer Gatlin	Masks in schools	<p>Please put health and safety first. Please follow the recommendations of experts like the AAP and the CDC: require masks for all students and staff.</p>

Jennifer Heard	KEEP face masks in K-8	<p>The Delta variant is highly contagious and dangerous and K-6 students are not currently eligible for a vaccine. In order to protect our children and provide in-person school, all staff and students should be required to wear face masks in both elementary and middle schools. All middle school students should wear face masks as 1/3 of the students are not old enough for a vaccine. Please follow the guidance issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC, which call for universal masking in schools.</p>
Jennifer Langdon	Masks	<p>I am a concerned Wake County parent. I have two children in the Wake County School system, a rising 5th grader and a rising 9th grader. Unlike the spring of 2020, there have been numerous scientific studies that have concluded that children should NOT be required to wear masks. Governor Cooper has finally removed the school state wide mask mandate and NC DHHS Toolkit has adjusted their policy as well. Now is the time for the Wake County School Board to abandon the mask mandate, an out of date policy, and move forward. Please give ALL parents the ability to choose what is best for their children in terms of mask wearing. You must realize that ending the mask mandate will continue to allow parents to choose for their children to wear a mask if they feel that is the best decision for their families. However, ending the mask mandate will give parents such as myself the FREEDOM to choose what is best for our children!</p> <p>Please do not delay. It is never too late to do the right thing!</p>

<p>Jennifer Underwood</p>	<p>Keep Masks Required in Schools</p>	<p>The CDC, NC DHHS, and the American Academy of Pediatrics all strongly recommend that for schools to remain open, public health measures, such as universal masking, must be implemented and adhered to. The Delta variant has changed everything. Vaccinated individuals can spread the disease, leaving our children who are unable to be vaccinated vulnerable. COVID-19 can range from mild to severe illness in kids and COVID-19 is now a top 10 cause of death for adolescents in the United States. Mortality alone is not the only negative outcome, long COVID-19 has been reported among kids. Studies continually show the effectiveness of a layered approach. Physical distancing, increased ventilation, and masks have the best effect on decreased transmission; however, in our school system, masks are the only remaining line of defense for our children. Currently in our schools - there's little to no distancing, there's often poor ventilation, half of the student body is not eligible for vaccines, and only a small percentage of the 12 - 18 population is vaccinated.</p> <p>Not only will the mask requirement in schools protect our children and teachers but will help reduce the spread in the community. Kids can spread COVID-19 just as effectively as adults.</p> <p>Many kids go home to families with high risk family members who may not be eligible for vaccines or may be immunocompromised. Every case is an opportunity to further infect others. While masks provide protection to the wearer, they primarily serve as source control, and the most benefits are achieved when everyone wears them. We need to do what we can to slow the spread.</p> <p>All available evidence indicates that COVID-19 will spread wildly in schools without mitigation efforts—including universal masking—firmly in place. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree; both agencies have released guidance indicating that schools should mandate masks for students, staff, and visitors. As local leaders, you should listen to them. Over the past year and a half, the world has learned a lot about how to reduce transmission and infections, and masks have emerged as a particularly important, scientifically proven mitigation strategy. The science supports masks in schools. Wearing masks is a small sacrifice to make to ensure that our kids can remain safe while going to go to school, which we know is important for their intellectual, social, and emotional development.</p>
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Jennifer Vick	Face masks	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>
Jennifer Williams, MD	Please keep mask mandate	<p>As the parent of a rising first grader who completed in-person instruction last year, I strongly support children in school wearing masks. It's unclear to me why adults wore masks and socially distanced until vaccines arrived now feel younger children should not be given these basic protections to reduce and mitigate the spread of COVID. For parents who feel masks should not be worn, there is a virtual academy available. And now that we know this is as contagious as chicken pox, we know we need masks more than ever for those who are not vaccinated. We may be tired, but the virus is not. My son loved his kindergarten year in his mask. Children normalize what we help them normalize. Please keep masks until vaccines are available for all children. Thank you.</p>
Jennifer Yates	Keep our kids safe	<p>I'm writing to implore the Board to keep masks required in our schools. There's little to no distancing, the air handling is limited, only ~25% of the *eligible* students are vaccinated, and more than half of students in WCPSS are not eligible for vaccines. Vaccines largely protect the person who receives them; masks protect others. Children are transmitters of the virus. Masks are our only line of defense for our children, teachers, and families at this point. Masks in schools protect the community at large. Covid-19 a Top Ten cause of death among children, but death isn't the only negative outcome; MIS-C and long Covid and are real concerns also. The lower numbers for children being diagnosed with Covid over the past year have been at a time when many students remained virtual. With nearly all of our students back in the buildings, transmission between students is a real concern. We're already seeing clusters at area schools. Please follow the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations and keep masks required in schools.</p>
Jereel Ba	Mask	<p>WCPSS staff and students needs to be mandated to wear mask until further notice for their safety. Kids continue to test positive for COVID.</p>

Jessica Gutierrez	Masking in schools	<p>Please require masks to be worn by all staff and students regardless of vaccination status this school year. All of the science to date supports the necessity of this in keeping our staff and students safe. Additionally, due to the contagiousness of the Delta variant, please reconsider school lunch options to reduce risk since that unmasked period brings the most risk in the school day. Spread out lunch times to reduce students, offer more outdoor options, students not facing each other, fans in lunch rooms, etc. to reduce the risk of this highly contagious variant that everyone whether vaccinated or not can spread. Allow and encourage schools to add covered space outdoors to accommodate outdoor learning or lunches if the school can raise the funds for it. Strict masking and well thought out unmasked meals are the only way we can effectively have school in person this fall. Re-open the Virtual Academy window due to all the new information over the past few weeks about the Delta variant and to allow those who do not want their children to wear masks to stay home. Masks are a vital step in keeping our staff and students safe.</p>
Jessica Kelly	Keep the mask mandate in schools	<p>Please keep masks mandated in WCPSS. Our children (have 2 in elementary) are not yet vaccinated and masks are just one simple way to keep them as safe as possible in school. They don't mind wearing masks and they keep them safe. I've already kept my children home due to non-covid related illness and I can only imagine how much school would be missed if masks were not in place. With the Covid numbers rising and the increase of complications in children due to the delta variant, it is imperative that masks remain required as we head into this school year. Please don't put our children even more at risk than they already are!</p>

Jessica Michaelson	Mask in all Wake County Schools	<p>My child an unvaccinated 3rd grader is already signed up for Virtual Academy. I am so glad we signed up in April. I think that many other families would like the opportunity to choose VA. VA registration should be opened up again. With consideration for the DELTA variant, break through infections in many vaccinated adults, and the fact that ONLY 60% of the population of wake county is vaccinated MASKS NEED TO WORN at all times inside ALL schools. As the CDC quoted in the most recent report, "the war has changed" meaning the unknowns about this highly contagious new DELTA Variant puts everyone at risk. The circulating misinformation about children not having serious illness from covid is not true with this variant. The data is changing daily as our numbers in Wake County skyrocket. There are reports of children getting very sick, on ventilators, and having serious long-term complications such as damage to the pancreas causing diabetes in otherwise healthy children after mild covid symptoms. There will be more hospitalizations and more deaths in the coming months. Please keep unvaccinated children that don't have a choice to attend VA safe. Please require everyone wears masks. Continue social distancing measures from last year. Eating lunch in classroom or outside. I know my child will be safe in VA but I speak for all the children in person next year. As a mother and medically competent healthcare provider please consider my requests to keep all children in Wake county as safe as possible next year. If you drop mask mandate in schools you will be responsible for the Covid19 infections and deaths in our schools and local community. It is WCPSS responsibility to keep these children safe and not contribute to more community infection and deaths. We need as many layers of protections as possible to get our community through this pandemic. Thank you for listening to my concerns and considering my request.</p>
Jessie Mathers	Masks in school	Please continue to require masks in school

Jessie Thomas	Concerns about returning to school	<p>My rising 4th grader and rising 6th grader are to return to in-person school this week. They are both ineligible to get the COVID vaccine due to age. I had to make the decision between in-person or VA months ago...back when in-person looked like a good choice. With the recent surge of COVID cases & the new Delta variant (as well as a recent cluster outbreak at my child's middle school), in-person is no longer the best choice for so many families. I have spoken with my child's elementary principal & I know for a fact that there is no social distancing in her school. They are also eating in the cafeteria like normal. How is this safe for our children? I have requested VA for my children but have no idea if & when that will get approved. We, as parents, seem to have few & unclear choices. It is very concerning to be in a place of such uncertainty & quite frankly it is unfair to us but most importantly our children! We need to know that our children have a clear, planned option for an education in a safe environment. As I see it, parents have three options: 1) send our children to in-person school with little to no safety protocols & the risk of COVID/Delta. 2) request VA & keep our children out of school for an undetermined amount of time until we know if they are accepted. 3) remove our children from WCPSS altogether & homeschool. All three of these options come with their own anxieties & uncertainties for both parents & children. We should not be put in this place. WCPSS needs to do better for our families! We need to know that children going to in-person schools will be in a safe environment with strict safety procedures in place. We need to know that children wanting to attend VA will be given that opportunity immediately & won't have to wait in limbo.</p>
Jill Gardner	Masks in school	Please require all kids, faculty and staff to wear masks regardless of vaccine status.
Jo HargreavesKwong	Masks in school	<p>I am a grandmother to children in the school district. I respectfully ask that you have students and staff wear masks .</p> <p>Children do get sick and some die. In addition many children who get covid are sick for weeks and months.</p> <p>It is important to do everything we can to keep our children safe including better ventilation of our schools Thank you</p>

Joanne Pilot	Closure of Athens Dr Library to patrons	<p>I am writing to express my disappointment in the announcement that the Athens Drive Community Library is closing for pick up and drop off of library books. There was no discussion with the community regarding this decision and no option for compromise. This library is the lifeblood for the citizens that live in the community. The reason for closing the library appears to be disingenuous as no library patron is allowed inside the library itself. The time it takes to pick up a book from the shelves outside the library is minimal and is a virtually COVID free contact. Could there be an option to pick up books after the school day has ended or on the weekends? That would limit any potential exposure between library patrons and students. I humbly request that the Wake County Board of Education reconsider the closure of the Athens Drive Community Library to those who pay taxes to support the library system.</p>
Joe Pasquale	Keep masks in schools	<p>We are not out of the woods yet regarding COVID. This virus has killed millions and continues to dominate our everyday lives. Why endanger our school children, their parents, grandparents, and loved ones?</p> <p>If a child can be a carrier and pass it along to loved ones we need to be diligent and follow the recommendations of the public health officials who work to keep the citizens of this country safe.</p> <p>Keep our children safe! Ensure masks are worn at school.</p>
John M Helsabeck	Please enforce mask mandates	<p>Given the information coming out about the increased transmissibility of the Delta (and likely Lambda and Gamma) variants of COVID-19, I think it would be criminally negligent to demand anything less than every student and staff member wear mask at all times (except when eating, obviously) while anywhere on campus.</p>
John McCray	Mask usage in the light of Covid-19	<p>Please continue to exercise caution and restraint and require all who enter Wake County public school buildings to wear masks. Guidance is set for the protection of all, not just individuals and it teaches children responsibility and respect. While masks may be uncomfortable, we often have to choose things that may be less preferable in order to succeed or be safe.</p>

Joseph David	Please require masks for all	We will have two high schoolers (grades 9 and 12, both vaccinated) and an elementary schooler (grade 4) in Wake County schools this year. We will be uncomfortable sending any of our children to school if masks are not required for everyone in their school buildings. Until our elementary schooler is vaccinated, we will not jeopardize his health and safety or the health and safety of others by sending him into an environment where masks are not required. If you decide not to require masks, we will move him into the virtual academy or withdraw him from Wake schools and homeschool him this year.
Julia Milstead	Mask mandate	The health and well-being of our children, as well as teachers and staff, is in your hands. Please do the right thing. The only thing. Require masks for ALL students at ALL grade levels. Thank you.
Julia Milstead	Mask mandate	The health and well-being of our children, as well as teachers and staff, is in your hands. Please do the right thing. The only thing. Require masks for ALL students at ALL grade levels. Thank you.
Julia Szyjka	Keep Masks Required	Until we understand more about the Delta and other emerging variants of Covid, the responsible position on masking is to follow state and CDC guidance on masking.
Julie Helsabeck	Masks	Mask should be required in WCPSS for teachers, students and staff.
Julie Marvin	Masks in school	Please continue to require masks for all students, teachers, and staff in school settings until kids under age 12 have had an opportunity to be vaccinated, and until numbers of infection have decreased to below 1% again. While masking is not ideal, it is the best precaution we can take to protect children, teachers, and our community as a whole right now. Social distancing is nearly impossible, ventilation systems are expensive and difficult to implement quickly enough, and our kids deserve to be protected from illness until they have had an opportunity to be vaccinated. Masks have been proven to work to significantly reduce transmission of Covid. Allowing vaccinated individuals to be unmasked is difficult to control and sets a challenging example to kids. Please continue to require masks for all kids and adults in school!

Julie Steet	Safety protocols in schools	<p>Please continue to implement and enforce safety protocols in our schools, including but not limited to mandatory mask wearing and proper spacing. I currently have a fifth grader sitting at home under quarantine. I'm hopeful that keeping kids home will stop the further spread of Covid, but I can't help thinking that if better and more effective protocols were in place and enforced this school year, my child would be at school today. As a year round family, we were just in in-person school through June. I was comfortable with the protocols in place last year and felt like the school was doing everything they could do reduce spread. Fast forward just a few weeks and all of that seems to have been thrown out the window. We need to continue to properly space our kids and enforce continued and proper face mask wearing. This includes our teachers!!! There is no reason why my child should be facing three other children during classroom time and that the children are allowed to pull down their masks and eat a snack throughout the day. We also need to limit the amount of co-mingling of our students. My child sits with one group in class, a different group in specials, a different group at lunch and is allowed to play with other classes at recess. How does this work for contact tracing??? It's a nightmare. Please make smarter decisions based on science. Thank you</p>
Justin Reehl	Protect our children -- masks should be mandatory at schools	<p>Please protect my children. They are too young for the vaccine. The only protection they have at school is face masks which have been proven to be effective at reducing the likelihood of transmission of COVID19. They are between the ages of 2 and 7 and all of them are capable of properly wearing a mask during the school day. If my 2 year old can wear a mask then all school age children can wear them. This virus does infect children and they can become severely ill. Please do not risk my children's health and safety just to "free a smile", I guarantee they won't be smiling if they end up on a ventilator because masks weren't mandated. There is no excuse, mandatory mask policy is just the right thing to do to protect public health.</p>
K Waller	Masking in schools	<p>Please follow CDC and AAP guidelines and continue to require masks for all students, teachers, and staff for the upcoming school year, whether or not they are vaccinated. The Delta variant is easily transmitted by both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Universal masking is the best choice for safety in schools and offers the best chance for a year without shutdowns and quarantines.</p>

Kara L Gensor	Maintain the mask mandate	<p>I am a high school science teacher and parent of a WCPSS high school student. We are both fully vaccinated. I had hoped that we would be maskless at the start of this school year. However, I had also hoped that more people would be vaccinated and that the number of people developing COVID would have been decreasing. I am no longer hopeful. Now is not the time to make mask wearing optional. We cannot trust those people who are not vaccinated to wear masks by choice. They say, "My body, my choice;" however, they choose to not wear the masks because they don't accept the science. We know from data that wearing masks does reduce the spread of respiratory viruses. Masks are uncomfortable but not dangerous. Masks do not deny students their educational rights but afford them with the ability to have the appropriate education. I have no desire to go into a lockdown again and teach virtually. Mandatory mask wearing can help protect all students and staff. Please do not be swayed by the emotional propaganda of a few vocal parents. Please follow the recommendation of experts like the American Association of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and require all students and staff to wear masks.</p>
Kate Woomer-Deters	Mask policy	<p>I support Wake County continuing a mandatory mask policy for students and teachers, whether vaccinated or not. My children, like thousands of others, are too young to be vaccinated. In middle school, many children too young to be vaccinated will mix and mingle daily with children who are vaccinated. The Delta variant is extremely contagious and will easily spread in our schools without a mask mandate. In addition to the health risks this presents, the disruptions to education and our economy if we have to undergo repeated and unexpected quarantines and shut downs are not worth it. Please continue a mandatory mask policy. Thank you.</p>
Kathleen Neff	Mandatory mask wearing	<p>Please keep staff and students as safe as possible from Delta variant of Covid-19 by requiring mask use in schools by everyone irregardless of vaccination status. I would ask that special consideration be given to safety protocols during maskless periods of the day such as snack and meals. If we are not being safe at these times, wearing masks the rest of the day seems ineffective.</p>

Katie Becraft	Mask mandate	<p>I want to start by letting you know I have been an RN for 15 years and am currently getting my Masters in Nursing as a Certified Nurse Midwife. I have had Covid, had children with Covid, treated patients with Covid. I have read so many studies from across the world about treatments, possible long term effects, vaccination and Covid in pregnancy and children. One thing that has resounded across all of these studies is that children are poor vectors of the virus, they do not suffer long term damage or severe illness. These studies show no difference in areas of the country who locked down, forced masks, or chose to allow parents to make their own risk assessments for their children in mask wearing. We are also ignoring the major study out of Israel that showed the immunity to Covid from people who had it and recovered is much greater than even those vaccinated. My two children fit that category and should not be forced to wear a mask. I have already chosen to pull my youngest child from WCPSS due to this mandate and her worsening asthma symptoms over the past year since forced masking. I have two children who should be free to breath as God intended. 40 states across the country have allowed for optional masking and 31 fellow NC counties have done the same. The government's role in this pandemic was to assist in developing treatments and prevention...they have done that. The governments power needs to cease and desist and that includes local governments. We as adults are quite capable of weighing risk and benefits for our own children and do not need your interference any longer. Please vote to make masks optional for Wake County Schools! The goal has never been zero cases!!!</p>
Katie Latham	Masks in schools	<p>I'm writing in support of a mask mandate for all WCPSS students and staff while indoors on school grounds, regardless of vaccination status. As I heard during the last Board of Education meeting, it is the plan of the Wake County Public School System to follow the guidance of the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit.</p> <p>Per the Toolkit, all schools should: require all children and staff in schools K-12th grade to wear face coverings consistently when indoors. Schools K-12th grade should make mask use universally required (i.e., required regardless of vaccination status) given that most of the student population in those grades are not yet eligible for vaccination.</p> <p>Masks are the one of the only things remaining to protect our children against the spread of covid in school. There's little social distancing, they are no longer staying in the classroom to eat lunch, and many more children returned to in-person schooling this year. The entire elementary school age group is still not eligible for vaccination.</p>

		<p>And, although some of the middle school and all of the high school age groups are eligible, we aren't even close to getting half of that population vaccinated. It would be unwise and, quite frankly, dangerous to public health, to remove a mask requirement at this point.</p>
Katrina Vernon	Masks in schools	<p>Hello! I have two daughters at Sycamore Creek Elementary -- in 2nd and 4th grades. Because of their ages, they are not eligible to receive a COVID vaccine. As soon as they are eligible, I will get them vaccinated, but in the mean time I am very concerned about the threat of the Delta variant. Please keep our children in masks at WCPSS schools until this threat is removed. It takes our whole community wearing masks to eliminate this virus.</p>
Kay E Helsabeck	Masks	<p>Masks *should* be required for students and staff.</p>
Kelly Capps	Mask support in schools	<p>I'm writing to express my strong support for keeping the mask mandate in our schools, especially for those not yet eligible for the vaccine. Last year my family chose the Virtual Academy, but after a year of remote learning my children need to return to school for in-person learning. And I'm counting on the district to provide a safe place for them to return to. I know it is the priority of the school system to keep students safe first and foremost - and masks are a big part of that right now. The Virtual Academy is still available for those who are strongly opposed to their children wearing masks.</p> <p>Since the vaccine became available to the 12+ population, the state has opened back up and virus numbers are now soaring. The 12 and under population has been forgotten - NOTHING has changed for them and their health should not be sacrificed.</p> <p>Masks will keep anxieties down for our educators and students so that they can concentrate on learning rather than the fear of this potentially life threatening virus spreading in their classrooms. Additionally, without masks the virus is certain to spread more, leading to more students at home in quarantine due to exposure, defeating the purpose of having schools open in-person to begin with. There is a way to SAFELY open schools, and again, masks are a big part of that.</p> <p>If Wake County students aren't required to wear masks, my children will not have a safe place to go to school and I'm not sure what option that leaves for my family and many others. Thank you for following State and CDC guidelines and thank for keeping the health and safety of our students of the utmost importance.</p>

Kelly Merhar	Masks for children under 12	<p>I urge you to please continue requiring masks in public schools for children under the age of 12. Please continue to follow the guidelines of the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics. None of these children have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. They are vulnerable to a highly contagious new variant. At the same time, they deserve to have the opportunity to learn in person in a safe environment. Waiting until they have an approved vaccine for these children gives everyone a chance to make the safest choice possible for their children.</p> <p>If the mask mandate is dropped, you are basically guaranteeing outbreaks among large groups of unvaccinated students and staff. I will be pulling my son out of his class and going back to virtual academy, which is by no means a good substitute for in person learning. My son is thriving with in person learning and has absolutely no problems with wearing his mask all day. He is still able to connect with his classmates with no issues.</p> <p>I believe it is a small minority that wants masks to be dropped; however, that minority is loud and aggressive. I do not believe that most parents want their children to be exposed to covid prior to having a chance to be vaccinated. That is why I am submitting my comment - to make sure that the other side is heard as well.</p>
Ken Brothers	Require Face Masks	Please require face masks for all students and staff. The delta variant will tear through our schools and send our kids back into online class if not.
Keri McCauley	Masks	My whole family is fully vaccinated but the science is clear, fully vaccinated people are having breakthrough infections and are just as likely to transmit the virus as unvaccinated. I am a pediatric PT. I work with medically fragile children. My worst fear at this point is unknowingly bringing this virus into one of my patients' homes and being the vector that kills one of them. It is a real possibility. This is not about protecting me or otherwise healthy people. This is about having compassion and caring for our community and the most vulnerable among us. I implore you to mandate masks for all WCPSS students, faculty and staff until everyone can get a vaccine and herd immunity is achieved.
Kerry Sykes	Require masks in schools	Please require masks in schools! Many teachers and students have family members who are not eligible for vaccines yet and they need protection. Everyone needs protection against the Delta variant, which can be spread regardless of vaccination status.

<p>Khristen Bendali</p>	<p>Masks in schools</p>	<p>I wish make known my enthusiastic support for masks to be required in schools. I am the mother of two elementary school students and an occasional substitute teacher at their school. I have never seen a child complain about wearing their mask; sometimes the masks are poorly fitting and a child will adjust it a lot, but it has never been a burden.</p> <p>I truly feel any concerns about comfort, psychological, or emotional problems with masks are solely in the parents' heads. When Covid was at its peak all eight elementary-aged students on my street played together wearing masks outdoors and had the same amount of joy and connection as without the masks. (For students with valid medical concerns this is different, of course.)</p> <p>For those who say to make them optional, and people who want their kids to wear masks can do so, you do not understand the limitations or struggles some families face. Some cannot provide food or water for their students to bring to school, let alone masks—either due to hardship, being overburdened or, unfortunately, uninvolved. The school has provided masks in the past, but if masks are optional they will not be able to do this.</p> <p>My final point is for parents to look at how terribly the optional/"vaccinated-only" masking has gone in our society as a whole since May. The Delta variant of Covid was enabled to mutate and grow from a "variant of concern" in India to the predominant variant of Covid infections here, and even learned how to penetrate/overwhelm the effectiveness of vaccines for preventing spread. I refuse to let our children be at risk for adults' misinformed and misplaced defiance of general public health practices. Thank you.</p>
<p>Kim Van Pelt</p>	<p>Keep masks in schools</p>	<p>Please keep masks mandatory in schools at least until vaccines are available to everyone. The Delta variant cases are rising and now is not the time to let our guard down. Everyone is sick of the pandemic and sick of masks but it is a simple way to protect and show respect for each other. While many parents are upset about the masks I don't believe the majority of the kids have an issue with them and many are worried about their health and safety without masks in place. Masks work!</p>

Kimberly McClelland	Covid Safety	<p>I'm a mom of 2 elementary age Wake County School children. I volunteer in the classroom.</p> <p>I coach a Lego team. I'm involved in my children's education. Like everyone, we have had to make many difficult choices during the current pandemic. In 2019, after the initial struggle with virtual school, we chose instead to homeschool. It went better than I hoped, and my children received personal, focused instruction for the entire school year. While my background is in engineering, not education, we were able to focus on the science and technology skills I gravitate towards.</p> <p>However, I recognize our arrangement is neither ideal nor sustainable. Most families do not have the luxury of a stay at home parent or the discipline to maintain a consistent instruction schedule for the entire school year. I'm also the first to admit that our public school teachers have a gift for education that I do not. In an effort to make the best choices for my children, we have re-enrolled with Wake County for the upcoming school year.</p> <p>I wanted to comment this week, because I believe the board is facing incredibly polarizing decisions about the upcoming school year. I'm also afraid we may be witnessing the beginning of the collapse of the public school system. As a nonpolitical, science-versed supporter of the public school system, I'm afraid the illusion of an upcoming decision is just an illusion. I'm afraid all the choices of in-person learning, masking, and remote asynchronous time have already been made. I'm afraid that I will again find that homeschooling is the best option for our family. I'm very afraid that the public school system cannot afford to lose many families like mine without becoming a second rate service.</p> <p>My simplest appeal is for a return to normalcy. My children are young and their generation will be defined by this virus for a long time. Their social skills will suffer. Their test scores will be poor. Their sense of trust has been shattered. Allow parents who are cautious to continue virtual school. Allow those who wish to mask to do so optionally. Support those that choose to vaccinate, but do not alienate those who choose not to. These students cannot learn effectively if they do not feel secure. Consistency and stability are essential to a productive learning environment. I'm very aware of the statistics and the epidemiology. At this critical juncture, I believe politics is a greater threat to our students than the virus. I believe if you asked those who spend their days in a classroom, they would tell you the same.</p> <p>I do not envy your position. I know that everyone is doing the very best they can with the resources available to them. No matter what happens this school year, just getting children through the school doors will be an incredible achievement.</p> <p>I sincerely wish you all few phone calls and boring board meetings.</p>
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Kimberly Nolan	Mask Requirement	With the newest delta variant, COVID-19 is more dangerous than ever for unvaccinated individuals. Unfortunately, all children in WCPSS 11 and under have no choice but to be unvaccinated right now. Fortunately, masks provide an easy way to interrupt transmission. Please support upholding the mask requirement to keep our children safe, at least until a time when all can have a choice in their vaccination status.
Kimberly Waller	In-person school / Masks	To me, the issue of utmost critical importance is maintaining full daily in-person education for all families that select this. For that reason, I support students wearing masks indoors at school.
Kirsten Ozimek	Covid safety	<p>Our 11 year old child has a pulmonary condition and we were advised this spring that it would be safe to attend. However, with the Delta surge we are very concerned that the most current CDC guidelines are followed. How will lunches be accommodated to maintain social distancing. With a high schooler we are also concerned that the virus may be brought home to our child who is too young to vaccinate.</p> <p>If CDC guidelines are not followed, will we be allowed to switch to virtual at this time? This is crucial to our family remaining in the district rather than having to try home schooling.</p>
Kyla Harol	Continued masking in schools	I urge you to continue requiring masks in our schools. We returned in July and already have several confirmed cases of Covid within our school, some thought to be contracted in school. I cannot imagine how quickly this virus will spread and how many more children will have to quarantine if we remove masks before they have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Please follow the guidance by the AAP and CDC to keep our children safe and learning in person.
Kyle Munn	COVID safety precautions	Until children under the age of 12 can be vaccinated, keep mandatory masks in place in Wake County schools. This is the most effective tool we have to avoid outbreaks at school. Thank you.
Kyley Schmidt	Keep Mask Mandate In Elementary Schools	<p>Hello WCPSS Board Members,</p> <p>I am a mother of two elementary schoolers who attend Herbert Akins Elementary in Fuquay Varina. I virtual schooled my kids all of last year to keep their education consistent during a tumultuous time. We have decided as a family to send our two daughters, ages 7 and 10, back to in-person school starting Monday. We made this decision because we believed the mask mandate was in place, keeping our unvaccinated children somewhat protected from coronavirus. If you vote to remove the mask mandate, you put my children's health and my family's health at risk. This</p>

would be a terrifying position to put parents and children in. Without the mask mandate we would put elementary age children at a much higher risk of getting covid, causing children to miss weeks of school, and potentially develop long term health problems. While at the same time no mask mandate would also increase the risk of transmission from children to older adult family members who refuse to get the vaccine and are around those children. We have a close relative (grandmother) who is close to our children and visits with them often. She won't get vaccinated for fear of the side effects and she could easily get very sick if exposed to covid from our children. We shouldn't have to limit our children's ability to see their at-risk family members because some parents don't like the idea of their kids wearing masks.

School buildings could quickly turn into super spreader locations especially with the delta variant on the rise and cases in the rise in NC. Please don't be irresponsible. Shouldn't we err on the safe side to keep kids in school? Please vote to keep the mask mandate until children can safely be vaccinated. Vaccinations are the best way to stop the spread of this virus, masks are the second best way, so why would we remove the mandate on masks before vaccines are available and being used by children? It makes no sense!

As I'm sure you know, the CDC recommends that kids who aren't vaccinated wear masks indoors in school at all times, here's a quote from their webpage on School Recommendations-

"CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking."

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

As a side note, I had a job offer that fell through when covid hit. I'm a stay at home mom trying to reenter the workforce. I had to stay home to virtual school my 1st and 4th grader this past year. Now I'm actively applying for jobs knowing the kids can safely go back to school with masks. If you take that away, you take my ability to confidently reenter the job market. I won't know when the school might get a viral

		<p>outbreak, and be forced to go back to virtual schooling. This is a big deal. Your decision affects all children and all working parents tremendously. Do the right thing and keep the mask mandate in place, until enough kids are eventually vaccinated to keep the covid spread at bay without masks. Let's keep our kids IN SCHOOL and give parents the ability to go to work again. We secure this by children wearing masks, all of them.</p> <p>Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.</p>
<p>Laura Clarke</p>	<p>Masks should be an individual CHOICE</p>	<p>As we approach the new school year, we should allow parents, caregivers, and guardians the CHOICE to make their OWN decision as to whether to send students back to school with a mask or not.</p> <p>As a parent who vaccinated my children, and am playing by the rules, feel that my child should be able to attend school without a mask. If parents chose not to vaccinate their child/children, then they can wear a mask, and if they still chose not to wear a mask, then that is their choice to.</p> <p>If families have compromised individuals at home, then they need to put protocols in place, in their home, to protect their family.</p> <p>More masks = more people not getting vaccinated..and those that did get vaccinated suffer those consequences.</p> <p>This should not be dictated by the school district at this time. We need to get the students back to class...and as normal as possible.</p>

<p>Laura Clarke</p>	<p>Masks should be an individual CHOICE</p>	<p>As we approach the new school year, we should allow parents, caregivers, and guardians the CHOICE to make their OWN decision as to whether to send students back to school with a mask or not.</p> <p>As a parent who vaccinated my children, and am playing by the rules, feel that my child should be able to attend school without a mask. If parents chose not to vaccinate their child/children, then they can wear a mask, and if they still chose not to wear a mask, then that is their choice to.</p> <p>If families have compromised individuals at home, then they need to put protocols in place, in their home, to protect their family.</p> <p>More masks = more people not getting vaccinated..and those that did get vaccinated suffer those consequences.</p> <p>This should not be dictated by the school district at this time. We need to get the students back to class...and as normal as possible.</p>
<p>Laura Mead</p>	<p>Masks</p>	<p>Please maintain the requirement for masks at WCPSS. The purpose of the mask is to protect others. So allowing parents to choose for their child is in reality them choosing what is best for my child. The masks did not deter my kids from learning last year. Use the masking as a learning opportunity to teach children the act of respect.</p>
<p>Laura Monaghan</p>	<p>Please follow CDC and AAP guidelines to keep our kids safe</p>	<p>The CDC and AAP both advise that students and teachers should be masked for in person learning. Please listen to the experts, not the noisy minority of parents pushing for the mandate to be dropped.</p> <p>As a parent of two elementary students who went virtual all last year, I was feeling so optimistic about sending my kids in person for 2021-22 two months ago. Now I am worried for their safety as they return amidst a resurgence of Covid cases.</p> <p>Students have a right to a safe education, and in order for that to happen mask mandates in schools need to be upheld. Please make the wise choice, especially while students under 12 do not have a vaccine available to them.</p> <p>Thank you- Laura Monaghan</p>

Lauren Abernathy	KEEP MASKING!	<p>I am the parent of a new Kindergartener who is very excited about attending school this year. Luckily, when the pandemic hit last year, I didn't have to make the difficult choice as many parents had to, take the risk and send their kids in for in person learning or choose virtual learning. Unfortunately, this year, right now, I am faced with the same difficult decision that many previously had to make. As we all know, in person instruction is where kids need to be to have the best educational experience. For many months, I have taken the data that has been made public regarding the policy and procedures taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in school and the ultimate protection for all our children. Scientific data supports mask wearing, social distancing, and extensive hand washing decreases the spread of the virus tremendously. The Governor's decision last week to allow mask mandates to end, has been completely mind blowing to me, especially with COVID numbers increasing due to the delta variant and when many of the children attending school are ineligible for the vaccine. As a parent, our number one priority is the health and safety of our children and in order to make sure that our children stay safe and protected, we need to make sure that masks are required for all, both vaccinated and unvaccinated, in order to keep not only our children safe, but the staff and faculty of the schools. As a parent, I am pleading with you to make masks mandatory so that we can have a safe, healthy year for all.</p>
Lauren Ferguson	Mandatory masks	<p>I am a parent on support of kids & school personnel wearing masks in schools. It is unreasonable to create policy that requires teachers and staff to know who has been vaccinated or not. And most students do not even have the option to be vaccinated. Until the majority of students are vaccinated, they can easily be carriers and create clusters of COVID within schools. It is difficult enough to get subs and and teachers without having large clusters causing more teachers and students to go into quarantine. On top of this, because all year round tracks are now open and the virtual academy is on a different schedule, students' ability to keep on top of their studies is difficult should they be quarantined. I have one child in WCPSS and a second who is still in preschool; both have sensory difficulties. Both are fully capable of wearing masks all day with support from the adults around them. Wearing clothes, & wearing shoes are not optional. Masks, which can aid in keeping schools a safe environment for children to grow and learn within, are important. With proper encouragement and age appropriate explanations as to why children need to wear them, they can do it and thrive.</p> <p>Please continue to require masks in school for students and staff.</p>

Lauren Huff	COVID response in elementary schools	Given the emergence of the highly contagious delta variant, the hope of vaccine authorization for those under 12 shifting from September to the end of the year, and the fact that many COVID case clusters are now being identified in our school system with the current safety measures in place... are you considering re-opening enrollment for virtual academy? I think there are significant advantages to in-person learning, which I want my son to experience; however, the COVID situation has changed dramatically since the enrollment window for virtual academy closed. The ideal option now, in my opinion, would be for children to have the option of virtual classes until a vaccine is available to them, and then to be able to re-enter the classroom. If unable to do virtual, I am strongly for mask mandates.
Lelah Jones	Masks in schools	Please keep masks in schools. They work. My daughter's class had a child come in with Covid and exposed them all. Thanks to masks in school nobody else got it. Please keep them!!
Lib McGowan	Please require all students, faculty, and staff to wear masks	Children under 12 currently cannot be vaccinated, and many students/faculty/staff who are of age and eligible to be vaccinated live with other who are not. While we having a pandemic raging through our community, we should make sure that we are acting in the best interest of community safety. For those who claim that the government does not have a right to infringe on their freedom to go mask-free, I would remind them of the fact that the "to promote the general welfare" was one of the basic tenets that our founders felt important enough to include in the preamble to the constitution.
Lily Wyatt	Support for masks in school	In light of the data regarding transmission of the COVID-19 delta variant and recommendations from the CDC, our family would like to express its support for keeping masks required in WCPSS. Masks have been shown to be effective against transmission of this disease. While not ideal, masks will help keep our teachers and students safe, and in the building for the 21/22 academic year.

<p>Lisa Jackson</p>	<p>Mandatory Masks in WCPSS</p>	<p>I would like to request that Wake County schools continue to have a mandatory mask policy until at least a vaccine is available for children under the age of 12. I have a six year old who will attend a Wake County school this fall. This is the current guidance from both the CDC and AAP:</p> <p>From the CDC website on 07/31/2021: “CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.”</p> <p>CDC update from July 27, 2021: Added a recommendation for fully vaccinated people to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission.</p> <p>The level of Level of Community Transmission in Wake County, North Carolina on July 31, 2021 was High.</p> <p>From an article on the American Academy of Pediatrics website, dated Jul 18, 2021: “The AAP continues to recommend that all staff and students who are 2 years or older wear face masks unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit their use.”</p> <p>Please continue to follow science-based recommendations on COVID safety measures for our students. Please do not succumb to political-based pressure to remove mask mandates. If mask mandates are removed, it is not a fair expectation for my 6-year old to continue to wear her mask without assistance from teachers.</p> <p>Please create a level playing field for all students. Since vaccines are not yet available for children under 12, they should not be forced to be around other students whose parents choose not to have them wear masks. That would create unsafe conditions for these children. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<p>lisa nagy</p>	<p>Our Kids Can Breathe and Want to be Safe</p>	<p>As the mother of a 2nd grade student, I ask that you please maintain masks and social distancing in elementary schools at the very least. We need to protect our children until they are able to protect themselves with the vaccine. This delta variant has us terrified for our babies. Please follow the science. If this does not happen for some reason... please reopen virtual learning as I can not send my child into an unsafe environment.</p>

		Thank you
Lizzy Behr	Masks, cases, and clusters	As per recommendations from the AAP, CDC, and NCDHHS, I urge you to continue requiring face masks in all WCPSS schools. In addition, I ask you to consider enacting stricter guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in WCPSS schools. The number of cases and clusters at year round schools in July is alarming. I also urge the board to push for a public distribution of the details on these clusters. WCPSS students, parents, and staff deserve to know the details of these clusters (ie. were these clusters due to unmasked meal times, seating arrangements in classrooms, transportation, etc.) and what WCPSS plans to do to prevent this from continuing to occur in our schools. The safety of children should be your number one priority right now. In order for students to focus on higher levels of needs (ie. Maslow's hierarchy of needs), individuals (in this case, students) must first have their basic need of safety and health met. Students who are sick OR even fearful of getting sick due to the prevalence of COVID-19 in their school will not be able to effectively learn and grow. Thank you.
Lynda Strand	We need masks	The Delta variant is more contagious and is affecting young people. We need masks in school to lower the risk for everyone! Many kids are still not eligible for the vaccine and we need to do our part in protecting them while they get an education.
Mack Ableidinger	Masks in school.	I am in high school and I am vaccinated, but others might not be. I think that kids should wear masks in school so that we will be more safe.
Madeline DiDonato	Masks in school	Please base your decisions on the health and safety needs of the students and staff. Please follow the recommendations of health and science experts like the AAP and the CDC and require masks for all students and staff.
Mandi Sharma	Open registration for virtual academy	Parents had to make choices for the upcoming school year based on the situation at the time (rising vaccination rates, lowering case numbers, and before Delta was prevalent). Due to the widespread and highly contagious Delta variant I no longer feel it is safe for my children to attend school in person until they can be vaccinated. Please reopen virtual academy registration so we have a safe option for our kids that keeps their education on track. We would be devastated to have to pull our kids out of the school system and lose their education and spot for future years to keep them safe. Our kids need us to protect them right now and families need safe options in light of the change in circumstance. Thank you.

<p>Mandy Fields</p>	<p>Require masks in school</p>	<p>First, a big thank you to each of you for your calm and science-driven approach to COVID thus far. You are doing a great job.</p> <p>The school board should continue to require masking of all children and adults in the buildings at the start of the 2021-22 traditional calendar school year, given:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases across the country – and in NC and Wake County – in COVID cases due to the Delta variant• Significant documentation in recent weeks of break-through cases in people who are fully vaccinated• The push-back in the timeline for estimated vaccine approval for under-12-year-olds• Findings from the ABC Science Collaborative that masking is what prevented widespread illness in schools that were on Plan A in the 2020-2021 school year• Recommendations from the updated NC StrongSchools Public Health toolkit• Recommendations from the CDC• Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics <p>It is clear that cases are increasing in Wake County and that not enough people are getting vaccinated to beat back the virus. Forty-two percent of Wake county residents are still not fully vaccinated. Cases in Wake County increased 10-fold between July 1 (35 cases) and July 28 (308 cases), according to the newest available data on the NC COVID-19 data dashboard as of August 1. The virus is in an upswing, and we must act accordingly.</p> <p>The school board needs to continue the mask mandate while students and staff are indoors. Anything less will be ineffective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A policy that recommends but does not mandate masking will result in very few people being masked – even families who want their children to be masked won't be assured that they will stay masked at school because of peer pressure. In addition, the families who choose not to mask will be the families who are most likely to come into contact with the virus elsewhere and bring it into the schools.• A policy that requires unvaccinated people only to mask is unenforceable. Imagine how my kids' big high school (Enloe) would ensure that all high schoolers who are unvaccinated are wearing masks, when some percentage of them wouldn't be wearing masks because they are already vaccinated. Can you imagine trying to determine who is whom in the crush of a high school hallway during class changes? Impossible.
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Margaret Pauls	Keep requiring masks at school	<p>Hello WCPSS! My name is Margaret “Katey” Pauls, I am a mother of two school age boys but also a Molecular Biologist. As a biologist and a mother I find it exceptionally critical that kids continue to wear masks in the classroom and WCPSS should require vaccinations for all that are eligible. As the understanding of science is always evolving, sometimes scientists don’t communicate effectively in what knowledge is “new” and what has been know for decades. My husband and I taught college level courses at a top university on how mRNA vaccines work nearly 2 decades ago, many of the students are today’s doctors. They are safe and effective but only work to eradicate disease if a majority of people get them. As there is no current vaccine for those under the age of 12, we need to have safety measures to protect those children. The best way to do this is mask wearing for all. Further there is scientific evidence that masks work in effectively reducing infectious spread. Think about how surgeons wear masks to protect both patients and doctors during surgery, same with the classroom. Until we tamp down Covid, it is critical for kids who are unvaccinated to wear masks to prevent spread. As Covid continues, new variants will evolve. If we don’t curb the Delta variant, my fear is what even more dangerous version will come behind it. As a mother and as a scientific expert, I am fearful for the safety of my children without masks in indoor settings.</p>

Maria Bruzzo	Keep Mask Mandate in K12 schools	We need to maintain a mask mandate in schools this year. The science CLEARLY shows this is the best way to protect our kids and communities. CDC, NCDHHS, and the AAP all urge schools to require universal mask mandates for all students, teachers and staff regardless of vaccination status. The percentage of vaccinated students in Wake County is extremely low and kids under 12 are not even eligible for vaccines. Wake county is considered an area with high spread. The Delta variant is much more contagious than previous strains and not only are our kids at risk, but they can also transmit the virus to family members at home. New findings are now showing that vaccinated people can spread Delta just as much as unvaccinated people. Schools are safe IF we keep layered prevention measures in place, including masks. Keep our schools safe so we can keep them open. Maintain a mask mandate for this school year.
Marie Pasquale	Please keep the mask mandate in place	Please follow the CDC recommendation and keep the mask mandate in place for WCPSS students and staff to keep our children safe!
Marisol Darnell	Requiring Masks in School	I'm a parent of a rising 2nd grader in Wake County and a 4 year old, who is currently in daycare. As we approach the new school year, I am astounded that there's still a debate about masks for children who are not eligible to be vaccinated yet. The science and data has proven that masks reduce the risk of catching COVID and we need to continue to protect our youngest community, until the vaccine is available to them. My children have never complained about masks and I feel the reasons behind those against them are ridiculous. I hope that the school board follows the science and recommendations by the CDC and mandate masks for our children.
Marjorie Jones	Keep Mask Requirement In Place	I urge the board members to follow the guidelines from the state of North Carolina and maintain a mask requirement for staff and students at least until the spread of Covid has diminished or vaccines become available for children under 12 and overall vaccination rates have increased. My child was able to enjoy both virtual and in-person school last year. She was able to attend in-person school to the safest degree possible because her school followed social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines stringently. My daughter (who is 7 years old) was perfectly willing and able to wear a mask to keep herself, her friends and her teachers safe. She excelled in school this year, ended first grade reading above grade level standards, and was sad to say goodbye to her teachers and classmates for the summer. Yes, you can learn and build positive relationships while wearing a mask! We are all ready to have a break from teaching and learning in masks, for sure. They aren't always comfortable or convenient. I'd love to remove daily temperature checks and washing masks from

		<p>my to-do list! But until it is safe to do so, we must stay the course and maintain our safety protocols...masks included.</p>
Mary Blanks	Universal masking	<p>Per the American Academy of Pediatrics, I encourage the board to make masks mandatory for all students, faculty, and staff. Masks are part of a critical layered approach that will help keep our schools open and safe for students. Given the recent surge of the delta variant locally, I am fearful that schools may be facing a critical juncture. My children benefit greatly from being with their peers socially and I want to be part of continuing to make that happen. Please make masks mandatory.</p> <p>Per the AAP - the AAP recommends a layered approach to make school safe for all students, teachers and staff. That includes a recommendation that everyone older than age 2 wear masks, regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>“We need to prioritize getting children back into schools alongside their friends and their teachers -- and we all play a role in making sure it happens safely,” said Sonja O’Leary, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Council on School Health. “The pandemic has taken a heartbreaking toll on children, and it’s not just their education that has suffered but their mental, emotional and physical health. Combining layers of protection that include vaccinations, masking and clean hands hygiene will make in-person learning safe and possible for everyone.”</p> <p>AAP recommends universal masking because a significant portion of the student population is not yet eligible for vaccines, and masking is proven to reduce transmission of the virus and to protect those who are not vaccinated. Many schools will not have a system to monitor vaccine status of students, teachers and staff, and some communities overall have low vaccination uptake where the virus may be circulating more prominently.</p> <p>https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/</p>
Mary Hinds	Mask mandates protect all our children	<p>I respectfully request that you keep the mask mandates for WCPSS students until the spread of Covid is controlled and all children have approval for the vaccine. As we are learning about the delta variant, it is highly contagious even with vaccinated children and teachers and we must take precautions to slow the spread and the mutations of the virus. If we want our children to have in-person, uninterrupted education, masks are a must.</p>

Mary Humphrey	Masking	Please keep the mask mandate in place for all students, regardless of vaccination status. The Delta variant is clearly a public health concern for everyone--we can't let our guard down now!!!
Mary Kathryn Brewer	Masks in schools	<p>Dear school board members,</p> <p>I sincerely hope you will follow CDC guidelines and the recommendation of Governor Cooper for all K-12 to wear masks. Please do follow science and don't sacrifice any child's safety. The delta variant is so contagious and we don't want huge outbreaks in schools and end up all going virtual again. Our kids are counting on you to do the right thing and follow the science. I have 2 children in high school and 2 children in middle school. I really hope you will mandate masks in high school and middle school since so many are still unvaccinated. It is unfair to allow them to even be in school much less not wear a mask. Proof of vaccination should be the minimum requirement if you choose not to require masks. Also weekly Covid testing with a proof of negative if you are unvaccinated and unmasked. The best solution is to require everyone to wear a mask to keep our children healthy. My 2 middle schoolers already started back and have no issues wearing their mask all day. They are already acclimated to it and don't even complain. It is a easy way to keep them safe. Thank you .</p>
Mary Maclean Asbill	Masks	<p>My vaccinated senior will happily wear a mask of it means in person school very day! We fear that if masks are not required there will be many cases and school might shutdown.</p>
Mary Vickery	Masks must be required!	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>

Mary Vickery	Masks must be required!	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>
Megan Williams	Mask requirement	<p>For the last year and a half, many of us have gone to great lengths to keep ourselves and our families safe. Our children's lives have looked very different, and those changes were met with resilience, acceptance, and knowledge that it was all for the collective good. Now that, thankfully, most adults are eligible to receive a COVID19 vaccination, it seems that we have forgotten the children. Our children matter. Their safety matters. And... their education matters, too. Until they have had the opportunity to become vaccinated as well, and likely well beyond this time, given the emerging data behind the Delta variant, universal masking needs to be required and enforced in our schools. Please protect our children; show us you care.</p>
Melissa B Nelson	Masks	<p>Please keep the current mask mandate in place for WCPSS classrooms. My children are 5 and 6 and I fear for their safety if masks do not continue to be worn in the classroom. Please continue to require all people in school buildings to wear masks when children are present, regardless of vaccination status. Thank you.</p>
Melissa Caporale	Support for mask wearing	<p>Due to the fact that students under the age of 12 can not be vaccinated, and the Delta variant is running rampant in North Carolina, I ask that you continue to require students and staff to wear masks in all classrooms. Masks have proven to keep virus transmission down. Please continue to keep our most vulnerable students safe.</p>
Michael & Melissa Johnson	Paid Parking Spots for High Schoolers	<p>Dear WCPSS BOE</p> <p>Are staff, teachers and administrators required to pay for parking like students are? Who is in charge of painting the lines and numbers in the parking lot? I would like you all to consider the safety of young drivers and use the money collected to paint lines all around the school building.</p> <p>Where is the money for student parking going?</p>

		Thank you. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson
Michelle Davis	Masks at school	<p>Per CDC and APA recommendations, all students and staff should continue wearing masks at school. I find it horrifying to consider that my children may be forced to be around unmasked people who could expose them to this disease that could impact anyone (long-term heart or lung damage), much less children, for the rest of their lives, if it doesn't kill them. This is why the school system requires routine vaccinations, like polio. Since most children are currently ineligible for COVID-19 vaccines AND since data is showing that even vaccinated people can transmit the latest variant, everyone should keep wearing masks for protection.</p> <p>This is the best equitable solution. As a highly educated, and yes privileged, mother, who is a public school graduate and a proponent of public schools, I find it appalling that people would suggest parents who want to protect their children and community with face masks should only have the option of virtual school or homeschooling. All children deserve to have the option of in-person schooling, learning academic and social skills. Additionally, making a change in masking, especially around vaccine ineligible children, after the window for virtual academy has closed, classes have been assigned, and even some schools have started, forces parents to either put their children in a dangerous situation (around mask-less people) or homeschool. This is irresponsible, unequitable, and quite arrogant.</p> <p>Based on the current data and medical recommendations, please keep the masking requirements as is for all students and staff (K-12).</p>
Michelle Gray	Virtual Academy	<p>Please consider re-opening the Virtual Academy for parents to sign their children up. In May, we had all hoped we would be in a different place with the pandemic than we are now, so most of us thought it would be safe for our children to return to school. The delta variant has changed things though, and the WCPSS COVID dashboard indicates as much. I would much rather have my child with peers virtually versus having to homeschool him, but if Virtual Academy isn't an option, then that's what we will have to do. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>

Michelle Guinn Ries	Masking in schools	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I am writing to urge adherence to CDC guidelines for universal masking for students, teachers, and staff in all schools for the current/upcoming year, regardless of vaccination status. Given the changing nature of the virus, especially the increased contagiousness of the Delta variant, possibility for breakthrough infections among vaccinated people, the fact that children under 12 are not yet eligible for vaccination, and the rising cases that we are currently seeing in Wake County and throughout the state, universal masking is the most effective way to keep our students and communities healthy.</p> <p>I have three children in Wake County schools, a rising 7th grader, rising 4th grader, and rising kindergartener. Last year, my 2 oldest children were in Virtual Academy until they were able to return in person in April. While their teachers and schools did an incredible job with virtual learning, after over a year of it, my children were having trouble engaging with academic material, experiencing both anxiety and boredom, and were suffering from lack of social contact. Getting children safely back in school is the most important step we can take for all kids right now, and universal masking is crucial to ensuring they remain physically healthy, emotionally healthy, and academically strong.</p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>Michelle Ries, MPH (Associate Director, North Carolina Institute of Medicine)</p>
Michelle Turner	Keep masks mandatory	<p>As a society we all agree to certain rules for the general welfare. We all agree to driving according to the rules of the road for example stopping at stop signs, stoplight, right side of the road for driving So that we can be safe while driving. Every time behind we get behind the wheel of a car we assume that others are also going by the same rules of the road. However, the rules are law so that it can be enforced and there are punishments and consequences for when people don't cooperate. Mandates are needed for all to ensure cooperation. The same is true for mask mandates mandates. Everyone breathes the same air, my child has a right to the safest air possible while in school. Don't like it? Go to a private school. Trust science and bring back empathy and a belief in cooperation and the common good. Selfishness has no place in our schools.</p>

Michelle Yip	Masks should be required to protect everyone	The delta variant has clearly changed the Covid-19 landscape. Being more transmissible combined with so many still unvaccinated (either by choice or now) the facts of the data and the impact of the virus cannot be ignored. This cannot continue to be politicized. Vaccinated ppl can get infected and spread as easily as unvaccinated. The responsibility of the county is to create the safest learning environment for our kids. Any logical human paying attention to the surge data across the nation and around the world should understand that masks help stop the spread and is an effective method to help mitigate spread. For kids and teachers being in person for 8 hours a day, masks need to be used to mitigate as the kids and teachers remain in the building. This shouldn't be an emotional or political argument...it is pure logic, facts, and science
Mike Lemons	In support of masking requirement	I am a grandfather of a rising 4th grader and rising 2nd grader at Underwood Elementary. I am a strong supporter of keeping the mask requirement in our schools. Per the ABC Collaborative, a group of Duke Scientists studying Covid transmission, "Going forward, masks will remain essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools, particularly as younger children remain ineligible for vaccines and the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus spreads throughout the U.S." Also, the CDC and APA are recommending continued masking requirements for children in schools. We know masks work and we know it is important that everyone wears the mask to prevent transmission, especially the carrier. It is not effective for just those children who choose to wear a mask to wear one. My grandchildren do not have access to a vaccine yet and it is their right to attend school in-person in an environment that is safe for them. Sharing an indoor environment with unvaccinated children without masks is not a safe learning environment for my grandchildren. Please vote to maintain the universal mask requirement for the 2021-2022 school year to keep our children safe.
Misty Helsabeck	Require mask usage at school	Please respect the science and require masks to be worn on school campus at all times, by everyone no matter age or vaccination status. I would prefer to see masks worn everywhere on campus, even outside. Our children cannot maintain a "safe" distance when on the playground.

Monica Cox	In Support of Mask Wearing in K-12 Schools	I ask that the WCPSS School Board consider following the advice and recommendations of the AAP and CDC and require all staff and students to wear a mask at school regardless of vaccination status. So much has changed in the last several weeks -- we know more about the delta variant and how easily it is spread by both vaccinated and unvaccinated alike. We see how many more children, most of whom are ineligible for the vaccine at this point in our elementary and middle schools, have been affected. This week, my son, and the majority of his sixth grade track at Lufkin Road Middle School are quarantining at home after an exposure at school. The strain this disruption puts on staff and students and families is enormous, not to mention our medical community as we know have more people needing tests and appointments and possible medical care. While masks are required in the classroom, they are not required at lunch, nor is distancing taking place during this unmasked time of eating and talking. I can only imagine that is where a majority of the spread took place. Three weeks in to the school year and we're already home as a result of exposure. Look at the numbers from our year round schools who are already seeing cases rise and clusters as a result of student-to-student transmission. Removing the mask mandate for students would be dangerous and ill advised. We need to remain vigilant. Life is still not normal and pretending it is doesn't make it so. Please keep our children safe in schools.
Monika Jaborn	Athens Public Library temporary Closure	To whomsoever it may concern - I am a single woman who recently moved here and live in the apartments near Lake Johnson. When I moved here, one of my main attractions to consider this location is the Athens public library. I have relied heavily on it the past year for my mental health, for my literary endeavors and so much! Athens library is a jewel of all the resources available in this neighborhood. To be honest, other than the library and the pool, there aren't many others, if not any other resources available for us Public that put money into this community. So it is such a huge de-spiriting thing to do to close it for the public. The library is a main reason for drawing people who invest money into this community like myself. Do please consider the repercussions of your unthoughtful actions - whoever it was that came up with this bazinga idea to shut it for Public.
Nancy Nice	Masks are needed	Kids are transmitters, so having them mask helps protect the community at large. Many kids go home to families with high risk family members who may not be eligible for vaccines or may be immunocompromised. Every case is an opportunity to further infect others. We need to do what we can to slow the spread. Masks are needed in schools!

Nidhi Malhotra	Mask mandates in Pre schools	<p>We, the undersigned, are community pediatricians and family doctors who take care of the children of Wake County. Many of us are also parents of children in the Wake County Public School System. We stand in solidarity with and in support of the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC recommendations for universal masking in the K-12 population.</p> <p>We strongly believe that in-person learning is one of the most important things we can do for our children during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that in-person learning is the best way to provide consistent, safe spaces for students to grow and learn. But for the benefits of in-person learning to be realized, schools must remain open. And the available data shows that schools remain open when proven mitigation techniques are employed.</p> <p>Until our K-12 students achieve a sufficient threshold of vaccinated children and adult staff, we must continue our evidence-based efforts to maintain low transmission rates in schools. Masks remain an integral part of a multi-faceted approach in protecting our children from COVID-19, especially as the Delta variant spreads across our globe.</p> <p>We know that masking works. Last year, Wake County was able to welcome thousands of students safely into the classroom with masks and additional mitigation efforts. We are incredibly fortunate to have the Duke-led ABC collaborative locally to help guide our schools, and we should continue to take advantage of their data and guidance. Their most recent summary indicates that masks are the most important means of curbing spread in school, which allows students of all grades to attend full, in-person instruction.</p> <p>We are thankful to the Wake County School Board for their continued thoughtfulness, effort, and hard work in keeping our children and staff in a safe, productive school environment.</p>
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<p>Pal gnani</p>	<p>Mandate masks in the schools</p>	<p>I'm a mom of 4th grader, in Green hope elementary school, Wake County. I'm writing to you wrt rising delta cases in the wake county.</p> <p>When we opted for in person learning in May, cases were the lowest and delta variant did not exist in the USA. Though it was a tough choice for us to commit for one year , we opted for in- person when vaccination was increasing and COVID cases were the lowest.</p> <p>Delta variant is known be brutal on unvaccinated and there won't be approval for vaccination for 9 year olds until mid winter. Considering the higher number of COVID cases reported recently in wake county schools(Turner Creek) , I sincerely request you provide us the flexibility to switch to virtual option ASAP at least for the first quarter. I also request the school system to evaluate flexibility for in-person/virtual option based on circumstances.</p> <p>I also sincerely request to keep the mask for all children at school in case virtual option is not provided. We know based on the science that mask prevents the spread of COVID. CDC also recommends mask indoors even for vaccinated. It is highly unsafe for unvaccinated children to take the masks off.</p> <p>Thanks, Gnani</p>
<p>Paloma Espinoza</p>	<p>Please make masks mandatory!!</p>	<p>Masks are hot, sweaty, ear-pinching, laundry-creating torture devices. Children should not have to wear them at any time in school. In addition, goggles for swimming should be banned. They don't allow eyeballs to freely interact with their environment, the clean, fresh, chlorinated water. Soccer shin guards too! Please liberate the shins. Football helmets? Concussions are clearly a more desired outcome than having that heavy sweaty thing on kids' heads. Gloves? For Pete's sake, they are barbaric. Let hands touch snow and ice like God intended!! Jokes aside, please do not listen to a vocal minority that makes outlandish comparisons between "child abuse" and mask-wearing. My outspoken, not-always-compliant children have been wearing masks for a year at daycare, school, and camp, and they have suffered zero ill effects except for occasional fogging. We need kids in school, and we need it to be safe. Please keep masks required until kids can be vaccinated. Sidenote: I drafted this up last week. Now, with even more information pointing to the highly contagious Delta Variant, I'm absolutely not joking around about this. I hope that all kids can have a safe, normal and productive school year, and masks are a</p>

		<p>very small sacrifice to make that happen. PLEASE make masks mandatory for all kids, teachers, staff, and central office staff.</p>
<p>Pamela Bunnion</p>	<p>Response to the Make Masks Optional Petition</p>	<p>This is a response to the points made in the Make Masks Optional petition in order to address the misleading and inaccurate statements. But the main point is this: As I am writing, there is a little under 3,000 people choosing to sign this petition even with its high media attention. Based off the population of the school district, it is clear that this petition does not reflect the majority of the families in this school district.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes, NC Gov. Cooper allowed the state mask mandate to expire. He has encouraged the school districts to set the mandate themselves, in my belief, as an attempt to take politics out of this pandemic. Medical and health facilities that are owned privately will be able to establish their own guidelines for masks, so it is misleading for the petition to specifically call out these facilities. 2. The Strong Schools NC Public Health Toolkit contains No legal requirement, yes, but doing the right thing for the “greater good” shouldn’t be legally required for humanity. 3. Making masks optional will only prolong this already prolonged crisis. The reality is our state’s vaccination rates are in the lower 40% of the eligible population. A huge portion of the school district is unvaccinated and large portion of our school district doesn’t even have the option yet to get vaccinated. The masks are the least we can do and they are a great way to at least slow the spread for those who choose not to get vaccinated. 4 and 5. It is telling that they specify how parents who choose to send their children to school without masks should do so “Without discrimination or penalty to the child” but did not add that specification to the parents who choose to send their children with a mask. 6. Vaccinations are required for school attendance unless for a medical or religious exemption. The covid vaccine should be no different, considering as we have seen, covid can completely disrupt our lives and economy. 7. Parents who do not wish to send their children to school unless children are NOT forced to wear a mask can enroll their children in the WCPSS Virtual Academy, or may unenroll their children to homeschool. 8. The society’s guidelines throughout the summer can be based off the CDC guidelines that stated unvaccinated people should continue to wear a mask. They are relying on personal responsibility. The point that the petition is making is that all of those unmasked children at the hockey game had families that were clearly not

taking into account their own personal responsibility, because if those children were under 12, they clearly were not vaccinated. Gov. Cooper is vaccinated. He did not need a mask based off the requirements put forth from the CDC.

9. Private schools have more funding and resources to ensure other protocols are in place to keep the students safe. Our already over crowded schools don't make necessary social distancing possible in the same way that small private schools can.

10. Some NC public schools that are smaller have indeed stopped requiring masks. Right or wrong, with smaller school districts, just like small private schools, they have the ability to create more space for students. The second largest school district in NC does not have that same luxury.

11. Since the covid vaccine is not added to this list of required school vaccines yet, I can understand that. But that also means that parents need to be honest with their own personal choices and not allow their behavior and choices to affect others.

12. There is no such thing as a legal definition of a vaccine. The definition of a vaccine can be found in a dictionary and one can see how this vaccine fits that definition.

13. I'm sure with time the contingent requirements listed on the petition will come to be if the Delta variant is allowed to mutate even further to an even more dangerous variant. The flu vaccine is not required, yes, but Covid 19 is not the flu.

14. Anyone can find anything that seems credible to support any belief.

15. This is an opinion and not a fact.

16. Parents need to focus on teaching their children kindness and the importance of community and loving thy neighbor, and the bullying epidemic will end.

17. The threat in this section was interesting after they stated their concern with bullying.

18. Public Schools are part of the state which needs to be focused on the "greater good" and therefore it is important to use them for vaccine clinics as well as providing that information about vaccinations.

19. Correct. There will be no law backing up the requirement to wear a mask, just as there is no state law or mandate associated with a dress code policy that the school district develops.

20. This aggressive statement reminds you that you are an elected official, which I can't imagine you forget, but they fail to understand that a school board, yes makes decisions in line with the law but also makes plenty of decisions that are in the best interest of their students and staff members. As an elected official you are called to listen to the majority and make your decision to satisfy as many members of the community as you can.

Pamela Callaway	COVID precautions in schools	Hi, please continue basic COVID precautions at school. One of my sons got COVID at camp this summer. They were eating indoors and not enforcing mask use. The one who went to camp where they are outdoors and enforced the mask policy did not get Covid. Please have children eat outdoors or spread out or in classrooms if they can, and please require students to wear masks at all times, except when actively eating or drinking. I desperately need my kids to go to school in person, and it is so much better for them, but it looks like the new Delta variant is extremely contagious. Please protect *all* our kids - some of us are high risk for Covid, and mask wearing is more effective if everyone is doing it, not just a few people. Please keep our kids safe!
porter bowman	masks	mask hurt our kids i dont have to mask my kid when I go places do not do it for schools

Prashanti Mantrala	Concern on sending kids to school in person even if it high school since we have a child under 12 yrs old not vaccinated yet	<p>Respected WCPSS, we are very grateful to all the great services done by teachers , staff and officials in providing our children great learning opportunities.</p> <p>We are initially signed for virtual academy due to worry on getting exposed to covid at school . But since the courses opted by magnet high school and middle school were compromised in selection for Virtual academy students . We again shifted our high school kid to in person though worried at heart . But seeing the recent changes and increasing in covid cases especially to unvaccinated and cases in wcpss schools making us worry more .</p> <p>So humbly request wcpss officials and teachers to support our kids in getting equal magnet courses for both in person and virtual students . We are really really grateful to all the community and wcpss teachers for supporting the families and students through all hard course of time .</p> <p>But my high school kid is concerned of loosing the courses if he is not in person . We request you for granting courses to virtual students also so that we can have less worry Atleast until our second child who is under 12 gets vaccinated.</p> <p>Though our second kid also is magnet student and he also has to get compromised on his courses due to being in Virtual academy we thought health is more important than courses . But for my high school kid it is not easy to loose courses .</p> <p>Please please please kindly understand our concerns as a parent and also I hope many ppl undergo this tension whether to compromise on course or health . Kindly help us get through this situation smoothly .</p> <p>We are really really grateful to all the great support all the officials , principal and teachers are giving .</p> <p>But also help us in this matter,</p> <p>Once again please think of the option of giving all courses to all children equally irrespective of virtual academy and in person .</p> <p>And also please give the students and families to opt for VA or in person once again,</p> <p>Very very grateful.</p> <p>Kindly excuse me if I am wrong in anything .</p> <p>Thanks and regards, Prashanti</p>
Rachel Henderson	Keep masks in school	<p>Please support keeping masks in schools, k-12 for students and staff. Please also reinforce lunch and snack time social distancing. This is a big gap in safety. COVID is on the rise and delta variant is super contagious. My 2nd grader deserves to go to school and be safe.</p>

Rachel Rehl	Covid Safety Measures Including Masks	Please keep the mask mandate for all staff and students in WCPSS. Children under age 12 are not able to get vaccinated and Delta variant is far more transmissible. We need all protective measures in place in order to keep our children learning in person.
Raleigh Resident	Please do not make masks optional for students and staff.	<p>Please do not make masks optional for students and staff. Given the current surge in cases, it would be irresponsibly dangerous to force unvaccinated children to be in close quarters with unmasked people. While there is a loud minority of science deniers, the vast majority of parents want their children to be able to attend school safely until they can be vaccinated. Wearing a mask is a minor inconvenience compared with the effects of COVID.</p> <p>The health and safety of our children and community is in your hands. If you are unable to stand firm and protect them, and you do decide to make masks optional, please allow enough time and flexibility for us to switch our children to virtual academy.</p>
Ralph Helsabeck	Masks	Please require masks for all staff and students.
Rashmi Shivaraj	Make mask mandatory at school	We request to make mask mandatory at school for all grades. And also have virtual option available. Based on the current situation we are not ready to take that risk.
Rebecca	Face Masks	<p>Please don't be swayed by the emotional propaganda of a few vocal parents with another agenda than the health of students and staff. Please follow the recommendations of experts like the AAP and the CDC: require masks for all students and staff.</p> <p>Please keep our children and staff safe.</p>
Rebecca Eberle	Masks are a must	Do not think the loud voices are the majority. I have talked with a lot of families who are upset that the safety guidelines in place when we enrolled for this school year were dropped the second we went back in the classroom. The only thing we have left are masks. The desks are not spaced out at all, they're back to eating and talking in the cafeteria. We need masks to keep our kids safe. Follow science, not the loud mouthed conspiracy theorists.

Rebecca Simpson	Keeping masks	I'm writing in support of keeping masks mandated in all WCPSS schools until vaccination is widely available for our students under the age of 12. This aligns with the recommendations of both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control. Last year I sent my student back in person for spring semester and felt safe doing so thanks in part to the precautions including mandatory masking indoors. By dropping masks this will put our students and staff at higher risk of infection and increase the likelihood of quarantines and school closures leading to learning losses. We all know cases are currently on the rise and this is our best defense at keeping our kids safe and schools open.
Renate Andrews	Continue to require face masks for adults/children in WCPSS school buildings	<p>I encourage WCPSS to continue the requirement that all adults and children wear a mask while indoors (with appropriate medical exemptions). The Delta variant is spreading widely; children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated; and, recent evidence suggests that vaccinated persons are still spreading the virus.</p> <p>WCPSS should also consider requiring regular testing for (unvaccinated?) staff/students and/or wastewater testing in school buildings to catch outbreaks before they take hold.</p>
Renee Wood	Masks	Please continue to require mask and protect our vulnerable children who are unable to get vaccinated. Our children deserve to be in school and it is unsafe to do so without a mask mandate. Thank you.
Rhea Lucovsky	Mask requirements for Wake County Schools	I am a former preschool teacher with friends and family still in the field and a grandmother to three little ones. COVID is and will remain a threat to many; especially our children and the unvaccinated. I firmly believe masks should be a mandatory requirement in schools for all! Our teachers and students didn't sign up to be test subjects and that is exactly what we would be asking them to be if masks do not remain mandatory. Please keep the mask mandate for our children's sake!

Robin Hoffman	Maintaining mask requirement in the WCPSS	<p>I am writing to express my strong support of maintaining a mask requirement for all students and staff in the Wake County Public School System, regardless of vaccination status. I am the parent of rising 2nd and 4th graders; they obviously are not old enough to be vaccinated, so I am understandably very concerned about their well-being during the Delta variant-driven surge of Covid-19 in NC. One only has to look at the recent quarantining of 200 unmasked students and staff at Franklin Academy Charter School in Wake Forest to see what the result would be at all WCPSS schools if this mandate is lifted. This variant is far more contagious than the strain we were faced with last school year, and during that time, schools were virtual for 3/4 of the year and stringent masking and social distancing requirements were in place for the time that school was actually in session in the spring. To completely eliminate a mask requirement and social distancing requirements when we are dealing with a strain that is even more virulent is foolish at best and negligent at worst.</p> <p>I am also in support of all K-5 schools returning to serving lunch in the classrooms instead of having unmasked children from different classrooms mingling closely in the cafeteria at lunchtime. Having different class groups mix unmasked in a full-capacity cafeteria does not make sense if schools are trying to keep children in their own "pods" to avoid the spread of Covid-19 among classrooms.</p>
Rose Greiner	Athens library for Public	<p>The Athens library has been an integral part of our community for 43 years. that is as long as I have lived here and I can vouch for how much it has helped nourish this community all these years. I was shocked to learn the new council and board thinks we do not deserve this public amenity. Why? We deserve it as much as someone who lives in downtown Raleigh or Cary. We cared for our neighborhoods and see it slip away into something unrecognizable one by one. 100s of trees being taken down, 10s of houses built where one house stood. As the population increases in this general neighborhood and the nature is recessing.. there is more need for us old folk to find solitude and comfort in books immemorial. Please do not take that away from us. I have lived long enough to see how temporary closures work. Not everything in life is about money. When a community is lost, then it will be too late to realize and work on rebuilding it.</p>

Rose Krayer	Tracking quarantines at school	<p>According to the linked article, WCPSS is not tracking when a classroom is sent home to quarantine. Why? This is important information for families to have access to if we want to assess the risk of sending our child to school. What is Wake hiding by not tracking these numbers?</p> <p>https://www.wral.com/coronavirus/they-sit-3-feet-apart-at-least-8-students-with-covid-at-wake-elementary-school/19791761/</p>
Ross Davidson	Masks in Schools	<p>I write as a parent of a rising kindergartener in the Wake County Public School System pleading for the board to maintain the mask requirement in public schools. School will be the only place that our child and many others are at risk of exposure to covid. With young children being unable to vaccinate, and with a hyper-transmissible variant spreading at an alarming rate – even in children, it makes little sense to remove the only layer of protection that these children have. We are excited and optimistic for a year of in-person learning and fear that removing the mask requirement is the first step down a path that leads to unnecessary clusters of sick children, quarantining, large outbreaks in schools, and eventually sending children back home for another disjointed year of remote learning. We are counting on leadership to make the necessary decisions that will help protect our vulnerable children and help keep them in school.</p>

Russell Giroux	support of mask mandate	<p>In the past year, WCPSS has continued to focus on three big components of a quality school experience: safety, behavioral health, and equity. With these three things in mind, I urge the school board to continue to require masks in schools and other WCPSS work sites.</p> <p>First, the rise of the Delta variant means that COVID is more likely to spread in situations where distancing and masking aren't prevalent. While our schools cannot currently provide for ample social distancing, masking provides a safety measure to limit the spread of COVID, making our schools safer for children and the staff that support them each and every day.</p> <p>Second, masking prevents students and staff from spreading COVID. This means that students are more likely to be able to transition to school and stay in school. Consistent routines with consistent staffing patterns support student's behavioral health as they re-enter school this summer and fall. Mandating masks can eliminate a divide between students who mask and students who do not, making instances of mask-bullying less likely and creating a sense of community; we're all wearing masks to keep our school family safe.</p> <p>Third, masking can prevent COVID spread, keeping children in school where they can access instruction. Without the option of virtual instruction for students when ordered to quarantine, students would be faced with inequitable access to learning and support during these quarantine times. Taking every step possible to keep students and staff in their classrooms includes mandating masks to prevent COVID spread.</p> <p>Many of us agree that the power of our schools comes from the nurturing and responsive relationships and instruction students receive each and every day in WCPSS. Please take every step possible to keep students and staff in classrooms this year, which means continuing the mask mandate.</p>
Russell Nelson	Masks in schools	Please require all individuals to wear masks during school.
Ryan Knickerbocker	Masks - keep them on for under 12 for the next three months	Parent asking you to keep masks on for everyone in the under 12 classrooms through the release of the kid vaccines. It's almost here, just deal with masks a little bit longer so we can be in person safely. This isn't indefinite. There's no reason to give up this close. Public health is not an individual choice, and never has been. If you don't want your kids to wear a mask, YOU do virtual academy.

Samantha Kennedy	Later School Start Times	I am new to NC, and have an incoming Senior and Sophomore at Apex Friendship. I believe that Wake County was at one time considering changing school start times to better align with students natural circadian rhythms, especially as it relates to high school students. While I fully understand that so much focus has had to go to Covid management, I do feel that it is imperative that the BOE continue to make progress in changing HS/MS start times later, especially given the increase in students needing mental/ emotional health support. Please do not let this issue fall thru the cracks... our kids need it. Thank you
Samantha Schpero	Virtual school	Will you be opening up virtual school for people who did NOT sign up for it in April when Covid looked like it was under control? Now that it's on the rise and our children under 12 are the most vulnerable in the schools, I would like to see the option to sign them up for virtual NOW!!!
Sangeetha	Children wearing masks at school	Masks should be made mandatory for kids who have chosen to go to in-person school. I have already had my 8 year old suffer from Flu just within 10 days of returning to in-person and I can't see him suffer again in case he gets Covid. Until the kids (ages 2-11) are vaccinated, the masks should be made mandatory in school premises. Otherwise, give us the option of virtual.
Sara Fitzpatrick	Masks for students in schools	Given the lack of options for our students 12 and under to get vaccinated and the medical information available to us, as well as the updated CDC recommendations there is no clear reason we should not take this simple step of masking students to keep our kids safe. It is unfair to subject our kids to anything but the highest level of safety and I understand that people have a choice whether or not they choose to get vaccinated but by refusing to wear masks it is inhibiting everyone else's safety. Pleas make the best decision to keep our kids safe and IN PERSON.
Sara Fitzpatrick	Masks for students in schools	Given the lack of options for our students 12 and under to get vaccinated and the medical information available to us, as well as the updated CDC recommendations there is no clear reason we should not take this simple step of masking students to keep our kids safe. It is unfair to subject our kids to anything but the highest level of safety and I understand that people have a choice whether or not they choose to get vaccinated but by refusing to wear masks it is inhibiting everyone else's safety. Pleas make the best decision to keep our kids safe and IN PERSON.
Sarah Ann Bagley	Mask wearing	Are there repercussions for teachers and principals not wearing masks properly or at all times they are expected? I feel uncomfortable asking a teacher and/or principal to wear their mask on carpool lines. This makes me feel like they aren't always wearing

		them in the school either. I feel it is very important for the mask to be worn when interacting with so many students in a day.
Sarah Gardner-Cox	Masks in schools	Please require all individuals to wear masks during school.
Sarah Szymanowski	Athens Drive Library	Books on the Go has been a lifeline through Pandemic Parenting (which if we are realistic is NOT over). If I have to trek with my kids to Cameron Village AND take my unmaskable newborn inside for pickup, my kids are definitely not going to get the opportunity for new books as often. This is a huge disappointment. Creatively adjusting Books on the Go hours when high school students are not around anyway would be a simple solution. It is also an interesting assumption that the option of Books on the Go is not needed or wanted in the community, but the risk of COVID transmission by being outside on the high school campus is too great to keep a library branch open.
Sarah Tate	Universal masking in elementary schools	I am literally begging for universal masks in Wake county schools for the upcoming school year (or at the very least until our young kids have the option to be vaccinated.) Our children are already divided in the classroom and this would certainly do nothing to help them. The kids have to go back to school. We all want that. The kids have to be protected until they can be vaccinated. Please tell me we all want that too. If one single child dies from covid contracted in our schools that will be on our hands. Let's teach them about community responsibility and the greater good and the value of staying on the safe side - at least sometimes. Let's help them feel safe and stay safe. Please. They are our KIDS. We have to get this right.

Shaina Schreuder	Mask requirement in schools	<p>I'm writing in support of a mask mandate for all WCPSS students and staff while indoors on school grounds, regardless of vaccination status. As I heard during the last Board of Education meeting, it is the plan of the Wake County Public School System to follow the guidance of the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit.</p> <p>Per the Toolkit, all schools should: require all children and staff in schools K-12th grade to wear face coverings consistently when indoors. Schools K-12th grade should make mask use universally required (i.e., required regardless of vaccination status) given that most of the student population in those grades are not yet eligible for vaccination.</p> <p>Masks are the one of the only things remaining to protect our children against the spread of covid in school. There's little social distancing, they are no longer staying in the classroom to eat lunch, and many more children returned to in-person schooling this year. The entire elementary school age group is still not eligible for vaccination. And, although some of the middle school and all of the high school age groups are eligible, we aren't even close to getting half of that population vaccinated. It would be unwise and, quite frankly, dangerous to public health, to remove a mask requirement at this point.</p> <p>I think most families agree that it is important to get our children back to school. But we need to do so safely. While the spread of the delta variant is raging through our area, it's even more important that we protect our children who are ineligible to receive a vaccine.</p>
Sharese Cobb	Covid Safety in Schools	Based on the current uptick in cases, will the board let parents sign up for virtual learning? If not, how will the kids be kept safe?
Sharon Morris	Mask support	I'm the mother of 3 elementary students too young to receive a vaccine. I fully support masks in schools until vaccine is available and rates of spread drop. These children need access to in person education and I am counting on WCPSS to keep them safe. Without the use of masks the amount of quarantine that will be necessary with cases will disrupt so much of their education.

Shaunis Mercer	Require Masks in School	<p>I'm the mom of two elementary school children at Lincoln Heights Elementary School writing in support of continuing the mask requirement for all WCPSS students and staff while indoors on school grounds, regardless of vaccination status. During the last Board of Education meeting, it was my understanding that the plan of the Wake County Public School System is to follow the guidance of the NCDHHS StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit.</p> <p>Per the Toolkit, all schools should:</p> <p>Require all children and staff in schools K-12th grade to wear face coverings consistently when indoors. Schools K-12th grade should make mask use universally required (i.e., required regardless of vaccination status) given that most of the student population in those grades are not yet eligible for vaccination.</p> <p>With the highly transmissible Delta variant and other potential variants on the horizon, it would be prudent for the safety of our children to require masks. Masks are the only current option to protect our children against the spread of Covid-19 in school. The entire elementary school age group is still not eligible for vaccination.</p> <p>While some of the middle school and all of the high school age groups are eligible, we aren't even close to getting half of that population vaccinated. If the goal is to keep children in school and not having to quarantine frequently or shut down the schools, it is important to continue the requirement to wear masks to reduce the spread of the disease.</p> <p>Please continue to follow the science as our knowledge evolves and keep our children as safe.</p> <p>.</p>
Sheri Reed	Mask Mandate	<p>Please follow the CDC guidelines to keep masks in place for our children. This is following the science and not an emotional response. Kids cannot be vaccinated and until they can, masks can make attending school less risky for the spread of COVID.</p>

Soumya Sathyanarayana	Virtual option and keep mask in schools	<p>I'm a mom of 3rd grader, Satvik Rao, in Alston Ridge elementary school, Wake County. I'm writing to you wrt rising delta cases in the wake county.</p> <p>When we opted for in person learning in May, cases were the lowest and delta variant did not exist in the USA. Though it was a tough choice for us to commit for one year , we opted for in- person when vaccination was increasing and COVID cases were the lowest.</p> <p>Delta variant is known be brutal on unvaccinated and there won't be approval for vaccination for 8 year olds until mid winter. Considering the higher number of COVID cases reported recently in wake county schools(Turner Creek) , I sincerely request you provide us the flexibility to switch to virtual option ASAP at least for the first quarter. I also request the school system to evaluate flexibility for in-person/virtual option based on circumstances.</p> <p>I also sincerely request to keep the mask for all children at school in case virtual option is not provided. We know based on the science that mask prevents the spread of COVID. CDC also recommends mask indoors even for vaccinated. It is highly unsafe for unvaccinated children to take the masks off.</p> <p>Thanks, Soumya.</p>
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Srijana Guilford	Virtual Academy Registration for 21-22 year/COVID	<p>We are asking you to open enrollment into Virtual Academy for all grade levels. The short 10 days (April 22 – May 2, 2021 Per: https://www.wcpss.net/Page/48334) to make a decision regarding enrolling in Virtual Academy for the entire 2021-2022 school year was given with the promise from WCPSS that “The district will also re-evaluate registration in Virtual Academy if the COVID-19 pandemic surges again.”(Per: https://www.wcpss.net/Page/48334)</p> <p>THAT TIME IS NOW. As of July 30, 2021 “Wake County has moved back into the Orange Tier in the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services COVID-19 County Alert System, which means substantial community spread.” (Per: https://www.wakegov.com/news/wake-county-reinstates-mask-requirement-county-buildings) And, “Wake County has seen a 279% increase in COVID-19 cases since the beginning of June – meaning the number of people infected has more than quadrupled.”</p> <p>It is the RIGHT TIME to reopen Virtual Academy enrollment. Please do this now to give us the CHOICE, and the TIME TO PLAN FOR OUR FAMILIES AND THE TEACHERS AND OUR CHILDREN TO READY THEMSELVES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR. Help keep our children safe. We Are relying on you. THANK YOU.</p> <p>As of July 30, 2021 per: https://www.wakegov.com/news/wake-county-reinstates-mask-requirement-county-buildings : “Wake County hospitalizations due to COVID-19 have gone up more than 73%, and across North Carolina they have DOUBLED in the last two weeks.”</p>
Srinirisha Lankipalli	Athens library closure for public	<p>Hello! We recently came to know about the Athens library closure to the public over concerns of patrons being there at the same time as kids. We understand and respect that concern. However, we have relied on Athens library for YEARS as a community, as a source of knowledge and an amenity to help with our mental health in particular over the past year and half. We would be grateful for a compromise where we could carry on with Books on the Go service as it has been in place now. It worked very well and the community has immensely profited from it. To take away an important amenity from a community with already very little public amenities is a very cruel and unfair thing to do. It is as if someone on the board thinks we do not deserve a library for this community and demographic, which is very biased. So we request and urge you to reconsider the closure for the public since I write this on behalf of almost 600 people in the neighborhood that have voted that we NEED the library for</p>

		<p>public peruse in a way that does not affect the children. We are sure there are intelligent people on the board to draw up a plan to work this out. Please do not disappoint our trust in you. Please do not fail us yet again! Thank you!</p>
Stacy Lundblad	<p>Keep masks on, keep kids safe!!</p>	<p>Kids under 12 have months before a vaccine might be available. The Delta variant is even more contagious than the original. Keep masks on our kids to keep them as safe as possible. Ensure they are distanced while eating lunch. They should not be sitting next to each other while unmasked and eating, especially the youngest True, covid deaths are a small percent. Any preventable death is worth the effort. Long covid is the bigger issue, some may get over it easily, others will have unknown lasting effects.</p> <p>Do the right thing and keep the masks on all kids and staff until they are all eligible and are fully vaccinated.</p> <p>If parents don't want masks on their kids, they can choose to do homeschool or virtual. Those of us who have done the right thing for the greater good, should not have to make the decision alone to keep our kids safe from people who decide not to educate themselves on actual science.</p> <p>The APA and the CDC recommend masks to be worn.</p>
Stephanie Hall	<p>Please Require Masks in WCPSS</p>	<p>I am a parent and healthcare worker. My son is a rising 2nd grader and my daughter is a rising kindergartener. Please require masks in all WCPSS schools until all age groups get the chance to become fully vaccinated. My children do not yet have that chance. We lost a dear family member to COVID last year and know the seriousness of this virus. Please listen to the recommendations of the CDC and AAP to mask up in schools, especially as new variants circulate with unknown consequences. Listen to the experts.</p> <p>I also support being informed if our child's teachers are vaccinated or not. We need to be given information to allow us as parents to best protect our children. People should not have a right to unknowingly infect others, especially if they are children.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Stephanie Kaplan	Lets Keep Schools Open--MASK UP!	<p>As a parent of 3 school aged children under 12, I strongly believe the science behind wearing masks have proven its effectiveness in protecting those against the COVID-19 virus. I was a parent that selected virtual learning last year due to the COVID pandemic. In reviewing the data from last year's school session with masking, social distancing, and handwashing, it has proven to be effective with minimal outbreaks. I was encouraged by this data and felt comfortable enough to have my children attend in person education this year; however, after the Governor's announcement last week to end school mask mandates has left me unsure about this school year. I feel like it is equally important as a parent who is for masking to have their voice heard. Virtual learning does not replace in person learning and should not be considered the only alternative to return to school safely. Allowing masks to be optional will only put more people at risk and it puts a strain on the faculty at schools. As, you know, we need to keep our teachers safe and healthy to keep schools open in order to prevent any additional shortages. I hope this decision is made on scientific data, like requiring children to be immunized in order to attend school. Everyone working together can keep all parties safe and healthy, which will help us meet our goal of reducing transmission and keeping schools open!</p>
Susan Zepeda	Student Heath and safety	<p>Thank you for putting the health and safety of your staff and students first by continuing to require masks in schools per CDC guidelines. As COVID cases continue to rise in our community and schools, it only makes sense to do what we can to try and protect our children, while giving them the opportunity to learn with their peers in person. Thank you!</p>
Sy Sourisak	Masking requirement	<p>I am a father of a rising 4th grader and rising 2nd grader at Underwood Elementary. I am a strong supporter of keeping the mask requirement in our schools. Per the ABC Collaborative, a group of Duke Scientists studying Covid transmission, "Going forward, masks will remain essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools, particularly as younger children remain ineligible for vaccines and the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus spreads throughout the U.S." Also, the CDC and APA are recommending continued masking requirements for children in schools. We know masks work and we know it is important that everyone wears the mask to prevent transmission, especially the carrier. It is not effective for just those children who choose to wear a mask to wear one. My children do not have access to a vaccine yet and it is their right to attend school in-person in an environment that is safe for them. Sharing an indoor environment with unvaccinated children without</p>

		<p>masks is not a safe learning environment for my children. Please vote to maintain the universal mask requirement for the 2021-2022 school year to keep our children safe.</p>
Tania Longest	Keep mask wearing at WCPSS	<p>I respectfully ask the School Board to keep the current mask wearing rules in place for students, teachers, and staff at Wake County Public Schools. To ensure continued in-person learning, we need to prevent community spread among students, the majority of whom are unvaccinated at this time.</p> <p>If quarantine of students occurs because a particular student becomes ill, I want to know how the district and school (Vance Elementary) will continue a student's lessons while he or she is out of the class.</p> <p>I also want to know what outdoor or in-class plans schools have for eating in the cafeteria, and how those will be implemented. The status quo — to have many kids eating together in one setting without social distancing or good ventilation — is not acceptable and may lead to infections, which we want to prevent.</p>
Tanya L Wolfram	Keep Masks and Social Distancing	<p>As the parent of a fourth grader and first grader at Adams Elementary school, I would like to advocate that the Wake County School Board keep the mask mandate for public schools. My children are too young to be vaccinated and masks are effective at preventing the spread of COVID, as shown by successful re-opening of schools last year. With the rise of the highly contagious Delta variant, children who are too young to be vaccinated are at high risk. Similarly, schools need to re-introduce social distancing such as eating lunch in classrooms or outside rather than the cafeteria. Help keep my children and all public school students in the classroom and safe by requiring masks.</p> <p>Please do the responsible thing and listen to the scientists (CDC) and doctors (American Pediatric Association) rather than those uniformed (but loud) voices, and vote to keep the mask mandate for WCPSS.</p>
Taylor Smith	Yes to masks in WCPSS	<p>I'm a huge supporter of masks in WCPSS schools. I know you've been getting a lot of flack from a vocal minority of people that do not think masks are necessary but I assure you there are more people that are supports of masks in WCPSS schools to keep our kids safe. Thanks for what you do and we appreciate you.</p>

Tricia Tabelon	Require Masks Until All Can Be Vaccinated	<p>Until all school-age children can be vaccinated against Covid-19 and most people in Wake County are vaccinated, the only way to protect our children and everyone in our community is to require all those entering school property to wear a mask. I am very grateful that my children were able to attend school virtually last school year in spite of the pandemic and that they now have the opportunity to attend in person. However, with the increasing cases of Covid-19 brought on by the Delta variant, I fear that if masks are no longer required that Covid-19 will continue to spread, further mutations will occur, lives will be endangered - or worse, lost - and a return to remote learning for everyone will be inevitable. I, like many other parents I'm sure, crave a return to normalcy for our families. I believe that taking sensible precautions now, like requiring masks in schools regardless of Covid-19 vaccination status, will get us there sooner. I urge the Board to consider sticking with a mask requirement for our students, teachers, and staff for as long as Covid-19 continues to spread in Wake County. Thank you.</p>
Valerie Rye	Yes to masks and distancing during lunch	<p>I have a high risk child who is a cancer survivor - she needs masks to stay in school. I am also concerned about the lunch situation - we need for kids to eat outside, distanced when able. When not possible, kids need to be distanced in cafeteria and some in classroom. We need to keep all children as safe as possible.</p>
Venita Bowden	Athens Drive Library	<p>While I am thoroughly supportive of comprehensive mask usage in the WCPSS system, I am very concerned at the planned closing of our last remaining aspects of our local public library.</p> <p>I understand the need to limit exposure to our students; but the library could easily be opened to the public in the evening and weekends without the students being there. Unless there are plans to split out the public library into a stand-alone building near the current high school (which seems costly), there is a huge need in the community to have access to the public library. We are now being told that the Books on the Go program will be terminated; this program literally does not even allow us to enter the building but provides a minimal level of access to the library books.</p> <p>I encourage the WCPSS board to find a middle ground, working with the county commissioners, to allow the public library to remain open to the public.</p>
Vicky Earp	School masking	<p>The science is clear that masking reduces the spread of coronavirus. While my child is vaccinated, most in school are not. The Delta variant is incredibly transmissible and dangerous. Please continue the mask mandate for all kids indoors until community spread is very low and all kids can be vaccinated. When the vaccine receives full clearance, please make it compulsory.</p>

W.Brautman	Only 20% of teens are vaccinated.	Since 80% of teens are not vaccinated, masks are a must to help reduce the spread of the super contagious (50% more contagious) delta variant. Too difficult to determine who is vaccinated and who is not without vaccination card checks. (Many would be okay with this as well) We are concerned with older kids bringing home the virus to the household and spreading it to younger children, and family members that may be immunocompromised or had an organ transplant,etc. *Will you be helping with vaccination incentives such as clinic at high schools, gift cards, etc? Maybe incentives for students that are vaccinated already as well. Maybe unvaccinated students must show a negative test each week? This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated spreading the virus. Vaccinated people have a 99.999% probability of not getting seriously sick.
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<p>Will Langdon</p>	<p>Forcing our children to wear masks is hurting them</p>	<p>Almost everything in life is a Cost-Benefit Analysis. In my opinion, there is ZERO benefit to forcing our children to wear masks at school and MANY costs. First of all, there is still much debate in the medical and scientific community whether cloth masks do anything to slow the spread of Covid. Even if they are effective children (vaccinated and unvaccinated) don't need to wear them because they are already virtually immune to the virus. The survival rate for children (vaccinated and unvaccinated) is 99.99999% and they are four times more likely to be hospitalized with the seasonal flu. They are much more likely to die of the seasonal flu, RSV, car accident, lightning strike, drowning and murder. Children are also poor transmitters of the virus so they are much less likely to spread it than adults.</p> <p>Forcing our children to wear masks all day at school has MANY COSTS. It has negative educational, health, social, mental and psychological effects. A recent randomized clinical trial from JAMA Pediatrics showed that after just three minutes of wearing a mask the carbon dioxide levels in children reached dangerous levels. I believe this is why my 10 year old daughter complained almost every day after school last year of having a headache and being tired. Forcing a child to wear a mask all day at school obviously impedes their learning and communication and makes for a terrible educational experience. There are many reasons why we have never forced our children to wear masks at school and these are just a few. Our children desperately need a normal school year without masks!</p> <p>Many school districts across the country and the world have been operating safely for months without mask mandates and there is no evidence to support the premise that schools with mask mandates do better regarding Covid than schools without mask mandates. Several governors that were once ardent proponents of lockdowns and school mask mandates have completely changed their mind. For example, Democrat Gov. Phil Murphy of NJ is recommending that schools not require masks in the fall. He has finally realized that the costs of a school mask mandate far outweighs the benefits. Please do the right thing and make masks optional in Wake County. Parents know what is best for our children. Please allow us to be parents and make decisions that are in the best interests of our children!</p>
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Yevonne Brannon	Masks in school	<p>I support requiring masks for all students, teachers and staff, and anyone who is working inside the school buildings. Until we have all children vaccinated, we must protect our children and our educators from COVID, especially the dangerous variants that are spreading quickly in our communities. I urge you to follow the medical advice and keep our children as safe as possible. I fully endorse allowing children to return to school but only if we take all known precautions to protect their health. There is only one responsible decision to make, masks for everyone, handwashing, cleaning shared space regularly and practical social distancing. I believe in compromise and wearing masks is a good compromise to allow our students back into their schools. I support a return to in-person schooling- our children are ready to be with their classmates! So, if we want our children back in school, then let's work together to keep them in school. Let's use the tools we have on hand - masks and handwashing - to limit COVID. Thank you for allowing input from the public as you consider this policy decision.</p>
Yos Priestley	Mask policy in WCPSS	<p>Given the sharp rise in Covid cases - due to the Delta variant and low community vaccination rate - I urge you to please keep the current mask policy in place. Both the American Academy of Pediatrics and CDC recommend all individuals (vaccinated and unvaccinated) wear masks while inside school buildings, and I hope the Wake County school board continues to support this policy. Masks are a simple way to keep kids - and their families - as safe as possible. Thank you for your consideration.</p>