

Video Public Comments:

[Kira Kroboth](#) - HVAC filters, pooled testing result delays, and thank you

Written Public Comments:

Kara L Gensor	Masks	<p>I am a high school teacher in WCPSS and a parent of a high schooler. I taught at the middle school over summer school. Honestly, I do not like wearing a mask all day. However, evidence clearly supports the reduction of spread of illness when there is mandatory mask wearing within schools. I prefer to teach my students in person and not remotely, so I will do whatever is needed to keep us in person. I hear a common theme among many of the people who object to children wearing masks in schools: the masks are causing psychological damage to the children. However, very few of them are actually in the schools on a daily basis nor are they interacting with hundreds of students. I can tell you from my time at middle school and my time in high school that I don't see kids suffering because they have to wear masks. I see teenagers who still manage to make googly eyes at their girlfriend or boyfriend. There are kids who LOVE the masks. With the mask on, a hood over their head, and their hood zipped up tight, all that peeks out is a pair of eyes. They love the anonymity. There are a few who need to be reminded to pull it up, but those are the same ones who need to be reminded to go to class on time, to get out of their cell phones and pay attention, etc.</p> <p>The people who complain about the psychological *damage* of masks on children are not complaining about the lack of nurses, guidance counselors, and psychologists at schools. They aren't complaining how class sizes of 35 prevent teachers from having relationships with students. And they aren't prohibiting or limiting the cell phone usage of their kids. All those things do impact the mental health of students.</p> <p>It's easier and cheaper to point the finger at masks. They forget the saying that when you point one finger at me, three are pointing back at you. The masks are not the cause of mental health issues in students. Please keep the masks mandatory for the time being.</p>
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Stephanie Avett	Including Sustainability in the next Strategic Plan	<p>Good evening. My name is Stephanie Avett. I am a parent at Hilburn Academy, as well as a NC certified Environmental Educator and Master Gardener volunteer in Wake County.</p> <p>I am a member of the Wake Green Schools Partnership committee. Our committee consists of teachers, administrators, Environmental Educators of NC members, local and statewide organizations such as Wake County Soil & Water, Every Tray Counts, NC Department of Environmental Quality, Water Resources Research Institute, and more. At our Wake Green Schools kickoff event in 2020, we had the pleasure of having Mr. Heagarty and Ms. Kushner attend, along with over 120 WCPSS teachers and administrators to learn about green and sustainable measures across the county.</p> <p>Currently, there are green initiatives happening in some schools in WCPSS. From traditional school gardens at Hilburn Academy to rooftop gardens at SouthEast Raleigh Elementary; stormwater runoff reduction measures like cisterns at Kingswood Magnet Elementary and a rain garden at Ballentine Elementary; beehives and bird boxes, wildlife trails, outdoor classrooms, and more. Working with Every Tray Counts, WCPSS made the commitment to compostable trays, and several schools have composted them along with food waste. Across the district, we work with Wake County Solid Waste for Feed the Bin recycling collections. Athens Drive Magnet High School has our first solar array, and more are coming soon! New and remodeled schools have water bottle fillers and interior lights on motion sensors to save energy. Four schools have been recognized as US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools and one as an NC Green School of Excellence. Ms. Cash attended Abbott's Creek's recognition as a Wake County Soil & Water Conservation district Watershed Stewardship School, one of five schools with this distinction. I am extremely proud of all of the green and sustainable initiatives and education happening in WCPS, but...</p> <p>I would like to encourage WCPSS to keep moving forward in our green and sustainable measures across the county, in all schools, across all 12 municipalities. We are asking to have these green and sustainable measures included in the next strategic plan, and we want to collaborate with you to make that happen. We want to see implementation of these impactful projects at all our schools. We believe it is essential that WCPSS hire a Sustainability Coordinator—someone to facilitate collaboration and coordination among Maintenance and Operations, Child Nutrition Services, Facilities, Construction and Planning, schools, and grants. There are funds to support these initiatives through Wake County Solid Waste Reduction Grants, NC DEQ grants, regional EPA</p>
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Kimberly Stephenson	Keep masks, please add more levels of protection	<p>I'm writing to voice support to keep masks in our schools, and to add more layers of safety - classroom air purifiers, lunch time distancing and outdoor eating, more robust testing program that more quickly identifies positive students and staff, providing n95 masks. Thank you.</p>
Becky Showalter	Freedom to Teach "Divisive" Topics	<p>With growing alarm, I have read about the movements around the country to ban books, limit teaching freedoms, and set as bedrock the goal of "not causing student discomfort" in education. I am aghast.</p> <p>I am writing today to say the following:</p> <p>(1) Good education often SHOULD cause discomfort; it should cause healthy reflection on our worldviews and the effects those have in larger society. The experiences of young people are by definition limited – expanding horizons and creating lifetime learners is the purpose of education. Discomfort is sometimes part of that.</p> <p>(2) Public education should serve society, not individual parents who only want their children to know certain things. Yes, parents should have ways to question and interact with policy makers (as they do in these type of meetings), but in the end, educators and experts in the field should lead based on best practices and an understanding of how good education works.</p> <p>(3) Finally, let me state unequivocally that my husband and I (and most Wake County families that I know) stand firmly against book banning. If educators feel something is not age appropriate, fine, but loud, threatening parents and outside groups should not be limiting educational opportunities for everyone.</p> <p>I thank you for what you have done to push back against these ideas already, and I encourage you to continue. Please know that so many in this community feel similarly!</p>

Christine Kraft	West Lake schools to single track calendar/masks/testing	<p>Thank you to staff for researching the proposal of moving the West Lake area schools to a single track calendar and reaching the conclusion that our administrators and teachers have already realized! We are excited for the opportunity to have all our children and teachers on one schedule such that they can grow academically, socially, and emotionally with less stress on our teachers and more equitable resources for all. I hope your vote will follow staff recommendations!</p> <p>More thanks to you for implementing Covid testing in our schools. At my children's schools--WYWLA and West Lake Elementary--this is beginning and I can already see improvement from week to week with ease and speed.</p> <p>Finally, thank you for continuing to require masks in our schools. Coming off an entire year of virtual for my kids--which was a good experience, but not one we want to repeat--our goal as a family is to keep our kids in school. We are doing to the right things at home to minimize exposure, and I hope that the school board will continue to do the right thing at school do minimize exposure and keep our kids in-person as much as possible!</p>
Will Langdon	The Case Against Masks at School	<p>This piece in The Atlantic written by three public-health experts eviscerates the case for school mask mandates.</p> <p>About the authors: Margery Smelkinson is an infectious-disease scientist whose research has focused on influenza and SARS-CoV-2. Leslie Bienen is a veterinarian and faculty member at the Oregon Health & Science University--Portland State University School of Public Health. Jeanne Noble is an emergency-medicine doctor at UCSF.</p> <p>"We reviewed a variety of studies—some conducted by the CDC itself, some cited by the CDC as evidence of masking effectiveness in a school setting, and others touted by media to the same end—to try to find evidence that would justify the CDC's no-end-in-sight mask guidance for the very-low-risk pediatric population, particularly post-vaccination. We came up empty-handed."</p> <p>"Imposing on millions of children an intervention that provides little discernible benefit, on the grounds that we have not yet gathered solid evidence of its negative effects, violates the most basic tenet of medicine: First, do no harm. The foundation of medical and public-health interventions should be that they work, not that we have insufficient evidence to say whether they are harmful. Continued mandatory masking of children in schools, especially now that most schoolchildren are eligible for vaccination, fails this test."</p>

		<p>https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/01/kids-masks-schools-weak-science/621133/</p>
<p>Will Langdon</p>	<p>Schools Can Safely Make Masks Optional Under New CDC Guidelines</p>	<p>Shira Doron, an infectious disease physician, is hospital epidemiologist at Tufts Medical Center and an associate professor at Tufts University School of Medicine. Westyn Branch-Elliman, also an infectious diseases physician, is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. Elissa Perkins is an associate professor of emergency medicine and director of emergency medicine infectious disease management at Boston Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine.</p> <p>“Respirators and other high-quality masks are highly effective at protecting their wearers, regardless of what people around them are doing. That makes the old mantra “my mask protects you and your mask protects me” obsolete. As a result, schools can finally safely make masks optional for students and staff.”</p> <p>“We urge public health and school officials to educate communities on one-way masking, emphasizing personal choice regarding self-protection and supporting those who choose to remain masked. Time and energy that staff spend policing mask use is far better spent on teaching and supporting children. It’s time we stopped worrying about what others are doing and started focusing on protecting ourselves. We have many more tools in 2022 than we did in 2020, and our policies should shift to reflect these advances.”</p> <p>“Our children have sacrificed a lot to protect us. Now it’s time for us to give them their childhood back.”</p> <p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/25/schools-safely-make-masks-optional-new-cdc-guidelines/</p>

Reinaldo Olavarria	Employment Diversity	<p>WCPSS BD Public Comment on Employment</p> <p>I am a US citizen. I am a resident of Wake County since April 2001. I am a resident of Wendell, North Carolina since 2004. I am disabled. I am Hispanic. The board should not conduct business until it corrects its customary practice of non-inclusion. This is being translated on the wakecountyfails.com website. The specific page on that site is public comment 2022.</p> <p>HHS [Historically Hispanic Schools] and HHC [Colleges] do not exist here in the states. They may exist more so in Puerto Rico or up north. It was Black Children that tried to integrate into White Schools in the south.</p> <p>The aim here is to show, the customary practice continues in Wake County Schools. The added element is sex. I applied to be a principal at several WCPSS school, as a male, as a Hispanic, and as a disabled person.</p> <p>I wanted to be like Judy Heumann, David Pincus, and Elizabeth Alarnick Arazno. What did they all have in common? Teachers in the education system. For example, Elizabeth Alarnick has been teaching in NYC schools, as a paraplegic for over 15 years now. I wanted the same opportunity, the opportunity to work.</p> <p>My son came home several times from elementary school, in WCPSS, and commented he did not want me to go to events because his friends did not understand me or made fun for me. Why? Because the non-disabled children do not have exposure to disabled role models. Your system suffers another inequity in that non-disabled licensed teaching staff implement policies for the disabled that further inequities thereby because “they do not have the expertise or experience” in providing services equitably to the disabled.</p> <p>I just met the new principal for Carver Elementary School. She is black in a school that is reported to have a 40% ratio of Hispanic Students. When Katherine Faison needed a new AP at her side, I applied, I was denied. I was denied for a White Female whom had no experience as an AP. The opportunity and hopes to undo the injustice was executed by Katherine Faison, of course under the auspices of WCPSS’s governing board and that of Wake County.</p> <p>From my observation, people motivated with prejudice and racism and anti-disabled sentiments,</p>
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		<p>govern with their prejudices intact in WCPSS and Wake County Government.</p> <p>What I am asking for and commenting on is the need for Open and Competitive Hiring. And, what I am asking for is to Implement the Core values and actually in an unbiased manner develop an affirmative action program top change the dynamics of the population of WCPSS educators to include Veterans and the Disabled. It is widely known that no agency is keeping track of the population in the employment end with regards to how many disabled persons are in the teaching profession in NC, last I heard it was less that 1%. Cathy Trudell told me she has never seen a disabled person hired. Hire US.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Reinaldo Olavarria</p>
Adina Safta	Thank you to WC Board Members	<p>Thank you for attending the meeting tonight.</p> <p>Thank you for enforcing mask mandates in these meetings.</p> <p>Thank you for adding information to your current guidelines.</p> <p>Thank you, board members, for all you do.</p> <p>Thank you for the decision on D4 Board Member.</p> <p>Thank you for keeping a close eye on COVID 19 cases.</p> <p>Thank you for enforcing mask mandates in schools.</p> <p>Thank you for considering Virtual Learning.</p> <p>Thank you for focusing on the mental health of students.</p> <p>Thank you for listening to the parents at the meetings.</p> <p>Thank you for accessing funds during these times.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Ami Zach	Mask Mandate	Is the district reconsidering/discussing the mask mandate to make it optional for students?

Laurie MacDonald	Metrics for optional masks, Board Meetings, BAC meetings, bus driver shortage	<p>1. What are the metrics the Board will be using to make masks optional in the schools?</p> <p>2. Is there a way the Board can follow-up on questions that parent/community members ask during the Board meetings and then post the follow-up for all to access?</p> <p>3. Can individual schools educate parents/community members on the function and purpose of BAC meetings and then inform them of when these meetings will be held? After listening to board meetings these past two years, I believe there needs to be alternative modes of effective communication between elected board members and their families/community members in a smaller setting where constructive conversations can take place.</p> <p>4. Is the bus driver shortage a temporary issue or do we anticipate it to last indefinitely and therefore what is the short/long term plan to address this?</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Jennifer Carlton	Parent against forced masking	It's time to define health as more than the absence of #COVID-19. We need leaders to stand up for our children. Masks must be made optional for faculty and students.

<p>Kristel N Behrend</p>	<p>LGBTQ+ rights</p>	<p>“Nine out of 10 LGBTQ students regularly confront teasing, bullying and sometimes violence...” even in Wake County Schools.</p> <p>“LGBTQ students are 140x more likely than heterosexual students to miss school due to safety concerns”... even in Wake County Schools.</p> <p>“One out of 3 LGBTQ youth attempt suicide or have suicidal thoughts. Youth in schools with pro-LGBTQ policies report fewer thoughts of suicide.” Ask yourself if Wake County truly has pro-LGBTQ policies.</p> <p>On paper, policy 1710 states:</p> <p>“The Wake County Board of Education acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. The Board prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, transgender or gender identity, disability, or age and will provide equal access to designated youth groups as required by law. Any form of unlawful discrimination, harassment, or bullying in any educational or employment activities or programs is against Board policy.” Let me restate that first line, “We acknowledge the dignity and worth of all students and employees.” Dignity and worth. Those are just words if we don’t have actions to show our LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families that they have dignity and to help them feel worthy... actions like requiring staff to respect a student’s right to use other pronouns, setting clear bathroom and locker room policies that protect our LGBTQ+ youth, responding when our Lt. Governor calls them filth, keeping our libraries full of stories that let LGBTQ+ students know they are not alone, standing up to speakers who use hate speech in reference to transgender people, allowing LGBTQ+ staff to be as open as their heterosexual peers without repercussion, protecting our students’ privacy, and putting this in black and white for every principal in every Wake County Public School so they are not forced to make site-based decisions on how to interpret board policy 1710. I am proud to work at Knightdale High School where our LGBTQ+ students have quickly learned that we are a welcoming and open school. The rainbows are visible, representation in our books is plentiful, the library is a safe space for all students, we have a strong Gender Sexuality Alliance, and we welcome our students to use a private bathroom that they don’t have to ask permission to use. Without proper documentation, clearly stating how we should manage sensitive situations involving LGBTQ+ students, schools are reacting to individual situations rather than proactively seeking pro-LGBTQ+ procedures. If we want to uphold board policy, if we truly value ALL of our students, we have to speak out against the hatred proliferated by categorizing LGBTQ+ staff, students, and materials as filth and obscenity. If we don’t speak up, we are validating the loud voices seeking to oppress while alienating our most vulnerable population. (statistics from NCAC,</p>
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		https://ncac.org/resource/defend-lgbtq-stories-a-resource)
Shelley Peele	No more masks	<p>The time to lift mandatory mask requirements is long past due, especially as more evidence gathers at their ineffectiveness at preventing Covid. Children are the least likely to experience serious symptoms, yet have the burden placed on them to protect the most vulnerable while adults can and do function mask-free in almost every other place. Our children are suffering and bearing the terrible cost with mental, social, and academic loss. This is the greatest travesty of our time and is being conducted for a political power play. Please set aside your hubrus and listen to the parents. We bring you facts, stories, pleas, and yes anger ; yet we continue to be shut out from the most important thing to us – OUR children. This cannot continue.</p> <p>Remove the books with extreme sexual content from school libraries. Why does a school child need access to books describing how to engorge a clitoris with blood for orgasm or visual depictions of oral sex? This isn't anti-LGBTQ propaganda. This isn't about censorship of ideas. It is one of the most basic non-refutable arguments that simply can't be ignored. You are in effect peddling porn to our children.</p> <p>Why are you focused on SEL learning when core academic progress is falling so far behind? What our kids need are normalcy and the basics that have worked for generations – teachers that focus on core skills like reading, writing and math in a learning environment that fosters creativity as well as physical and social well-being. The latter comes from letting kids be kids, not guinea pigs in this totalitarian medical experiment. We may never recover from the harm you've caused, but we need to start somewhere. Bring back normalcy and common sense.</p>
Chanel Marshall	COVID funding	It is my understanding part of receiving COVID funds ie ESSSR, Cares act etc the county must survey parents and share an “exit strategy” or “end game” for Covid rules and restrictions. Can you please share what measures you will be using to determine when children may remove masks, and when social distancing, contact tracing, testing and quarantine will stop.

Stephanie Hall	COVID Concerns	<p>Hello, I am a healthcare worker as well as the mother of a WCPSS kindergartner and 2nd grader. I'm asking to please work to keep my children and my family safe when it comes to COVID. I have an autoimmune condition and my brother-in-law is immunocompromised. 1) Please keep the masking rule in place. It is the easiest and most simple mitigation measure. My 7-year-old loves his mask and both of my kids forget to take it off when I pick them up. They are old enough to understand the rules and how it helps themselves and others. They have zero issues with wearing masks. This is especially important since it seems everyone has not cared to notice that cases are at an all-time high. 2) Please make surveillance testing mandatory. It is fairly useless if hardly anyone is signed up and it is voluntary. The communication on it was also not clear and many parents didn't sign up just because they didn't understand what it was. We need this information to keep the spread down and keep schools open. We should have required a negative test to come back to school from the break. But of course access to tests can be difficult for some families. Which makes it even more important to test in school. 3) Please require vaccination for all those eligible and mandatory testing for those that claim exemption. Voluntary programs rely on people doing the right thing and if there's one thing I've learned during this pandemic it's that people don't care to do that and instead focus on what they want for themselves. It needs to be mandatory and enforced. 4) Please ensure every classroom has a proper air filtration system that can mitigate Covid and doesn't just meet the very low standards we have currently. 5) Please work to increase the possibilities for more outdoor options for lunch specifically, but also for classes and other activities. Being outside is a great investment in our health post-Covid as well.</p> <p>Please help keep our children and communities safer. We don't want to give this virus more chances to mutate and go through another variant wave. It didn't have to happen with Delta and Omicron so let's do all that we can to ensure it won't happen again. Please do not throw up your hands and give up like everyone else seems to be doing. We can do something about this.</p>
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<p>Becky Lew-Hobbs</p>	<p>Masks</p>	<p>We're in the 3rd school year affected by COVID. Students are back in school, but it's far from normal. Kids must wear masks per school board mandate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Imagine getting on the school bus at 8am and being in a mask (except for lunch) until you get home around 4:45. That's about 9 hours of which only 30-40 minutes is mask free. o Do YOU, the board, wear masks for this long, with few to no breaks? People shop mask free, go to sports events mask free, go to church mask free. o Wearing masks inhibit good communication. Learning to understand facial cues is a major part of communication. But kids have not been able to learn this with their teacher's faces hidden. And younger kids have a hard time learning to sound out words. o Wearing a mask muffles sound. How can kids be expected to learn, when they can only hear part of what a teacher says? o And for kids who have a signed medical exemption from their doctor WHY does the school board allow principals to deny it? o And then there is "mask mouth". IE "wearing a mask for an extended period can create unwanted side effects" including dry mouth, bad breath, tooth decay, gum disease, disrupt breathing and lead to dehydration. <p>We the parents, will be involved in our children's education. Get back to the basics of reading, history, math, and science. Turn your focus back to education, not healthcare. Kids are behind in their education because, THE SCHOOL BOARD has continued to endorse policies that harm them and impede their education.</p> <p>Stop smothering our kids and let them breath fresh air.</p>
<p>Heather Koons</p>	<p>Masking and Censorship</p>	<p>Dear School Board Members,</p> <p>I am submitting this written comment to show my support for your decision-making process in regards to the mask mandate and censorship. I know that masks have been an important part of the effort to curb Covid-19 spread and are a small sacrifice of us to ask of our community. As conditions change, I know you will revisit the policy and only make changes based on good science-based evidence and recommendations.</p> <p>Also, I appreciate that the schools system took parental concerns about books seriously and examined those in question carefully. I fully support the decision to keep books in the libraries that will provide some benefit to students who seek them out. I also support providing options for parent to opt out of having their child read a required book that they object to. I actually believe WCPSS has these sorts of policies already in place. In other words, thank you for all you do and keep on</p>

		doing the fabulous, thoughtful job that you have been doing for years.
Samantha Struthers	Criminal Background Checks	<p>Dear WCPSS BOE</p> <p>The school district is not performing criminal background checks on outside vendors. If so you would find mugshots and pending charges on individuals. However the local schools are hiring individuals to be motivational speakers despite individual on house arrest.</p> <p>Parents need to know and provide informed consent before a criminal is within 6 feet of their child.</p>
Valerie Rye	Keeping masks and testing in schools	<p>I appreciate the job you have to keep our kids safe. I think a huge part of that is keeping masks in place and expanding testing. Testing should be opt out - not the current opt in system. We are testing too small a sample at both of my kids schools to see the impact of reducing spread - Which our family has personally experienced.</p> <p>Please continue to keep masks as the community and school spread is so high right now.</p> <p>Please find ways to raise wages to being in more highly qualified teachers, staff and administrators. We love our schools here in WCPSS, but are concerned with the amount of teachers and staff leaving. Raising wages could help with attracting more people to our district.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
Poppie McNierney	Covid Protocols	<p>The metrics being used to renew the mask mandate are outdated, and need to be changed. Instead of cases, severity of disease needs to be reviewed, and this has NEVER been an emergency for children. There is more than enough science and data to support MASK OPTIONAL choices for WCPSS. Kids are not, nor have never been, super spreaders for covid. Adults have been living normal lives for months, and it's beyond time to give the normal back to our children. They should NOT be shouldering the responsibility of this any longer. Adults can go to the gym and participate in activities breathing freely, yet our children are forced to mask while exerting energy playing basketball, dancing, acting, etc. The ONLY place children are required to wear masks is at school. It is optional everywhere else, including all of the activities they participate in. Leading doctors from around the world are calling for children to return to normal:</p> <p>https://www.urgencyofnormal.com/our-statement. Public Health officials are coming out in droves saying closing school was a mistake, cloth masks don't work, and testing is a problem.</p> <p>https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/covid-affects-your-memory. Even Dr Wen who has been a huge proponent of masking children, says it's time to take them off. WCPSS was behind</p>

		<p>in decision making and kept kids needlessly in virtual school longer than the "experts" said they should. WCPSS is again on the wrong side of history, needlessly forcing masking on children. Masks should be OPTIONAL. Those who want to continue masking, should have the right to do so, and there are plenty of one-way protection masks they can wear. The mask protects the wearer, it does not protect anyone else, and should therefore be a CHOICE.</p>
Bryan Persak	Take the masks off	<p>https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/01/kids-masks-schools-weak-science/621133/</p> <p>The board/ABC Science consistently point to “studies” that justify mask mandates. The North Carolina and Arizona studies were both flawed to the point any legitimate science teacher would give them an “F”. There are dozens and dozens of actual scientific studies that refute ABC Collaborative yet somehow the entire board has missed them all? European countries did not mask young children and the WHO opposed masking children younger than 11. Now European countries are completely removing restrictions including mask mandates. Are we planning to be the last county in NC with mask mandates? What studies does the board use to determine that masking works? The “well it could have been worse” point that is used has 0 scientific basis. Over 2,000 students tested positive in January so what is the board’s claim that without masks it would have been 4,000, 8,000? Certainly seems like masking is having 0 impact on spread, prove me wrong. What studies has Wake County done on the adverse effects of masking children?</p> <p>Last meeting one of the board members was saying cases matter at the same time the head of UNC’s Covid response was saying the exact opposite. Does that board member have more/different information than UNC? Also masking was compared to wearing a seatbelt. Does that board member make sure everyone driving on the road is wearing a seatbelt because the implication was he is not protected unless everyone is wearing a seatbelt?</p> <p>No one is asking for masks to be banned (although a strong case that they should) we want informed consent/parental choice. The parents that want their children to live in fear for the rest of their lives can continue to mask their children or go remote.</p> <p>The CDC has even admitted most masks that children wear do nothing and their own studies prior to the pandemic showed that masking does not stop respiratory disease.</p> <p>Still waiting to see the additional gym class or work out program recommended by the board /ABC Collaborative. If this was really about health wouldn’t the board want to hone in on the most significant co-morbidity? Or is this really just about 2 narratives, mask and shots?</p> <p>You had a difficult time figuring out where a hand selected board member actually lived (hint: it would have taken about 5 minutes to prove his residency) and we are supposed to trust you with medical decisions for our children?</p>

		<p>You may view us as the fringe minority but what you don't see is the 30 plus other parents I personally have talked to that agree masking children is wrong but are busy parenting so don't have the time to constantly show up at meetings/send comments.</p>
<p>Megan Williams</p>	<p>You are not health experts- focus on academics</p>	<p>I have three children (11, 9, and 6) in the Wake Co schools and my husband and I dedicated over 22 combined years of service to the WCPSS. To say we are supporters and proponents of the public school system is a drastic understatement. But this board has caused me to lose faith in this system. You have allowed politics to sway your decisions, you have openly used your power to promote your personal agendas, even if it is corrupt and frankly illegal- such as with the recent decision to attempt to elect Craston Artis for District 4. I implore you to get back to your job at hand, which is to provide rigorous instruction for our students. This mask mandate has to stop. All three of my children have allergies, which makes breathing difficult. Adding a cloth layer in front of their mouths for 8 hours a day has caused a significant increase in the need for open mouth breathing, leading to 13 cavities between my three children in under 12 months. Just a side note- none of my children had any cavities prior to spring of 2021. My eldest's allergies have been exacerbated by breathing recycled air through his mask for 18 months to the point where he has developed asthma and he now has to use an inhaler daily. There has been no conclusive data showing cloth face coverings are beneficial at all, and I would argue that the side effects of mask wearing far outweighs whatever transmission they may prevent. Looking at the data, which you claim to be monitoring, children COVID cases at best account for less than 25% of total reported positive COVID cases, although looking at the data, the baseline is 10-15%. Of those positive cases, children have a 98.5% chance of not even needing to step foot in a hospital and have a 99.98% chance of survival. WHAT ARE YOU PROTECTING THEM FROM??? Never before in our history of serving Wake County has there ever been so many resources for mental health distributed. You are promoting fear and seclusion in our children through mask mandates, unnecessary quarantines for healthy children, which are causing a drastic surge in a mental health crisis. Our test scores are deplorable- so much so that you had to lower the window of what was considered a "passing score", and our children still failed. Build this system back up. Provide support for our teachers, bus drivers, support staff, and administration. You have created a system for our school employees that is negative, causes burnout, and is significantly underappreciated. I encourage you to use your resources to pour into our staff so that they in turn can pour into our students and bring this school system back to what it once was- an educational power house.</p>

Heather Taibi	No Masks, No Mandates - back to normal	<p>Health is about more than the absence of COVID-19. During the last two years, our society and public health response has directly harmed our children. Schools shut down, sports and activities halted, and masks being worn in schools has caused learning loss, drops in measured IQ in the very young, childhood delays, and locally at WCPSS we saw significant decreases in test scores. Children are experiencing alarming levels of anxiety, depression, and eating disorders, and suspected suicide attempts and impacts to their health.</p> <p>Covid-19, especially the Omicron variant, poses very little threat of serious disease for students. Teachers are protected by vaccines, booster, and therapeutics. The coronavirus and variants are here to stay. It is time to appropriately balance risks to children's health. Reclaiming normal life for our kids is the best way to support and protect them.</p> <p>It is time for the WCPSS Superintendent, Staff, and the Board to step up and provide leadership and evidence-based policy. You do not have to blindly follow the NCDHHS toolkit or the CDC "guidance", but rather think independently, logically, and consider the latest data. Restore fully normal school for WCPSS children at the first opportunity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vote Mask Optional. Well-controlled real-world studies have not demonstrated any clear benefit of masking students. Children and teenagers are in our community without masks at sports, activities, socializing and having sleepovers – it is not logical to think that masking in schools has any impact on transmission. Continuing to mandate masks increases fear and falsely conveys that schools are unsafe. As a high school in Massachusetts found when moving to mask optional: "smiling is more contagious than covid-19" and a survey of students found that 70% said the policy improved their experience, including their ability to learn. 2. Do not treat vaccinated and unvaccinated children differently. Children are not a danger. Your quarantine policies targeting unvaccinated children are unfairly keeping healthy children out of school. The data clearly shows vaccinated people still spread Covid-19, especially with Omicron, so your unequitable policies do not make sense. 3. Encourage extracurricular activities and social events without fear. Allow our children to get back to normal school lunches, recess, PE, field trips, sports and activities travel and competitions, and clubs and social activities.
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		Our children have sacrificed a lot over the last two years to protect their community. Now it is time to give them their childhood back. https://www.urgencyofnormal.com/
Bonnie Navarro	masking in schools	Please make masks optional for all students in schools. The data has shown that children are not drivers of transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Data have also shown the alarming emotional and mental health effects to children from promoting fear through masking. It's time to stop the insanity and return our schools to a place that supports children's health, whether mental or physical.
Catherine Coley	Please keep masking in schools and improve air filtration methods	<p>Please continue to enforce mask requirements in schools. There seems to be a knee-jerk reaction among some to repeal mask mandates the very moment that COVID case numbers begin to go down, but with each new variant, the numbers have gone back up. It is not logical to remove one of the very protections that is helping to keep numbers from skyrocketing, and not when we are nowhere near where we need to be in terms of numbers of cases, daily percent positive rates, or in number of people hospitalized in this state. And, no, Wake County is not an island in the state.</p> <p>In England, for example, where mask requirements were dropped from schools, within one week a number of schools had to reinstate requirements due to surges in COVID cases.</p> <p>From The Guardian: URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/29/schools-in-england-reinstate-mask-wearing-rules-as-covid-and-absenteeism-soar</p> <p>'Schools that ended the requirement for pupils to wear face coverings this month, in line with government guidance, are reinstating it again because of surges in Covid cases. [...]</p> <p>'Official figures published by the Department for Education last week show that Covid-related pupil absence in England has jumped by 100,000 in two weeks.</p> <p>A total of 415,000 children – just over 5% of the state school intake – were absent on 20 January, up from 3.9% on 6 January. More than three-quarters of absent pupils had tested positive for Covid.</p> <p>At nearly a quarter of state schools, more than 15% of teachers and leaders were off work. In total, 9% of heads and teachers – 47,000 – were absent on 20 January, up from 44,000 two weeks previously. A similar proportion of teaching assistants and other staff were also out of school.</p>

		<p>Kevin Courtney, joint general secretary of the National Education Union, said: “It is very likely that we are going to see increased disruption in schools across the next weeks, with cases rising among both primary and secondary pupils. The government has acted prematurely in removing face masks and has acted tardily in providing ventilation solutions.”</p> <p>I would also like to encourage WCPSS to increase its sense of urgency in procuring air filtration systems for schools, and particularly, of course, for older schools. Such systems would provide myriad benefits, and not just for pandemic use.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and for your service to our school system.</p>
Jessica Streamo	Unconstitutional Mandates & Inappropriate Books in School Libraries	<p>Since last August I have attempted to engage the BOE in open communication with regard to the objection of parents to the unconstitutional mandates imposed against our children. In addition, it has since been revealed that there are grossly inappropriate books made available to students in most of the schools in the county ranging from elementary to high school levels. I have written numerous emails on both subjects to all of you, and the vast majority of you have ignored me completely. I have asked for surveys to be created to send to families so that the BOE would accurately consider the wishes of the parents on these subjects but was told it was unnecessary since the BOE was aware that there were objections. Even the N&O was willing to publish such a survey and the results indicated that families should be given a CHOICE as to whether their children would submit to mandates. The official spokesperson from WCPSS went on record to say that the individual schools were responsible for removing obscene reading material from the libraries. Even the public libraries removed certain titles from the children’s section, but we have seen no change in what is in the schools. We know you have been served with lawsuits, FOIA requests for your bonding insurance, as well as your oaths of office. We have it all in writing. So at what point in time will you understand that our children are the most precious and protected people in our world, and that we will stop at nothing to ensure that this abuse ends. Are you willing to be held financially liable, lose your positions, and be publicly ostracized? understand that those events are a foregone conclusion should you remain digging your heels in. it’s a wonder any of you can sleep at night knowing that you are 100% complicit in the destruction of the mental and physical health of an entire generation of children. Just imagine what the world will be like in 20 years when these children are the ones making the decisions in government positions.</p>

Stephanie Lormand	Bigoted Public Speakers	<p>I understand that the general policy of the School Board is to not respond to public comments. I want to be clear that the Board permitting a public speaker during the January 4th school board meeting to refer to LBTQIA+ children as filth was a gross violation of public trust.</p> <p>While I understand members of the board remain pressured by these book-banning, homophobic, transphobic, anti-mask, anti-vax, anti-CRT, anti-SEL, that pressure in no way excuses your responsibility to the children in this district.</p> <p>A small, yet loud group of transphobic bigots should not be allowed to speak that way about the children in our district without an immediate answer from the board.</p> <p>I also support leaving books that affirm gender identity in our school and local libraries. As an institution y'all have managed to keep cops in schools despite the decades of community support to not do so-- I look forward to y'all using that same effort to prevent the banning of books.</p>
Jenn Smith	I support continued masking in schools and support our hardworking teachers and staff.	<p>I am writing because I continue to see people arguing against masking in schools despite high transmission levels in our community. My children have been doing well with masking. My youngest has been playing basketball masked without any difficulty. We see the impact of COVID on staffing shortages, student absences, and in our community we know burnt out healthcare workers. So, since masking has been proven to reduce transmission we hope the Board will continue to vote for mask use in our schools. I also wanted to write about how even with staff shortages that have affected both of my students, we have noticed teachers and staff going above and beyond to support my children. One example is from my high schooler. She is in Math 1 and last week was feeling very stressed during the Delta Math homework activity. I emailed her teacher as I was also reaching out to friends for tutoring advice. The next day the teacher emailed me specific options including offering to help my student with her homework. When she ended up doing very well on a quiz a day later the teacher sent me a copy of her high score and a positive message to share with my child. I realize teachers have so many things pulling them in different directions. Especially right now so that email meant A LOT to us. We are very thankful for the teachers and staff and wanted to pass along that their hard work and dedication is being seen. Thank you for your time.</p>

Erin Bridges	COVID protocols	<p>Parents are planning now for the 2022-23 school year, and we need to know what to expect. We need to know exactly the criteria you are using to decide when masks will no longer be required. We need to know what you will do to ensure all available mitigation measures are in place to make it safe for full-capacity buildings and busses. The mishandling of this Omicron wave was embarrassing. Lessons from the Delta wave should have been learned. Following DHHS and CDC guidance would be a great start. The NC Toolkit is full of mitigation measures that should be implemented. Let's do it. If you aren't going to, say it. And if you aren't, there needs to be a virtual option next year for families unwilling to follow the few protocols in place AND those who need all measures implemented for their high-risk families to be safe. Most of all, we need clear decisions, clear benchmarks, and quick action so we can make sound choices.</p>
Sarah Coggins	Covid-19	<p>I would like to thank the Board for your continued support of requiring face coverings in schools. It is clear that this simple step is helping to prevent further spread of the virus. I have 2 children in WCPSS. Both are fully vaccinated; one recently received a booster. My children understand the benefit to the entire community vaccination and face coverings provide. They have no issue wearing their masks to school each day – often forgetting to take them off when I pick them up or they arrive home. We look forward to the day where they will no longer be necessary, but unfortunately without enough of their peers vaccinated and the omicron variant, we have a long way to go.</p> <p>I am concerned that I am seeing fundraising at some schools to help provide better air purifier/filtration systems. Not every school has the funds or the PTA ability to support this. I urge the Board to do whatever possible to make sure EVERY school in our county has the same quality air systems in place. Every child, teacher, and staff member deserve that same, equal environment and for our schools to be as healthy as possible.</p> <p>I appreciate your hard work, dedication to keeping our schools safe, and continuing to listen.</p>

Christa Morrison	Safety	<p>Thank you WCPSS Board for everything you have been doing during the pandemic these past two years. It has been a struggle for everyone. Our teachers and staff are overworked and our students are overwhelmed, full of anxiety, and behind in their academic studies.</p> <p>I'm writing you for multiple reasons. I ask that you continue to mandate masks in school buildings. With another new variant out, we have no way of knowing how this new variant will spread or infect individuals. In addition, we need to install better air quality filtration systems in ALL schools, and a better plan in place if things get worse. We can do better. We NEED to do better, for the children, teachers, and staff.</p> <p>Before we make masks optional, we MUST have layered measures of protection in place now to prepare for mask removal. This includes outdoor eating spaces for ALL schools across the County and indoor air filtration HEPA filters for ALL schools. Both measures will help keep virus levels down when masks are not present. Not one school should receive special treatment over the other, all schools should be treated equally.</p> <p>I also ask when making critical decisions, you look at up-to-date information. The ABC Collaborative is showing you information that is at least 6 months old, and not based on the most current and more contagious variants. I understand the pressure you are feeling from both sides regarding masks; however, it's not about the pressure or the politics, it's about what is best for keeping our children and staff safe. There are many high-risk children and adults that your decision will impact. Thank you for your time.</p>
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<p>Holly Wilcher</p>	<p>informed consent for EUA devices/interventions</p>	<p>Mask use for the intent of viral transmission prevention is authorized for Emergency Use only. Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA means “the products are investigational and experimental” only. 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 or her right to refuse administration of the product. This statute further recognizes the well-settled doctrine that medical experiments, or “clinical research,” may not be performed on human subjects without the direct, knowledgeable consent of the individual receiving treatment. Regardless of the lack of safety and efficacy behind the decision to require a child to wear a mask all day, it is illegal in NC to mandate Emergency Use Authorization approved investigational medical therapies without full informed consent of the recipient North Carolina statute contains an informed consent requirement in G.S. 90-21.13. It states, in part, that</p> <p>(2) A reasonable person, from the information provided by the health care provider under the circumstances, would have a general understanding of the procedures or treatments and of the usual and most frequent risks and hazards inherent in the proposed procedures or treatments</p> <p>The North Carolina Supreme Court has held that [t]o meet this statutory standard, the health care provider must provide the patient with sufficient information about the proposed treatment and its attendant risks to conform to the customary practice of members of the same profession with similar training and experience situated in the same or similar communities. In addition, the health care provider must impart enough information to permit a reasonable person to gain a "general understanding" of both the treatment or procedure and the "usual and most frequent risks and hazards" associated with the treatment."</p> <p>The right to avoid the imposition of human experimentation is fundamental, rooted in several international medical ethics codes and further codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations. In addition to the United States regarding itself as bound by these provisions, these principles were adopted by the FDA in its regulations requiring the informed consent of human subjects for medical research.[v] Furthermore, the human right to avoid imposition was rooted in our NC state statute G.S. 90-21.13.</p> <p>Furthermore, by requiring children to wear a mask, you are promoting the idea that the mask can prevent or treat a disease, which is an unlawful fraudulent practice. It is dishonest to promote that a product or service can prevent...disease unless you possess competent and reliable scientific evidence... substantiating that the claims are true.</p>
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<p>Pamela Boudah</p>	<p>Board Advisory Council Public Meetings : why no archived materials Advertised Accessibility</p>	<p>I appreciate that WCPSS has a precedent to advertise Board Public Meetings, Board Policy and achievement meetings and archive agendas, meeting minutes and the actual Board Public meetings using UTube. So why are Board Advisory Council (BAC) meetings, a Public Meetings for each WCPSS district Board member not advertised to seek parent and community stakeholder involvement? Why does the Board not utilize the many WCPSS resources such as Principal weekly messages, district text announcements, WCPSS main website page, social media accounts for the district such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to advertise BAC meetings to increase Board transparency and access for parent and community involvement? My understanding is there is no link that exists to access previous BAC Public meetings including agendas, meeting minutes, slide presentations or audio/video recordings. Why is this information not accessible to the Public?</p>

holly wilcher	health care choices for parents and children	<p>Dear Board,</p> <p>I write to ask you once again to please return some sense of normalcy to our children's lives in school. Please let children and parents decide on their health care choices. You are not legally required to mandate masking. Much of the world does not require these medical therapies on children and their children are well. I ask you to stop compromising the emotional safety and social health of children and please allow the choice to wear masks in Wake County schools.</p> <p>Thank you, Holly</p>
holly wilcher	children are suffering - please stop experimenting on them	<p>Please immediately end the human experimentation on children. End all virus mitigation mandates today.</p>
Kristin Beller	Black Lives Matter At School Week	<p>Our public schools are the heart of our communities. Children develop lifelong friendships in our classrooms and on our buses. They develop trusting relationships with the school staff supporting them each day. They remember moments that to others may seem insignificant but for the child, that moment may have unlocked the door to a whole new world. These relationships and moments seem magical but they are not magic. They are the result of years of intentional study and choices to reach every child, and every child needs something different. I am continuously amazed and proud of the way my colleagues across the district invest their time and energy into building relationships with their students and families, participating in their own learning, and collaborating with other school staff to provide amazing learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>This week is Black Lives Matter At School week, and there are many amazing resources for school staff to use to more effectively and intentionally meet the needs of every student. The choice of a teacher to intentionally choose to read books with Black characters throughout the year allows Black children to see their own experiences reflected in stories the same way white children do on a regular basis. The choice of a school staff team to identify ways old systems or practices exacerbated gaps in opportunities for Black students and to intentionally use different practices or</p>

restructure systems allows Black children to have opportunities for academic or personal growth without barriers. The choice of a district to intentionally hire more Black educators allows Black children to imagine another career pathway for their futures. The choice of a school board to fund more counselors allows Black children the opportunity for restorative solutions instead of the punitive measures that are disproportionately assigned to them. Black Lives Matter At School week refocuses our attention on actions - big and small - that can potentially create the deep change needed to sustain schools as nurturing, supportive learning environments for all of our children.

Critics often claim that focusing on pro-Blackness results in anti-whiteness, but that criticism in itself demonstrates how white-centric our society is. This week isn't about white people at all. Creating intentional space to lift up a specific population of students does not equate to putting down another group of students. The staff in our schools who have committed themselves to the learning and growth that allows them to develop practices that build and support respectful classroom communities are incredibly skillful in this work. They recognize the need for every child to love themselves and recognize their excellence. Our staff committed to this work also recognize that some children have more barriers and negative messages aimed at their identities that require intentionality to break down those barriers. This is the work of educators of all racial identities, not just Black educators. And just as is true in every other aspect of development for professionals - in education and beyond education - our school staff are reflective and collaborative so that they have support in learning how to assess when something does or doesn't work, why, and how to do it better in the future. This doesn't happen in isolation or without support. It is absolutely essential that public school staff in all roles have access to the support, coaching, and resources for the full cycle of growth and application to be carried out successfully. This board has been supportive of staff having access to resources, but we are still far from this support being embedded so deeply in teacher and staff training, policies, structures, and regular school practices that it no longer requires specific focus and attention. Please use this week to think about how this Board can continue to sustain supportive, nurturing, and equitable school communities.