

Video Public Comments:

- Brandy Sullivan - Support for WCPSS [english](#) | [español](#)
- [Amanda Lunn](#) - Support for School Board and mask mandate
- [Chuck Tryon](#) - Support for School Board and school staff

Written Public Comments:

<p>Laura Bottomley</p>	<p>Sustainability Goals for Wake County Schools</p>	<p>I would like to voice my support for more focus and attention on increasing participation in Sustainability goals in Wake County schools. My biggest concern is the waste and toxic by products produced by our cafeterias. While I believe that staff is not to blame, I feel like it is an area where very little waste should be put into our landfills for our students to deal with in the future. Most products have an Earth healthy alternative. Stronger directives and policies should be created for recycling treys, or using dishwashers for reusable materials, and composting unused food. On top of thousands of trays and silverware, food is separated into tiny plastic containers that are thrown away! Thousands and thousands of products that are not biodegradable are put into our earth DAILY from our county schools. If we are to teach our children to think globally and to care for our planet then we MUST model this. WAKE County is looked up to for many things and I believe we can be a trendsetter in this area too. It's not an easy task, and I understand this, but often the RIGHT thing to do—is not easy.</p>
<p>porter bowman</p>	<p>masks</p>	<p>I know it's been a long time since i made my last comment and i stopped because i felt that you guys were not listening and i am going to start again because i feel like my voice should be heard even if you don't care or listen So i want you to end the mask mandate a lot of states are doing it so can you please end it I know that you think you're helping but its not helping thank you</p>
<p>Mindy Weschler</p>	<p>Make masks optional for all children</p>	<p>The time has come to make masks optional. Many districts have been "mask optional" all year. They do not have a higher number of cases than Wake Co. Many pediaticians, including Dr. Benjamin, have stated that it is time to reconsider mask mandates. They are doing more harm than good. Parents should be the ones to make medical decisions about their children, not the school board. We'd greatly appreciate you reviewing this and voting on this TONIGHT, Feb 15. Thank you!</p>

Josey Kasper	Mask optional vote	It should not be up to the level of “board interest” in a vote; it should be up to the community level of interest and it IS HIGH. There should be a bite at every meeting going forward now that the toolkit has changed and every member’s reasoning behind keeping masks has been changed. It is time. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. Make it mask-optional for every student and staff member regardless of vaccination status NOW. Our children deserve forward progress not stagnation. Public schools are losing out the longer you play this game. Oakland, CA is having to close public schools they have lost so many students—it should be a wake up call to WCPSS. The tide has turned. The writing is on the wall. The time is NOW. Vote mask optional on 2/15.
Ralph cummings	Optional mask policy for WCPSS	There should be no mask mandate in our schools. Masks should be optional, not mandated. 1. Science proves they do not prevent covid. 2. Covid is aerosolized and not spread by droplets. 3. Children are the lowest demographic at risk. 4. Countless studies show kids do not spread covid at schools. 5. Countless studies show masks do more physical and emotional harm then no masks.
Tim Panek	Make masks optional	Ivy had enough of your Communist like rule over my children. It’s time to make masks (which have absolutely no effect on transmission or contraction of Covid-19) optional. Your rule over my children and my rights as a parent must come to an end.
Kelly Doyle	Supporting the board and decision to continue the mask mandate	
Keira stojin	Keep kids and staff safe	Masks are still important tool to keep everyone safe. Kids under 5 still have no vaccine, schools cannot distance due to staff to kids ratios, and now there will be no contact tracing and you can come to school after testing positive if you have vaccine. We need masks to have some protection left for staff and children.

Kathy Sullivan	Masking children!	<p>This is why our children need to breathe!  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1371071876680572">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1371071876680572</a>  The damage that has been done to our children will never be forgotten! The medical and respiratory issues have been completely ignored. The students cannot concentrate! If they do start to focus, the teacher screams at one of the students to pull their mask up interrupting the entire classroom! My grandson is 13 and going through puberty. He is continually gasping for breath in class. He once loved school now he loathes it! He feels the teachers don't want to hear the students talk and this is the reason for the mask. Our children know what is going on! Our children are the least affected by this virus but yet they are held more accountable than China! This just has to stop!  We are very aware of the financial gain to keep this masking up. This has cost our state plenty. Children that once had remarkable IQ's are now struggling with the most minor learning requirements. They can't hear correctly, they cannot see expressions and they are continually faced with ANTIFA gear all day! The masks litter the school grounds and our streets and parking lots. For a virus that is this dangerous this ought to tell you something!  Once again....we have entrusted our children to you and it is time you do the right thing! The options on the table will eventually cause such an issue with public schooling which they have begun to do already. Last but not least, here is this amazing video once again! Will you be on the side of our children or on the side of corruption and bureaucracy?  <a href="https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1371071876680572">https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1371071876680572</a></p>
Andrea Rose Biondi	Thank you so much for keeping kids safe	<p>I want to thank the WCPSS School Board for following the science and ensuring our children are kept safe at school wearing masks and also funding improved ventilation systems. We are so grateful for having our child back in school in Wake Co. where she is thriving in a supportive, safe learning environment. Please ensure masks mandates are cont'd until the rates of COVID infections are significantly lower. Thank you also for in school testing.</p>
Amber Sauer	In favor of masking	<p>Thank you to the school board for continuing to follow CDC guidelines and keep the masking mandates in schools. My children are at reduced risk because of these requirements. Please keep the mandates.</p>
Sarah Chesser	Keep masks in school	<p>Keep masks in school. Masks help reduce transmission to keep kids in school. Masks have enabled schools to stay open this year. Masks are an easy, simple solution to enable I'm person learning. Currently case rates are still high. The governor just extended the order allowing state workers to sub in schools. We are not at a low rate yet.</p> <p>Plus, children under 5 are still not eligible for vaccines and might not be for months. There are</p>

		<p>children under 5 in wcpss preschool programs which masks are their only personal protection at school. There are also many younger siblings of students who cannot be vaccinated.</p>
Lauren Raymer	Make masks optional now	<p>Hi! Thanks for reading my comment. Please make masks optional asap. My daughter started WCPSS as a freshman in high school and has only wore masks her entire high school experience, which is about to be half over. Since she is new to WCPSS it has been difficult to get to know people. She has said things like "I don't even know anyone" or "I wouldn't recognize people at the game" or "it's hard to meet people seeing only half their face". As you can imagine at that age and growing need for normal peer interactions she needs to see people!</p> <p>The mask is not preventing spread. There are countless studies to say this, including real life experiences... how can so many other states be maskless and have same numbers. It makes you go mmmmm.... That all said, the kids are not at risk. Everyone can get the vaxx if they want. It's time to offer these kids normalcy and a free life. When making all choices we look at costs and benefits at this point that ratio doesn't favor mask mandates, especially for kids. They (and all adults) can be mask free in every other aspect of their lives. Why is school so different.... It's not. Please make masks optional. Thank you</p>
Katie Dettelbach	Masks in schools	<p>I am writing to urge you to consider making masks optional in schools. It is beyond time to make the switch. We have been masking our kids unnecessarily for almost 2 years now, and it's time to end. As you know, a large number of school districts, both in our state and beyond have made masks optional recently, and some for over a year, and they have had great results. Our kids deserve to see emotions and be KIDS again. I'm sure most of you tuned in to the super bowl on Sunday and saw that NO masks were being worn by a majority of individuals. The hypocrisy needs to end now. We can go about our lives freely and openly without masks, but we have to cover our kids faces to enter schools? This is no longer logical. Your own tip doctors and researchers have made you well aware that masks are no longer necessary and the risk of infection is a risk worth taking!!! It seems as if you only trust the doctors' advice when it fits your own narrative. The damage you've done to kids emotions at this point is irreparable, and the gaps in learning will be long-lasting. We need a fix now, we need to make this right! We all have seen your behavior behind the lines and we understand you're now (rightfully so) embarrassed at how you've allowed this to continue, and we are willing to overlook that- just make the right decision here! The decision to mask should rest SOLELY on parents, not you.</p> <p>Please consider the emotional status of our kids and their educational futures here, they need you</p>

		to be level-headed and logical adults here!
John Scarborough	Covid masking	<p>Dear board members, you are under increasing pressure to drop the mask mandate for the students of Wake County. And as such you are bombarded with statistics and suggestions from both professionals and misguided individuals. While I am hopeful that we are moving into a stage of this epidemic that is waning we still have not reached the previously published benchmarks to drop the mask mandate.</p> <p>Unfortunately I believe that professionals like Dr Benjamin with the ABC collective have not given the board consistent and accurate information to work with. While it is true that the public health approach to the virus as it mutated had to change the very basic policies and procedures have not. A bit of research shows that Dr Benjamin has changed his guidance radically multiple times within the last month. His recommendations are widely different depending on where and whom he was addressing. In short I do not believe he can be trusted to provide you with the recommendations and guidance that you need to move us to a place where masking is optional in the schools.</p> <p>And the district does need a better thought out exit strategy for masking, just dropping masking suddenly without having carefully considered the impacts on schools and the community is not only unwise but potentially opens the district up to liability and a claim of negligence on behalf of students who require extra protection based on their personal health profiles. I'd ask you to remember that all of the recommendations by high-profile health professionals are based upon the assumption that we have a much higher level of vaccinated students and people in our community than we do.</p> <p>Alao given the nature of viruses it is not a question of if we have another strain mutation of the coronavirus it is a question of when, and I do not believe that the board has directed the area superintendents and appropriate staff members to formulate a plan to further protect schools and children in the case of such a event. And plans are what we are asking for, common sense plans to get our schools and students into the safest possible condition. Please keep the masked mandate in place until the guidance and science shows us that is safe to drop it.</p>

tiffany p barry	Unmask our children!	<p>Please NOW vote to allow our kids to go to school without masks for the first time in two years and have a normal school experience. Make this a choice for parents! We have been more than tolerant trying to keep the sick and infirmed protected from COVID. It is our time now to be unmasked.</p> <p>My 16 and 14 year old children are suffering. Both were lively, happy, straight A students, dealt with the remote schooling but now are sullen and depressed wearing a mask to school every day! One math teacher at Broughton sits in a plastic box to teach and calls the kids "vectors of disease." She will not instruct and only puts you tube videos on a screen to illustrate math problems for pre-calculus. She is basically teaching virtually in person while surrounded by plastic! What a joke!</p> <p>My kids can go to a Canes game, State Fair, see movie at North Hills, go to restaurants and hang with their friends inside all without wearing a mask. The time is over. People have access to vaccines if they choose to get them or not (we are all 3x vaxxed!) and it is time to move on. If people want to wear masks or habe their children wear them, fine. It is their choice. My family chooses to not wear them any more.</p> <p>Please vote to remove masks from the classroom. These kids need this desperately!</p>
Daria Crater	Masking	<p>It is TIME to unmask the kids. Enough is enough. The psychological damage that is happening for these children will affect them for the rest of their life!</p>
Kennedy Velasco	REMOVE THE MASK MANDATE	<p>Please do your part and join the growing number of counties in our state who are allowing our children to return to normal. Two years is long enough! Speaking from our family's own personal experience... all four of our children have had Covid (with almost zero symptoms!). All four of our children have been vaccinated. They have done what they've been told to do by the adults in their lives to help keep Covid under control... and what have they been rewarded with? They are the only ones that have to continue to mask day in and day out to go to school.</p> <p>They go to hockey games, play in travel sports, go on vacations, eat in restaurants... and watch every adult around them live their lives like normal... and yet they are still being required to wear masks in school to protect these adults. This charade has gone on long enough. And there will come a point when you won't have the ability to enforce this nonsense anymore. We will all look back on this ridiculous time and wonder what took you so long.</p>

Christina Thomas	Mask should be optional	<p>It is a parents right and choice to decide if their child(ren) need to wear a mask. Most other counties in NC have switched to optional wearing masks and its time that wake does the same. It is effecting these children, it does not matter if they wear a mask or don't, or have the vaccine or don't. They can still get covid! They have been trapped wearing these for 2 yrs its time to put an end to this before parents decide to remove their kids from the schools and you lose your jobs because there will be no kids for you to teach. They haven't seen their friends full face or a teachers face in 2 years!!!! We want to see all these smiling faces including the staff!!! I cant remember the last time I saw a teachers or staff members face outside of a video call.</p>
Julie Trinks	Make masking optional	<p>It is long past time to make masking for all students and staff optional in our schools. With clear research, one way masking can provide protection for those who want and need it. Also following current research, and common sense, it is clear that universal masking of all our students and staff for the entirety of every school day has more drawbacks than it does helpful uses. Let our children and our teachers be fully heard and fully seen for the first time in two years. Thank you.</p>
Dustin Prescott	Remove Mask Mandate	<p>Now that the quarantine requirements have been removed and your own experts have recommended mask mandates be removed. I am asking that you remove the mask mandates from our schools.</p>
Kristi Bennett	Optional masks	<p>I pulled my kids out of Wake County two years ago because of required masks and they will not be going back for a variety of reasons. Mostly because your education quality has tanked as you have focused on spending millions on social justice issues and requiring masking instead of the core reason you exist which is to educate children. I put that in as a gentle reminder of your sole reason for existence since you seem to have forgotten it.</p> <p>Perhaps the last two years you have also forgotten that you are an elected official. Your oath is to the voters who you believed intelligent enough, discerning and judgmental enough to sort through issues and candidates and elect you as a voice for their concerns. If you believe the adults of this county are wise enough to vote, you must also believe they are wise enough to choose for themselves and their children if they should or should not wear a mask. Either the people are smart and you rightfully got elected and they can make their own decisions, or they are not wise enough to make discernments and your election is not valid because the people cannot be trusted to make ANY decision.</p> <p>Make masks optional. Parents in Wake County are intelligent and deserve to be respected.</p>

Christi Stitzer	Make masks optional	<p>It is beyond time to update the policy on masks and make masks optional immediately. There is enough scientific data to support that masks do not provide adequate protection from covid. They are also not often worn properly by young children. There are studies that show a collection of dangerous bacteria on improperly worn masks at school. Masks make it difficult to learn and teach letter sounds in kindergarten. Masks cause anxiety, among a host of other issues, including negative impacts on mental health. Covid does not impact children, look at the science! Please, where there is risk, there must be choice. Let this be an individually made choice, based on what is best for our children's needs. Communicable diseases have existed since the beginning of time, and there have always been a certain population that is more vulnerable that needs to be responsible for protecting themselves. We have never enforced masks in the healthy in this way before, and we do not need to continue. Remove the masks now. Enough is enough. Many other states have lifted mask mandates, and some states never enforced mask mandates. Do the right thing.</p>
Marisol Darnell	Masking in Schools	<p>The CDC still encourages schools to wear masks. I've seen wavering opinions from Dr. Benjamin of the ABC Collaborative. This is disappointing, as it appears this is how you all make your decisions on keeping kids safe. Why not listen to the CDC?</p> <p>For our county, masking is the only consistent measure taken to avoid the spread of Covid. I'm disappointed that my school is not participating in weekly testing and it is apparently up to myself and my husband to get our own testing done.</p> <p>My daughter is too young to be vaccinated. My husband and I take time out of our workday to check out my son for lunch, in order to minimize his exposure to others, unmasked. As a board, why not wait until the youngest children are eligible and have the time to be fully vaccinated? What is the rush?</p> <p>Along those lines, why would you all want to immediately remove masks from school? Why can't it be a measured approach? When the positivity rate goes below a certain number? Present a plan to us and maybe we won't think of your actions as rash and pressured.</p> <p>If masking becomes optional, I know my son will continue to wear a mask, of his own accord. But that then might open him up to questions and maybe teasing from kids who are not. I know how ruthless kids can sometimes be. But, yet, you want to open up that kind of behavior by removing masks from school?</p>

		Please, take a more measured approach, don't immediately bow down to political pressure. Give my daughter and others a chance to get vaccinated.
Jennifer Carlton	Mask Optional NOW	People across the political spectrum agree that mandatory masking policies in schools should be changed to mask-optional policies. Dr. Leana Wen on CNN was a long advocate for child-masking and she has joined the call for an urge to normalcy with the viewers of CNN as she admits masks are NOT benign. Vaccines and therapeutics have been available to all those at risk. N95's are now abundantly available to all those who still want to mask. But there are many, many aspects of our children's health and well-being – beyond evading one virus – that need to be taken into account. Make mask optional for all students. It is time to end blanket harmful measures.
Charles Overman	Blatant hypocrisy	If 70,000 people can be inside watching the Super Bowl, and millions around this country, and the world, can host parties, watch at restaurants and bars, only the biggest of hypocrites can say children should continue to wear masks in schools, or during sports. There is no greater crime being committed than to continue a forced masking policy on our children after the world watched the hypocrisy on display Sunday night.
Kelly Mann	Masks	<p>We have waited on some science to back up masking. It is not there. It is not justified. When one of the most outspoken parent masking advocates, (who frequently references her close relationship/conversations with Chair Mahaffy), publicly states</p> <p>"As soon as everyone learns how to behave out of concern for others, masks will come off," we know.</p> <p>We know masks disrupt the mirror neuron process in developing children, we know that masks cause enormous speech delays, and we know masks damage children emotionally and socially.</p> <p>We know and you all know. Do your job and make sure our children are given the best opportunity to learn.</p>
Lisa Jay	Mask Mandates	I appreciate the board and their efforts to keep schools open, the current mask mandate and the continual emphasis on the importance of vaccines. I'm writing in to ask that the board continue to uphold the mask mandate for the safety of our children and other vulnerable members of our community. Until the spread of this deadly disease stops, we need to do everything in our power to limit it. I believe the school board is doing all they can with the limited resources they have and ask that they continue to protect our families, thank you.

Kimberly Waller	optional masks	<p>I am a parent of two fully COVID-vaccinated WCPSS students (one in elementary and one in middle school).</p> <p>I ask that at your next board meeting, you transition to face masks being optional at school.</p>
Maegan Serra	Continue mask mandates	<p>Please continue to enforce a district wide mask mandate. Transmission rates are still very high, and until those numbers reach 5% or lower, we have to do continue to do our part to protect the community's most vulnerable, including those families with children under the age of 5 who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated, as well as the immunocompromised. In addition, district wide testing should continue. We want our children to stay in school, but we must continue to ensure that they do so safely.</p>
C	Mask Mandate	<p>Please uphold the current mask mandate in schools. Masking is effective at limiting the spread of COVID, that's clear. Given we are still well above the baseline community transmission rates (way way above actually) the CDC defines for needing preventative measures, it really is simple that masking should continue, along with continued increased ventilation efforts. Please don't let politics or capitalism be the driving influence or this decision and instead let our children's health, safety, and wellbeing be the driver. Thank you.</p>
Ren Randolph-Adams	Uphold Mask Mandate	<p>Our pandemic is not over. At this point both my child, their parents, and grandparent have had COVID and could be at risk to have it again without a mask mandate. My immunocompromised family members and I request we keep masking as long as the CDC recommends it, for the safety of all of us.</p>
Annie Kistner	Mask mandate for Wake County schools	<p>Please continue requiring masks in our schools. This protects everyone and is good for more than just COVID-19. It helps with cold and flu transmission as well.</p>
Jessie Thomas	Face Masks	<p>I will keep this short. I just wanted to voice my strong opinion that I believe face masks should continue to be mandatory for all Wake Co public schools. At the very least, this mandate should continue until ALL children can be vaccinated and have the opportunity to be fully vaccinated. It would be ideal if the mandate stayed in effect until the community vaccination rate is 85% and positive COVID cases drop below 5% for at least 2 consecutive weeks.</p> <p>I trust that you will follow scientific studies and not political views when making these huge decisions for our children!</p> <p>Thank you, Jessie Thomas</p>

trisha watkins	Get rid of mask mandate	We now know these masks don't work...nobody wants to wear them for the most part and when you do wear them, you know they have been thrown around the car, shoved into backbacks, etc...breathing in gross stuff just to go along with the "rules"...meanwhile, you go to any sporting event where they are packed in like sardines and no masks...but somehow, in school, it's required and all for "safety"...what a load of BS and we all know it...if there are those that WANT to wear one for whatever reason, fine...nobody cares...but EVERYBODY shouldn't be made to wear one...it's stupid...people should have a choice...and kids masked no less...they are the ones least likely to have any kind of long term problems...and the really young ones masked up, it affects their learning of sounds/words etc when they are just learning how to sound words out. Keep rid of them!!
Megan Sandidge	Unmask our children	Please vote to end the mask mandate in schools. Our children shouldn't have to suffer another day.
Lindsay Keane	End the Mask Mandate Now	It is well past time to remove the mask mandate in schools. The only place my children have to wear masks anymore is in school. They had a wonderful, mask free life during their January track-out break. It broke my heart to put them back in masks when they returned to school on January 24. They are 9 and 11 and even they can see the absurdity. They ask me why their cousins and friends in other states can go to school without masks but they cannot. They ask me why their friends in private school can go to school without masks, but they cannot. It is time to stop treating our children like vectors of disease when COVID 19 poses very little risk to them. There have been numerous studies recently showing the ineffectiveness of masks against the spread of COVID 19. Students, staff and teachers all have the opportunity to get the shot, and all have the option to wear one-way masks to protect themselves. There are no more reasons why you cannot make masks optional. The Wake County School board has been interfering with our children's lives for nearly two years. It is time to let them be normal children again. Our children deserve the freedom of choice when it comes to masks. Please call for a vote at the February 15 school board meeting and end the mask mandate in schools now!
Valerie Rye	Keep masks and mitigation measures in schools	Thank you for working so hard to keep all of the students and staff safe. I would like to ask that you keep the masks in place for now. I feel that we must have lower community spread before we lift any mandates at school. When the time is right, with lower numbers, use a stepped down approach with the knowledge that they will be put back into place, if we go above the appropriate numbers.
Jennifer Schiller	Unmask Kids	We are well past due the time to make masks optional for wake county school kids. The science is clear that masks haven't made a difference in spread of covid, kids are everywhere else in town without masks which makes the school requirement all the more absurd, and the harms outweigh the good. The wcpss board has hidden behind faulty mask effectiveness studies and the ncdhhs

		<p>toolkit for long enough. As the parent of two high schoolers in wake county , I would like to see all Covid mitigation measures ended in favor of a return to normalcy. It's time.</p>
Lauren Mitchell	Masks	<p>With the changes in contract tracing and quarantining by NCDHHS, it's time to unmask our children. No excuses any more. Other NC counties have dropped this mandate and it's time for wake to do the same. We demand a vote this Tuesday Feb 15. Did you watch the super bowl? Not a mask insight! Parents deserve the right to make this choice for their own kids, not you. Unmask my children.</p>
Poppie McNierney	Masks optional	<p>Schools all over the country (and in our state) are already mask optional, and more continue to adopt this policy daily. Even with masks optional, cases and hospitalizations continue to drastically decrease. Public health officials have come out and said that cloth masking is not stopping the virus. This is what the majority of the kids are wearing, and are not even wearing properly. It is time for WCPSS to join these other counties, and allow masking to be OPTIONAL. WCPSS has been following the advice of the ABC Collaborative, headed up by Dr Danny Benjamin, and even he agrees. From a recent WRAL article "When asked if Benjamin was concerned that students exposed to COVID-19 in an unmasked environment was too risky, Benjamin said it's a risk he believes school districts could considering taking given that vaccines are widely available for most school-aged children." Our kids are the least risk age group, yet they are the ones who have the most restrictions. Anyone watching the Super Bowl can agree. It's time to give students their full lives back. Remove mandatory masking and remove all other restrictions now.</p>
Melissa Duncan	Mask Mandates	<p>I am requesting to make mask optional for children in school effective immediately. We should not be functioning in a state of emergency any longer. The toolkit has been revised for quarantine guidance and the CDC no longer deems cloth masks as a means to protect against COVID. It is time to let the families choose what is best for their children. It is time for us to join the majority of states and countries that no longer require masking in schools. Thank you.</p>
Cristina Padres	Masks	<p>You will all be held responsible for your crimes against our children when the truth comes out about your taking funds for each child you've forced to wear masks for 2 YEARS!! You are evil despicable people and will answer to Almighty God for your CRIMES against children. Luke 17:2          "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."</p>

<p>Tammi Waters</p>	<p>Please keep our kids safe</p>	<p>Thank you to the WCPSS Board members for continuing to do an amazing and hard job of keeping our kids safe throughout this pandemic. I'm writing this as a local community family physician and parent to 2 children in WCPSS schools. I greatly appreciate your efforts and can't imagine the difficult decisions that you have been faced with.</p> <p>I ask that you continue to follow the science. To keep our kids safe and IN school. To encourage vaccinations. And to keep masks in schools. Our numbers are high right now. The percent positive is high. Community transmission is high.</p> <p>I look forward to the day when we can send our kids to school safely and without masks. Now is not that time. Please work together, with the medical community, to keep our children safely in the classroom.</p> <p>Your commitment to our children is appreciated.</p>
<p>Kimberly Stephenson</p>	<p>Please keep masks, fortify testing</p>	<p>I am writing to voice support to keep masks mandatory for WCPSS students. Masks have been integral in keeping spread of COVID lower among students. I would also like to thank you for implementing School-based covid testing this year and encourage the district to fortify and update testing guidelines to keep up with current COVID issues such as shorter incubation times and more contagious variants. Please consider further supporting schools in distanced and/or outdoor lunches to further reduce the spread of COVID. Thank you to all of the school board members and superintendent Moore for keeping our students safe and healthy in Wake County.</p>
<p>Donna lengtat</p>	<p>Masks</p>	<p>It's time to end the mask mandate for all of us. Especially our children it's not healthy for them to breathe in their own carbon it's been proven to be unhealthy. Leave it up to parents if they want to mask their kids let them but stop the tyranny</p>

B.N.	Masks are more harmful than good	<p>All teachers had to take a type of developmental class. My case: early childhood developmental class and within the first few chapters you learn about the importance of the entire face, social emotional development, and language development. It's no surprise students are behind in these areas currently, even those who previously would not even be considered candidates for any type of therapy.</p> <p>The masks are not stopping transmission or really even reducing it. They're being used inappropriately and repeatedly raising the amount of bacteria a child is breathing in.</p> <p>Our own political leaders (ruling class) and artists (entertainment class) aren't following these guidelines. Adults, who are at the higher end of the complication spectrum of this "lord's of the flies" disease aren't adhering. The children should not be subjected to fearful adults whims. The masks should only be worn on a case by case basis, as needed, if there may be a cough or cold symptoms present. Even then, they are generally useless when children decide to trade their neighbors for cuter masks and take them off to eat.</p> <p>They're useless and harmful.</p>
Sarah Gardner-Cox	Continued masking in schools	<p>Hello, I am writing to ask you to continue the in school mask mandate until case positivity rates drop below 5% for two weeks, and total new cases per 100k fall below 10 for two weeks. The CDC and other organizations have urged continued masking. I realize that case counts have been downward trending, but it would be wrong to give up before we reach the goal of low case positivity rates. Thank you!</p>
Russell Nelson	Continued masking	<p>Hello, I am writing to ask you to continue the in school mask mandate until case positivity rates drop below 5% for two weeks, and total new cases per 100k fall below 10 for two weeks. The CDC and other organizations have urged continued masking. I realize that case counts have been downward trending, but it would be wrong to give up before we reach the goal of low case positivity rates.</p>

Jennifer Schmidt	Mask mandate	<p>As pressure mounts to release the mask mandate in Wake County schools, please close your eyes and picture this.</p> <p>My son, who is in kindergarten, came home last week crying because he said he became so sleepy at the end of the day from continuing to wear his mask that he got in trouble in class for acting out. He said “Mommy, I just don’t understand why they want me to not breathe?”</p> <p>I’ve been trying to find logic and reasoning as to why we continue to wear these masks but I can no longer lie to my son about why you are forcing this upon him. The only thing that I can think of going forward is to tell him the truth. That his school district doesn’t care enough about him to let him think for himself. His school district doesn’t want him to be able to be comfortable so that he can learn, and be happy, and thrive. Wake county has always been a high performing district. In what world are students who have their mouth covered (and well as their rights and medical freedoms) be high-performing? It’s toxic and it’s shameful. Come November, you will be made aware of what this has done.</p> <p>#unmaskme NOW</p>
Diana Locki	Make Masks Optional!	<p>Release our children from the burden of wearing masks! It is detrimental to their physical and mental health, as we have seen and have tons of proof already! Return the Covid Funds to the Federal government and leave the parents to be in charge. You are loosing our consent day by day! Get rid of Panorama Surveys, GET RID OF THE FILTHY BOOKS! Children are NOT to be exposed to pornographic content! This is child abuse! We, the parents have lost trust in you to be our Public School Leaders and we are taking action!</p>
Sara Venkat	Masks in schools	<p>As a local physician, I am writing to stress the importance of continued mask requirements in schools at this time, given the current high level of community spread. For now, keeping school mask requirements are the best way to keep schools open and functional, and imperative to protecting those in the community who are high risk, or too young to be vaccinated</p> <p>.</p> <p>Thank you to the WCPSS school board for all you do to keep our kids and community safe.</p> <p>-Dr. Venkat</p>
Emily Brown	Masks in schools	<p>Based on peer review studies we know that masks do not work to stop Covid 19 or any other virus. Unmask our kids!!</p>

Melissa Warner	Mask mandate	<p>You the school board have decided that our kids should go to school all day, every day wearing muzzles like rabid dogs. Your arguments lack scientific data to justify continuing such an extreme "safety measure" for 2 years. More children died of the flu than covid during that time. Did anyone on the schoolboard suggest that at any point, anyone wear masks for flu? Do you know what it's called when you force your children to wear masks for fear of a virus that poses almost no threat to them? It's called child abuse. You deprive children of the ability to see each other's faces. Do you know what kind of damage that does? Have you wondered about the health effects that force the kids to breathe through sweat and spit and dirt-soaked rags every single day? Are you sure that there are no health risks? What about learning to read and they can't see the teacher enunciating the words? You're satisfied to place this burden on children anyway. And why? It's not to keep them safe. It's not to keep the adult safe. They can all get vaccinated if they want. No. You do it to make yourselves feel better and to protect yourselves politically. It's a disgrace and you should all be ashamed.</p>
Nicole Mignault	Masks in schools	<p>First and foremost, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts and opinions.</p> <p>My topic of concern is masks for children in school. As a parent of 2 preschool age children (5 and 3), who are BOTH required to wear masks, I feel ignored. I have reached out to many of you and have not heard back with even an acknowledgment of my opinions. Let me remind you, that you serve the people.</p> <p>I feel that you do not care about the mental and physical consequences we are placing on our children. I am appalled that the board has refused to change the mask vote regardless of the changes in the NCDHHS toolkit that are effective 2/21. Stating that students and school employees who are exposed to Covid-19 are no longer are required to quarantine, unless they test positive or show symptoms. Regardless of if the school requires masks or makes them optional.</p> <p>This is a huge loss for our children. You say that it's only a few more weeks, well this has already felt like a lifetime for them. My children were 3 and 1.5 when the pandemic started. It's been over half of their lives. I am begging you to make masks optional for our kids.</p> <p>Thank you</p>

Charles Aikens	Masks in School	It is now time to follow the science and unmask our children. Not in a month or 15 days from today. Now immediately, Pronto ASAP. For 2 years we have seen that the masks have not been an effective tool. 80,000 people at. Superbowl game packed in a stadium and hardly a Mankato be seen. I am done, we are done. History will not be kind to those who blindly followed the so called science. No more Masks, please.
WILLIAM CHESEBRO	End all mandates and elites admit their wrongful doings and murder of our children and humanity as a whole and face the 13 charges of crimes against humanity.	Enough is enough. We need this to end. Myself I need to be able to take care of my family and get back to work. 2 plus years, lost enough. The world is getting fed up. Teamwork makes the dreamwork. Freedom for humanity as the soldiers before us fought, killed and died for and they were heroes and we are called terrorists for standing for the very same freedoms and rights. Hahahaha
Mary Louise Kasper	Masks	Hello! I am a 7th grade student of WCPSS, and I would like to kindly ask the board to remove mask mandates. People who want to wear one, can still wear one, it should be their free choice. Just like not wearing a mask should be. Everyday, I struggle to breathe in class, especially in gym, when we are exercising and running, and cannot take our masks off to get enough air. Then, with me sucking in my mask so much because I'm not taking in enough oxygen, it gets wet and sticky with sweat and saliva, and it sunctions itself to my face, making it even harder to breathe- and extraordinarily uncomfortable. Everyday, I come home with the most awful ear aches after wearing a mask for 6 1/2 hours- only to have to go out again later in the day for extracurricular activities and put the mask back on for another hour or two (because of Raleigh's mandate), making my ears hurt even more. Everyday, I wonder what my classmates' faces look like, because while I have been going to school with them for two years now, I have no idea what they look like, because of mask mandates. Everyday, my friend, who has a hearing disability, struggles to understand her teachers, and know what's happening in class, because she can't hear them, and the clear masks don't work- they fog up. Everyday, I struggle with communication with peers, because I am a quiet person who talks softly and relies on facial gestures to communicate my feelings with others- but I can't do that with masks. My thoughts, words, and emotions are lost to its covering. Everyday, I see my little brothers' beautiful smiles and laughter swallowed up by masks. Everyday, I hear classmates boasting of how they got their first vaccine shot, second vaccine shot, and booster. Everyone I know is vaccinated.

		As I have explained above, masks inhibit, and cause miscommunication and discomfort, and everyone I know of has gotten their COVID vaccines. So my question to you, board members, is when will you take responsibility as the largest school district in the state, and one of the largest in the nation, and end these detrimental mask mandates?
Cathy Bixby	Reinstating choice	More and more evidence is coming out about the harmful effects wearing masks have physically and psychologically on a person. Why must our children, who are the LEAST affected by this virus, continue to be forced to cover their nose and mouth? My child can go to a football game with no mask but yet must wear one at school. Our Mayor has rescinded the mandate. At this point the only thing that is clear is that the Board does not have our childrens best interest at heart. That is very disheartening. How do each of you want to be remembered? A parent (the one who votes) will not forget those who do not do the right thing for their child. Although I'm beginning to feel that you don't even care.....
Rebecca Cunningham	2022-23 Bell Schedules	Please revisit shifting the high school start time back, as was discussed last year. I believe that decision was pushed off to this year, but no information has been received. This parent is greatly in favor of a later start time for my teenager. Having to wake up at 5:50AM is just too early for his current brain development & optimal retention of information! He's been learning all about that in his 9th grade health class. If you need that same info, we can have our high school health teachers forward it! Thank you
Laurie Chamberlain	Support For our School Board	I want to take this opportunity to expresses my great appreciation for your choice to keep the mask mandate in place. Doing so ensures my grandchildren are kept safe and healthy in our schools. I would like to ask you to please continue the mask mandates until the COVID positivity rate drops significantly in NC. You are doing a wonderful job, in very difficult circumstances. We, the majority of the parents and grandparents applaud your dedication to our loved ones.

Jennifer Ferrell	In Praise of the Board's Challenging Work	<p>Dear hard working Chairwoman Mahaffey &amp; entire WCPSS board members—thank you for your service to our public school communities &amp; the work to goes into keeping all of us as safe as possible. A few of you also balancing the care of your families w/ children attending WCPSS schools.</p> <p>We have seen the vocal minority continue to show up and try to drown out common sense public policy, based on public health recommendations—going on 2 full years now. In many cases advocating for their own family or child-which is understood and fair &amp; just in its own right. If a child within our WCPSS has medical reasons of any kind to not wear a mask, that should be considered &amp; respected by school administration and then our local superintendent and school board if necessary.</p> <p>But the repeat bandwagon, politically motivated in many ways, does not speak for me or even a majority of us who also voted to elect you into this office. It's quite alarming &amp; sad to see what seems to be an endless cycle of not only keeping a pandemic, now potential endemic going by NOT following even basic guidelines like masks and vaccines to keep themselves and others around the safe.</p> <p>Thank you for being strong on our behalf and letting the nastiness of some comments received roll off &amp; not taking the attacks personally. It is becoming increasingly clear and being reported daily that many county school boards nationwide are dealing with the same. In what is in many cases being funded by outside nefarious organizations with backward thinking blueprints.</p> <p>It is exhausting for all of us to continuously deal with—but no doubt for our board. Please know there is an even larger contingent of WCPSS parents and grandparents of all grade levels, current and past that may appear to be silent—but do in fact have your back as we continue daily doing what it takes to care for our families. While we also do the common sense measures to keep ourselves and others safe &amp; healthy. Thank you for reading &amp; understanding that you are in fact keeping us on the forward moving path by keeping masks in our schools in place and having a fair process in regards to other policy concerns to be addressed.</p> <p>I hope that many parents/caregivers start/keep paying attention to what is going on here during this public meeting process twice each month and doing what they can to lend a voice of support for your work and/or offer solutions respectfully to consider. Paying attention, utilizing public comment,</p>
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		<p>speaking in front of the board safely masked at a meeting AND w/ their votes for public servants such as yourself who give tirelessly back to this work.</p> <p>Thank YOU to the entire WCPSS central office and superintendent teams. Please keep it up &amp; going for all of your constituents and not just a minority that is pushing for what is truly NOT in the best interest of ALL.</p>
Lynda Strand	Safety	I want to thank the school board for doing their best during this pandemic and helping to keep students safe while at school.
Elizabeth Norval	Support or the School Board	<p>I want to commend members of the School Board for their strength of character and resilience in the face of enormous, unwarranted pressure from people who appear to be determined to undermine the Board. I support science and the use of reason and logic in decision making. We need to be mindful of what will serve the greater good, and help the most students and faculty to stay safe. I support the right of students to read about “uncomfortable” events and ideas. When I was sixteen, my history teacher required that each of his students in my South African school read a book by Leon Uris. I read Mila 18. I was horrified by the terrors inflicted on the Jews. But until then, I had no idea of the possibility that humans might perpetrate such horrors. It made me think. It inspired me to stand up for what I believe to be right, and protect the vulnerable. Every child needs to know the truth about the past, and not be “shielded” from facts. Children deserve the dignity and right to think for themselves and to reach their own conclusions. I thank the School Board for resisting pressure to remove books from the school library shelves.</p>
Sherri Bolton	Thank you for following the science	I'd like to thank the board for continuing to follow the science, and for doing everything possible to try to keep students, teachers, and other staff safe. My kids are so thankful to be back in person this year, and wearing a mask is a small trade-off for that personal interaction.
Jonathan McSween	Mask mandate	I am in favor of continuing the mask mandate for all schools until the transmission rate reaches the CDC recommended level.
Heather Tuttle	Make Mask Optional	Free the Smiles! Mask Optional!!! Enough is enough!
Shannon Knox	Thank you for keeping our kids safe!	This pandemic has been exhausting for everyone. Until everyone in our family can get vaccines we rely on Wake Count School Board to continue to enforce masks. We don't want our kids under 5 at home having Covid passed to them because their siblings classmates weren't wearing masks. A few more months and hopefully we will be back to norma this fall without masks once under 5 can

		get vaccinated. If nothing else, seeing a well planned path forward so concerned parents know this isn't a pressured uninformed decision would be great to see. Thanks for enforcing masks so far!
Jennifer Kern Pennell, MD	masks in the WCPSS	<p>I am writing as a local physician and as a mother to thank the WCPSS school board for making many tough decisions during the course of this pandemic. I am also writing to the school board to ask them to continue the mask mandate in the WCPSS schools at this time. It is imperative that our children be able to remain in school, and I believe that this is only possible if the mask mandate continues.</p> <p>We have scientific data that shows that the current variant is more transmissible than past variants. We also have data that shows that masks, while not 100% effective, do decrease transmission of this virus. And we know from our experience in the WCPSS that even with masks, we have had bus driver shortages and a record number of teacher and student absences. I fear that if masks become optional, then the number of infections in our teachers, students, and bus drivers will again increase. This could lead to inadequate staffing numbers and thus a necessary return to online learning, which has already negatively impacted many students from both an educational standpoint and from a mental health perspective. I understand that masks are uncomfortable and inconvenient, but they have allowed our children to return to some semblance of normalcy. I urge you to continue to protect this degree of normalcy and our children's health by continuing the mask mandate in the WCPSS.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jennifer Kern Pennell, MD</p>
Alex Fernandez	Make Masks Optional	35 counties are already Mask Optional in North Carolina. It is time Wake county to follow suit and make masks Optional for students. Parents that still "feel unsure" can mask their child all day and night if they like. These children are falling behind more and more every day and make no mistake, this mask mandate that keeps getting upheld is part of the reason. Enough is enough. Get back to education. Get back to what is best for the children of Wake county. Our future leaders have suffered enough, it is time to follow logic AND STATISTICS. Look at the decrease in infection, hospitalizations, and just about every other stat. ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! Make masks optional.

Shawn Martin	Masking in schools	<p>My name is Shawn Martin and I have a young son attending school in wake county. I'm writing to you to voice my growing concern about children masking in schools. There is zero data available to suggest that masking children in school is effective for stopping the spread of Covid. In fact, it is not only ineffective, but morally reprehensible. Strapping a mask on children not only deprived them of the ability to see the faces of their friends and teachers, but leads to numerous developmental roadblocks that will prove detrimental in the long term. My fear, among others, is that children will think this is normal behavior and will live their lives in fear of "exposure". Fear of being seen without a mask. Fear of seeing others without them. This has gone on long enough. This is not normal and it's time to stop manipulating young children into believing that it is. Adults have had their chance to be vaccinated, so strapping masks on kids does nothing to protect them. In fact, they do very little at all, which is now a widely accepted fact. I'm asking you remove the mask mandate, make it optional, and stop catering to fear and paranoia. Other counties have lifted them, and it's time for Wake county to do the same.</p>
Shruti Adiga	Covid safety	<p>Regarding covid19 safety protocols at the schools, I request you to continue to require masking for all staff and students. Community covid19 levels are still high. CDC still recommends masking in schools. Our goal should be to allow all students to safely attend school in person.</p>

Laura Wood	Adding Sustainability to the Strategic Plan	<p>Hello Superintendent Moore, Chair Mahaffey and Board members. My name is Laura Wood and I am the Environmental Connections Integration Specialist at Lincoln Heights Environmental Connections Magnet Elementary. I am a member of the Wake Green Schools Partnership and I am also a North Carolina certified Environmental Educator. With both of these in mind, I would like to ask the Board to add a Sustainability goal into the next 5 year Strategic Plan. This is a key step to ensure that we are moving forward in implementing more sustainable and environmental practices across the District. We have US Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools and are recognized as a US Department of Education Green Ribbon District, we have a NC Green School of Excellence, several Wake County Watershed Stewardship schools and will soon have 2 new solar panel arrays at WCPSS schools, Lincoln Heights being one of them. The addition of the Sustainability goal would pave the way for the creation of a Sustainability Coordinator position, someone who can work in conjunction with the various departments like CNS, M&amp;O, Transportation, Planning &amp; Construction and Grants. The Sustainability Coordinator can do an initial analysis of where schools and the District stand, work with the Board to identify specific goals and initiatives to target and then begin to tackle the challenges ahead. A Sustainability Coordinator would be an excellent resource to bridge the gap between schools and district initiatives, to handle fac mods, grant applications and more. We have many great success stories, but there is more work to do, such as adding more water bottle filling stations, decreasing storm water runoff and increasing outdoor learning spaces. We need to decrease the amount of food thrown away and increase composting across the district. We can return dishwashers to kitchens in new construction and major renos, switch out diesel buses from the transportation fleet and increase teacher and staff input on where to focus our energy and funds to maximize impact and improvements. We can also focus on teacher professional development and environmental literacy for our students to create environmentally conscious citizens ready to take action to protect and preserve our natural resources and increase sustainability.</p> <p>Please utilize the Wake Green Schools Partnership to move the District forward and add Sustainability into the Strategic Plan. Thank you so much for your time and consideration on this important topic.</p> <p>Sincerely, Laura Wood, MEd, NBCT NC Certified Environmental Educator Environmental Connections Integration Specialist</p>
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		Lincoln Heights Environmental Connections Magnet Elementary School Wake County Watershed Stewardship School & NC Green School of Excellence 2020 US Department of Education Green Ribbon School Twitter @LJWOOD_LHECMES
Jordan Hoff	Masks	Make masks optional!
Jana Dux	General Appreciation and Gratitude for Educators	To the teachers, assistants, custodial staff, bus staff, office staff, counselors, psychologists, nurses, and administration of Wake County Public Schools: Thank you for showing up for our students, day after day, in some of the most trying times to be in education--you matter and you are making such a difference in the lives of our students. The extra time, attention, and care you give to lessons, to making sure buildings and busses are prepared for the day, ensuring teaching staff are supported, all of this is setting the stage so that when students arrive for school, they are seen and known and valued and have all the support they need to learn. Your herculean efforts do not go by unnoticed. The hours and effort that feel unseen are so appreciated and to many students, you mean the world. In many more, you are that one adult motivating them to keep trying. Thank you for providing the scaffolding and supports our students and families need to learn and lean into challenges. You are being asked to do more than what is fair, especially now, and the least we can do is thank you for going above and beyond. It is crucial that we share extreme gratitude for your willingness to continue showing up, building resilience and courage in our students, seeing them and meeting them where they are, one day at a time. What you are doing is phenomenal. You are phenomenal. Thank you. --a Wake County Public School Parent
Tonya Thomas	Masks	Time to unmask our kids! It's child abuse plain and simple! State of emergency in LA and no one was wearing a mask at the super bowl! We know the "science has changed"...Stop the madness!
Chris Toutloff	Mandates.	The NIH said their could be a link between poor health for children and waring masks all day at school rebreathing their own Co2 in. This should have been common sense. Also The John Hopkins put out a report saying after their intense evaluation on the lock downs and mandates it did not prove to be effective in anyway at all. Everything the NIH and CDD is saying now ppl have been fired and cancelled over. Why? Also the unreporting of death that far exceeds this "virus" is disgusting like the ppl who couldnt receive theor daily weekly or monthly treatments to stay alive. Also the suicide rate has risen. 90% of ever one working in city, county, county should not hold any position of power. The ppl run everything and the past 2 years proved we the ppl do not. We need a change in management or no management at all.ALSO if there is a political loyalty to a fault you should be fired.

Amie Lynn Williams	Masks Mandates	<p>I am NOT here to talk about Covid Numbers</p> <p>I am NOT here to talk about Academics failings for the children in this county shown in the last 3 years</p> <p>I am NOT here to discuss the declining numbers of students enrolling in Wake county public school system despite being in an area that is fast growing</p> <p>I am NOT here to talk about CRT the classrooms</p> <p>I am NOT here to talk about the Pornographics found in grade school books</p> <p>NOPE- I am not here to talk about that</p> <p>YET.</p> <p>I AM choosing my battles today.</p> <p>I am HERE to talk about MY children and the mask mandates. Where is the off ramp? If you were to ask any of my children what our role is as parents/ and being a mother. They would answer - "Mom is responsible for my health, safety and well being" WELL, I stand here today as just that. I am their Voice. I am their Parent.</p> <p>In the last 2 years, I have seen what these mask mandates are doing to my "own children". My son shovels food in his mouth inside of 10 minutes as he says at school they get to talk in lunch after they put the masks on. My Daughter is now conscience of her looks and now hides behind her masks. My other pretween daughter is breaking out profusely in the area the mask lies. And talking to other parents, they are seeing ALL kinds of issues too. I BET our Teachers are seeing the same? Have you thought to ask them?</p> <p>So I ask YOU? When does the HARM being done to our CHILDREN Count? You have been using "Covid metrics" to keep healthy kids quarantined and masked as to not harm them ( the least affected by the virus.) What "Metrics" are YOU going to use now to start to Foster the Well being of our Children? Are you going to wait until the suicide rates More Than double? Are you going to wait</p>
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		<p>for the the numbers of kids with “anxiety, depression and stress levels” TRIPLE? Or when WE Parents start to see the physical and medical effects from breathing into a filthy masks all day.</p> <p>I ask you? All of you- What is the measurement?</p>
Heather Bilderback	Unmask our kids	It is way past time to unmask our children. Private schools aren’t masking anymore. Some states never even implemented mask mandates and their public school children are still in school having never worn masks. It is time to live our lives without all the fear and to give these children a sense of normalcy. Take the masks off.
Marina Cotarelo	Positive reinforcement	I appreciate the mask mandate and think it will continue to be advantageous until the numbers begin to drop.
Aubrey DiOrio	Keep mask mandate	Please keep the mask mandate in place until our positive testing rate drops below 5%. We need a solid plan based on data before lifting the mandate. I also think it’s important to get information from all staff and families before reconsidering the mask mandate. Do not just listen to a small group of loud community members.
Jenifer Powell	Please keep mask requirements for schools in Wake County	I am the parent of a 2nd grade student at a Wake County school. Please continue to uphold the mask requirements for Wake County schools at this time to ensure student and staff safety. Before considering making masks optional, please set clear criteria for removing the mask mandate (e.g. lower level of transmission in the community, percentage of positive cases lower than 5%, vaccination rates, etc.) and clear criteria for when a return to masking for everyone would be needed (e.g., higher levels of community transmission, surging cases with new variants, positive cases higher than 5%, etc.). If the mask requirement is lifted at some point in the future, other layers of protection will be even more important (e.g., improved air filtration indoors with HEPA filters, outdoor lunches, etc.), so please put these additional layers in place to protect our students so they are ready if masks become optional in the future. Please weigh high quality scientific evidence from multiple qualified sources higher than politics in making safety decisions. Thank you for your continued efforts to protect students and staff in our schools and our community members who live and interact with students and staff.
Laura Wrobel	End the mask mandate now	<p>Masks don't work, full stop, they never have. The charade of masking our children so you feel better needs to end. The studies are there, and finally reported in all media outlets. Masking is seriously harming our children.</p> <p>Swallow your pride, admit you made a mistake and fix this situation- make masks optional.</p>

Jillian Daneau	Masks	Please make masks optional. If over 70 thousand people can gather in CA for the super bowl and not wear masks, our children, who are the least susceptible to get or spread Covid should not be forced to wear masks at school here in NC. All school age children and staff have the ability now to be vaccinated which lessens the contractibility and spread. Do the right thing and after 2 years, give parents the choice to send their kids to school in masks or not.
Julie Sak	Thank you for keeping our kids safe	I want to say thank you to the school board for making decisions based on science and disease risk. As a scientist and a parent of 2 children in WCPSS schools, my priorities are the safety of my children and the safety of my community. We know the people who are shouting the loudest against vaccinations and masks are the most misinformed. In the history of the world, never have so many misinformed individuals attempted to derail public safety and the greater good. History will show how this all plays out and the school board has a role in keeping our community and our children safe. I thank you for keeping the most vulnerable and those without voices in mind when making decisions for our safety.
Tricia Bordman	Masks	What is the end game? Why can this vote wait till March 1? What happens March 1? Is the tool kit changing again? How easy is it to add one line to the agenda for tonight? Why do you continue to abuse Wake Co children? Just 2 more weeks? Abuse them just 2 more weeks? For safety? You know it and everyone else knows it. It makes zero sense.
Michelle Shields	Keep the mask mandate	Thank you for your efforts to keep our kids in school this year. I was happy to see that the board decided to stick with voting on masks during the March meeting instead of rushing a vote due to political pressure. Wake county is still an area of high transmission, and masks are one of the few consistent layers of protection our children have. Many schools are still lacking HEPA filters, outdoor learning/eating options and the ability to provide social distancing if unmasked. The elementary student vaccination rate is still low, and there are not enough families utilizing the optional testing programs. Many schools have preschool programs with children still too young to be vaccinated. There are many families that need to protect their elderly and/or immunocompromised family members. I hope that as we hopefully continue to watch Covid numbers in our area drop, that the board will urge staff to developer criteria for when it will be acceptable to remove masks and the instances when they would need to once again be worn. I hope the board will be proactive and consider the future and not just the current politically charged climate.
Michelle Jones Craig	Continue masking in schools	Thank you to all of the school board members who have continued to be aware of the COVID metrics and vote to continue masking in schools. It is true that the percent positives are going down, but the numbers are still high. As a parent and educator, I urge you to continue masking for all students and staff. Our youngest children in the community (age 4 and under) cannot be vaccinated

		at this time. These are our WCPSS students' younger siblings and our staff children. We need to continue to protect these children and other vulnerable people at this time.
Jonah Mergen	Masking in Schools	It's clear to anyone who has been paying any attention to any data that masking kids is completely and utterly useless. However, I don't expect the board to consider science, data or reason. I expect that the board does what it has already done, call to emotion and the feeling they need to "do something" to placate people's unfounded fears for children. If you are cowards and unwilling to stand up and follow the data and examples of states that long ago removed masks, I only ask that you do provide actual benchmarks for when you will make logical decisions so I can assure that none of my kids ever go to your public schools so as to avoid mask craziness into eternity. -Jonah Mergen Wake Resident Father of 4 young children
Lulane Chasteen	Non-existent step increase for braillists	In the recent (much appreciated,) pay increases and bonuses, one group of WCPSS employees were overlooked for the step increase. Braillists who work with the visually impaired students in Wake County Public Schools DID NOT receive any step increase. Historically, braillists have been 2 steps above Instructional Assistants. Regular classroom IAs received a 2-step increase and Special Ed IAs received a 3-step increase. Braillists provide important services to students with visual impairments. and many of our students also have other special needs as well. We HOPE this was just an oversight, but, either way, this issue needs to be remedied ASAP. Thank you.

Kirsten Beth Nova Starr	Book Censorship and Support of All Students	<p>I am writing today in defense of children's right to learn and against censorship of books in schools.</p> <p>I've never been a transgender youth. I've never run away from abuse to live with a pack of wolves. I've never solved a murder on a train. I've never escaped from slavery. I've never used my telepathic abilities to manipulate a galactic empire. I've never known a mouse who wielded a sword. I've never saved my money to buy a pair of Coon hounds. I never lived in Nazi occupied Denmark. I've never been a black youth in 1930s America. I've never gone on a life altering journey with an ancient wizard. I've never been a Jewish rebel in Galilee. I never put a wheel on the roof of my school. I've never hidden in a corner of my apartment so that Big Brother couldn't see me.</p> <p>There's a million lives and worlds that I haven't lived, and haven't seen.</p> <p>Thank God that there have been so many amazing authors who could write these worlds and lives and let me experience them, even if only temporarily and tangentially. I grow as a person when I see the world through another's eyes.</p> <p>There is much noise made over the book <i>Melissa's Story</i> (previously published as <i>George</i>) by Alex Gino, and <i>Gender Queer</i> by Maia Kabobe. These books are being slandered as though they are pornographic and somehow harm children. <i>Melissa's Story</i> contains nothing offensive in it, and is certainly less graphic than "Are you there, God? it's Me, Margaret" by Judy Blume. <i>Gender Queer</i> is an autobiographical book about the author's experience growing up asexual in a world that is very sexual. Both books are appropriately for the ages recommended (<i>Melissa's Story</i> for 5th grade, <i>Gender Queer</i> for high school) and both were incredibly enlightening to me as a mother and as a person. Removing books about transgendered individuals doesn't prevent children from being transgendered- it just sends them the message that the school does not accept them for who they are, and that school is not a safe place.</p> <p>No matter how loud the hateful and pro censorship voices are, they do not get to decide who is and who is not worthy of being loved and accepted.</p> <p>WCPSS does not want to go down in history as being on the side of the censor.</p> <p>Do not bow to hatred. Stand up for inclusion and equality and genuine human kindness.</p>
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Dori Butler	Unmask Our kids	<p>Board Members,</p> <p>As I am sure you are aware, masks have become proven to NOT help the spread of covid. I really want to know why you continue to mask our children when even the science has always shown that they don't work. Is it control? Is it your own personal fears? What is it? I want to know why you think you have more control over my children than I do. Why do you get to define our fears and worry. My 3 children have had to deal with this nonsense now for two years. My oldest (9th grade) remembers life before masks and I think has a chance to not be forever traumatized by your choices. My 13 yr old has already dealt with high anxiety and panic attacks before covid and now the mask make it harder for her to breath when she is freaking out. She also deals with acne and eczema that of course masks already make worse. She will faintly remember what life was like before but not near as much as my oldest. Now for my elementary son. His last normal year of school was Kindergarten. Do you remember Kindergarten? I barely do. He has no idea of what normal school life is like. Field trips, seeing your friends faces, not being bullied and treated like a virus (thats a whole different story for later). He had a root canal last Friday. I called it his covid tooth. The dentist even said wearing a mask effects your teeth. He brushed and we did what we could but I do blame covid for his tooth. He regularly doesn't want to go to school because he is so anxious with his mask on and other kids in his class are having major anxiety with school as well. The youngest have been hurt the most. They have no baseline of what normal is. The impacts on these kids of not seeing facial expressions, feeling like a virus and used in a political game will haunt them and you for the rest of our lives. You have the choice to do what is right but you hide behind your own mask and fear of whomever is controlling you. You know masks on children is wrong. You know what you have done and the time is now to stand up for the kids and do what's right. These kids deserve a real childhood and school experience. Please consider voting on that tonight. Please unmask my children.</p>
Brandy Sullivan	Support masking and lunch	<p>Hello! I'm a parent of 3 students that attend WCPS. I fully support COVID protocols &amp; masking. Thanks for providing free lunch to the students. Thanks for the CCK Program. Thanks for all of your support and hard work!</p>

Shanna Kanw	Masks	As a parent of a WCPSS child who lost his grandfather to COVID-19 before vaccinations were an option, I am very against the wake county public school system moving to masks optional. Let's keep everyone safe until more people are vaccinated or it's a requirement for the teachers and students of WCPSS. If Kids need mask breaks, let's get them outside more!
Amy Kirschner	MASKS NEED TO BE OPTIONAL!!!	<p>I beg you, absolutely BEG you to please unmask our children. Please allow us, the parents to these children, to make the choice for what's best for them!!!! These old navy masks aren't doing ANYthing. Our kids are still getting covid!!! They don't feel good for a day or 2 and stay home until they feel better. Just. Like. The. Flu. And We are moving on! HOW? HOW are we still making these poor kids wear these things ALL DAY LONG two years later?! If parents want to protect their children, they have vaccinated them by now! If they are extremely immunocompromised, they have protected their kids from illness way before Covid AND have virtual academy as an option!!! Grown adults who are supposedly way more susceptible to this virus are out and about with no mask and gathering in massive crowds. But our kids are treated this way???</p> <p>PLEASE read the science. PLEASE bring that science to the next board meeting. PLEASE help our board to move on. Let the parents have the right to choose for OUR children!</p> <p>At this point, This is criminal what you guys are subjecting our kids to. CRIMINAL!! Your continuous decision to keep them masked and made to believe that everyone around them is sick and they could be sick themselves is disturbing. You, as a group, are single handedly destroying our kids ability to learn, interact, grow in this school system.</p> <p>WE are the parents. US, not you! Every child is different. A mask on one kid could make them feel safe. BUT a mask on another kid could destroy them. Could put them into depression and give them terrible anxiety which effects their every single day. Their home life, their social life and &lt;what you should be concerned with the most&gt; their education!!!!</p> <p>Coming from a parent with 4 kids in your school district that these masks has literally put one of them in therapy bc of her anxiety. One of them seeing a neurologist for his Brain due to anxiety and depression. And One that has terrible social skills. All due to this masking charade that is STILL going on! I BEG YOU to stop this madness. What will it take for the board to finally start listening to parents? Do You need to see more mental breakdowns from your students? Do You need test scores and education retention to get even worse? Do you need more anxiety diagnoses from kids?? Do you need more depression from these kids?? Do You, God forbid, need more suicides?? You need more parents to scream at the top of their lungs???</p> <p>What!??? Please please tell us!!</p> <p>Unmask our kids!! Masks NEED to be optional!!!!</p>

		<p>It's been 2 years and you guys have given us PARENTS No end in sight! There will always be another variant. There will always be another "surge" but it's our jobs as parents to protect our kids, not yours.</p> <p>Please vote NO MORE MASKS at the next board meeting. Our patience have run out.</p> <p>Masks NEED to be optional. Period.</p>
Cathy Wurst	End mask Mandate now	As so many other states have done by following the science, it is time to end the forced mask mandate in WCPSS now.
Sharon Ross	HR compensation for Pay grade Level increase for Brailleists	Brailleists are pay grade level 20 now and Instructional Assistants with the current change in their pay grade level are on pay grade 22. I feel Brailleists pay grade should be increased to the next level to level 23. Brailleists are required to complete specialized training. We use this training daily when preparing assignments for students. Brailleists have always had a higher pay grade level than Instructional Assistants. A higher pay grade level will make it easier to recruit future brailleists for the school system as well as keep current brailleists within the system.
Heather Taibi	Vote tonight! Mask optional	<p>Shame on you Chair Mahaffey and the other board members who did not support voting on masks tonight, Feb 15. With the DHHS Toolkit dropping the tracing and exclusion requirements there is nothing preventing you from going mask optional - you should be voting tonight. The public knows that Karen Carter called for a vote, but most of the board did not support putting a vote on tonight's agenda. Instead of leading the way as NC's largest school district you are doubling down on ineffective policies that are harming our children's learning and mental health.</p> <p>The data and real-world evidence have evolved. COVID poses very little threat of serious disease for students, even for unvaccinated children. Teachers and students remain well protected by vaccination, with boosters available, and focused protection for those who need it. Preserving in-person learning and de-escalating fear are the best responses to Omicron. Maintaining normal in-person learning and school activities is critical for our students.</p> <p>"18 months ago it was irresponsible and wrong to say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid is similar to the flu</li> <li>• Many people hospitalized or dying just have positive tests, are not sick from Covid</li> <li>• It's most important to protect the vulnerable</li> </ul> <p>Omicron is different. Now, that's basically correct. Covid is adapting to us, we need to adapt."</p>

		<p>- Former CDC Director Tom Frieden Jan 7, 2022</p> <p>Tying mask policies to positive cases (the CDC transmission map) is irrelevant at this point. Let doctors be doctors and treat patients. Let public health agencies update its policies and advice as they are starting to do. Let individuals assess their own health and risk. You should do your jobs to maintain a normal school environment for our children. Vote mask optional tonight!</p>
Zachary Doyle	Masks and mental health	<p>Forcing kids to wear masks in school is absurd and does not follow the science. It's been proven kids don't catch/spread Covid as easily as adults and are at virtually zero risk from death/hospitalization/severe illness. We are ignoring the severe mental health consequences of masking children to mitigate an almost non-existent threat and to make adults feel safe. The suicide rate increases are staggering. Seeing and recognizing facial expressions are essential to kids cognitive and emotional development. They should have never been masked in the first place. Meanwhile we have large events such as the Super Bowl maskless yet we impose this on our children. Our priorities are backwards And it needs to end now</p>
Mary Ann McPherson-Glick	<p>HR Compensation Review Board decision on pay grade level increase for WCPSS Braillists submitted by Jill McKenna.</p>	<p>The Braillists in Wake County have been overlooked and deserve to have an increase in our Pay Grade Level. We have always been paid at 2 grade levels above IAs, but were overlooked. We are required to have special training/certifications, work with students, provide all their educational materials, assistive technology, and work compliantly with the student's IEPs. We also make the environment for our VI students safe providing support at arrival/dismissal, and in Specials like P.E. and Art.</p> <p>TVI (Teachers of the Visually Impaired could not perform their jobs without us because we provide all of the student's modified materials, whether enlargements or braille are needed. Our pay grade level of 20 should be increased to at least grade 23. Special Education IAs got 3 pay grade level increases and IAs got 2 pay grade level increases. Where is the recognition we deserve??</p> <p>PLEASE DO NOT OVERLOOK our dedication to the VI students in WCPSS. We may be small in number and don't have the exposure that IAs have, but that needs to change with a decision to increase our pay grade level to 23 by the HR Compensation Review Board.</p> <p>THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND EFFORT IN THIS DECISION.</p>

Christine Kraft	Masks	Thank you for continuing to require masks in our schools. It is helping. We appreciate your considerate judgment on this matter.
Kerry Sykes	Keep masks in schools	Please continue to require masks in schools. My kids are happy to be back in school after a year of virtual learning and understand the responsibility they have to wear masks to keep themselves and others around them safe from Covid. They are proud to have done their part so well and dropping the safety protocols while Covid is still rampant would tell them that their efforts are no longer valuable and their continued health is no longer a priority. Thank you for your hard work and dedication under such difficult circumstances.
Natalie Roberts	Masks	Masks are not on the agenda this week however, there are some loud voices out there trying to do away with them. There are also many parents who want to continue to require masks for a bit longer. While vaccines are available for kids 5 and up the vaccination rate for that age group is very low. Also vaccines aren't available for the younger siblings of many WCPSS students and the younger children of WCPSS employees. Cases are still extraordinarily high and we can not let our guard down yet. Masks should be required until vaccines are available for the youngest children and cases and test positivity rates are much, much lower and/or vaccination rates of students are much, much higher. Cases and positivity rates are falling and we aren't there yet but with continued vigilance and prevention we can be soon. Even if people think that kids don't suffer the same severity of illness as adults, the disruptions to work and school with every exposure/quarantine cause extreme upheaval for students and their families and must be given proper consideration.
Jamie Parker	Masks	If masks work so well, we wouldn't have sick people. We are human. We will continue to have illnesses that spread. The masks are a human made disease. They have caused countless medical and mental illnesses. The learning loss from lock downs and masks are unconscionable. It is past time to remove the mask mandate. No discussion is required. Make it happen tonight. Thank you for your service to our children and for doing what is best for them.
JoAnna Johnson	Pay Level Increase for Braillists	"We (braillists) appreciate the board considering what we feel was an obvious oversight to not include the specialized braillists in the last round of welcomed and overdue upgrades. While we are not a large or vocal group, the services we provide require training and certifications that allow our visually challenged students to succeed as mandated. While not disparaging the efforts of our special ed support peers, we would like to remind you that our skill level and value at least rises to their level and should be recognized as such..."

Sarah Coggins	Face Coverings	I would like to thank the Board for your continued support of face coverings in our schools. Like all parents, I look forward to the day where they are not necessary, but we just aren't there yet and rushing the process will only worsen the situation. We all know by now that in person classes make a huge difference in our children's education along with their overall wellbeing. To help keep our children in the school building AND healthy, we need to continue with many layers in protecting them from this virus. That includes wearing masks, more students vaccinated, adding air filtration systems in all schools (not just those where the PTA can fund it), and continued testing. I appreciate the time you all put into reviewing the data each month and relying on science to guide us.
julie montague poovey	Democrats for Mask Optional	Registered Democrat who's family has been vaccinated (and boosted when applicable) - who is not a crazy "trumper" . We are imposing requirements on our children for Covid (masks, no socializing at lunch, wearing masks outdoors (Underwood Band) - that the rest of the population is not required to endure. Please return our children's childhood!
Julie Waddle	Masks: Thanks, keep going	<p>Hi! I'd be at this meeting, but my Wake Co student has an afterschool event today.</p> <p>Thank you for your courage in helping keep us all safer during this pandemic. The numbers are still too high for us to stop masks, masks are effective, and are not doing damage to our kids.</p> <p>You know the numbers better than I do, so I won't get into them. Masks' effectiveness is also out there, but I want to share a personal anecdote: my husband and his physical therapist both wore masks at an hour-long, indoor, face-to-face session two weeks ago. That evening, the therapist got a positive COVID test result. My husband tested negative both five and seven days later, and never showed symptoms. The masks worked.</p> <p>My son has been wearing masks every day at school. He has some sensory issues, so we check with him regularly on how he's doing. No problems. No difficulty breathing, no anxiety about how others look. He says it's a little annoying to have to remember yet another thing, but it's just like his lunchbox.</p> <p>We are all tired of this, of course! I'm forgetting my mask in the car more now than I did a year ago. But it's not yet time to let go of the actions that help protect us from illness, death, and new mutations. I just go back to the car every time.</p>

Jalie Whitmore	Criminal Background on Vendors	<p>Dear WCPSS School Board</p> <p>This school board has been not addressing criminal Background checks with regards to paid vendors. This has been brought up to you before for the last 3 months. You are permitting adults to be near our youth - students on school campus need to be safe. Parental consent should be given to let a highly ranked motivational speaker who is on house arrest speak to our athletes. This is terrible what this man has done to women. Wcpss has no regard for families. Please stop texting us family themed messages.</p>
Jennifer Schmidt	Pro book banning	<p>There will be parents at the board meeting who are fighting for non censorship in regards to books in our district libraries. Funny how they don't want books censored but when it comes to our former president, they're all for it.</p> <p>If my children ever come home or read one of the books that are in the ban list, including but not limited to, gender queer, you will have mutiny on your hands because of the mama rage. Not just me. It'll be everywhere. Keep that disgusting SMUT out of our libraries!!!!</p>
Christine Half	Address Scammers	<p>Dear Wake County School Board &amp; Mrs. Moore</p> <p>For the last 20 years people have been using other addresses to show residency and scamming the system. We have students that are at schools taking electives that do not live in wake county. We have families not providing a change of address when necessary. No one is checking this information. Where is the policy that says people who violate policy will be fined. It's ridiculous that no one is held accountable and no one is doing the job.</p>

Theresa Kallman	Masking in schools	<p>We are writing as local physicians to thank the WCPSS school board for the many tough decisions they have made during the course of the pandemic to keep our children safely in school. It is imperative that we continue to follow the NC toolkits guidelines and not remove masks in school until spread is reduced to moderate or low levels of community transmission. The recent change to eliminate quarantine is a step in the right direction towards normalcy for our children. However, at current levels of community spread, this only remains safe if we utilize masking as a mitigation measure. We are excited for the day that our children will be able to remove masks, but it is very important to ensure we follow the safety parameters set to make sure schools can stay open and not become a place of spread. As well, with the current level of high transmission, high risk caregivers and siblings that are too young to be vaccinated are at risk if we remove masks too soon at school. Let's work together to ensure our kids STAY in school, and stay there safely.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Dr. Theresa Kallman  Dr. Priti Elkins-Williams  Dr. Kristin Donoghue  Dr. Shefali Parmar  Dr. Margaret Koscis  Dr. Chitra Chandrasekaren  Dr. Brett Wilson  Dr. Matthew Baldwin  Dr. Mary Wedegaertner  Dr. Tammi Mandel  Dr. Erin Regan  Dr. Jennifer Rochette  Dr. Debra A Rogan  Dr. Edith Nieves Lopes  Dr. Suzanne Benton  Dr. Sarah Owrey  Dr. Amanda R Steventon  Dr. Amanda Zarick  Dr. Michele Benoit-Wilson</p>
Annette McCall	Lack of Step increase for Brailleists	<p>I would like to know why the Brailleist in Wake County have been overlooked for a step increase. IA's, Special Ed IA's and other groups received step increases but we have not. We work very hard to make sure our students have the necessary brailled materials to succeed in class. We have sent</p>

		emails regarding this to HR and the only response for the last 3 months is that it is under review. We have waited long enough and it is time for an answer.
Michelle Clinard-Wagner	Banned books	Just because a book stirs up some uncomfortable feelings doesn't erase its importance in terms of gaining empathy, compassion, humanity, and understanding realities, experiences, and perspectives beyond our own. Banning books is the type of censorship that is likely to lead us to repeat the worst parts of history. It is devolving our humanity and culture, rather than nourishing and evolving through awareness and education. Stop limiting the growth of our culture, society, and our future.
Thomas Upchurch	Mask Mandates	There is ZERO evidence that wearing a mask inhibits the spread of COVID-19. This is particularly true for children, who are at an extremely low risk for this virus. This is AUTHORITARIAN at its core and is fooling no one. STOP this nonsense immediately. VOTE NOW to end this. Saying there is no interest is a LIE. VOTE NOW.
Marissa Barabash	Brailist Grade Level Increase	<p>I am a brailist at Oak Grove Elementary. I have recently come back from a year-long maternity leave. When I came returned from my leave, I was so disappointed and downright appalled to hear that the braillists of Wake County were the only ones not to get a grade level increase.</p> <p>I have been a brailist for close to 7 years now, but I would say that I've been part of the Wake County VI Department most of my life. Both my parents were combination TVI and O&amp;M instructors for over 20 years. So, I guess you could say that I knew how hard everyone in this department works even before I graduated high school. During my 7 years as a brailist, I have found that my job is an essential part in the Wake County Public School System. Just ask all the teachers and students here at Oak Grove. Ask their parents. They would all agree that we deserve this. Many of the teachers here have had a VI student in their classroom more than a dozen times and could tell you how the braillists here have been an integral part of their classrooms.</p> <p>Our county is lucky to have braillists. Most counties don't. Most people don't know what a brailist is. They don't realize that we get certified in braille and are continuously furthering our education that will enable us to help our students in the classroom. IAs, even Special Ed IAs do not have to get certified in anything let alone further their education (and yet they got a grade level increase). We as braillists do all this to help our students become equal parts of this school system. With that in mind, Wake County should make braillists equal parts of its school system and give us what we deserve.</p>

Nuala Crossey	Brailist Step Increase	<p>In the recent pay and step increases, there was one group of WCPSS employees who were overlooked. Braillists in the Visually Impaired Department did not receive ANY step increase. Special Needs IAs were given a three-step increase Regular IAs received a two-step increase. Braillists have historically had a pay rate at two steps above Regular Ed IAs. Many of the students we serve have special needs other than VI. Braillists are required to be certified in braille and our jobs require other specialized skills. I hope that the board will take whatever action is necessary to rectify the situation and give Braillist a minimum two-step increase. Thank you for your time.</p>
Becki Prince	Removing masks from children in Wake County Schools	<p>Masks requitements in Wake County Schools should be removed. These requirements have been removed all over the state and the country. It has been proven that these masks do not prevent Covid-19 or any variant. In fact many states, including ours, have shown no uptake cases where masks are required.</p> <p>The masks are also a hinderance with self-esteem issues, fear and personal relationships. Children do not see the faces of their peers, which interferences with creating normal, healthy relationships.</p> <p>Finally, please remove the mask mandate for all Wake County schools</p>

Kira P Kroboth	Mask Planning, Disabilities/ADA and ABC Collaborative	<p>As a mom of three boys who are immunocompromised, I write today to ask that the District take a deliberate, phased approach when the time comes to make masks optional. I say 'when the time comes' because we have not been told by the CDC or even the NCDHHS that that time is now.</p> <p>I know there is a lot of political pressure - an enormous amount. But politics do not and should not guide public health. I'd like to see the District discuss a plan that would consider community transmission (now and in the future) along with the introduction of other mitigation measures (outdoor eating, learning, ventilation) before removing the mask mandate. A vaccination goal for students should be included as well as increased testing. These tools we have should be in place before removing masks. This plan ideally would be presented to the parents, community and educators for their input before a vote. And when a vote does occur, it needs to provide clear guidance for when masks need to be required again the future. We see what's happening in the UK now, and we know that's usually a sign of what's coming our way. If we see another spike, a comprehensive plan should allow masks to be required again without needing to wait for a Board meeting or scheduled vote.</p> <p>The last few weeks have been tense with information of all types coming from all directions. I have closely followed the mask decisions across the country, and those with disabilities and are more vulnerable to COVID must be closely considered. Even the NCGA passing a law against mask mandates would not override the ADA. Students who have disabilities have the right to a safe and equal learning environment. This means simply saying 'they can wear higher quality masks themselves' isn't going to be a solution. These N95 or KN94 masks are expensive, hard to find and must have a very specific fit to be effective. Who will oversee this approach and provide the masks and proper fitting? Who will ensure access to these masks is equitable to those who need them? These children, mine included, need their public school education and services. In fact, for many there is no other option. School is required to attend and it must be safe. The legal landscape around this is becoming very clear in other states. Please do not forget this group of students and please remember their rights under the ADA.</p> <p>Finally, I wanted to briefly mention the district's guidance from the ABC Collaborative and the discrepancies that are becoming blatantly obvious. I read the article on WRAL from Dr. Benjamin last week saying now is the time to take off the masks. However, when I went to Google, I found multiple examples of interviews with him (some within a 5-day time period) that said nothing similar for other districts or states. In fact, the guidance from Dr. Benjamin and ABC Collaborative</p>
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Myka Knox	Library Books	<p>I find it appalling that the board would even entertain the idea of removing books because they have LGBTQ content. Specifically Melissa (originally published as George) and Genderqueer have been targeted by hate groups such as the Family Research Counsel (identified by the SPLC) for removal because of "pornographic" or "pedofilic" content. Neither book meets the definition for either of these. The issue here is that bigoted people want to suppress and oppress a marginalized group. Do not let these bigots cause more harm to our children by dictating what they can or can't read.</p>
Tamara Shultz	HR Comp Services on Pay Grade increases of Braillist	<p>I would like to bring to your attention that Braillist were overlooked in regards to pay grade and step increases in the recent approval of salary/pay grade changes. Braillist have always been 2 steps above IA's. This precedence was put in place by WCPSS. Now, IA's are on the same pay level as a Braillist. Spec Ed IA's are now being paid a step above the current Braillist pay - which was 3 steps above their past pay grade.</p> <p>As a Braillist, we're required to have certifications and trainings within our position. We provide materials and support for the VI students from arrival to dismissal, specials (PE and Art), recess, field trips, in compliance with the students IEP and VI needs/requirements. I ask that you reconsider the decision to approve Braillist to ALSO receive a step increases. My request would be Step 23 with the responsibilities and daily requirements of a braillist. Thank you for your time and reconsideration to approve and reward our efforts to keep our WCPSS VI students safe and support their educational needs daily.</p>

Amy Garbade	Follow the Science	As the case numbers from the current Omicron surge continue to decline, I ask that you continue to follow science in your decision making. Yes the number of cases and the percent positive of tests have declined. However these values are still elevated and Wake County is still at a high level of transmission according to the CDC. Continue to follow the recommendations of the NCDHHS toolkit and the CDC. It is too soon to relax all COVID layers of protection. Please follow the science and help protect my 4th grader and pre-k student who is not yet eligible to receive the COVID vaccine.
Madan Banda	Mask mandate	In light of the recent requests from various people asking for optional masking in schools, it is my sincere request that decisions be based on science and data. I would urge the board to keep the mask mandate on till the CDC says its safe to remove them in school or till the community transmission reaches pre-omicron levels (i.e very low transmission).

holly wilcher	Faces are essential	<p>Would like to say something from a developmental perspective, as an infant/toddler specialist. I'm extremely concerned about Mr. Koh's recent recommendation to mask toddlers. Children's organs are the most metabolically active the younger they are, and therefore require as much oxygenated blood as they can receive. Wearing a mask obstructs this access and affects all organ development0 including the brain. Masks also creates sensory deprivation for the toddler. Toddlers need to see faces. Faces are essential to their health and wellbeing. We miss critical needs of preverbal toddlers when we cover their faces. They struggle to develop and learn when we cover our faces around them. There is no credible scientific evidence that supports masking any child, let along a toddler.</p> <p>We create sensory deprivation or them when we cover the faces of their primary caregiver. Not being able to see an adult faces or the faces of their peers, research shows us creates anxiety in the young child's brain and body. This is not a short-term thing. This rewires their brain for their lifetime and requires neurobiological rehabilitation to correct. 80% of the brain is developed before age three. We get one chance to develop the brain. One! The malleability of the brain in early childhood is a biological gift! We should not be doing anything to threaten their neurobiology. We do not have one single RCT study showing the safety, efficacy or benefit of masking young children. Why would we do this? However, we have 100 of years of child development research telling us that seeing faces is critical to all aspects of a child's development.</p> <p>We want children to keep children healthy and safe. I think we can all agree on that goal. At the same time, the current experimental virus mitigation measures are not keeping our children emotionally safe. I cannot reiterate enough how much emotional safety is an important part of their overall health and wellbeing. While physical signs of seizures, strokes and nose bleeds, are of course missed with children's' faces covered, an environment void of facial connections for children is an emotionally unsafe environment. Covering the faces of children all day is not keeping them emotionally safe or physically safe.</p> <p>Finally, a child's stress response is supported in healthy relational environments, when someone smiles at a child, this is a neurophysiological event, it makes you healthy and keeps your psychologically safe. When we are reducing these crucial early social exchanges, we're removing a large part of their ability to develop empathy. Empathy is key to health social and emotional development. When we remove their social and emotional development, we're ignoring one of the most powerful contributors of engagement in a community and society. It doesn't matter how much</p>
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math they know, if they don't know how to empathize and get along with others, their future is bleak. There is a critical window for this social and emotional health to develop and that is in early childhood. When we institute policy, practice, and law that is in synchrony with biology of a child's developmental needs, we will see remarkable things happen. When we institute policy, practice and mandates that are out of synchrony with a child's biological development... we have a mental health crisis and worse on our hands.

Please stop the forced masking of children. It's unscientific, it's damaging and its tragic.

Kristin Beller	Gratitude for Masking	<p>Dear Board members,</p> <p>As of today, our county has a 14-day average of 1,177 cases of COVID-19 per 100K residents. As other school boards elect to drop their mask mandates, I am grateful that this Board has not. There are two groups of people in our community who still need community-wide protection from the virus, especially since our vaccination rate for students is not higher: our under 5-year-old population who are ineligible for vaccines and our residents who are severely immunocompromised, including those who are undergoing chemotherapy or have received organ transplants. As a resident, an educator, as someone who has both children in my life who are ineligible to receive a vaccine and family and friends (including public school staff) undergoing chemotherapy, I appreciate the collective community protection you are continuing to enforce.</p> <p>Masks do not hurt or harm children. In addition to there being no reliable or factual scientific evidence that they do, other countries, as well as populations within our own, have had widely-used masking practices during seasons of illness for decades and their children have suffered no physical or emotional harm. It is true that our students' emotional struggles have been exacerbated by a multitude of factors, but solely masking is not one of them. I used to say I cannot wait for things to be normal again, but they won't ever be normal again. We have lived through a period where our students were watching family members go to the hospital or even losing some of them to illness. During that period, we were given a simple, non-intrusive, harmless solution to wear masks, and our students had to hear adults argue against that protection. They had to hear people say aloud in public meetings that something was wrong with their parents for wanting them to wear a mask and wanting others to as well while also knowing that this virus had taken the lives of nearly a million Americans in two years. Hearing adults invalidate their experience of loss and grief - that has caused harm to our children. As we move forward in hope for healing and compassion for those who suffered losses, we have to let go of any notion that our communities will return to the exact same state they were two years ago. And truthfully, after this pandemic has impacted us all so deeply, would we even want it to? Wouldn't that mean that we didn't respond with empathy and compassion if we were to return to "normal"?</p> <p>The benefit and protection masks provide for our 3- and 4-year-old students, our students' younger siblings, our staff's own young children, and the severely immunocompromised family members of both students and staff, combined with the fact that masks do no harm, makes continuing to wear masks the most ethical choice reasonable and principled people can make. Our students are compelled, by law, to attend public schools but they are not compelled by law to become</p>
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		<p>vaccinated, nor are they provided equal protection because their parents decide whether or not they receive a vaccine. Because of this, they do not get a choice about whether they are protected or not from the virus. For all of these reasons, this Board of Education should maintain a mask mandate until at least April. Once the weather warms up, public school staff have more options to open windows in classrooms and on buses or to hold class outside to prevent viral transmission to students with family members who are severely immunocompromised or under 5-years-old. This is most important for classrooms where multiple families within a class may choose to send their children to school unmasked.</p> <p>Thank you for continuing to protect our students and family members who are unable to protect themselves until our conditions change to lessen the risk of passing the virus on to the unprotected, preferably with the conditions of higher student vaccination rates, lower county cases per 100K, and warmer weather to allow for more flexibility for staff decision-making.</p> <p>Sincerely,  Kristin Beller  Wake NCAE President</p>
Marie Best	Only PTA moms allowed in school	<p>To the school board,  Where is the policy that states only if you are on the PTA you are allowed in your child's school? It is a fair question! I am a PTA member not on the board and yet I have witnessed and video recorded PTA volunteers walking in the school. They just get buzzed in no problem. My principal said they have earned being admitted. This should not be allowed.</p>

Amber Kendall	Mask Mandate Must Remain	<p>As a parent, community member, and education professional, I am writing in support of the continued mask mandate in schools. Metrics must be established before the mask mandate can be safely dropped in order to protect our students and teachers from rampant infection, which is both a public health and logistical nightmare. Currently, case numbers in Wake County are near the winter 2020-21 peak, during which WCPSS moved to remote instruction. If the board deems it necessary to continue in-person classes during this and future surges, other mitigation measures are necessary. No one mitigation measure is foolproof, and the best public health approach follows the swiss cheese model, where many measures are employed at the same time. These include masking, aggressive air filtration, contact tracing and isolation, regular testing, and vaccination. Unfortunately, the unsuitably low vaccination rate of students aged 5-12, who have been eligible for vaccination for months, means that the elementary and middle school population will not be protected from infection or hospitalization, and their siblings under 5 are not protected at all. Seeing that the district is not employing other mitigation measures fully, masking remains the easiest and most effective option for keeping schools functional, and students and staff healthy.</p> <p>Additionally, some would argue that masks have a detrimental effect on child development. This is my field of study, and having reviewed the literature, I can attest that those who claim a detrimental effect of masks on student mental health do not have evidence to back them up. Any studies showing a negative impact on mental health do not target mask wearing specifically; they instead show a general effect which can be attributed to the disruption of schedule and loss of life during the pandemic--both of which are mitigated by masks. While some students cannot wear masks for developmental or health reasons, those students already receive dispensation from the district, which makes mask use by those who are able all the more important to maintain their protection.</p> <p>On the other hand, evidence for the benefits of mask usage are myriad. Masks have been shown to decrease spread in school buildings, and a lower viral load through reduced exposure leads to milder illness. If masks usage is downgraded to optional, the wellbeing of everyone, including those who continue to mask, will be threatened. Masking is not a personal choice--it is a public health strategy for the greater good of the community.</p>
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Alicia Angell	Mask Mandate	<p>Please vote today to end the mask mandate.</p> <p>In Wake County, there were only 259 new cases on 2/12. This is in a county of over 1 million people.</p> <p>The high number of cases just over a month ago was 6,694.</p> <p>Out of thousands of cases, there have been 8 children hospitalized in the CapRac region (Wake, Franklin, Johnston, Harnett and Lee Counties) since the beginning of February .</p> <p>This is not a serious illness for most children and all school children and employees can be vaccinated and wear a mask if they choose too.</p> <p>Please end this mandate.</p>
sheila	Masking in schools	<p>I keep seeing stories about how Wake County is growing exponentially but school attendance is not....easy...STOP REQUIRING MASKING, DISTANCING, NON-NORMAL BEHAVIORS. Let our children live, smile, play, and school attendance won't seem such a weird, sad place for them!!!</p>

Jen Petrie	Ending Mask Mandates in School	<p>Masks have been required in school since the students returned to school, but where is the evidence that is helping to accomplish the original goal of slowing the spread? Covid is still here and has continued to spread. There have been recent studies stating that cloth masks do little to nothing to mitigate the protection from covid or the spread of covid, so it is irrational to think that this strategy has a benefit that outweighs the risks. There is no valid scientifically significant evidence for young children that this , so WHY are we continuing to burden the children, also not knowing what kind of effects masks will have for the student's future.</p> <p>It is also not developmentally appropriate for small children to be able to handle wearing PPE. Most adults can not comply with wearing masks over their nose and mouth all day appropriately, what do you think the compliance rate is for a 5 year old kindergarten student? This is completely irrational thinking and anyone who has been in the classroom or worked with or spent time with small children would understand that children do not use these masks the way that they are intended to be used (chewing on the masks, wearing a wet mask all day, sneezing into the mask and not changing it out, placing a mask back on after it has fallen on the floor/been stepped on/shoved into pockets or shot across the classroom). Why are there such strict standards on our children when they are the LEAST likely to be negatively affected by COVID? It all is irrational thinking and lacking common sense if you know anything about young children's behavioral patterns.</p> <p>I am truly sad that adults are letting this happen to small children. You say you want to protect the children, but you are not looking at the whole picture or the child as a whole. Think about the students that are just learning how to read and learning letter sounds... think about the students that have trouble reading social emotional cues... what about the students who have speech and language disorders, sensory disorders, anxiety disorders and even the students that have had MEDICAL exemptions DENIED. How is that trusting medical experts/"the science"?</p> <p>In conclusion, there is simply not enough valid scientific evidence to support cloth masking for children in schools and the risks certainly outweigh the minuscule or non existent benefit. It is time for the return to normalcy for our students TODAY. Let's get back to letting kids be kids.</p>
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