

The following e-mails were submitted to be read to the District 64 Board of Education at their July 15 regular meeting:

Good evening, my name is Dr. Line J. Srinivasan.

- I am a mom of 2 boys, a D64 elementary school student and a 4 year old. I am also a board-certified anesthesiologist and pediatric anesthesiologist.
- First, I want to thank the board and our superintendent for all the multifactorial mitigation strategies aimed to keep our kids and community safe and decrease the spread of Covid 19.
- I would like to help empower the board and our superintendent with evidence-based reasons and science to help make decisions that affect thousands of families and children in the D64 district, as well as affecting the public health in general since we do not live in a bubble. People are (with self-awareness and caution) returning to regular activities- sports, indoor and outdoor events, traveling domestically and abroad.
- Covid infection rates are increasing in the US with eased mask restrictions and increasing diagnoses with the delta variant, which by end of June has made up about 20% of US cases and growing because it is more contagious. The average person infected with the delta variant can infect 3.5-4 other people as opposed to 2.5 people by the original strain. Vaccinated people are still getting the Delta variant. Israel (highly vaccinated with Pfizer and a country that thus gives us good insight) recently had to reinstate their indoor mask policy due to rising rates.
- Kids 6 months to under 12 do not qualify for vaccination YET.
- Appx. 3000 kids grade K-5 are non-vaccine eligible in D64.
- Although most kids infected with covid have recovered well and fewer kids, thankfully, have had the severe multi-system inflammatory syndrome; however we in the medical community at large still have concerns about sequelae from covid and unpredictability of who it will affect and severity. We don't know who around us have chronic medical conditions – illnesses both kids and adults can have- such as leukemia/lymphoma, cancers and on chemotherapy and have weakened immune systems, cardiac conditions, pulmonary diseases, or are on immunosuppressive therapy.
- I deal with risks versus benefits and risk versus risk analysis every day when taking care of patients. The risks of wearing masks <<< risk of not wearing masks in an unvaccinated population especially indoors and congregated setting. Especially when taking into consideration that one person's choice to not mask their child or themselves (if either not vaccinated) indirectly affects other families and the community at large outside of D64, because we do not live in a closed system.
- Masking helps decrease covid and non-covid respiratory transmitted illness & thus minimize need to miss school/get covid testing+ quarantining until results back for non-vaccine eligible children
- There is a reason why we wear masks in the operating room. Why front line healthcare workers have worn an N95 with mask over and faceshield for the past 16 months at work while caring for known covid patients and even negative covid tested patients. Masks work.

It is delightful to have had our kids back in-person in public school again and it has shown us that peer-peer transmission is low WITH masks both in public and private schools. Children have been getting covid in general more commonly from scenarios where they are not masking, not from peer-peer transmission in school.

- We must remain vigilant and self-aware of decisions for our own health and that of all others. This is public health.

- During the current status, since not all kids are vaccine eligible, masks on for all students and faculty can decrease spread, keep kids in-person for school, and decrease breakthrough transmission of rising variants during school hours. Masks on for all students allows for no judgement or stigmata of anyone by anyone.

Thank you for your time.

Line Srinivasan, M.D.

MAKE MASKS OPTIONAL

I agree with the sentiments of so many who have spoken before me... I am writing on behalf of my two incoming 2nd graders requesting our representative board to take the lead - make masks optional in D64.

Jamie Tinaglia Lee

Masks in School

My husband and I have a child in grade school in District 64. We have received an email from Dr. Olsen regarding COVID-19 related guidelines including physical distancing, wearing of mask by the unvaccinated, whether adult or child, and additional measures. Please have the record reflect that we are in favor of the guidelines, which track CDC and state guidelines. Our daughter wore a mask when speedskating at Oakton with the speedskating club and at summer camp through the Park Ridge Park District, both of which including physical exertion. Wearing a mask while sitting at a desk will be easy by comparison, and small sacrifice to make to protect other people. She may only be 10, but she understands both the social compact and the golden rule. Thank you for your time.

Stephanie Goetz

Please consider masks option for upcoming school year

I am respectfully requesting that D64 parents be allowed to make the decision whether or not to have their children wear masks in the upcoming school year and to make

If COVID cases rise sharply in our area a mask mandate can quickly and easily be put in place. Those who would like more protection for their child, particularly vulnerable children can have their child wear a mask, and those who are comfortable with their child, not wearing a mask can choose for their child not to wear one. Although this is not as effective as everyone wearing a mask with the low case rates and high vaccination if those with parents who are concerned about COVID continue to have their children all wear masks this offers an increased measure of protection and allows for some compromise. This does not have to be an all-or-nothing situation given the current numbers in the state of Illinois and more importantly in Park Ridge. Again if the health situation in our area changes due to the variant or other factors a mask mandate is easy to implement.

Gemma Bolech - parent, resident

primary school masking protocols

Please require that primary students and unvaccinated adults wear masks in school until there is an approved and widely available vaccine for children under 12 years. This is no less an issue of keeping children safe than putting locks on the entrances of the district's buildings. Research - not facebook or instagram posts, but actual research conducted by people trained in the scientific method - has indicated that the delta variant is significantly more contagious than the variants prevalent at the beginning of the 2020 school year. It is hard to fathom that basic public health and safety has become a topic of debate, but since it has, I respectfully ask that you continue to require all unvaccinated individuals within the district's buildings to wear face coverings.

Sincerely,

Carter Esterling

Universal masking for all those unvaccinated

In order to ensure the safety of all in our schools, please require masking for all those who are unvaccinated at the start of the school year.

Since the vaccine is currently only available to children age 12 and older, all of our younger students should be required to wear masks indoors.

I taught a full year starting in person last school year in a nearby suburban district; we had no spread and no quarantines. This was in tremendous part because of our strict adherence to masking indoors. My district has already announced (without fanfare) that all unvaccinated will be masked. This shouldn't even be a debate here; it's what is safe, sound, based on science and recommended by virtually all public health agencies. We should strive for what is best for all children; in this case, what is best and safest for every child is to require universal masking for all unvaccinated individuals until there is a widely available, approved vaccine for everyone.

Thank you,
Megan Roberts

masks for unvaccinated students

D64 Board and Admin,

We should continue to experience the hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic **collectively**. CDC guidelines matter. I support the use of masks on all unvaccinated children for the safety of their in-school education.

--

Amy Bartucci

Masking in schools this fall

To the Board,

We are writing today in support of following the CDC and the Illinois guidelines of keeping masks on children in schools until there is the opportunity for them to be vaccinated. Any other course of action would be risking the health and well-being of our children. Public schools follow public health guidelines. Period. Any parents that feel differently can pay good money to send their kids to schools that don't take public health into consideration.

In a perfect world no one WANTS to wear a mask, but right now the world isn't perfect, its dangerous and this virus is not letting up. States around ours are seeing surges and we need to do our part to keep OUR community safe. Until the time comes that our children are old enough to get vaccinated, we expect the public schools to keep our kids safety and health as a top priority.

Thank you,
Lauren and Jason Rapisand

Following the CDC guidelines

Dear School Board Members and Dr. Olson,

First off, thank you for your service. I cannot attend tonight's meeting, because I am engaging in my own public service on the Park Board, but I wanted to share my comments.

I applaud the work the District has done in attempting to protect our children from coronavirus. While children have had a lower incidence of fatalities, there have been children who have suffered longterm effects and died. I can't imagine how devastated their parents must be, and I sincerely hope that no families in our community have to suffer that fate.

Like many other parents in this town, I worry about the mental health and emotional well-being of my kids. It was difficult for all of us when they were home for remote learning. I especially saw manifestations in my younger child from being isolated from her peers. After just one day of being back in class with her peers, I saw improvement. But I also remember worrying about the possibility of my daughter's class having to quarantine for a couple weeks, should a classmate test positive. My kids were lucky to not have that experience, but I know that other

families did have to contend with a return to remote learning under those circumstances. Making safety measures optional for a population of children too young to be vaccinated is reckless. In addition to keeping our kids safe from coronavirus, many families also had their kids bringing home far less cases of colds, flus, and other common maladies this past spring. Not only were they physically healthier, but they didn't have to miss as much in class instruction for fear of infecting classmates.

Coronavirus has not been eliminated, and now there are new variants that are potentially more dangerous. It would be patently illogical to take away the protections that have kept our kids safe before the dangers have passed. To paraphrase the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, it would be like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet. I trust that our School Board will do the right thing and continue to follow the recommendations of the CDC.

Sincerely,
Jennifer LaDuke

Yes to Masks in the fall!

Hello D64 School Board,

I am writing to let you know I am in favor of mandatory masks for kids in k-8. Outside can be an exception.

Covid is not over. My children do just fine with masks. Sports, school, camp, grocery store. Covid isn't spread in schools because of the masks being worn. I cannot control what other kids do outside of school, so I hope that in school everyone is masked.

My daughters will be in Kindergarten and 3rd grade at Carpenter. Neither one has complained about wearing masks (except outside hot days or in the car- which we don't have to do anymore).

They also told me they WANT to wear masks at school- they feel safe. They will also feel safe if the other children did too. Having a choice will make some younger kids less likely to comply.

My husband and I both work in health care and we still wear masks at work.

Please review the science out there and decide to mandate masks for k-8.

Thank you,
Kelly Mearis

Masking
Hello Dr. Olson and Board members,

I know tonight meeting will include a conversation regarding the masking rules for our district during the 2021/2022 school year.

I want to express my support for having the children unmasked while outside. I feel this is especially important during outdoor recess and gym.

I also feel it would be beneficial for our children to be able to go outside for lessons as much as possible while the weather is nice. This will allow them to get masks breaks during the day and fresh air while limiting exposure.

While I feel masks being optional for all our d64 children during the first part of the year is appropriate, I know others feel differently.

I just hope we can follow what almost everyone can agree on. The chance of spreading COVID in an outdoor setting is extremely low. Please consider allowing our children to be unmasked while outdoors.

Thank you,

Kelly Lawrence

Public Comment for tonight's meeting

Hello,

I submitted a longer letter to the members of the board. But I would also like to submit this shorter comment that is more appropriate if emails will be read into the record this evening (I'm not sure if that is the case. I will try to be present in person, but I'm not sure that will be possible tonight.) My public statement is provided below:

Hello,

I submitted a longer letter to the members of the board. But I would also like to submit this shorter comment that is more appropriate if emails will be read into the record this evening (I'm not sure if that is the case. I will try to be present in person, but I'm not sure that will be possible tonight.) My public statement is provided below:

Public Statement for 7/15/2021 – D64 Parent, Dr. Ginger Pennington

Dear D64 Administrators and board Members,

I would like to offer three points for the public and school district to keep in mind when evaluating options for a policy on masking this fall.

1) In a few months, the covid vaccine should be approved for kids under 12. When that happens, children and their families will have a true choice and a "mask optional" policy would be appropriate. But until that time, kids under 12 have no choice. If they want a public education, which is their right under law, they should be able to go to public school without being exposed to unmasked, unvaccinated children. Federal and state guidance is

masks indoors for the unvaccinated. Schools should be following that guidance, and those that don't are putting themselves in legal jeopardy should severe illness occur.

2) Regarding the science --- as in all areas, scientific studies produce a range of outcomes. Some support a theory / claim, some do not. That doesn't mean science is "wrong" or "pointless" or "biased." And it doesn't mean it's okay to just pick the studies that support one's favored opinion and run with only those, which is what the "mask optional" proponents are doing. Well-trained scientists understand that moderating variables (plus the basic laws of probability, mere chance) effect the outcomes of any individual study. And any individual study has its own weaknesses and strengths. That's why, in science, we look to the TOTALITY OF THE EVIDENCE to see which claims receive the strongest support. That is what the CDC, IDPH, ISBE, etc are doing --- taking their lead from what the scientific consensus is at this time, which is that unvaccinated people should wear masks indoors.

3). Masks in elementary schools are a small sacrifice, for only a few more months, for the common good of ALL children, especially immunocompromised kids. Masks reduce risk for both the person wearing it, and the people not. It's not just a "personal choice," because each parent's choice effects other kids in the school.

A "mask optional" policy seems appropriate only when families have a choice to vaccinate their younger children for protection. Families of high schoolers have that choice now, but those of us with younger children must wait a few more months. In elementary/middle school, ALL families deserve a safe public education in schools that are following scientific consensus and state and federal guidance. We need to protect the most vulnerable and teach our children compassion for others

Thank you for your service and hard work.

Ginger Pennington

Please make masks optional

Good evening to all,

In being that I can not attend the meeting in person , I would like to voice my concerns and opinion on this topic.

As a parent, we need to voice our opinion for our children. It has been a rough year full of changes, unknowns etc. Our children have adapted to these changes.... some did ok, some struggled.

I believe that the mask wearing should be optional. Parents should be able to make that decision for their children just like some are choosing to vaccinate their children and some are not. We all know what is best for our families. Our children's social and emotional development along with physical health is very important. Children should not be discriminated based on age or whether they have had the vaccine or not.
Please make masks optional.

Nicole Ancona

CDC and D64 Mask Policy

D64 did such a great job keeping our students safe last year. Per the most recent CDC guidance for schools: students who are unvaccinated should continue to mask due to the close proximity of students within a school. Although I'm glad for both of my students to return to school this coming school year, it is clear that social distancing cannot be maintained with the return of all students. Therefore, I hope to see D64 continue to do an amazing job at keeping all students and staff safe by following the new guidelines of masking for the unvaccinated population. Students did well last year and with COVID numbers low this is not the time to loosen masking protocols. There are students with health conditions including my own children which render them high risk if COVID is contracted. Our youngest students are not eligible for vaccination yet and again due to the inability to social distance, masking is one of the last ways to keep our youngest students safe. Please, I urge you to continue one of the only ways we are able to help keep our students safe from COVID and quarantining: masking.
Thank you.

Natasha

Masking Our Children

I would like to go on the record as stating that masks should be optional for all students. As it stands, there is an abundance of evidence which indicates that masks are of questionable utility, i.e. the Danish mask study, but going a step further and making the assumption that a group of children will "properly" wear the mask for an entire day is ludicrous.

Forcing children to conceal their face behind a mask is harmful for their social development and their ability to assess and comprehend facial cues. The virus poses no risk to children, and that needs to be kept in mind. In addition, fear of children spreading the virus to teachers has been proven to be entirely unfounded.

It should also be noted that the experience of closing schools and locking down the entirety of healthy society is unprecedented throughout history. Further, a quick glimpse reveals that most schools remained open around the world and did not require masks during the pandemic and no adverse consequences were suffered.

At this point in July of 2021, any adult that wishes to be vaccinated has no obstacle in doing so. Anyone who has chosen not to be vaccinated, has assessed the risk of their choice and is comfortable with their decision.

I will anticipate a couple of objections: some adults may claim that they are unable to take the vaccine for medical reasons or others may claim that they live in a multi-generational household including grandparents. In either case, those individuals are completely entitled to wear masks or isolate themselves from others if they choose to do so. They should not, however, be entitled to use the force of the school board or local government to impose their values and beliefs on others.

Ultimately, this entire discussion as to masking comes down to a small, vocal minority attempting to use the force of local government to impose its values and standards upon others. The dangers of that should be self-evident.

My sentiments are that personal responsibility and choice should always prevail over the wishes of those who wish to use local government as a means to impose upon others.

Finally, this entire business with the lanyards is nonsensical. The school system should take a cue from private business, in which clients are instructed to remain home if they feel ill. No business requires you to wear a lanyard signifying your health status upon entry. It is very simple, if the kids do not feel well they should stay home. No lanyard is necessary.

I call upon the school board to have some compassion for our children.

George Gineris
Father of Three Students in D64

Covid protocols
Please share as a public comment.

Dear District 64 board members -

As the district continue to prepare for the next school year, I just wanted to share my continued support for the Board's position to follow appropriate CDC guidance around COVID mitigation.

I can only imagine the push you may be receiving from parents and other stakeholders who would like us to move away from these protocols, especially mandatory mask wearing. However, given that our students under 12 are not yet eligible for vaccines and there are numerous variants spreading through the country, I think it is

I know that for our family, it's imperative that both of our daughters be safe from the virus, not only for their sake but also for the sake of members of our family who are significantly immunocompromised and would be severely ill if they were to contract the virus. And while we could require our children to wear masks while other

students do not, numerous health experts have shared that mask wearing decreases when only some members of the school wear them while others do not.

Again, I appreciate your willingness to follow national guidance and place health and safety at the heart of your decisions. I know it's not always a popular path, but it is one that I believe is much appreciated by many, many members of the larger D64 family.

Monica Milligan

Please unmask our children!

Dear District 64 Community,

We have had a year and a half of a poor learning environment for our students. They have been masked, socially distanced, taught through e-learning and isolated from other children. As a former educator, I know, as our very well-educated teachers also know, this is not how children learn. Children need to see a teacher's smiling face, they need to see and hear the teacher pronouncing words. Learners learn best when they use more than one of their senses. Masking children hinders visual, aural, and linguistic learning. This causes students to struggle and fall further behind. I moved to Park Ridge because of the rigorous curriculum and highly-rated education at District 64 schools. At this point in the pandemic, it is time to get back to educating our students. Please unmask our children and resume the high quality teaching and education that we were used to before covid.

Thank you,
Terri Gineris
Mother of three district 64 daughters

Continue the policy of masks!

Dear District 64 Board Members:

I am writing to urge your support in continuing the policy of mask usage for students and faculty/staff, regardless of the vaccination status of the individual or their families. An unmasked and unvaccinated child living in a home with unvaccinated parents/family members poses an increased and wholly unnecessary risk of transmitting the coronavirus to other unmasked (and even masked) children. The vaccination rate in our community is much too low to even consider allowing unmasked individuals to be around a population that is currently ineligible for the covid vaccine.

My daughter is a rising first grader. At no point has she *ever* even complained about wearing masks (even in her 100% outdoor summer camp, where temperatures have soared to over 90 degrees some days). On the way to an outing, she usually puts her mask on as soon as we enter our car, rather than at the last possible second before entering the activity. At pickup from school or summer camp, on the walk to our car, she usually is too busy chatting about her day

to listen to me tell her she can take the mask off, and often I'll see her in the rearview mirror with it still on. These experiences tell me she does not mind the mask. She understands that her well-fitting mask protects her from being exposed to the coronavirus, and it acts as her ticket to safe socialization. She also understands that her mask protects her from other viruses, such as the common cold, etc, as she has dealt with the consequences of staying home from school on two occasions over the last year due to non-covid related sniffles.

Please help stop the spread of the virus, and keep masks mandatory for the time-being.

Sincerely,

Jessika Ishu
District 64 Parent

Masks

The CDC and the IDPH have updated their recommendations for K-12 schools this fall. The agencies have said that we need a layered approach. It is recommended that eligible kids get vaccinated. If they are not vaccinated, kids need to socially distance, wear masks, wash hands, have well ventilated classrooms, and it has been recommended that the district implement surveillance testing.

This is all against the backdrop of the Delta variant, which has a 1000% higher viral load and is 200% more transmissible than what we were experiencing last school year.

I am writing to urge D64 to do the right thing for our kids and our community. We had a relatively successful spring last year, in part due to the measures outlined above: masking, social distancing, well ventilated classrooms, quarantining when cases are identified. The district needs to think proactively and comprehensively on how to keep our kids and the community safe.

Andrea Cline

2021-2022 guidance for Covid

Thank you to Dr Olson for the update on the state's guidance for school's this week. As a mom of two kids attending elementary school in the fall, any early information is very helpful!

We are hopeful that trends continue to move in the right direction and that children under the age of 12 are eligible for vaccines by August/September.

I am by no means an expert ,but until we see that rollout, I do hope we continue with masks at least at the start of the year for many weeks until the percentage vaccinated gets to a level safe enough to prevent a school transmission outbreak and/or we have actual trends of D64 in person school attendance vs. covid case rates as a data point.

Any updated guidance on quarantine rules for next year would be helpful before school starts as well (i.e. 14 days vs 7 days with a negative test)

Thank you,
Ciara Bochenek

Questions for tonight's meeting

Good morning!

I apologize that I cannot attend in person to ask these questions, but am hoping that the board will read and answer them.

I recognize that at the elementary grade level there is no way that mask wearing by students will be eliminated by the start of the school year. It pains me to accept this, but I'm a realist. I am, however, hopeful in having the board consider a few options:

1. Will the students be able to remove their masks while outdoors?
2. Will the quarantine rules change so that if a student is infected with COVID-19 only they must quarantine and not the entire class?
3. Will there be a better solution for lunch? My youngest daughter sat on a beach towel on the gym floor to eat her lunch while in person in the spring, not ideal and not looking to repeat that.

Thank you for your consideration-
Christy Shebuski
Mom to 2 girls at Field Elementary

July 15 public comment

Dear members of the District 64 School Board,

I am writing to implore you to follow the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE guidance for our students return to school this fall. The health of our communities depend on you exercising good judgement and trusting in the qualifications of our public health officials. This means to keep ALL students masked since they are not vaccinated.

Yes, I can choose to keep my child masked but science has shown over and over again that masks protect others from the wearer, not the wearer from others.

I understand the enormous pressure you are feeling from the community to follow the science and unmask the children. Well the science and health officials not just in the US but around the world show that if you are not vaccinated, you need to wear a mask especially when it is indoors. The research shows us that our children are best protected when they are masked and distanced at school.

Please put the best interest of all the children first and vote to follow the CDC guidelines.

Sincerely,

Robin Button

In support of D64 following CDC recommendations

Dear board members,

My family would like to show our support in your decision to continue to follow CDC recommendations to ensure the safety of our children and community.

I think most of us can agree that our children and families have benefited from the return to school in-person. The school support staff and teachers have worked so hard to make in person learning work. For that, we are grateful.

It is great news that the majority of the school staff are vaccinated. Until our children (both ages less than 12) are eligible for vaccination, they fully understand that we are all doing our part to do what it takes to keep them in school with their teachers and classmates, including indoor masking.

While there are evolving variants becoming more of concern, delta and others, this is not the time to pretend that the pandemic is over. It is far from over. Over 99% Covid deaths in the US during the month of June 2021 were unvaccinated. Children can get sick. Long Covid symptoms occur in children as well as adults.

We support you, our community leaders to continue the good fight and follow the current CDC recommendations with indoor masking.

Thank you,
Alice Yao-Lee, MD
D64 parent

Pro Mask Mandate

Dear D64 Board and Dr. Olson,

Please uphold the guidelines of the CDC and Illinois State Board of Education regarding mask wearing for non vaccinated children.

We need safety for our kids. Mask wearing will help us achieve more in school continuity.

I would even go a step further and have a kids wear them to protect the unvaccinated children. Even vaccinated people may be asymptomatic and carry covid19 to unvaccinated kids.

The variants are more contagious and we need to lock this down. It is not a popularity contest, a matter of "choice" or political. It is a matter of following our leadership in science to keep our community and kids safe to attend in person school.

Best regards,
Jennifer and Tony Kuzminski
Parents of Emerson 7th Grader

Masks

Good evening Board. My children have no issues wearing a mask. But, two of them struggled greatly being at home during remote learning and we cannot risk safety or returning to remote learning. Also, two of them are not old enough to be vaccinated. We are compelled to school our children and this is our school district so we must send them to D64. En loco parentis holds our district responsible for the safety of our children. Anything that knowingly puts children at risk of any form should be made as safe as possible. The science is quite real and vaccinations, masks, and distance are the safest bet. To not require masks would be incredibly irresponsible and, frankly, completely unacceptable in exposing our children. Believe me, if anything happens to my children or others due to ignoring the recommendations of the CDC or state, there will be action toward accountability. Just look at the reports of children in the ICU and being ventilated in Mississippi and Missouri and understand the responsibility we have to protect those who are at risk.

Thank you,

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Dr. Gregory J. Bublitz

Mandate mask-wearing in D64

I'm writing today to express my strong support for mandatory mask wearing in D64 as we begin the 2021-22 school year.

As the parent of a Field 1st grader and a Jefferson pre-schooler, it is my firm belief that all students, staff, and faculty should wear masks as we begin the next school year, regardless of vaccination status.

No child in elementary school will be eligible for a vaccination until after school starts and many students will start middle school before they are eligible.

We asked our youngest children to do the hard thing early on in the pandemic and they largely rose to the occasion. Now it's everyone else's turn to make the choices that best protect them, until they are eligible to be vaccinated. Masks work. Please make them required until more students can be vaccinated.

D64 has done a wonderful job protecting students, staff, and faculty, and I want to see that continue, until the youngest among us can be vaccinated.

Thank you,

Nicole Hrycyk

My Request

Hello,

I trust educators to create policies and procedures that they feel work best in schools. However, when there is a very real threat to our children's health and safety, I want to make my thoughts and expectations clear.

I am the mother of an incoming kindergartener. I chose to keep my son home last year due to the many unknowns with Covid. We are excited to be starting the school year with a fresh optimism and better understanding of the science surrounding Covid-19. And the science is clear: universal masking works. As a result, I would like to share my unwavering support for required masking in the elementary schools.

Some may argue that the vaccinated can go mask-free. And yes—we know that vaccines work, but there is some question about how well they will continue to work with new variants circulating. Until children are eligible for the vaccine, all bodies in the school building should be required to mask to protect our most vulnerable population, our unvaccinated little ones.

I love Park Ridge, and we are proud to call this community home. Please continue to make us all proud by following the science and making evidence-based decisions to keep our loved ones safe.

Cheers to health in the new school year!
Erica Green

Fall School

Dear school board,

I am writing to be on the record, as a parent of 2 children in the district (Emerson and Carpenter). It is extremely important that the board follows health guidance that masks should not be optional for unvaccinated students, in order to keep our schools open as the Delta variant is surely a public health concern. Allowing a surge in cases would not be wise and could negatively affect our students more than the wearing of masks. Also, in encouraging the mask wearing for the unvaccinated, you may help incentivise more students who are eligible to get vaccinated. I simply do not want to see us set backwards in our progress to defeat the pandemic locally and those lobbying to drop masks for the unvaccinated are not speaking on behalf of many parents. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Warm regards,

Allison Jones

Public Comment July15

I support mask optional for all students in D64 this school year.

After this past year of great hardships that included at home schooling, a hybrid schedule, and finally a return to school with numerous restrictions (mask wearing at all times, dividers at every desk, 6' of separation, eating lunch on the hallway floor, not being allowed to play with your friends at recess, and countless others) it is far overdue to return our children to a normal school environment. Please look at the data surrounding this issue rationally, allow mask optional and stop the deterioration of the D64 education system our families have grown to love and respect.

-Robert Rado

masks work

Hi Board,

As I'm sure you all know, masks are effective at stopping / slowing the spread of COVID, which is why the CDC recommends unvaccinated people use them indoors. Given that many children in D64 schools are currently too young to be vaccinated—for the safety of our children and community—please follow CDC guidelines and require them to be worn in the schools. I know we all want our children to be safe and back in school full time. This measure will help achieve those goals.

Sincerely,
Alice Dobrinsky

public comments

To the School Superintendents, School Board Executives, Principals and Administration. This is your personal Notice of Liability. You are not medical professionals and therefore, would be unlawfully practicing medicine by prescribing, recommending or using pressure tactics to coerce non-vaccinated students to be treated with an experimental vaccine that has serious potential risks to the health and well-being of children. Any coercion or pressure tactics used for students to be vaccinated (including but not limited to mask wearing and other social distancing requirements) contravenes the Nuremberg Code, the Helsinki Declaration and Federal Law. You may be held personally and criminally liable for any injuries or deaths that occur. I have attached a two page letter for your reference. Optional mask wearing for students is the only prudent course of action.

Peter Juiris

Dear Board Members,

I am writing in regard to mask guidelines for our schools this fall. As a parent of children not yet eligible for vaccination, I fully support the current CDC guidelines outlined in the recent email from Dr. Olson. Mask wearing this past year played a significant part in preventing the spread of covid in our schools, and is still necessary to prevent the spread of covid among the unvaccinated. It would be a shame to risk a return to a hybrid model in the future because of a rush to relax masking guidelines. I hope our district will continue to follow CDC recommendations to ensure the safety of our children, faculty, and staff.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Mierisch
Parent of rising 3rd grader at Field and 6th Grader at Emerson

**Comment re CDC mask guidance
Re-sending, to correct board address.**

Melissa

D64 Board Members and Superintendent Olson:

Thank you for continuing to affirm and follow the guidance provided by CDC and public health experts. Given that the CDC recommends masking indoors for those who are not vaccinated and that most of the D64 student population is not yet eligible for the COVID vaccine, it makes sense that our students continue to be masked in the fall.

I am a parent of two children at Carpenter, and I truly appreciate all of the work that the district has done to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff while also striving for what's equally important: keeping our kids in in-person schooling. You cannot have the latter without paying attention to the former. We should not prematurely remove the mask requirement and risk an outbreak in our schools. Doing so would be like stopping running 10 meters before the finish line.

Thank you,
Melissa Hulting

Public Comment July 15

As a parent of 2 children in D64, I want my comment on record: Masking children in Fall needs to be optional!!! This is a decision each parent/guarding should make for their children

Considering we are in phase 5, positivity rate is extremely low, teachers and staff are vaccinated, and children have been shown not to transmit covid at the same rate as adults, as well as having much less severe impact.

I really don't want to hear about CDC, ISBE and other agencies forcing district's hand. Recent announcements make it clear masking and other covid protocols lie with the district administration. Fed funds will not be reduced based on schools decision regarding masks; and even if state and federal agencies would change funding their current contribution is not significant enough to matter. Of the \$80 million in revenues last year 84% came from our taxes - that's \$68 million!!!! Therefore the voice that matters the most here is that of the parents, speaking on behalf of their children

Thank you
Ivana Miller

Public Comment July 15

I support mask optional for all students in D64 this school year.

Thank you,
Diana Filo

In support of masks for 2021-2022 school year

Dear School Board Members,

I'm writing in response to Dr. Olson's email today, which summarized updated guidance from the CDC, IDPH, and ISBE and ended with the statement "

The summarized guidance includes the wearing of masks by the unvaccinated, which includes all children under age 12. I fully support mask wearing by these students as long as doing so remains the prevailing public health recommendation by the aforementioned public health groups.

I've seen some local social media chatter in support of making masks optional for students, which I do not support. I understand that mask wearing is difficult for some children, and they'd probably all prefer not to wear them. However, with such a large population of students that remain unvaccinated, my 10-year-old son included, and with covid variants surging in some parts of the country, now is not the time to disregard the advice of public health experts. Keeping the schools open and safe should be our number one priority, and following the public health guidance on masks is the best way to do so.

Thank you,
Emily Vlasich (parent of Lincoln and Washington students)

Public Comment for July 15 - Masks

Dear board,

It has come to my attention that there is a group of parents pushing for masks optional for the upcoming school year. As a scientist, I would hope that our district chooses to follow the CDC guidelines that say that masks should be worn unless a child is vaccinated. This is the link to the most recent guidelines.

I have no problem in vaccinated children not wearing a mask and see this as an incentive to get vaccinated. I have one child vaccinated and two that are too young. Our children already know how to wear a mask at school and had no problem in making this happen last year.

Sincerely,
Dr. Rebecca Heneghan PharmD

Mask Policy 2021-2022 School Year

Dear School Board:

I am requesting that you very seriously considering mandating masks in school until most children are able to get vaccinated. I am asking this for these specific reasons:

1. As a clinical psychologist I offer: we have a duty as fellow humans on this earth to do no harm to others. Since none of the children at the elementary schools can yet be vaccinated, and we as of this moment do not know of the long term effects of COVID-19 on our children's brains and immune systems, requiring the wearing of masks for the duration of the school day is a small ask. In addition, I offer, I work with children who have had brain injuries from infections. I promise you, it is not something you wish for your child. I also work with individuals who developed psychosis and mood disorders. I promise you this too is something you do not wish upon your child.

2. As a mother I am working hard to teach my children to take good care of their health. I ask them to brush their teeth twice a day, see a dentist twice a year, wash their hands after events/school/bathroom use, shower on the regular, not pick their noses, eat healthy, limit sugar and screen time intake, etc. Their mental health is impacted by getting schooling in school versus on a screen. I would like to avoid lengthy and multiple school closures due to outbreak. I also would like the school to be a place where good habits and good manners and responsible citizenry is taught and practiced. Please continue to instill the good habit of protecting themselves and others.

3. As a friend I ask you to consider those who will be impacted. My neighbor died of COVID. I have patients and their families who were hit hard, suffered deaths, from COVID. I have an unvaccinated ex-husband. I have an aging mother, a baby nephew. I have a best friend who had a double lung-transplant who got the vaccine and she developed ZERO antibodies from it. I work with vulnerable populations. I work with your children, your parents, your neighbors, and I would prefer to not add greater risk to all of their lives simply because it would be more convenient to not have our children wear masks. Life requires us to do our best to be good to one another. There is enough hardship. And there are so many people suffering so much more greatly than the "suffering" of a mask for a little while longer