

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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**(no subject)**

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**Jill MH Taber** <jill.michal@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 20, 2021 at 10:41 AM

To: Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, Wilena Old Person <woldperson@mcpsmt.org>, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org  
Cc: Nick Taber <nick.taber58@gmail.com>

Superintendent Watson, members of the board of trustees, fellow parents and community members:

Nearly 500 days ago, then-Governor Steve Bullock ordered Montana schools to close due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In the course of those 500 days, our school children have borne burdens they should NEVER have been expected to shoulder. I have watched my son's excitement for school plummet due to school closures, mask requirements, social distancing, and an absolute assault on kids' abilities to learn, socialize, and grow in a school environment.

I'm beyond tired. There's no rhyme, reason, or SCIENCE to support a continued mask requirement in our schools. In 500 days, we've learned that COVID is NOT a pediatric disease (a physician friend told me this even BEFORE the pandemic), that serious cases among children are extremely rare, and that kids are NOT spreading the disease.

It didn't take a pandemic for me to know that my husband and I know what is best for our children and our family. In 500 days, EVERY family within MCPS has chosen how to best deal with COVID.

NO MASKS for 2021-2022 at MCPS. Enough is enough. If the district requires elementary age children to wear masks, telling them their presence is not welcome -- DANGEROUS -- unless they cover their face, we risk a horrendous and continued assault on their confidence as human beings. Further mask mandates for our children will further cripple their passions and abilities for learning, socializing, and maturing into young adults who can think for themselves.

I beg of you: don't require masks for ANY kids at MCPS, K-12, for 2021-2022.

I am available and willing to discuss this issue over the phone or via email.

Thank you,  
Jill Taber  
Lewis & Clark parent  
jill.michal@gmail.com  
406-490-5216

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**Jill MH Taber**

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## 2021-2022 Covid restrictions

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**dianne reinhardt** <dreinhardt@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Jul 21, 2021 at 1:54 PM

If there are continuing COVID restrictions I will be pulling my children out of school. I suspect there are many like me who will not muzzle or instill fear in our children for another year.

Any idea when you will announce your decision for the upcoming year?

Respectfully,

Dianne Reinhardt

Sent from my iPhone

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## **Make masks optional for elementary children please**

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**Katie Kutz** <katie.m.kutz@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Jul 23, 2021 at 8:09 AM

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing today on behalf of the emotional, social and mental health of our youngest Missoula students which has been pushed aside throughout the pandemic. Not one day did I argue against masks last year, in fact I still wear my mask while at work as an ER nurse for my 12 hour shifts without complaint. Not one day did my daughter argue about her mask last year, but now that vaccines have been made available to all of our wonderful teachers, staff, and at-risk caretakers of our students, I am begging that we make masks optional for the 2021-2022 school year. Last year was an unprecedented year, and I'm so glad we all made it through and are stronger for it. We have more information going into this year, and we need to utilize all of that info going forward. We need to stop the virtue signaling and begin to look at the data, as we did when we successfully moved out of the hybrid model and into full time instruction. There are plenty of states and countries that had full time school without masks, let's please draw from that data moving forward. Kids are NOT spreading the virus, regardless of masks. It's time to put their delicate and developing mental, social, and emotional health first.

Influenza kills elementary aged students at the same rate that COVID does, we have never mandated mask wearing for influenza. Although we don't have the current year's suicide data, we do know that on average suicide kills around 8,000 children yearly, where influenza kills around 200 (1). Assuming what we know about influenza and COVID death rates in children being very similar we can assume that suicide will massively outpace COVID once we get that official count next year. Yet we aren't linking the necessary emotional component of seeing other faces, enjoying the smile from a classmate or the reassuring facial expression from a teacher on a job well done. We are social beings, we NEED to see facial expressions for that emotional health. Suicide is far greater of a threat to our children and we need to treat it that way. Young elementary children NEED to see their teachers mouths moving to learn to read, write, and speak correctly. The teachers NEED to see their students' mouths moving to correct their speech. Despite mask mandates in schools last year, every single teacher and student will attest to pulling their mask down frequently during every single school day, which negates the purpose of masking. Speech and language specialists are already seeing the effects of masking young children in preschools and elementary schools. Teachers report the numerous stresses on themselves in trying to teach while also keeping masks on, and constantly nagging students to do the same over and over.

My question is "why"? Please have the decency and respect to give me and other inquiring minds the reasoning behind why we might keep masks this next school year. We are educated, smart, rational decision making adults who just want to know the reasoning and the data behind the choice. We pay taxes to use this public service and we need to be included in the decision making process that affects our children. No one loves our children more than we do as their parents, we will do whatever we need to keep them safe. That being said, their emotional, mental and social health is more at risk here than their physical health, and I am begging you to keep that in mind. Where do we need to put our focus and energy this next year? Enforcing useless mask requirements is not one of them.

The MOA is available, thankfully, for the families that choose to use it. Let's dig through some real data and come to a conclusion based on science, NOT on fear and emotional reactions. We've made the "tough" decision in going back full time and \*YAY\* it worked. No one died, our local COVID numbers continued on their downward trend following that decision, everyone was much better off for returning 5 days a week, and I thank you sincerely for making that decision. Time to look at the data again and make the tough and correct decision to make masking optional in schools this next year.

Thank you so much for your time and commitment to our kids!  
Sincerely, Katie Kutz

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(1) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

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**Re: Please keep masks in school**

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**Jaclyn Foster** <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Jul 27, 2021 at 9:41 AM

Hello,

I wanted to follow up my earlier comment with today's CDC guidance that vaccinated people with unvaccinated children under 12 (which is currently all children under 12) resume wearing masks indoors. It seems to me that if parents of children need to wear masks to prevent transmission to them, children under 12 should also wear masks indoors. I hope you continue to require masks in schools this upcoming year. I have a very hard time seeing our family feeling safe without a mandate.

Jaclyn Foster

On Mon, Jul 19, 2021 at 2:58 PM Jaclyn Foster <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

My daughter is starting kindergarten this year and as far as I have been able to tell, last spring Missoula School District said whether to continue the school masking policies would be evaluated in time for fall semester. I'm not sure where you're at in the decision-making process, but I wanted to draw your attention to the American Academy of Pediatrics' recent statement that all children should be masked in school during the upcoming year:

<https://t.co/fJaPmB9og1>

My daughter is good at wearing a mask but I'm also realistic about whether a 5-year-old will keep one on all day if her friends aren't also wearing one and if her teacher isn't reminding her.

Thank you,  
Jaclyn Foster

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Jaclyn Foster

she/her

No response necessary during evenings or weekends

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**Re: Masks in MCPS for Fall 2021?**

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**Elizabeth Wilder** <eamorey@gmail.com>

Tue, Jul 27, 2021 at 3:45 PM

To: Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;, Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;

Hello! I'm writing again as I never received a reply to my last message inquiring if masks would be required for all students, teachers, and staff in MCPS for Fall 2021.

As you know, the Missoula County Health Department is now asking people to mask up once more, given the recent increase of cases and outbreaks of more contagious variants of COVID-19. They are unable to reinstitute a mask mandate because Governor Gianforte has crippled their ability to do so.

Source: <https://nbcmontana.com/news/coronavirus/missoula-co-officials-urge-public-to-wear-masks>

Additionally, the CDC and other US-based health experts are reversing their prior mask policy. They are now recommending that all people, vaccinated or not, wear masks indoors, including children in schools.

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/27/cdc-to-reverse-indoor-mask-policy-to-recommend-them-for-fully-vaccinated-people-in-covid-hot-spots.html>

I'm writing to ask once more what your plan is with masking for MCPS students and staff for Fall 2021.

I also urge you to follow expert recommendations and require masks for all, at the very least until all children have been given ample opportunity to get vaccinated -- but possibly beyond, given these dangerous new variants.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth Morey  
MOA/Franklin Parent

On Thu, Jul 8, 2021 at 5:03 PM Elizabeth Wilder <eamorey@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello!

I'm writing to inquire if masks will be required of students, staff, and teachers for Fall 2021 until all students have been given ample and easy access to be vaccinated? We are now approximately one month out from when teachers and staff will return to school to prep for the new year, and approximately 6 weeks from the start of the new school year.

As you know, a new, more highly contagious COVID variant is now the dominant strain in the United States, and our state vaccination rate for eligible individuals is not leading to optimistic expectations for how this variant will hit our population.

"The country, which just celebrated the Fourth of July with some of its first large gatherings in more than a year, is headed toward a "dangerous" fall season when delta is expected to cause another surge in new [coronavirus](#) cases, health experts say. [Already the dominant variant in the U.S.](#), delta will hit the states with the lowest vaccination rates the hardest — unless those states and businesses reintroduce mask rules, capacity limits and other public health measures that they've largely rolled back in recent months, experts say."

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/08/us-heading-for-dangerous-fall-with-surge-in-delta-covid-cases-and-return-of-indoor-mask-mandates.html>

I encourage you to offer one of the following for Fall 2021 for MCPS:

- masks required for all students, teachers, and staff until all students have been given easy access to vaccination

7/28/2021

Missoula County Public Schools Mail - Re: Masks in MCPS for Fall 2021?

- allow families to enroll students for MOA until all students have been given easy access to vaccination, and then allow MOA students to choose to return to in-person schooling

I look forward to hearing your plans to keep our school community safe this fall during these unprecedented times. Thank you so much.

Elizabeth Morey  
Franklin/MOA parent

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Beth Morey

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## Unmask children - they are not at high risk

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**Madeline Parker** <madeline.05@hotmail.com>  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 1, 2021 at 9:10 PM

Hello,

Please change mask wearing to be an option for fall 2021. Children are at very low risk to get seriously ill, and the CDC has stated the flu hits children harder than covid-19. I am wondering if the parents who are nervous about covid-19 know how much more mild covid is on children than the flu.

Death rate for children 0-17:

Covid: 0.03%

Flu: 0.40%

Masks have shown to increase the inhalation of carbon dioxide. My kids would complain about headaches after coming home from school, and have been begging me to not have to wear them anymore. I recently asked 10 parents from my school about their stance on masks, and only one parent was having their children wear masks in public places still. That's 90% who are not masking their children.

I was completely supportive of my kids wearing masks while the vaccine was not readily available, but now that it is, it is time to take care of our children's mental, emotional and physical health and help them get back to normal. They have sacrificed so much this past year and a half.

Please make masks optional for fall 2021!

Thank you,  
Madeline Parker

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## preliminary results of pro-mask petition

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**Jaclyn Foster** <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 1, 2021 at 11:37 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, governor@mt.gov, Elsie.Arntzen@mt.gov

Hello,

Last night I started a petition for school boards to implement mask mandates in schools, and for Governor Gianforte to allow school districts to maintain the local control to do so. I plan to collect signatures through August 9, but because I understand some meetings on the subject are happening earlier, I wanted to give you a heads up that we have collected 217 responses in 24 hours so far. The text of the petition can be found below. I am happy to provide preliminary signatures upon request.

Thanks,  
Jaclyn Foster

The signers of this petition support mask mandates in Montana public schools for the Fall 2021 semester. They ask the MT state government to allow school districts the freedom to enact such mandates in accordance with the most recent guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control.

AAP Guidance, July 19, 2021: "Everything possible must be done to keep students in schools in-person...All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use). The AAP recommends universal masking in school at this time for the following reasons:

- a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccination
- protection of unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and to reduce transmission
- lack of a system to monitor vaccine status among students, teachers and staff
- potential difficulty in monitoring or enforcing mask policies for those who are not vaccinated; in the absence of schools being able to conduct this monitoring, universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without the added burden of needing to monitor vaccination status
- possibility of low vaccination uptake within the surrounding school community
- continued concerns for variants that are more easily spread among children, adolescents, and adults"

CDC Guidance, July 27, 2021: "Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the guidance for fully vaccinated people. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place."

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## **Support for Covid 19 Mitigation in school**

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**Nathan Stephens** <nathan.m.stephens@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 2:28 PM

Thank you for protecting student health last year with Covid-19 mitigation measures including online academy, masking, social distancing, group size limits, sanitizing protocols etc. No doubt the protocols you followed last year saved lives. I encourage the school board to do the same for the 2021-2022 school year as well.

Yours in good faith.

Nathan Stephens  
Missoula, Montana

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks for 2021-22 school year

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**kathleen harvey** <harvey62010@hotmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 2:49 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us" <publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us>

I respectfully request that you allow each family to choose what is best for them. I support the freedom to choose to have my children wear a mask or not.

God bless the USA!

Kathleen Harvey

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## COVID Task Force

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**Tim Stoops** <tmstoops@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 2:59 PM

Hello,

In light of this week's COVID Task Force meetings, I'd like to thank you first for your leadership last school year in putting mask mandates, social distancing, and rigorous sanitizing protocols in place. These measures saved lives, and kept children safe. Considering that vaccines are still not available to children under 12, and that the Delta variant is surging, I am hopeful you will continue with the aforementioned protocols for the 2021 fall and winter seasons to keep children safe. This will align our schools with guidance from the CDC and US Secretary of Education.

Tim Stoops  
Parent of 2 Students at Jeannette Rankin Elementary

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Public Comment

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**Av8torguy** <Av8torguy@protonmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 3:22 PM

Reply-To: Av8torguy <Av8torguy@protonmail.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sent with ProtonMail Secure Email.



**Public Comment 8-2-21.pdf**

267K

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Ryan Darling, concerned Father of MCPS students

RE: Mask mandate for healthy school children

First, I would like to cite a German study, Randomized Clinical Trial published in the Journal of the American Medical Association:

Walach H, Weikl R, Prentice J, et al. **Experimental Assessment of Carbon Dioxide Content in Inhaled Air With or Without Face Masks in Healthy Children: A Randomized Clinical Trial.** *JAMA Pediatrics*. Published online June 30, 2021. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2659

- Healthy CO2 blood content should be 0.04% by volume
- Masked children had almost 10 X more CO2 – 0.39%
- Masks increase CO2 in bloodstream to nearly twice allowable level in a closed room.
- Younger children effected the most

Effects of high CO2 in bloodstream (Hypercapnia):

- Drowsiness.
- Skin that looks flushed.
- Trouble concentrating or thinking clearly.
- Dizziness or disorientation.
- Shortness of breath.
- Hyperventilation.
- Feeling tired.
- Changes in the color of the skin.

Symptoms of CO2 overexposure by inhalation include dizziness, headache, nausea, rapid breathing, shortness of breath, deeper breathing, increased heart rate (tachycardia), eye and extremity twitching, cardiac arrhythmia, memory disturbances, lack of concentration, visual and hearing disturbances (including photophobia, ...

Some of us don't trust the guidance from CDC and American Pediatrics, its within our rights to challenge their recommendations.

I would like to remind Missoula County that state law forbids students being removed from school property for not wearing a mask. HB 501 1.4

This does not however prevent administrators, staff, and teachers from taking other punitive actions against my children, through shaming, humiliation, or removal from class. This deeply concerns me as I will not send my children to learn in a hostile environment.

Additionally, the efforts to mandate masking of students appears COERCIVE to influence Parent and Student decisions regarding EXPERIMENTAL vaccines. My daughter was told by her Vice Principal that mask mandates will be in place until 70% of students have been vaccinated. Since the vaccines are experimental, and coercive masking mandates have caused MENTAL SUFFERING and possible physical injury to my children, I believe the following code applies to

all county employees, school board members, school administrators, staff, and teachers involved in the implementation of mask mandates:

## **The Nuremberg Code (1947)**

### ***Permissible Medical Experiments***

*The great weight of the evidence before us to effect that certain types of medical experiments on human beings, when kept within reasonably well-defined bounds, conform to the ethics of the medical profession generally. The protagonists of the practice of human experimentation justify their views on the basis that such experiments yield results for the good of society that are unprocurable by other methods or means of study. All agree, however, that certain basic principles must be observed in order to satisfy moral, ethical and legal concepts:*

1. *The voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential. This means that the person involved should have legal capacity to give consent; should be so situated as to be able to exercise free power of choice, **WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF ANY ELEMENT OF FORCE, FRAUD, DECEIT, DURESS, OVERREACHING, OR OTHER ULTERIOR FORM OF CONSTRAINT OR COERCION**; and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the elements of the subject matter involved as to enable him to make an understanding and enlightened decision. This latter element requires that before the acceptance of an affirmative decision by the experimental subject there should be made known to him the nature, duration, and purpose of the experiment; the method and means by which it is to be conducted; all inconveniences and hazards reasonably to be expected; and the effects upon his health or person which may possibly come from his participation in the experiment.*

*The duty and responsibility for ascertaining the quality of the consent rests upon each individual who initiates, directs, or engages in the experiment. It is a personal duty and responsibility which may not be delegated to another with impunity.*

2. *The experiment should be such as to yield fruitful results for the good of society, unprocurable by other methods or means of study, and **not random and unnecessary in nature.***
3. *The experiment should be so designed and based on the results of animal experimentation and a knowledge of the natural history of the disease or other problem under study that the anticipated results justify the performance of the experiment.*
4. *The experiment should be so conducted as to avoid all unnecessary physical and mental suffering and injury.*
5. *No experiment should be conducted where there is an a priori reason to believe that death or disabling injury will occur; except, perhaps, in those experiments where the experimental physicians also serve as subjects.*
6. *The degree of risk to be taken should never exceed that determined by the humanitarian importance of the problem to be solved by the experiment.*

7. *Proper preparations should be made and adequate facilities provided to protect the experimental subject against even remote possibilities of injury, disability or death.*
8. *The experiment should be conducted only by scientifically qualified persons. The highest degree of skill and care should be required through all stages of the experiment of those who conduct or engage in the experiment.*
9. *During the course of the experiment the human subject should be at liberty to bring the experiment to an end if he has reached the physical or mental state where continuation of the experiment seems to him to be impossible.*
10. *During the course of the experiment the scientist in charge must be prepared to terminate the experiment at any stage, if he has probable cause to believe, in the exercise of the good faith, superior skill and careful judgment required of him, that a continuation of the experiment is likely to result in injury, disability, or death to the experimental subject.*

***For more information see Nuremberg Doctor's Trial, BMJ 1996;313(7070):1445-75.***

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## Masks and vaccines

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**Tyler Bowen** <tdbowen@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 3:28 PM

To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I'm writing you to encourage you to follow guidance by the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics and continue with our current mask mandate in MCPS facilities. It's imperative that we provide a safe environment for our students, and universal masking is an important step to prevent the spread of Covid in our schools. The Delta variant is quickly becoming the predominant source of infection in our area and nationwide. It's been shown to be substantially more contagious, and it affects young people more severely than the original strain. Furthermore, it's shown that even vaccinated individuals who end up with breakthrough cases of covid are as contagious as those who are u vaccinated.

Additionally, I implore you to add the covid vaccines to the current list of mandatory vaccinations for students and employees of the district. The state has clarified that schools are exempt from the law that would prevent them from doing so. It's an important step towards keeping our school population healthy. Those who refuse the vaccination can still receive a quality MCPS education through the Missoula Online Academy.

I know there will be plenty of opposition to facts and science from a small but noisy group of people (many of whom don't even reside within the MCPS district) who don't understand or care about public health, but I hope you will stand strong against them and follow the science and guidance set forth from our medical/health communities to keep our schools safe.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masking

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**Kate Jennings** <tkatecenis@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 3:35 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS School Board and Administrators,

I am submitting a public comment to support that children under 12 wear masks and social distance for the upcoming school year. I strongly support and agree with the recommendations and science that the CDC and AAP has shared that our unvaccinated kids should wear masks and social distance in school.

You did a great job last year making decisions that kept our kids safe, while providing the opportunity to return to school. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the safety and educational equity of our kids.

Sincerely,

Kate Jennings

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Thank you to our school board for keeping kids safe--keep up the good work!**

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**Erin Hendel** <eehendel@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 4:14 PM

I just want to say thank you to our MCPS board for making hard decisions to keep our kids safe in the 2020-2021 year. As we look at the possibility of entering another school year with a dangerous variant spreading through our community, I wanted to voice my support for continuing measures that keep our vulnerable populations safe. Whether that includes continuing the online academy for those who choose, masking indoors, keeping classes separated, or other measures I trust this group to continue making common-sense decisions that have our kids' education and health in mind. Thanks for your hard work!

Best,  
Erin Hendel  
Rattlesnake Elementary Parent

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## Please mandate masks in school

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**Chad Dundas** <chaddundas@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 4:19 PM

Hello Missoula School Board,

I'm the father of two children--ages eight and six--currently enrolled to attend public school in Missoula this fall. It is my hope that both my kids will be able to attend full-time, in-person classes in the Missoula schools as safely and responsibly as possible. For that reason, I'd like to urge the board to adopt a district-wide mask mandate for schools this fall.

Last year, my daughter attended the entire year via the Missoula Online Academy and, while she enjoyed the experience, I know she wants to get back to being with her friends in a physical school building. I believe the Missoula schools did a great job limiting the spread of COVID-19 last year and that masks were a vital part of that effort. With the highly contagious delta variant currently on the rise, surely universal masking will again be an integral part of a safe learning environment again this year.

With a comprehensive mask mandate in place, I know I can feel good about sending my kids back to school this year. Without one, we will likely either opt for online learning or to enroll our children elsewhere.

Please continue to keep Missoula kids safe, healthy and in school.

Thanks so much for your time and the careful consideration I know you will give this issue.

Yours,  
Chad Dundas

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**Please require masks and social distancing in schools**

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**Kate Smith** <katemeinig@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 4:19 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello! Thanks to all of you for your service and for protecting student health last year with mask mandates, social distancing, limits on group sizes, and sanitizing protocols. I'm writing to ask you to keep it up. My daughter is 8 years old and therefore not eligible for the vaccine yet. Please require that all students, teachers, and staff in schools with kids under 12 years old wear masks and social distance, as much as possible.

Thanks for your time,  
Kate Smith

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## Please require mask-wearing for all

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**Allison Marston** <allisont2727@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 4:22 PM

Thank you so much for your response to the pandemic thus far. You kept our students safe even though it was difficult. Please continue to do so now that 100% mask wearing is recommended by the CDC and AAP. Cases are rising again (and much faster than last year) and my kid is about to go into kindergarten at Lowell Elementary. She and everyone she comes into contact with at school should be wearing masks.

Thank you,  
Allison Marston  
59802

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## School Masking

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**Maria Ferrini** <mtmaria@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 4:23 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am a parent to 2 children at Paxson Elementary here in Missoula. It is my hope that Missoula schools will continue to implement masking in schools, especially in the elementary and middle schools where children are not yet old enough to receive vaccines. It is my hope that you will continue to work with the public health department in implementing safety requirements based on our communities levels of cases and spread of covid. I am incredibly thankful for all of your hard work last year in keeping the covid cases low in the schools last year so our kids are able to learn safely in person at school.

Thank you for all that you do for our kids and community,

Maria Ferrini

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask mandate

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**Dawn Smith** <dms1959@live.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 5:16 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am a nurse at St Patrick hospital. I am hoping there is some way that the district can find to allow a mask mandate at schools. Nurses are exhausted. The last thing we need is a hospital full of young, pediatric patients. What our "governor" has done is disgusting to me. What kind of state legislature won't do what they can to protect our kids?? I do not have school age children anymore but I would definitely not send my kids to a giant COVID Petri dish everyday. Good luck - I think we are going to need it.

D smith

Sent from my iPhone

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## Please keep masks in schools

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**Jamie McConnell** <jsilberb@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 6:12 PM

Hello,

First, thank you for all your diligence over the past year to help protect our kids from COVID exposure while at school. I know it hasn't been easy.

I'm writing to ask you to continue to uphold a mask mandate for public schools in Missoula. I have two kids, both go to Paxson and are under 12 and thus not eligible to be vaccinated at this time. I would not feel comfortable sending them to school if masks are not required.

I urge the board to make a decision regarding masks based on science. The CDC has made the recommendation that kids should continue to be masked in public schools. I support that recommendation. Also, the US Secretary of Education is also recommending masks.

Each of my children had a classmate who got Covid--my children never tested positive and I believe it was because of masking and socially distancing that was required during the 2020/2021 school year.

Thanks for all you do,

Jamie McConnell

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Masks and Covid19**

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**Anna Puryear** <annalpuryear@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 6:44 PM

Good evening

Throughout this pandemic and crisis MCPS has followed the guidelines set out by the experts, even when they were unpopular. Why would the district and school board do something different now? I support following the guidance set out by the experts in epidemiology of what schools, communities and the overall citizens of our town, state, and country should do to continue our battle safely against this pandemic.

Thank you  
Anna Puryear

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## Mask requirements for upcoming school year

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**Tyler Gernant** <tyler@tylergernant.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 7:09 PM

Please accept this email as public comment in support of requiring masks for all unvaccinated children in the MCPS system, which is necessarily all children under 12 years old at this time. I trust that each member of the COVID task force has taken the time to review the available information regarding masking and the spread of COVID. That said, I understand that public pressure can sometimes make the right decision seem like the wrong one. I write simply to encourage you to at least require masks for children under 12 years of age as current information would suggest is prudent. As the parent of two children in the MCPS system who are under 12 and unable to receive vaccinations for COVID-19, I would not feel safe sending our kids into an environment where recommended precautions are not being followed. Thank you for your work and the time that each of you has spent devoted to keeping my kids and those in our community safe!

- Tyler Gernant

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## Unmask our kids!

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**Bryan** <bs.horacek@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 7:28 PM

To: javgeris@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, rwatson@mcpsmt.org, Bryan Horacek <bs.horacek@gmail.com>

Hello. My family has three kids that possibly will be starting 3rd grade at Chief Charlo this coming school year. As far as a normal start to school for children mine have only been through kindergarten where there was not an extra concern from the normal viruses of becoming sick. Now the main lesson my children are learning everyday at school is wear a mask, stay away from your friends, wash hands excessively throughout the day with mostly hand sanitizer and not even soap and water, few minutes to eat with no mask, to then put back on the mask to go outside and again being reminded to stay apart from all other children. These are far from the values my wife and I would ever instill in our children. Compassion for other people is not built on distance.

It's understandable that we had a novel virus that has consumed the world and only with time would we be able to understand its impact on our community and kids. For more than a year and a half we have learned that children have not been affected nearly the same as the elderly. They have not been a source of spreading and illness has been notably less than for people over the age of 55. The CDC shows that for school aged kids 4-18 have had a little more than 400 kids die from covid19. However the CDC also says that from the deaths only on average 5% of those deaths are from covid alone and the rest had other comorbidities, usually multiple. That means that possibly 20 kids from 4-18 years old may have died of covid alone in the United States. Of course we all know that there are absolutely no deaths from flu for any age group in the United States. In a normal flu season for kids ages 4-18 there are on average 150 to 200 deaths a season which is measured by 12 months and from this pandemic our total deaths are measured closer to 18 months. Also note again the possible deaths of children by covid alone (20) and those with comorbidities (380). Again this is not to be exact or fully up to date as I haven't checked the CDC sight as of today. Finally from the CDC's numbers they show more kids have drowned in 2020 than died from covid. So to save more children's lives we should put them in life preservers everyday rather than putting them in masks.

The science on masks has been back and forth and you can find any study to help your argument. Masks are proven however to cause children and adults to breathe less oxygen and more carbon dioxide. I use a cgi, or combustible gas indicator, for my job and when using it under a mask within seconds it will alarm as an oxygen insufficient area. Per OSHA if that was a confined space I would need a SCBA to enter.

My wife and I strongly support children not to be mandated at school to wear a mask to attend. We also strongly support that parents should have the right to choose for their child on what they think is best and not the school choosing for them. The CDC's credibility has been deteriorating rapidly as of late.

As I mentioned in the opening paragraph my children possibly would be going to a public school however if masks are mandated at all they will not be enrolled in a public school. This is a great opportunity for schools and teachers to start again teaching our kids in a more loving environment that supports the mental and emotional growth kids require. The solution to this virus should not be more damaging to our youth than the virus itself.

"Those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Benjamin Franklin

Thank you for your time.

Bryan and Corrie Horacek



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## COVID Task Force Meeting Public Comment

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**Moriah Mitsuda** <moriah.mitsuda@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 7:36 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello,

I am a Missoula resident and mother of two young children. I wish I could attend this afternoon's meeting and deliver my comments about the Missoula schools COVID plan, but I feel it would be unsafe for my children to risk COVID exposure at the meeting. I hope you'll accept this email in lieu of my commentary in person at the meeting.

I strongly support any plans MCPS has to require masks for the coming school year. The high contagiousness of the delta variant of COVID, combined with a school population made mostly of children who cannot be vaccinated yet makes for a dangerous combination. I am extremely concerned that our schools will be a vector for COVID to run rampant. A COVID outbreak at school puts students, teachers, staff, and all their families at risk of both death and permanent disability. I am worried that my vaccinated husband, who is a teacher, will catch a breakthrough case at school. I am worried that my too-young-to-be-vaccinated daughter will catch COVID from one of her too-young-to-be-vaccinated classmates, and expose my newborn son to COVID.

Requiring masks does not infringe on students' (or teachers' or staff's) personal liberties. Failing to enact basic safety measures at public schools, however, does put their lives at risk. Mandating masks at school is the duty of the MCPS system.

Thank you very much for considering my thoughts. Please feel free to contact me at moriah.mitsuda@gmail.com if you have any questions for me.

Best wishes,  
Moriah Mitsuda

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## Requiring Masks for School in the Fall

Dakota Nyght <dakota.marie@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 7:57 PM

To: Rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org

To the Mr. Watson, members of the MCPS Covid Task Force, and members of the School Board,

I am writing to respectfully request that masks be mandated for public school for the 2021/2022 school year, at least until vaccinations have been made available and children under the age of 12 have had a reasonable chance to be vaccinated, which I am hoping will happen by the spring semester of 2022.

I am one of the many parents who enrolled my children in the Missoula Online Academy last year. That decision was based on several factors—the desire to help "flatten the curve," to prevent my children from getting sick and carrying COVID-19 back to at risk members of my household and close family, and as more details emerged about the disease and its potential outcomes, to prevent my children from getting sick themselves and risking life threatening complications and/or long-hauler covid symptoms.

I was grateful for the option to enroll them in MOA and for the dedication and hard work of their teachers to keep them engaged and on track with their academics—but make no mistake—it was not the *easy* option, and it definitely had an impact on their mental and emotional well being, their physical health, and on their academic performance. They are both currently enrolled to return to in-person instruction this fall, with one major caveat—we have been waiting for MCPS's decisions on mask wearing and covid prevention strategies. Neither of my children are old enough to be vaccinated yet, which would mitigate the risk somewhat, and until they can be vaccinated I am not comfortable sending them back to school without a mask-wearing mandate.

I was distressed to learn that at the first task force meeting, multiple parents showed up to protest mask wearing and made health claims such as "masks increase carbon dioxide levels," that "masks don't work," that "kids don't die and it's no worse than the flu."

The simple fact of the matter is that these claims aren't true. Children do die and many have long hauler symptoms. And the claims about carbon dioxide and masks not working have been disproven by multiple scientific studies, by simple real world examples from people who have worn masks and run races or done other highly strenuous activities, and by medical personnel who have worn masks for hours on end to tend to people sick with Covid-19 and other highly communicable diseases. Saying otherwise is ignorant or deliberately ignoring science, and refusing to wear a mask when it can protect yourself and others is simply selfish.

Both the Center for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics are recommending that masks be worn in school, regardless of vaccination status. The Delta variant is proving to be both more contagious and more virulent than previous strains. And the fact remains that we still don't know what the long-term effects of Covid-19 really involve or how long they will last. One study (see link below) that came out in June estimates that as many as 24% of people who survive Covid-19—even non-hospitalized patients with "mild" symptoms or asymptomatic cases—suffer long-term symptoms after their "recovery." And as a parent, I will do everything in my power to prevent my kids from suffering from a *eminently preventable* outcome.

(<https://s3.amazonaws.com/media2.fairhealth.org/whitepaper/asset/A%20Detailed%20Study%20of%20Patients%20with%20Long-Haul%20COVID--An%20Analysis%20of%20Private%20Healthcare%20Claims--A%20FAIR%20Health%20White%20Paper.pdf>)

Am I looking forward to insisting that my kids wear masks? No. Do I think it will be fun for them and the other kids? No. Do I have some sick desire to impose mask wearing on kids and others for the foreseeable future because I think it's *fun*? Again—no. I am looking forward to not wearing a mask or enforcing that my children wear masks like you wouldn't believe.

But do I want to reduce the risk of my children, my family, their classmates, their classmate's families, and the amazing teachers and school staff contracting Covid-19, getting sick, and potentially suffering life-long complications? Yes, absolutely.

Please follow the recommendations from the CDC and AAP and mandate mask wearing during the school year.

Thank you for your time and reading this email.

Respectfully,  
Dakota Nyght  
(Franklin Elementary and CS Porter parent)

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## In support of students wearing masks this fall of 2021

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**Logan Jones** <shoop83@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:02 PM

To: Rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org

To Mr. Watson, the MCPS Covid Task Force, and members of the school board,

Please do not send students back to the classroom this fall unmasked and unprotected from the SARS-Cov-2 virus that is still very much raging across the country and around the globe. It is not yet safe for unvaccinated populations to gather in any sort of enclosed space.

This has become a very controversial, touchy, heated topic for various reasons. Parents rightfully want their children to be safe. People have gotten wrong ideas about what that means. Please, look at the science. Listen to the career virologists. Look at the recommendations that have come from those whose job it is to know how to keep the population safe. The Center for Disease Control, CDC, again now recommends masking up while indoors as they again see case numbers climbing. The American Academy of Pediatrics, APA, is recommending students wear masks in the classroom. In every country that has been able to fight back this virus, it is because they have taken precautions to prevent the spread. Doing nothing, keeping business as usual, has not stopped the spread. It has only gotten worse when it is ignored.

I know the arguments against masks. Frankly speaking, they are all wrong.

"Masks increase CO2 levels in the body."

No, they do not. There is exactly zero evidence available that a proper cloth mask, a surgical mask, a KN95 mask, an N95 mask or any of the other appropriate masks do anything of the sort. People from all walks of life have been wearing protective masks and respirators for decades with no ill effects. A mask designed to contain the spread of Covid does not increase CO2 levels in the body. It does not block O2 from entering the body. It does not restrict breathing in any meaningful way.

"Masks do not work to prevent the spread."

Yes, they do. Covid is spread by the moisture that leaves the body's respiratory system. It is projected into the room when someone coughs, sneezes, belches, hiccoughs or even simply breathes. A proper mask properly covering the nose and mouth will capture that spray and reduce the viral load spreading into the room. Less viral load in the room means less chance of the virus spreading.

"Covid is no worse than the flu."

Yes, it is. It has been 100 years since "the flu" brought the country to its knees. Covid is worse than the flu. The mortality rate of covid is orders of magnitude higher than the flu. The flu doesn't require refrigerated morgue trucks be set up to contain corpses. The flu doesn't deplete an entire hospital system's supply of oxygen just trying to keep patients alive. The flu doesn't call retired nurses, physicians, respiratory specialists out of retirement to help keep people alive. Covid is worse than the flu.

"Children don't die of covid."

Yes, they do. Hospitals have been reluctant to report it but the numbers are climbing. Children are on ventilators. Children are dying from this virus. Is the number high? Not yet. If we continue to do nothing to protect the vulnerable, that number will continue to rise. Pack children into a school with no protection and we will see many parents' nightmare manifest.

What no one seems to mention is the horror of long covid in children. A grade schooler who has their lungs destroyed by this preventable virus will forever be unable to participate in playground games. Brain fog will wreck their academic aptitude. Loss of taste and smell will make living life just that much more difficult. Even if a kid contracts this thing and doesn't die, what are the long term ramifications of catching it? They'll be living with that for the rest of their lives. Wearing masks to prevent the spread significantly reduces the chance that they will be disabled through no fault of their own.

"Wearing a mask is a gag."

That's preposterous.

"Wearing a mask is government overreach and will lead to authoritarian control."

The government has the power and responsibility to implement what is appropriate to protect the population from harm. This isn't new. If wearing masks will prevent the spread (see above, it will) that is the easiest way to stop this thing until vaccines are available to children.

"Wearing a mask should be a parent's choice, not the school."

In the interest of stopping a deadly and debilitating virus from spreading through the community, there has to be mandatory action. Wearing a mask is a small inconvenience. I wore one for many months every day until I got vaccinated and the local virus numbers were dropping. I still wear one every time I go shopping anywhere. With the infection numbers climbing again, I am likely to begin wearing one at the office again, despite being vaccinated because the now dominant Delta variant means even the vaccinated can become a vector. I live with 2 unvaccinated children. I have to do what I can to keep them safe.

It is part of a school's responsibility to keep children safe. Wearing a mask to prevent a virus from ravaging the population is the simplest, easiest, lowest-effort thing we can do to even try to keep the kids safe until they're able to get vaccinated.

This is not a forever thing. With good fortune vaccines will be available for kids down to 2 years old by Christmas time. After that, the equation changes. Until then, though, we have to stay vigilant. We have to do every little thing we possibly can to protect children.

I implore you. Go and listen to Dr. Fauci. Listen to Dr. Walensky, Director of the CDC. Listen to the scientists, specialists, experts, researchers, doctors, nurses across the globe that have fought long and hard for far too long for us to give up now.

Please, mask up the kids this fall. Keep them safe until they can get vaccinated. It's the responsible thing to do.

Thank you,  
Logan Jones

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## We support masks at school

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**Laurie** <laschlueb@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:02 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, rwatson@mcpsmt.org

Hello Superintendent and Board of Trustees,

We are a family with two students at Washington Middle School and we support wearing masks at school. Please base your decisions on science and the CDC recommendations. Our kids can handle wearing masks. They don't want to get sick or cause others to get sick.

Thank you,  
Laurie Schlueb

Sent from my iPhone



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Yes to school mask mandate

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**Taylor Marston** <emarston31@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:07 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello!

Thank you so much for following COVID safety measures up till now, and please please please keep it up! If you don't require masks for students in the fall my 5-year-old will not be attending kindergarten in-person, and therefore I won't have the free time to apply for an MCPS job (I really want to work at Lowell while my child is in school).

Respectfully,

Taylor Marston  
pronouns: he/they

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**COVID task force**

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**Molly Stockdale** <mollystockdale@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:13 PM

To: "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dr. Watson, Trustees, Members of the COVID Task Force,

As a parent and a concerned member of the Missoula community, I urge you to stick to the science when it comes to determining when and whether students should wear masks. As the Delta variant of COVID-19 spreads, resulting in higher case rates, hospitalizations, death, and breakthrough infections, it is essential that we protect our children and one another by adhering to CDC recommendations regarding masking, social distance, hygiene, and vaccinations.

I would also urge you to set guidelines and then follow through on them, regardless of angry feedback from a vocal minority of parents.

Our children are learning two essential lessons from how we adults handle this pandemic:

- 1) Good citizenship is rooted in caring for others enough to inconvenience ourselves.
  - 2) Recommendations based on science may change based on new information, not on opinion.
- "The good thing about science is that it is true whether or not you believe in it." - Neil deGrasse Tyson

**Molly Stockdale**

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## Yes to School Mask Mandate

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**Chris Greensweight** <ctos708@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:19 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for your continued investment in the health and advancement of our children and community. I am aware that many difficult and thoughtful decisions have been made before today and will continue to happen.

Looking at scientific data we as a whole community are experience aggressive increases of positive covid cases over the last few weeks. These numbers show a very real and valid reason to keep masks mandatory.

While many vaccinations have happened we must consider that a large portion of MCPS students simple don't have a vaccine available to them. Keeping those younger children safer with continued mask mandates.

Lastly, I'm about to become a parent with a child attending Lowell Elementary. Elsie Marston is a bright, funny caring kid. She deserves a chance to make relationships with kids her own age and to grow educationally mentored by a trained and passionate professional while having the safety of her health be a priority. Without a continuous uphold of the mask mandate that isn't a possibility for her. There is simply not a vaccine available for a five year old.

Please consider all the students accessibility to a vaccine, individual safety over majority comfortability when accessing the upcoming school year. As a father I am putting trust in you that my child's well being is the priority.

Sincerely,

Christopher Greensweight

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## **MCPS should absolutely require masks everywhere!**

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**Eli Nyght** <eli.nyght@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:30 PM

To: Rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org

To Mr. Watson, members of the MCPS Covid Task Force, and members of the School Board,

I have one child going into middle school at CS porter, and one who will be a second grader at Franklin elementary. Please enforce a mandatory mask mandate along with social distancing. From the standpoint of our children, the only thing that has changed since March 2020 is that we now have an even more virulent and infectious version of Covid running across our communities.

I have heard that some parents are resistant to masks because of 'increased CO2' levels. And that we now have 'science' that backs it up. These people are not aware of the actual science of the study and are basing their unqualified conclusions on cherry picked reporting from the JAMA study for 45 participants. (See/watch <https://abc7news.com/jama-masks-children-and-co2-pediatrics-face-mask-study/10866564/> ). The increase in CO2 levels after 3 minutes is physiologically insignificant.

The notion that mask wearing isn't preventative is also not based in any science. It has been tested repeatedly over the last 16 months that masks reduce transmission. (See <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/in-depth/coronavirus-mask/art-20485449>, there are 25 references at the bottom of the article).

Bottom line, the people who have devoted their lives to public health—the people who have to base their livelihood in following science and have to constantly bring us the public the bad news of what is going on have consistently asked the public to mask up, to wash hands, and to practice social distancing.

I don't go to a car mechanic to ask about the pests in my flower bed, nor do I go to Best Buy to ask about oral hygiene. It makes sense to go to the people who have focused their lives and training on the problem I'm trying to deal with. So when deciding what to do to control or prevent disease, it makes sense to look to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC). It makes sense to listen to our local health officials. Not the hardware store, not the corporate opinion media channels, and not parents. HHS, CDC, the local health board. People who specialize in this kind of problem are the only people we should be asking about what we should do. You had the wisdom to listen to them last March. Things are only worse for our kids now with the Delta variant; please have the wisdom to listen to them again.

Yes to masks, yes to social distancing, yes to vaccines as soon as they are available. We're doing decently well in Missoula, but not good enough yet - only 61% of the eligible population has been fully vaccinated, and 0% of children under 12 who have been vaccinated. We still have too many people who break the honor system and justify themselves based on politics or a willful embrace of ignorance. I understand they are passionate. But passionate ignorance is no reason to ignore the specialists who have made this type of event their life's work. This is not the time to entertain entitlement and arrogance. This isn't about freedom, this isn't about the cure being worse than the disease, this isn't about trying to control people for the sake of egomania. Please have the wisdom to realize that our children have no immunity against this disease, that it spreads easier than chickenpox, and that there is no reason to accept any level of illness or death amongst our youngest population when it is preventable.

Thank you,  
Elijah Nyght

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## Masking for 2021-22

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**Catie Kohler** <catie.kohler@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:46 PM

We have two children attending Lewis and Clark in the fall. My husband and I are both health care practitioners and appreciate science- and evidence-based decision making. Neither of my kids have the option to be vaccinated. We are asking that mask mandates be put in place at least in the elementary setting.

My children have used masks throughout the pandemic as needed and have NO PROBLEM wearing them because we have framed mask use under social responsibility and empathy.

Thank you for taking this into consideration.

Catie and Michael Kohler

Sent from my iPhone

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## Masks in School

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**Jess Coulter** <jess.c.coulter@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:56 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am writing today to encourage you to mandate masks at least in schools (elementary and middle) where learners are too young to be vaccinated. The CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics recommend masks as an important measure of protection. I enrolled my children in the MOA last year, and am looking forward to having them return to in-person school. They deserve to be protected in every reasonable way.

Thank you for all your hard work throughout the pandemic, on this and other issues. I greatly appreciate your time and attention.

~Jess Coulter  
MCPS parent

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## Covid Restrictions for the Fall

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**christinesmith@web.de** <christinesmith@web.de>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:24 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear board members,

I am the mother of an incoming freshman and an incoming senior. When covid first affected our schools in the spring of 2020, and MCPS went full remote after spring break for the remainder of the year, my younger son's mental health was immensely affected.

He developed anxiety during this time, and I have no doubt that not being in the classroom with his peers was the biggest contributing factor. As I am a single Mom and an essential worker, he spent most days at home by himself. I know that this social isolation was really difficult for him. When he returned to school in the fall on the hybrid schedule, things gradually improved, as more in person days were added.

Children and teenagers NEED real, in person social connections with peers. Please advocate for the mental health of our children.

I understand that some families are at a higher risk than others or have a different comfort level with the risk they want to take, but it seems that the online academy is a good option for these families.

Please take these considerations into account, and I thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Christine

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## mask mandate

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**Kathleen Gill** <thatkatiegill@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:35 PM

To the board,

Thank you for your hard work during this difficult time. As a small business owner, I know firsthand how challenging it has been to continually reinvent. My husband and I both appreciate all you have done so that our 3 children were able to safely return to school during the pandemic. As a concerned parent, I urge you to consider requiring masks in all Missoula County Public Schools. It is clear that we are not out of the woods and need to continue to be diligent in keeping our kids safe and healthy. Both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend universal masking in schools. I urge MCPS to heed their advice.

Thank you for your time,

Katie Gill  
406.531.9373

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## Masks

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**Cory McAtee** <saxysousy@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:37 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Please require students to wear masks this year. The younger kids cannot yet get vaccinated, and the Delta variant is even more transmissible than the previous version of Covid. We took our kids out of the online school so that they could be social and have class in person this fall. However, if you take away the mask mandate, I don't know that it will be a safe environment for them. Please keep the mandate in place.

Thank you

Cory McAtee

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks

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**Nicholas McAtee** <mcateenicholas@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:40 PM

As a parent of 2 children under 12, I hope mcps will at the very least recommend mask usage.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## 2021 School Year

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**K Smith** <kmsmith2333@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 10:04 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good evening,

As a parent of two children about to attend elementary school, I am hoping that masks will be required and any other reasonable precautions be put in place, since they cannot yet be vaccinated.

Thank you,

Kristi Smith

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## Masks

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**Jan B Newman MD** <jan@sightsoflight.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 10:11 PM

Masks are the one thing that has been shown to be effective in stopping transmission of Covid. It is a minor inconvenience and if kids realize they are helping others, most want to comply.  
It appears from new CDC data that even vaccinated can be transmitters and the new strain is more transmissible, causes more serious illness and is worse for children than the original strain.  
The majority of sick patients are unvaccinated. If we do not want a repeat of closing down Missoula and overwhelming our healthcare care system and want schools to stay open, masks are essential.  
Covid cases are increasing . Masks would protect children and antimaskers from themselves.

Jan B Newman MD, FACS  
1-406-544-0006  
Jan@sightsoflight.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Covid-19 restrictions 2021/22 school year**

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**Bryce Baker** <bbaker006.bb@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 11:14 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I would like to voice my opinion in support of requiring masks be worn in MCPS for the upcoming school year.

I have two children in the MCPS system, grades 3rd and 6th, and because of their age they are ineligible for vaccination.

Given the current resurgence of cases, it's in the best interest of the community to require masking until spread lessens.

Thank you for your consideration,

Bryce Baker

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## Support for MCPS mask mandate

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**Gordon Terpe** <gordon@terpe.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 12:00 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

MCPS trustees and COVID task force members:

Thank you for all you do for our children and community, and for taking the time to read my email.

I am Gordon Terpe, and I'm the parent of a 7th grader at Meadow Hill Middle School, and I want to express in the strongest possible terms my support for a mask mandate in MCPS indoor spaces.

Last school year MCPS was remarkably successful at keeping schools safe, encouraging vaccinations when they became available, and generally controlling COVID-19. I know that none of this was easy, and you have my heartfelt thanks for what everyone at MCPS contributed during a challenging time.

The U.S. Secretary of Education recommends in-person school with masks, as does the American Academy of Pediatrics. As we know, children under the age of 12 cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccination at this time, leaving masking as the best tool for protecting that vulnerable population. A comprehensive mask mandate gives clear, unconfusing guidance to our kids in a way that is straightforward to enforce. A mandate, tied to a key metric such as daily new cases in the county, is absolutely the best way forward.

Last year demonstrated that MCPS can successfully use COVID protocols to keep students, faculty, and staff safe. In the face of a new surge as the school year begins, now is the time to take the steps necessary to protect the MCPS population once again.

Kind regards,

Gordon Terpe

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Mask mandate in schools.**

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**Michelle PicKell** <ompickell@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 6:47 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Whom It May Concern: I am sending this email to express my concern in regards to the potential mask mandate requirement for Missoula County Public schools for this upcoming year. I strongly appose this requirement and demand that you reconsider implementing this requirement. In addition to the health risks as well as the psychological damage that is being done, the masks have been proven to be completely unnecessary. Please take this into consideration before making your decision to continue to damage our children both physically and mentally. Sincerely, Michelle PicKell.

Thanks,

Michelle PicKell

406.546.9112

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse any typos.

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## Masks

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**g hope** <localart2003@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 7:17 AM

Reply-To: g hope <localart2003@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Covid Task Force,

Thank you for the work you do to help us get through the pandemic. I am an Art teacher at Willard Alternative High School Program and I am encouraging you to keep our mask mandates. I don't want to be in the same room with someone that is unvaccinated and unmasked. I wish KN95 masks were mandatory. Last year there were all varieties of barely effective masks worn by students and staff.

It is a challenge trying to teach a hands on subject like art and keep the 3 to 6 foot apart but we managed last year, the new variants will make this even more important. Even with vaccines I worry about the virus spreading to students, their families, and my high risk parents.

Thank you,  
Gwen Hoppe

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

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## School restrictions due to covid

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**Cj Hirning** <cj.hirning@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 7:26 AM

Reply-To: Cj Hirning <cj.hirning@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am hoping for school to be in person this year. My children need it. We tried MOA last year, both my children were failing by christmas. They piled so much onto my 6th grader that she couldn't keep up and my 2nd grader had a lot of trouble focusing on her zoom meetings and not getting distracted by other things. We ended up pulling them from school and homeschooling. It worked great for my middle schooler, she was doing wonderfully and really enjoys homeschooling, but I worry about her mental health with the lack of socialization. My youngest still struggled after we started home schooling, she does her best learning in a group setting. She is also a very social kid, and the lack of socialization has been very hard on her.

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



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## Mask mandate

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**Adam Boomer** <adamboomer42@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 7:35 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thanks for taking the time to read this. COVID is real and real Americans care about our fellow people. The minimum effort of wearing a mask and getting a vaccine. Half of our population can't bother until it hurts them personally.

Keep our community safe. Keep our schools and businesses open. That requires we care about our fellow humans. Unfortunately, we have proven that individuals don't make good choices. We don't whine and through tantrums over taking our shoes off at the airport.

Keep the mask mandate. Perhaps some civics, science lessons for our uneducated population.

Adam Boomer

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## Mask/vaccine requirements for 2021

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**PrairieFire EquineVideo** <jenbelitz@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 7:44 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I know this is a very tough decision in light of the current situation. Although I feel the all day mask mandates maybe more harmful than good amongst this age group. I feel there are ways to ease this restriction while not adding significant risk. For example, some schools only required masks in buses and in hallways but not in cohorts. If the community feels overwhelmingly strong about masking while in the classroom then I feel staff should be proactive about offering more "mask breaks" and communicating those opportunities to parents and all students. Examples could be that they do not have to be worn out doors or when 6ft apart. As a staff member of a local school I had the opportunity to ask 7th and 8th graders what they liked most and the least about coming back to school. All stated the masks as the worst thing. I think we need to understand that this is a cumulative stressor, and some will communicate it more than others. Some kids would rather suffer than draw any attention to themselves much less break a rule. We can't just assume that if it's easy for us and it seems easy for some students, that others aren't suffering from greater stress and anxiety.

When it comes to the vaccine, I am wholeheartedly in support of choice. It may seem black and white to some, but with all vaccines, what is the best for the herd is not always best for the individual. I urge our schools to change the message of "get the vaccine or else" (which I feel could be deemed as coercion), to "talk to your doctor about getting the vaccine for you and your children".

Please do not continue to push the vaccine as though there are no risks, maybe the risks of covid greater, but doctors and parents are better equipped at deciding what's best for each individual child than the school.

Thank you for your dedication to this issue and taking into consideration my comments.

Jennifer Belitz

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## No masks, please, especially for younger grades

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**Brianna Randall** <brianna.randall@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:18 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS Board Members,

Thank you for looking at all the science to keep our kids safe during the school year. I would like to encourage the board to NOT have a mask mandate at Missoula schools this upcoming year, particularly for elementary students. The science shows young children do not suffer from COVID symptoms, nor are they major spreaders of the virus.

Learning without masks at a young age is important, as children are still learning how to communicate effectively — seeing the whole face is a critical part of understanding social cues.

Thanks again. I appreciate your time and service to our community!

Cheers,  
Brianna Randall  
Freelance Writer | BriannaRandall.com  
(406) 370-8388

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## Covid precautions for Fall 2021

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**Katrina Mullan** <katrinamullan@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:31 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am a parent of an MCPS 3rd grader and 6th grader, and I am emailing to voice my support for masks to be required along with other precautions to minimize the spread of Covid in MCPS schools. I am impressed and appreciative of how the measures taken by MCPS last school year allowed children to attend school in-person without large outbreaks. Given that we currently have high community transmission and that children under 12 cannot be vaccinated, I believe these measures are still justified. This is supported by the current CDC and AAP guidance.

Voluntary mask recommendations or options for some children will not serve the same purpose as a mandate because masks provide greater protection to people the wearer comes in contact with than to the mask wearer themselves. This means that each individual family may not have a strong incentive to encourage their own children to wear masks, but every family is safer if the whole school community takes this precaution. Voluntary mask guidelines will also provide a very visible source of difference between students, which is likely to create unnecessary conflict and stress for them.

Many thanks,  
Katrina Mullan

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks for elementary schools

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**Kasey Boeve Wright** <kasey.boeve.wright@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:39 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To whom it may concern,  
Please mandate masks for all students and staff working with kids 12 and under, at least until they are able to have the chance to be fully vaccinated.

Thanks,  
Kasey Wright

Parent, Lewis and Clark Elementary

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Kasey B Wright

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**Please follow CDC guidance and mask our kids this school year**

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**Genevieve** <genevievejm@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:42 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Barbara Frank &lt;bfrank@mcpsmt.org&gt;, Bryan von Lossberg &lt;bvonlossberg@gmail.com&gt;

Hello dear School Board,

I write as a parent of a Lowell 4th grader and a member of the Lowell PTA board.

First, I'm very thankful for your response to the pandemic thus far.

With the new CDC guidance and the science that has found that vaccinated individuals can carry a viral load and thus spread the virus, I am hoping that you will continue to **require** masks for students, staff, and teachers this year and do so until elementary aged kids have a vaccine option. It keeps kids safe. It keeps the virus at bay. It allows parents to go to work.

Lowell School has some of the district's most at-risk kids and families, and many of our students need school to be safe and fed. It isn't equitable to force those who have no choice but to opt for an unsafe environment. Let's keep kids safe *and* in-person!

Thanks for listening and making these decisions and deliberations. You all really have been thoughtful and made some really good hard decisions in the last year and a half.

Best,  
Genevieve Jessop Marsh  
Lowell PTA Co-President

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Genevieve Jessop Marsh  
406.543.0031 h  
406.550.3663 c

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Genevieve Jessop Marsh  
406.543.0031 h  
406.550.3663 c



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## We support masks at school

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**Chuck Wayland** <chwayland1@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:54 AM

Hello,

I am writing to lend my support to the school board to follow whatever guidelines the CDC recommends for children at school this coming year. If that means wearing masks to protect teachers and staff, families and loved ones, then so be it.

Thank you

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Chuck Wayland, LCSW, ACHT  
Turning Toward Possibilities  
336 West Spruce  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-396-7834  
www.chuckwaylandtherapist.com  
Counseling, Hypnotherapy, Coaching, Breathwork

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Masks: a FAMILY'S choice**

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Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:59 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jill MH Taber** <jill.michal@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 6:25 AM  
Subject: Masks: a FAMILY'S choice  
To: Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dr. Watson,

Good morning. I am sick at the thought of our kids facing another year of mandatory mask wearing and senseless COVID restrictions. Enough is enough. We have long known that elementary-age children do not become severely ill, nor do they spread, this virus. Rather we are spreading to them needless fear, worry, and an extreme dampening of independence and spirit by forcing masks. Reasonable accommodations have been made for those parents and families in our district who want restrictions, masks, and vaccinations. It is time for the district to consider families like mine who want to be able to choose the best for our children as well.

Please, encourage the task force and the board to allow masks to be a family choice for the school year. You will have many who will choose to continue to wear masks and you will have many who will appreciate some sanity and reason regarding what should be a family's choice.

Thank you.  
Jill Taber

\*jill mh taber\* (sent from Pixel)



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: masks at school**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:00 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **Lisa Davey** <loganhwilson@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 11:24 PM  
Subject: masks at school  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Covid Task Force, I recently received information that you were considering lifting the mask mandate at school next year, if my information is correct. I would like to add that I am fully vaccinated, but I'm writing this anyway out of decency and concern for fellow students and concern for the staff.

Please respond with what you plan to do, with terms I can understand as an autistic 15 going on 16 year old. If my information is correct, please read the rest of this email.

As a high-risk person and as a teen with common sense, this shocks me and is unacceptable from my point of view. I shall endeavor to enumerate the reasons why, for your erstwhile consideration.

1. I am a high-risk person, and doing so endangers my well-being.
2. Several members of my family are high-risk, and thus this endangers them by proxy.
3. The schools will become plague epicenters, and I don't think anyone wants that.
4. The virus has killed millions of people, and if by doing this, you kill off most of the next generation, you are setting back progress on several fronts, including getting rid of this virus, since it affects children and adolescents now.
5. Some of my friends are high-risk, and this endangers their well-being. I will NOT sit idly by and let that happen.
6. I would've thought this task force had more common sense, having been assembled to stop this virus getting any worse. Pfizer is only around 63% effective against the Delta variant, which is the dominant strain in Montana now.

In conclusion, please in the name of the health and safety of all involved, please amend your plans to include social distancing and masking requirements for the student body and staff, regardless of vaccination status, as well as requiring proof of vaccination, double-checked against hospital records or the like. Thanks a lot-Artemi Wilson, Hellgate Knight.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Masking for students at MCPS**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:02 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **jwoessner@bigsky.net** <jwoessner@bigsky.net>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 11:10 PM  
Subject: Masking for students at MCPS  
To: <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>  
Cc: Bill Woessner <william.woessner@umontana.edu>

Dear Superintendent Watson and the MCPS Covid Advisory Team,

We are writing to support MCPS requiring masks to be worn by students and staff if schools will be back "in person" this fall.

We are retired educators, and have been watching with alarm as the daily Covid cases increase, both statewide and locally here in Missoula County. With the rise of the more contagious and severe Delta variant, and the absence of a vaccine for children under the age of 12, masking is the prudent procedure in prevention of the spread of the disease.

Please require masks!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jean Wilkerson Woessner, M.Ed.  
William Woessner, PhD, Regents' Professor Emeritus, University of Montana

Sent from my iPhone

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Covid task force - masking support**

---

**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:03 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **Henry Davey** <hdavey406@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:31 PM  
Subject: Covid task force - masking support  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Greetings MCPS covid task force,

I am writing in support of requiring MCPS students wearing masks for the upcoming school year to help slow the spread of Covid-19 and particularly the Delta variant. Not only will this help to protect students and staff, but it will help protect the community at large. In addition I would expect this simple measure to increase the in person attendance at the schools as high risk individuals are less likely to op-out if they feel safe at school. This is a simple measure that can prevent unnecessary suffering and save lives. Failure to take preventative measures during a pandemic is disrespectful of students, staff and community. Please demonstrate responsibility and respect by supporting masking up at MCPS this fall.

Sincerely, Henry Davey

Concerned grandparent of MCPS students and a Missoula resident.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Yes to masks**

---

**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:05 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **Blake Bucher** <blakewbucher@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:16 PM  
Subject: Yes to masks  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Mr. Watson and Covid Task Force,  
I am worried about children's and teacher's health this fall. Please mandate masks to keep them safe. It is terrible, but it has to be. Please!  
Thank you for your work,  
Blake Bucher

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: In favor of mask mandate**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:05 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jennie Bucher** <jbucher.vn@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:59 PM  
Subject: In favor of mask mandate  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Covid Task Force Committee,  
I am strongly in favor of a mask mandate for MCPS this fall, as hard as that is. The Delta variant is so dangerous, and affects kids and even the vaccinated. The risks are too great. Please stand strong, and protect our kids. I am a recently-retired MCPS teacher, and I thank you.  
Jennie Bucher

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Public comment for Covid Task Force**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:06 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **Jori Quinlan** <jori.quinlan@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:03 PM  
Subject: Public comment for Covid Task Force  
To: rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>

Hi Mr. Watson,

I am writing to provide public comment to the Covid Task Force convening August 3.

I strenuously urge the Task Force to continue to follow the best available public health recommendations made by the CDC, the local MCCHD, the AAP, and other respected entities in making public health decisions for the Missoula County Public Schools, based on local conditions. At this time, this means starting the school year requiring masks be worn by everyone in the building.

My daughter will be a 2nd grader at Chief Charlo Elementary, and my husband is a teacher at Willard. Both were in in-person school last year. That decision, though difficult, was made easier by the numerous precautions taken by MCPS to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Neither my husband nor daughter found masks to be difficult or unduly uncomfortable to wear. In fact, masks enabled, they did not inhibit, learning. Since teachers and learners felt safer, the learning environment worked better. My daughter learned and saw that as members of a school community, we do things to take care of each other and keep each other safe. As the community opened up, we felt safer visiting Grandma, knowing that both our school-exposed family members had at least been protected by the fact that everyone in their schools wore masks (I was exposed to far fewer people in my job, but we were masked as well).

Further, science has continued to demonstrate that masks are one of the most effective preventative measures available to us besides, of course, vaccines. Until significantly more people are vaccinated, and so long as the Delta variant continues to increase numbers in our community, the safe decision for Missoula schools is to start the school requiring masks of all individuals. Please demonstrate what we expect our kids to learn at MCPS - that some sources of information are more reliable than others, that expertise is developed through study, learning, testing, and science, and that sometimes we do things not just because it protects us, but also to protect the most vulnerable in our community, including kids who can't be vaccinated yet, elderly family members, other at-risk students and faculty and family members, etc. Please recommend that MCPS require masking by all students, staff, and faculty at MCPS, regardless of vaccination status, until conditions improve and merit a change to that policy.

Thank you,

Jori Quinlan

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**Fwd: Masks in public schools and task force meeting**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:06 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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From: **Lisa Davey** <ladavey25@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 8:02 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Masks in public schools and task force meeting  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Covid Task Force,

I apologize I won't be able to attend your meeting tomorrow. Masks have been reliable in slowing the spread of COVID 19, including variants. Now that Delta is catchable AND TRANSMITTED by vaccinated people, it is important to take precautionary measures to keep our kids healthy, as well as our teachers, counselors, administrators and everyone else. Even if older kids are old enough to get vaccinated, many will still live with children who are not able to be vaccinated. Additionally, the Delta variant has drastically changed the equation. It means that if my child brings it home from school, I could get it and give it to my mom who is at high risk or he could give it to his step mom who is undergoing treatment for breast cancer or to his three siblings too young to be vaccinated. It also means that my high risk teenager, who opted for MOA last year and missed out on a Freshman year in order to stay safe will not be safe at school once again. Between him being vaccinated and having masks at school I feel safe sending him to in person school, where he needs to be. Telling parents of kids at risk that MOA is an equal but separate option is discrimination, plain and simple. We cannot let masks become something teens self regulate. I know that when the bulk of people quit wearing masks I felt uncomfortable wearing mine in public and quit again until the new information came out. When I have gone to places like the Food Bank, where everyone was still wearing masks, I put mine on no problem and appreciated blending in. If an adult who understands the science, along with the peer pressure is succumbing to the peer pressure, I don't think most teens will make the choice most based on public health, even if they want to. Finally, schools teach science. Follow the science. Masks are proven to mitigate spreading (and flu numbers will be lower as well!) and changing guidance is part of the equation. As the mom of a vaccinated teen at high risk who desperately wants to return to school, and who deserves access to his public education and on order to be fair to all students and keep our community safe I strongly urge you to require all MCPS students wear masks this fall.

Sincerely,

Lisa Davey  
Hellgate High Parent (and graduate)  
406-240-4105

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Yes please to masks for Fall 2021**

---

**Jon Stafford** <staffordjon@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:15 AM

I'm a parent of 6th and 3rd graders at MCPS schools and am strongly in favor of mask wearing at MCPS schools for the upcoming semester.

Each student or staff member should wear a mask to make everyone else safer. Optional masks would be a bit like optional speed limits on roads. We're safer when everyone obeys the speed limits, we're not safe if we choose to obey the speed limits but others don't, because people who speed make roads more dangerous for everyone. Same for masks.

MCPS have done an outstanding job of managing the difficult situation last academic year, please continue to keep our trust by continuing with commonsense measures like mask wearing going forwards.

Thanks  
Jonathan Stafford

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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**(no subject)**

---

**islandwaters** <islandwaters@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:47 AM

To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

All,

Our Daughter attends Chief Charlo Elementary and will be going into the fourth grade. The main reason we agreed to have her go back in person in the fall was due to the excellent Covid protocols and mitigation that were accomplished by MCPS. Now I hear they are considering changes to the mask policy. We WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORT the masking policy and it's proven effectiveness. It is regrettably that the health and safety of our children, who are NOT YET eligible for a vaccine, has been politicized. I wonder about the liability and legal issues that could arise if a child contracts Covid at a school that does not follow the CDC guidelines?

Please continue the proven Covid protocols and mitigation that were in effect last year.

Thank you,

Pamela Jolly

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## Requesting Masking for Fall 2021

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**Moriah Hein** <moriahmaye@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 10:21 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I'm asking you to consider requiring children to be masked upon return to school this fall. This is the advice of both the AAP and the CDC that all school aged children be masked.

I have 2 high risk 2 year old children at home and want to send my older daughters back to in-person learning at Lewis and Clark. I can't imagine I'm the only one with at risk people living in their household wanting to send their children to school. My hope is that all kids will be wearing masks for 6-8 weeks after a vaccine is available to allow for children (who want it) to get their vaccines and build immunity before lifting the mask mandate. It is my understanding that a EUA vaccine will be available for children 5+ in September/October, so this doesn't feel like a huge ask.

Please remember that while this virus doesn't seem to be affecting children as intensely, it doesn't mean that the children won't be bringing this home to others in their households that are unable to receive vaccines.

Thank you,

Moriah Hein

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## **Mask Mandate**

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**Jarom Hein** <jaromhein@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 10:51 AM

To: Publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am emailing in support of a mask Mandate to stop the spread of Covid 19.

Thank you,  
Jarom Hein  
Missoula Montana

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Covid Task Force Public Comment

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**Shana Stratford** <shanamstratford@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 10:54 AM

Dear MCPS School Board and Administrators,

I am submitting a public comment to support universal masking for all MCPS students for the 2021-2022 school year. I believe following the science and recommendations of the CDC and AAP is important in keeping our children and our community safe.

Thank you for all your hard work throughout this pandemic in keeping our students and teachers safe.

Sincerely,

Shana Stratford

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Covid Task Force Public Comment

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**Erica Ritsema** <erica.n.ritsema@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 10:56 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Members of the Covid Task Force,

I would like to encourage the task force to adopt mask requirements and other mitigation strategies that are tied to public health metrics, such as the cases per 100,000 7-day average rate in Missoula County. We are seeing a new surge of cases and are currently experiencing accelerated spread.

I am incredibly impressed that so few cases of Covid occurred within MCPS schools last year. We know what works. Let's keep doing it! Having mitigation requirements tied to data will allow MCPS to adapt to changing case rates, hopefully loosening requirements if things improve. This feels like the best solution for keeping the children in our community safe, particularly those who are too young to get vaccinated. It is also important for keeping teachers and other school staff safe.

In addition to the safety of students and staff, this is important to me so that I can effectively do my job as a public health educator. Last spring, after vaccination became more widely available and cases dropped, I was able to step inside a classroom as a guest speaker for the first time in 14 months. It was such a joy! I would like to be able to do so again this upcoming year, and that only feels possible if school districts like MCPS continue to take steps to mitigate the spread of covid.

Thank you for your time and attention. I appreciate all the work you have done to keep our community safe.

Sincerely,  
Erica Ritsema, MSW

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**masking this fall**

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**Sara Blackwell** <seblackwell@outlook.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:00 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To whom it may concern,

I am a nurse and a parent and understand everyone's growing concern about the Delta Covid variant and our kids. I feel that masking and taking the covid precautions ie frequent hand washing, masking, and cleaning frequently used surfaces helped to keep cases down in our schools. I am concerned what not being in school will do for our kids. My son did not do well home schooling, he started disliking anything that had to be done on the computer. He got behind in his reading and comprehension because of how resistant he was becoming to on-line schooling. His resistance and anger at on-line school made it difficult for my husband and I to teach him. As an ICU nurse I have seen what Covid does to people and their families. I know people are scared but I believe our kids need to go to school and that masks and good hand hygiene will keep our numbers down in the school system. Thank you -Sara Blackwell

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Covid Task Force**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:02 AM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

*Confidentiality Notice:*

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Fangsrud** <sarahfangs@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 10:54 AM  
Subject: Covid Task Force  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Mr. Watson,

I'm a Paxson parent to an upcoming third grader and a new kindergartner. Both my boys need to get back to school this year. My husband and I want to send them back to public school but we have concerns about their safety and the safety of our community in school. The delta variant is spreading fast in Missoula. Luckily we know that there are safety measures that we can take that work to prevent the spread in our schools. Those safety measures include mandatory masking for all students and teachers. Masking works. Social distancing works. These are facts proven again and again by the medical community and by the data. The WHO, the CDC, and the American Academy of pediatricians all recommend masking in schools. It's ridiculous that masking in schools is even up for debate in Montana. It is our responsibility to keep our children safe. I'm writing you to support mandatory masking in schools to protect our children. I trust that Missoula County public schools will do the right thing and implement mandatory masking for all elementary school students, as none of these children are eligible for the vaccine. I also support mandatory masking for middle school and high school to slow the spread in our community and protect children and teachers. Please make the right choice so parents can safely send our children back to school where they can thrive this year.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Fangsrud  
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Sarah Fangsrud

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## Masks in schools

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**Gini Porter** <giniporter@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:10 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I am a parent of a high school student that will be returning to in-person classes this fall. She is vaccinated and she will also be wearing a mask. We have immunocompromised family members that are unable to get vaccinated. We fully support a mask mandate for in person classes. There are too many students to maintain social distancing measures and so many different interactions that can spread the virus. As a community we need to take precautions to slow the spread, especially of the emerging delta variant. Please decide to follow guidance from the CDC and local public health officials.

Thank you for protecting our youth and vulnerable populations.

- Gini

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Gini Porter  
406-360-2944  
giniporter@gmail.com

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## Masking up per AAP and CDC Recommendations

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**Becky Krantz** <beckykrantz@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:27 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Dr. Watson, Members of the Board, and Members of the COVID Task Force,

As much as I was hoping to return to normal/without my mask in the fall, I trust science and the recommendations of our top medical staff and agencies to recommend the best course of action and I hope you will, too. Please listen to expert recommendations and not the noise of local commenters who are more concerned with comfort than safety.

I was excited to be considered fully vaccinated back in April, but I continue to follow masking guidelines and other recommendations out of respect for my fellow humans, especially those vulnerable populations who are unable to be vaccinated. The small inconvenience I face wearing a mask indoors while around others is well-worth knowing I am doing my part to help us beat back a deadly virus. It is frustrating to see such politicized behavior around an issue of public health. Because our MT Legislature has declared schools cannot collect vaccination records from students, we cannot know if our 12-18 populations are vaccinated at a high enough rate to prevent spread at school.

Until we can overcome vaccine resistance and the shocking rise in disinformation and arm-chair scientists, it is best that we accept the recommendations of the American Association of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control, **who both clearly indicate that universal precautions like masking are currently necessary in environments like schools.** I won't paste all the recommendations, because they are easily accessible and I know you have read them.

A close friend of mine (and an MCPS employee) has long-haul COVID symptoms and I am familiar with too many others who have suffered loss of family or long-haul disease to behave so recklessly with other people's health. I have a 2 month old daughter at home and I am starting to lose hope that my community cares for her health and the health of other vulnerable populations enough to vaccinate themselves so we can safely lower mitigation measures.

Thank you for your time and for your thoughtful decision that (hopefully) relies on research and evidence-based recommendations by experts in the field to protect the health and futures of our students and staff.

Becky Dupre

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Required masks

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**Donald Risset** <ressetda@hotmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:34 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

Do not require our school children to wear masks.

Thank you.

Don Risset

1910 Wyoming St AptE

Missoula. MT 59801

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks - Public Comment

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**Christy Griesse** <cgriesse@live.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:36 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

Reaching out regarding the masking for MCPS. My step daughter attends Jeanette Rankin. I feel strongly that the children should continue to mask during this pandemic, given children under the age of 12 are unable to acquire a vaccine at this point.

I feel strongly that public health outweighs the dissatisfaction of comfort/annoyance of masking.

Thank you!

Christy

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks

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**Trevor Subith** <subith56@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:40 AM

I am a father of 4 in MCPS. The masking of our children in our eyes is something that should be a choice. My kids had issues with masks and the harm it caused them mentally. I vote no mask. Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

## Don't mask children using junk-science

roy@roymckenzie.me <roy@roymckenzie.me>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 11:48 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Governor Gianforte <governor@mt.gov>, Elsie.Arntzen@mt.gov, Mike Starmer <mike.starmer@protonmail.com>, bcc <bcc@missoulacounty.us>

There are no randomized control trial studies that show masking reduces transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to a statistically significant degree.

### Don't use junk-science to mask children.

#### 1. Surgical mask / cloth face mask studies

Community and Close Contact Exposures Associated with COVID-19 Among Symptomatic Adults ≥18 Years in 11 Outpatient Health Care Facilities — United States, July 2020

The US Centre for Disease Control performed a study which showed that 85 percent of those who contracted Covid-19 during July 2020 were mask wearers. Just 3.9 percent of the study participants never wore a mask.

Original: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6936a5-H.pdf>

Erratum. correction: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6938a7.htm?s\\_cid=mm6938a7\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6938a7.htm?s_cid=mm6938a7_w)

<https://www.theblaze.com/op-ed/horowitz-cdc-study-covid-masks>

#### 2. Facial protection for healthcare workers during pandemics: a scoping review

This study used 5462 peer-reviewed articles and 41 grey literature records.

“Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic has led to critical shortages of medical-grade PPE. Alternative forms of facial protection offer inferior protection. More robust evidence is required on different types of medical-grade facial protection. As research on COVID-19 advances, investigators should continue to examine the impact on alternatives of medical-grade facial protection”

So how is your cloth and surgical mask working again if EVEN medical grade alternatives are failing ?

Study Article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32371574/>

#### 3. Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses

“There is moderate certainty evidence that wearing a mask probably makes little or no difference to the outcome of laboratory-confirmed influenza compared to not wearing a mask”

Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33215698/>

#### 4. Disposable surgical face masks for preventing surgical wound infection in clean surgery

“We included three trials, involving a total of 2106 participants. There was no statistically significant difference in infection rates between the masked and unmasked group in any of the trials”

Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27115326/>

#### 5. Disposable surgical face masks: a systematic review

Two randomized controlled trials were included involving a total of 1453 patients. In a small trial there was a trend towards masks being associated with fewer infections, whereas in a large trial there was no difference in infection rates between the masked and unmasked group.

Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16295987/>

#### 6. Evaluating the efficacy of cloth facemasks in reducing particulate matter exposure

“Our results suggest that cloth masks are only marginally beneficial in protecting individuals from particles <2.5 µm” Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27531371/> 7. Face seal leakage of half masks and surgical masks “The filtration efficiency of the filter materials was good, over 95%, for particles above 5 micron in diameter but great variation existed for smaller particles. Coronavirus

is 0.125 microns. therefore these masks wouldn't protect you from the virus" Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/4014006/> 8. Comparison of the Filter Efficiency of Medical Nonwoven Fabrics against Three Different Microbe Aerosols "The filter efficiencies against influenza virus particles were the lowest" "We conclude that the filter efficiency test using the phi-X174 phage aerosol may overestimate the protective performance of nonwoven fabrics with filter structure compared to that against real pathogens such as the influenza virus" Study article: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29910210/> 9. Aerosol penetration through surgical masks

Roy McKenzie  
roy@roymckenzie.me  
415-471-0253

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## health protocols for back to school

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**Susan Roy** <susannejroy@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 12:11 PM

We appreciate all the health protocols last year adopted by the Board to keep the in-person schooling as a healthy option for children. We are concerned about the coming year and urge the Board to adopt mask mandates, or a masking requirement linked to Covid cases, and social distancing.

As a grandparent who picked up an elementary grandchild last year, we saw how easily the children adapted to using masks. As did all the people meeting children in the school yard. The elementary children prefer the in-person schooling, and it is important for their social development.

If, however, there are no protective health protocols, parents will have no choice but to keep children home.

Thank you again.

Susan And Tom Roy

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask MCPS

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**Theresa Tanner** <theresa.tanner@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 12:27 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees,

I am writing in support of continued mask wearing for the Fall of 2021. With new variants in our community and the inability for all children to be vaccinated I feel it is imperative that we continue to keep our students, teachers, and staff safe from Covid-19. There is no doubt that protocols that were put into place last year not only kept our schools open but undoubtedly saved lives. I believe we should continue to be proactive in reducing the spread instead of reactive when Covid rages through our school system. Thank you again for keeping our students safe.

Theresa Pestel

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **MCPS Mask Meeting 8/3/21**

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**Sharon Bishop** <sharonb.coin@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 12:34 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Can't make the meeting so giving you my 2 cents.

Wearing a mask should be up to the parent. PERIOD.  
MY BODY MY CHOICE

Thank You,  
Sharon Bishop  
406.542.5111

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## MCPS mask use in schools

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**Richard Wilkins** <wilkinsrichard2000@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 1:53 PM

To: "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear MCPS board and staff.

By now it should be clear that we have all been lied to. By the media, politicians, the medical establishment, and by social media. This is a hard pill to swallow but the majority of the state has as well as a good portion of our town, which is clearly indicated in the approach of other school districts throughout the state. Those of us understand the difficult impasse we face here. After all it was the brilliant Mark Twain who said, "It is easier to fool a man than to convince him he has been fooled." And this holds true in human psychology as many of us have a tendency to be stubborn, arrogant and self righteous. But at this point it is critical that we awaken to what we see transpiring around us, we have been purposefully divided and set against each other, true wisdom comes in discerning the why, but first we must acknowledge the lie. The truth can often be shown, in times of tyranny, by information that is censored. In 1930s and 40s Germany censorship looked like book burnings. Today the White House Press secretary has declared that they are working directly with social media platforms to "suppress disinformation" and though it is clothed in different language it is censorship nonetheless and they have been doing this across all major social media platforms and through major media news networks. When you cut out a mans tongue you do not invalidate what he has to say but you reveal to the world that you fear it. Censorship has no place in our country as is clearly spelled out by the 1st Amendment of our Constitution. And please dont even go there with the hate speech rhetoric because its a strawman argument, the only REAL remedy for bad or hateful speech is more speech, not censorship, that is why we are Americans and why we have our Constitution.

One of the most heavily censored groups in America today is Americas Frontline Doctors, a group of patriotic doctors who truly care and have been trying to provide the truth to America since July of 2020. Please find below a 6 page document from them that I have attached. The document contains 29 separate medical and legal citations and conclusively shows masks do not work, and are harmful, especially to children. It also states, as I mentioned in my public comment yesterday, that it is both Unconstitutional and illegal per international law via the Nuremburg code, to impose this medical measure on anyone who does not consent to it. I do NOT consent and there are MANY more parents and citizens who do not. This clearly places you and your organization in violation of the supreme law of the land as well as international law if you choose to REQUIRE masks (Rob you were very correct in saying that the wording of Recommended vs Required is VERY important). In the realm of a class action lawsuit Lawyers even now are lining up to take cases such as this and many cases across the country have already been enjoined and won by those who only desire the freedom to CHOOSE! But this is what they want. We should be friends and neighbors, not enemies. Yet we will NOT continue to have our children repressed and suffocated by a false narrative. You have an opportunity to turn this around here and now by allowing CHOICE and siding with FREEDOM. But if you continue to persist in the abuse of our children, there will come a day, when all the truth is revealed, and all who facilitated the abuse will be held to account, legally and criminally, and then it will be too late to talk, too late for apologies or platitudes. The ball is in your court.

Sincerely

Richard Wilkins



**CHILDREN.pdf**  
277K

Date: April 12, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

I am sending you this notice, on behalf of Family or Child Name. My findings raise significant concerns, both medically and legally, of the current mask policy in place. Masks are ineffective for the purpose claimed by the mandate, potentially harmful, and only authorized for use by an EUA.

**Masks are ineffective and in many ways they harm.**

It's a myth that masks prevent viruses from spreading. The overall evidence is clear: Standard cloth and surgical masks offer next to no protection against virus-sized particles or small aerosols.<sup>1</sup> The size of a virus particle is much too small to be stopped by a surgical mask, cloth or bandana. A single virion of SARS-CoV-2 is about 60-140 nanometers or 0.1 microns.<sup>2</sup> The pore size in a surgical mask is 200-1000x that size. Consider that the CDC website states, "surgical masks do not catch all harmful particles in smoke." And that the size of smoke particles in a wildfire are ~0.5 microns which is 5x the size of the SARS-CoV-2 virus! Wearing a mask to prevent catching SARS-CoV-2, or similarly sized influenza, is like throwing sand at a chain-link fence: it doesn't work. There has been one large randomized controlled trial that specifically examined whether masks protect their wearers from the coronavirus. This study found mask wearing "did not reduce, at conventional levels of statistical significance, the incidence of Sars-Cov-2-infection."<sup>3</sup>

Consider also, that the existence of more particles does not mean more virus. Research shows less virus does not mean less illness. Dr. Kevin Fennelly, a pulmonologist at the National Heart, Lung and Blood institute debunked the view that larger droplets are responsible for viral transmission. Fennelly wrote:

"current infection control policies are based on the premise that most respiratory infections are transmitted by large respiratory droplets- i.e., larger than 5 [microns] – produced by coughing and sneezing, ... Unfortunately, that premise is wrong."<sup>4</sup>

Fennelly referenced a 1953 paper on anthrax that showed a single bacterial spore of about one micron was significantly more lethal than larger clumps of spores.<sup>5</sup> Exposure to one virus particle is theoretically enough to cause infection and subsequent disease. This is not an alarming thought - it simply means what it has always meant, that our immune system protects us continually all our life.<sup>6</sup>

There have been hundreds of mask studies related to influenza transmission done over several decades. It is a well-established fact that masks do not stop viruses. "Part of that evidence shows that cloth facemasks actually increase influenza-linked illness."<sup>7</sup> Bacteria are 50x larger than virus particles.<sup>8</sup> As such, virus particles can enter through the mask pores, yet bacteria remain trapped inside of the mask, resulting in the mask-wearer continually exposed to the bacteria.

Related to the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic, there was almost universal agreement among experts, that deaths were virtually never caused by the influenza virus itself but resulted directly from severe secondary pneumonia caused by well-known bacterial “pneumopathogens” that colonized the upper respiratory tract.<sup>9</sup> Dr. Fauci and his National Institute of Health studied pandemics and epidemics and concluded, “the vast majority of influenza deaths resulted from secondary bacterial pneumonia.”<sup>10</sup>

All parties mandating the use of facemasks are not only willfully ignoring established science but are engaging in what amounts to a whole school clinical experimental trial. This conclusion is reached by the fact that facemask use and COVID-19 incidence are being reported in scientific *opinion* pieces promoted by the CDC and others.<sup>11</sup> The fact is **after reviewing ALL of the studies worldwide, the CDC found “no reduction in viral transmission with the use of face masks.”**<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, Children have been repeatedly shown not to be drivers of this contagion. It is well-accepted that children have a statistically zero chance of dying from COVID. The CDC shows the K-12 mortality rate from or with COVID is .00003.<sup>13</sup> Any intervention, especially one that is prophylactic, must cause fewer harms to the recipient than the infection. Since children have the lowest death rate from COVID infection, the cost-benefit of requiring children to wear an investigational face-covering with emerging safety issues is especially difficult to justify. Anthony Fauci was very clear that asymptomatic transmission was not a threat. He stated, “in all the history of respiratory-borne viruses of any type, asymptomatic transmission has never been the driver of outbreaks. The driver of outbreaks is always a symptomatic person.”<sup>14</sup>

Wearing respirators come(s) with a host of physiological and psychological burdens. These can interfere with task performances and reduce work efficiency. These burdens can even be severe enough to cause life-threatening conditions if not ameliorated.<sup>15</sup> Fifteen years ago, National Taiwan University Hospital concluded that the use of N-95 masks in healthcare workers caused them to experience hypoxemia, a low level of oxygen in the blood, and hypercapnia, an elevation in the blood's carbon dioxide levels.<sup>16</sup> Studies of simple surgical masks found significant reductions in blood oxygen as well. In one particular study, researchers measured blood oxygenation before and after surgeries in 53 surgeons. Researchers found the mask reduced the blood oxygen levels significantly, and the longer the duration of wearing the mask, the greater the drop in blood oxygen levels.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, people with cancer, will be at a further risk from hypoxia, as cancer cells grow best in a bodily environment that is low in oxygen. Low oxygen also promotes systemic inflammation which, in turn, promotes “the growth, invasion and spread of cancers.”<sup>18</sup> Repeated episodes of low oxygen, known as intermittent hypoxia, also “causes atherosclerosis” and hence increases “all cardiovascular events” such as heart attacks, as well as adverse cerebral events like stroke.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, the mandatory mouth mask in schools is a major threat to a child’s development. It ignores the essential needs of a growing child. The well-being of children and young people is highly dependent on the emotional connection with others. Masks create a threatening and unsafe environment, where emotional connection becomes difficult.<sup>20</sup>

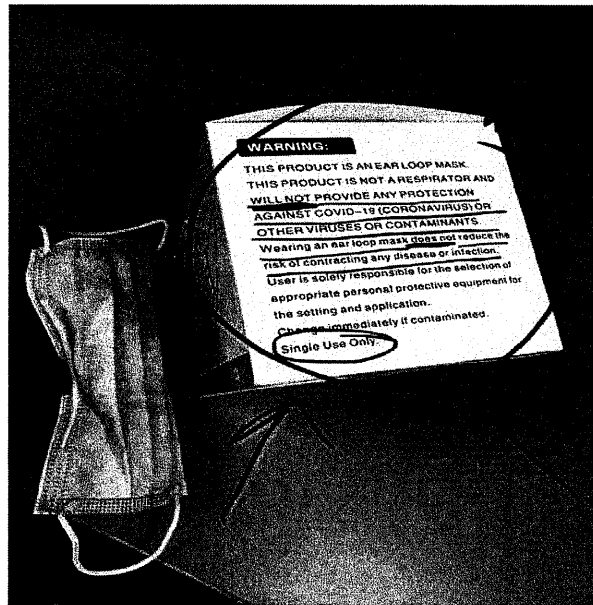
### **Informed consent is required for investigational medical therapies.**

Regardless of the lack of safety and efficacy behind the decision to require a child to wear a mask, it is illegal to mandate EUA approved investigational medical therapies without informed consent. Mask use for viral transmission prevention is authorized for Emergency Use only.<sup>21</sup> Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA, means “the products are investigational and experimental” only.<sup>22</sup> The statute granting the FDA the power to authorize a medical product of emergency use requires that the person being administered the unapproved product be advised of his or her right to refuse administration of the product.<sup>23</sup> This statute further recognizes the well-settled doctrine that medical experiments, or “clinical research,” may not be performed on human subjects without the express, informed consent of the individual receiving treatment.<sup>24</sup>

The right to avoid the imposition of human experimentation is fundamental, rooted in the Nuremberg Code of 1947, has been ratified by the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki, and further codified in the United States Code of Federal Regulations. In addition to the United States regarding itself as bound by these provisions, these principles were adopted by the FDA in its regulations requiring the informed consent of human subjects for medical research.<sup>25</sup> Add State info here if possible. The law is very clear; It is unlawful to conduct medical research (even in the case of emergency), unless steps taken to ... secure informed consent of all participants.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, by requiring children to wear a mask, you are promoting the idea that the mask can prevent or treat a disease, which is an illegal deceptive practice. It is unlawful to advertise that a product or service can prevent...disease unless you possess competent and reliable scientific evidence... substantiating that the claims are true.<sup>27</sup>

The FDA EUA for surgical and/or cloth masks explicitly states, “the labeling must not state or imply... that the [mask] is intended for antimicrobial or antiviral protection or related, or for use such as infection prevention or reduction.”<sup>28</sup> As you can see from the image below, masks do not claim to keep out viruses.



**Illegally mandating an investigational medical therapy generates liability.**

There are no efficacy standards on child-sized masks and respirators under OSHA, but there are proven microbial challenges as well as breathing difficulties that are created and exacerbated by masking children.

Requiring children to wear a mask sets the stage for contracting any infection, including COVID-19, and making the consequences of that infection much graver. In essence, a mask may very well put children at an increased risk of infection, and if so, having a far worse outcome.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that mask wearing presents a severe risk of harm to the wearer should – standing alone – not be required for children, particularly given that these children are not ill and have done nothing wrong that would warrant an infringement of their constitutional rights and bodily autonomy. Promoting use of a non-FDA approved, Emergency Use Authorized mask, is unwarranted and illegal. This mandate is in direct conflict with Section 360bbb-3(e)(1)(A)(ii)(I-III), which requires the wearer to be informed of the option to refuse the wearing of such “device.” Misrepresenting the use of a mask as being intended for antimicrobial or antiviral protection, and/or misrepresenting masks for use as infection prevention or reduction is a deceptive practice under the FTC. It is clear, there is no waiver of liability under deceptive practices, even under a state of emergency. As such, forcing children to wear masks, or similarly forcing use any other non-FDA approved medical product without the child’s (or the child’s parental) consent, is illegal and immoral.

This letter serves as official notice that Child’s Name does not consent to being forced to wear a mask. Child’s Name advocates will not fail to take the maximum action permissible under the law against your organization, and against you personally. Accordingly, I urge you to comply with Federal and State law, and advise children they have a right to refuse or wear a mask as a measure to prevent or reduce infection from COVID-19. Any other course of action is contrary to the law. I am willing to testify as to the veracity of the contents in this document. Please confirm no further pressure will be exerted upon Child’s Name to follow this illegal mask mandate, and that Child’s Name will not face any retaliatory disciplinary action.

Sincerely,

Name

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?doi=10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.4221>

<sup>2</sup> Berenson, A (November 24, 2020). *Unreported Truths about Covid-19 and Lockdowns: Part 3: Masks*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M20-6817>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals.lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30323-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals.lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30323-4/fulltext)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals.lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600\(20\)30323-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals.lanres/article/PIIS2213-2600(20)30323-4/fulltext)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/03/090313150254.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4420971/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/virus-vs-bacteria-difference>

<sup>9</sup> The pathology and bacteriology of pneumonia following influenza. Chapter IV, Epidemic respiratory disease. The pneumonias and other infections of the respiratory tract accompanying influenza and measles, 1921 St, LouisCV Mosby (p. 107-281)

<sup>10</sup> <https://academic.oup.com/jid/article/198/7/962/2192118>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

<sup>12</sup> Nonpharmaceutical Measures for Pandemic Influenza in Nonhealthcare Settings—Personal Protective and Environmental Measures, Jingyi Xiao<sup>1</sup>, Eunice Y. C. Shiu<sup>1</sup>, Huizhi Gao, Jessica Y. Wong, Min W. Fong, Sukhyun Ryu, and Benjamin J. Cowling (Volume 26, Number 5, May of 2020).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schoolschildcare/k-12-testing.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1orSO094uY>

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Johnson, Journal of Biological Engineering (2016).

<sup>16</sup> The Physiological Impact of N95 Masks on Medical Staff, National Taiwan University Hospital (June 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Bader A et al. Preliminary report on surgical mask induced deoxygenation during major surgery. *Neurocirugia* 2008;19:12-126..

<sup>18</sup> Aggarwal BB. Nucler factor-kappaB: The enemy within. *Cancer Cell* 2004;6:203-208, and Blaylock RL. Immunoexcitatory mechanisms in glioma proliferation, invasion and occasional metastasis. *Surg Neurol Inter* 2013;4:15.

<sup>19</sup> Savransky V et al. Chronic intermittent hypoxia induces atherosclerosis. *Am J Resp Crit Care Med* 2007;175:1290-1297.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.world-today-news.com/70-doctors-in-open-letter-to-ben-weyts-abolish-mandatory-mouth-mask-at-school-belgium/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/media/137121/download>

<sup>22</sup> <https://ca.childrenshealthdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/CDE-Superintendent-Letter0from-Childrens-Health-Defense-California-Chapter.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3 (The FD&C Act)

<sup>24</sup> 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(e)(1)(A) (“Section 360bbb-3”)

<sup>25</sup> C.F.R. § 50.20

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.invertedalchemy.com/2020/12/belief-is-not-medical-counter-measure.html>, 21 C.F.R. § 50.23, 21 C.F.R. § 50.20 21 C.F.R. § 50.24

<sup>27</sup> FTC Act, 15 U.S. Code § 41

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/media/137121/download>

<sup>29</sup> Russell Blaylock, Id. (quoting Shehade H et al. Cutting edge: Hypoxia-Inducible Factor-1 negatively regulates Th1 function. *J Immunol* 2015;195:1372-1376. See also: Westendorf AM et al. Hypoxia enhances immunosuppression by inhibiting CD4+ effector T cell function and promoting Treg activity. *Cell Physiol Biochem* 2017;41:1271-84. See further: Sceneay J et al. Hypoxia-driven immunosuppression contributes to the pre-metastatic niche. *Oncoimmunology* 2013;2:1 e22355.



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**upcoming school year**

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**tiffany bateman** <tiffanyabateman@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 1:59 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

My son, he is 9, has been in camp for most of the entire summer, 5 days a week for 6 hours a day. He is around not only different kids each day but also the counselors. They are required to wear masks and no issues have occurred. I would believe it to be considered much "safer" for him to be in school and around the same kids for 5 days than at camp? But it was HIS decision and he wanted to go. I can bet that most parents and their child or children have traveled and have been exposed to far more people than my son has while on their vacation. It is unfortunate that we are back to this discussion regarding the school year. I strongly encourage sending the children back to school full time with a mask mandate in place. Don't jeopardize the education of the children AGAIN by forcing online classes, especially for the students who can't thrive without contact with the outside world, my son included.

Thank you,  
Tiffany

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: In support of masking**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:07 PM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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## ----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Melodie Stenger** <melodiastenger@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 1:23 PM  
Subject: In support of masking  
To: <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Hello, Rob, and hello to the Board-

I have two children in MCPS- one rising freshman at Hellgate, another an 8th grader at Washington. I am writing today in support of continued masking in K-12 schools this fall. There are many of us who share this position, and a great number of them already feel that showing up in person to large groups is risky, given the Delta variant. I hope you will accept our email messages instead.

Why support masking? The coronavirus will continue to mutate the more it spreads. The more it mutates, the greater the likelihood that it not only "breaks through" the vaccines we have currently developed, but does so with greater severity. When that happens is something that cannot be predicted. It could happen here, though. It could happen soon.

It is true that the numbers indicated that those who are currently vaccinated do not \*seem\* to be at risk of grave complications or death due to the Delta variant. But they can spread it. And if they can spread it, it speeds up the possibility that we will have a worse variant, and soon. I don't want to go back to the world where my kids can't see their grandparents or go to the library or have birthday parties.

My kids are already used to masks. Let's stick with it a little longer and see if we can't manage to contain the COVID-19, and all of its variants.

Sincerely,  
Melodie Velasco Stenger



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## MCPS masking policy

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**David Podrasky** <dbpodrasky@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:27 PM

Please keep in place a masking policy that protects school children who are too young to be vaccinated from needlessly contracting covid-19. This would entail a masking requirement for all students and staff during indoors, in-person instruction.

My child attends Chief Charlo grade 3.

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**public comment re: masking in MCPS schools**

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**Ian Smith** <ianoblio@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:32 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, rwatson@mcpsmt.org

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to offer my unequivocal support for MCPS to institute an across-the-board mask mandate for all MCPS students, irrespective of vaccination status. With COVID-19 infections rising at an alarming rate and with new information/understanding about the ability for fully vaccinated individuals to contract COVID-19 and to transmit the infection to unvaccinated folks, an across-the-board mask mandate is imperative, in my view.

As a parent of a both a 2nd grader (who cannot get vaccinated) and a high-school senior (who is vaccinated), I believe the MCPS Board of Trustees needs to make decisions regarding masking that protect the most vulnerable members of the school population, including kids under 12 and others who cannot receive a vaccination.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ian Smith

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## Public comment re. mask mandate in Missoula schools

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**Sloan Howell** <sloan.howell@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:32 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Superintendent Watson and school board members,

Thank you for your hard work this last year. My 9-year old son attends Franklin Elementary and the split days, mask mandates, and other protocols made in-person attendance feel safer last year.

This year, as kids under 12 still aren't vaccinated, and cases in Montana are rising, I feel strongly that schools continue the science-based protocols designed to limit the spread of COVID-19 in schools in the 2021-2022 school year. Specifically, limited class sizes, social distancing, masking, and enhanced sanitizing seem crucial for a safe and successful school year.

In particular, I think requiring masks, at the very least until Missoula reaches a safe level of active cases and/or new cases, is absolutely necessary.

I can imagine how difficult these decisions are, and appreciate the thoughtful work you all do. Please consider requiring masks this coming school year. My kid and our whole family thank and support you.

SJ Howell  
Franklin parent

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**Please unmask our children!**

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**Michelle Mandell** <mmandell2186@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:35 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I would like to express my concerns regarding mask mandates for our children.

On June 30, 2021 the Journal of the American Medical Association released a study showing mask wearing in children is more harmful than helpful. The study found that after only 3 minutes of wearing a mask, the carbon dioxide levels in the air inhaled by the children (average age of 10) increased to 13,120 parts per million and 25,000 ppm for children ages 7. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2781743>

To put this into perspective, the normal levels of co2 in the air range from 300-500 ppm, according to OSHA. Levels between 2,000 and 5,000 ppm cause headaches, poor concentration, loss of attention, increased heart rate and nausea. Exposure to levels greater than 40,000 ppm may lead to serious oxygen deprivation resulting in permanent brain damage, coma or even death. If levels increased into the tens of thousands after only 3 minutes of mask wearing, I can only imagine what they would be after a full day of wearing one.

I have worked in the medical field for over 10 years. I am not opposed to masks as I have found them to be very useful and helpful in many circumstances. What I am opposed to is forcing everyone to wear a mask. We, as parents, should be given a choice on a decision that will affect our children's health, both physical and mental. Let us do our jobs as parents and choose what we know to be best for our children. Whether that be sending our kids to school with masks or without, the choice should be ours.

Thank you for your time.

Michelle Mandell  
Russell parent

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**Fwd: Masking this Fall**

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**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:44 PM

To: Tracy Long &lt;talong@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Danielle Chapin** <danielle.c.chapin@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:39 PM

Subject: Masking this Fall

To: &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello,

Thank you to everyone on the Board for their efforts to make an educated decision regarding masking this fall in school. I appreciate that the board is taking into consideration parental comments, but am hopeful that the ultimate decision is based on recommendations made by the leading experts in public health. The delta variant has proven to be 50-60% more contagious than the initial Covid-19 virus and the alpha variant. How do we manage transmission in schools when the majority of kids are not even eligible for the vaccine? The science has shown that the best defense other than vaccine is with masking and social distancing. That is why the CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. The American Association of Pediatrics has echoed the same recommendation.

My daughter will be a second grader at Rattlesnake elementary. Masking has come to feel second nature to her. At 7 years old she understands that this is a minor inconvenience to her to protect her friends and their families. I hope the board will follow the most current guidelines to continue to protect all of our children and their families so we can continue to keep children in school, their family members at work, and our community healthy.

Warmly,  
Danielle Chapin

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Fwd: Public comment re best way to keep our kids safe this year**

1 message

**Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:45 PM

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Cobler** <sarahcobler76@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:41 PM  
Subject: Public comment re best way to keep our kids safe this year  
To: <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Mr Watson and the MCPS Board,

Thanks for taking the time to solicit input from the community on the best way to keep our kids safe this year. Our son attended Rattlesnake Elementary, and is headed to Washington Middle School this year. We hope the school board will continue to use the best available science to guide its decisions, which currently make it clear that school aged kids (and everyone else on campus) should wear masks, and to the extent possible, social-distance at school.

Last year was tough to say the least, and all of us are ready for this public health disaster to be over. Unfortunately, it seems like we need to stay the course, and make difficult choices that balance some risk against the need to keep kids on a consistent school schedule. The best way to keep our schools open AND safe is to continue to require masks for anyone on campus and take other precautions as necessary and available, like providing additional handwashing stations, social distancing, taking advantage of outdoor classrooms, and the many other innovations our great teachers and school administrators will imagine.

Younger kids still don't have the option to get vaccinated, and even with vaccines, we're seeing COVID spread. Our kiddo will turn twelve this fall after school starts. We are eager to get him vaccinated, but know that won't be enough to keep him safe. Many of his class and teammates will be too young to vaccinate. His elderly grandmother lives at home with us. If schools aren't taking proper precautions, families like ours won't be able to attend school. We don't need or expect special treatment, but know we are not alone. Lots of elderly or otherwise immune-compromised folks will be negatively impacted if our schools become disease vectors.

I know board members, teachers and staff are being pressured by others to loosen restrictions. I understand - no one likes being told what to do. But these are remarkable times that require unusual steps. Thank you so much for serving our community, and doing all you can to keep our kids safe.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Cobler, Missoula  
(Address available upon request)



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## Masking is important for this fall

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**Agatha Light Podrasky** <aslight42@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:02 PM

To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello Mr. Watson,

I fully support MCPS requiring masks in schools this fall, especially for children under 12 who are at risk for contracting covid-19 and who cannot yet be vaccinated. Masks are an important safety measure to take to limit the spread of the delta variant of covid, which is more contagious than other variants and is causing deaths as I write this. The only way lives will ever 'get back to normal' is if we can stop the spread of this virus- and not enough people are making smart choices. Case counts are rising and more people are dying. Mask wearing has become grossly politicized, when truly only the science of disease transmission should be considered. It's simple- wearing masks cuts down on the virus spread. Kids are resilient and are better at following guidelines to protect their health than adults.

My child spent the entire last school year online in the Missoula Online Academy. She had a year without friends, with remote peers. We all made the best of it, but it was extremely hard. We are all exhausted, spent, pushed to the limits of tolerance and capacity to deal with all the challenges every day now presents. Have you ever tried to do your job every single day for a year, while simultaneously being everything to a child- their parent, teacher, friend? Both my husband and I work full time, and I am full of guilt and pain every single day as I try to balance fulfilling the expectations of my professional job and the needs of my family and my child- because it is impossible to do it all.

It increasingly feels like mothers and fathers and young children have been forgotten. My daughter feels like the world is turning its back on children- she feels that adults don't think children matter. 'Just go ahead and let the kids get sick- they probably won't die...' is the message being sent by policy-makers. My daughter is literally living in a society demonstrating it does not value her life or her childhood. How do you think that feels?

We were asked to commit to a second year of online school very early this spring - before anyone could really know what covid cases would look like this fall. Optimistically, we did not sign up for another year of online schooling and working from home in isolation- it was too hard. We hoped our daughter could be vaccinated before school started. We know now that won't happen. Now case numbers are climbing, my daughter is still at risk from this virus, and MCPS is considering not requiring masks.

If you do not require masks and you cannot require vaccines, you are telling children their health is not important. You are telling them that to go to school is unsafe- that to go to school with other kids they must take on a new level of risk. Haven't schools already been proven to be dangerous enough environments?

Please, do the right thing. Require masks. It is the least you can do. Show that you care about the safety and well being of children. Do you really want to increase the risk to our community? Do you want the spread of this horrible disease to continue?

Kids can't be vaccinated yet. Require masks in schools.

Sincerely,  
Agatha Podrasky

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## Fall 2021 COVID mitigation strategies

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**Erin Semmens** <eosemmens@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:04 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dr. Watson, Board Members, and COVID Task Force Members:

I am a parent of a Washington 6th grader and a Paxson 2nd grader. I am writing in support of continuing COVID precautionary measures into fall 2021 including requiring that all staff and students in MCPS schools wear masks. Schools were not major sources of transmission last year because of the extensive measures put in place and the outstanding cooperation of staff, students, and families. I know so many, including our family, appreciated these measures and the cooperation because they made it possible for our kids to attend school in person as safely as possible. Continued COVID mitigation strategies are justified because:

1) We have accelerated spread in our community. Missoula County reported 52 new cases today and a 20 case per 100,000 person seven day daily average.

2) Vaccines are remarkably effective—even against the delta variant—in preventing serious disease, but elementary school and many middle school students are not yet eligible for them. The latest Missoula County Vaccine Data Report indicates that 29.8% of 12-14 year olds and 49.8% of 15-19 year olds are fully vaccinated. The majority of Missoula County residents in the middle school and high school age ranges still have not been vaccinated.

3) Kids can get and spread COVID.

4) Masks prevent COVID transmission and are best at preventing transmission when everyone is wearing one.

Please continue implementing COVID precautions in schools to keep our kids healthy and in school.

Thanks very much for considering my comment and continued thanks for your leadership and efforts,  
Erin Semmens

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please establish a mask mandate

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**Kristina Hubbard** <kristina.hubbard@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:07 PM

Dear school board:

Thank you for protecting my child's health last year with mask mandates, social distancing, limits on group sizes, and sanitizing protocols. It made all the difference in the world and my appreciation cannot be overstated.

I strongly support ongoing social distancing and a mask mandate this year as Montana (and the broader country) navigates ongoing COVID cases, including variants.

In-person teaching is important to our children, and schools that mandate masks and other precautions keep kids safe and allow working parents (like myself!) to keep putting food on the table.

It's worth noting that the U.S. Secretary of Education is recommending in-person education with masks. I'm hopeful school can be in session this fall with safety precautions in place. My preference is for my child to return to schools with a mask mandate, social distancing rules in place, and consistent sanitization protocols as well.

Respectfully,

Kristina Hubbard  
59802

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## Please follow the CDC's masking guidance for K-12 schools

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**Bryan von Lossberg** <bvonlossberg@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:22 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Rob Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>

Dear MCPS Board:

My wife and I are parents of an MCPS fourth grader at Lowell. First and foremost, thank you for your service to this community and our children. We are proud to have a child attend an MCPS school. To date your leadership and that of Superintendent Watson and senior staff has been exceptional in an excruciatingly difficult time.

Thank you. We are grateful parents.

Please hold true to the sensible, science-informed path you have navigated so effectively.

U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona recommends that school systems follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's masking guidance for K-12 schools recommending "universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status."

We support that guidance unequivocally. Our child's in-person attendance this fall depends on it.

We are also aware that you are receiving significant commentary promoting claims that are, at best, mistaken and, at worst, lies - including claims that wearing masks increases the carbon dioxide levels in children's blood to an extent that compromises child safety, that masks are ineffective as a preventative/mitigating COVID measure, and that children don't die from COVID.

Those claims are false — and a disservice to the crucial role our schools play in childhood safety, development, and happiness.

Again, thank you for your service and commitment to our children.

Respectfully,  
Bryan von Lossberg

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## Public Comment for Covid Task Force Meeting on 8/4

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**Beth Gherlein** <bgherlein@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:28 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

MCPS Trustees, Committee, and Task Force Members,

I am writing to publicly and urgently express my support for the authority of the MCPS Board in instituting COVID mitigation policies, especially the requirement of face coverings for everyone in MCPS buildings.

I want to start by thanking the board, the superintendent, and the COVID task force for the incredible and very difficult job they did last year keeping students safe through mask wearing, social distancing, reduced class sizes, and the remote learning option. I know difficult decisions were made in the interest of community health and safety. I implore the board to be brave and continue to make the tough (and sometimes unpopular) decisions we will need to keep our children and our community safe in the coming school year.

I am the a parent of 6 year old rising kindergartener at Paxon and I am deeply invested in keeping MCPS in person learning as safe as it can be this year. My daughter absolutely needs in person school for her social, emotional, and academic health. My husband and I also co-own a business in Missoula, Tandem Bakery, and we can not continue running our business, supporting our family, and providing jobs for our employees without safe and reliable childcare for our kids. I know that everyone here understands the crisis we are facing with the Delta variant and the incredibly important role that MCPS plays in helping this community navigate the crisis. My daughter, like all of our kids, deserves a safe and stable place to learn and grow this year. My sixty-eight year old mother and seventy-one year old father-in-law, both Missoula community members, need to feel that they can hug their grandchildren without risking their own lives. My family, like many, many, Missoula families, needs safe and stable childcare in order to continue working and supporting ourselves. Our community also desperately needs employees who feel safe sending their kids to school while they work.

The board has an enormous responsibility here. We are counting on you to do the right thing and put the health and safety of our community first. Thank you for all of your dedication and service in these unprecedented times.

Sincerely,  
Beth Gherlein

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Support fall masking

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**Ashley Ostheimer Hilliard** <ashley.nicholemt@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:59 PM

To: Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I am writing to support fall masking of students and staff in all grades, regardless of vaccination status. Wearing masks is a small price to pay to keep infections down and support consistency for our schools and kids schedules.

Thank you,

Ashley Hilliard

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please require masks

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**Alecia Gray** <alcgry@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:02 PM

To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Please, for the safety of our children, teachers, staff, and community, require masks this upcoming school year.

All children under 12 cannot be vaccinated and are vulnerable to the rapidly spreading Delta variant. Masks are a critical component to their health and safety. It's a simple thing that slows the spread.

You have my full support to mandate masks. This action will align with public health recommendations from the AAP and the CDC.

Thank you,  
Alecia Gray  
Mom of an 11 y.o. rising 6th grader

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## School Masking

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**kmasella** <kmasella@q.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:05 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon.

I'm not sure why anyone would need to wonder why it is that we're back in the situation of Covid 19 cases not only on the rise, but the virus being even more contagious than the last version of itself.

Had we all banded together and wore masks and gotten vaccinated, no one would have to be having this ridiculous argument of masking again this year.

Of course we should be in masks ... because the vaccinated folks are able to still spread the virus and there are far too many beings still un-vaccinated for us to somehow turn a blind eye to it and believe it'll miraculously go away while we pretend we don't need to protect ourselves and our kids.

You have a responsibility to the students and staff to do all you can to help minimize the spread of this. It's very apparent that too many folks still aren't taking this seriously and doing what actually can be done to minimize this ... and that's taking the vaccine and wearing a mask.

This shouldn't be a difficult decision if your true goal is to keep people safe and healthy. Don't waste time getting caught up in the antics of those disavowing the facts.

Besides that, how many more meetings and semesters and school years do you want to have this same argument?

It's not that tough of a decision.  
Do you want to protect the health of your students and staff or not?

Kim Masella

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **CDC's researched guidance must be followed - we must mask up!**

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**Jobyna McCarthy** <jobymac@yahoo.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:39 PM

To: "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear Superintendent Watson and School Board Members,

We must protect kiddos 12 & under, and the CDC guidance stating that masks should be mandated and worn for ALL students/staff/faculty regardless of vaccination status. We are vaccinated and still can carry the virus to our most vulnerable, which right now, are our kiddos who cannot receive the vaccination yet. Also, hospitals are overwhelmed again with covid and overworked nurses - let's keep the flu at bay for another year by requiring masks!

Best,  
Jobyna

Jobyna McCarthy [she \ her]  
<https://nmdrp.me/jobynamccarthy>

I Accept Mariah's Challenge!  
<http://mariahschallenge.com>



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in schools

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**Marcia Storer** <marciastorer@hotmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

As the younger children have no way of being vaccinated, please insist that all students wear masks. Not only will this help protect the children but also their parents and grandparents. I am extremely afraid that our grandchildren will catch the virus but also want them to experience in-school learning. Not only are the students at risk but so are all the staff members. While wearing masks is a reasonable way to reduce exposure and the threat of Coronavirus, it will insure that kids will be allowed to have in-person learning. Thank you.

Sincerely

Marcia Storer

Sent from my iPad

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**Concern about remote learning for AY 2021-2022**

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Hellem, Tracy Lynn <THellem@chamberlain.edu>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:13 PM

Dear, MCPS Board.

I am writing to voice my concern regarding potentially opting for remote learning for the 2021-2022 AY. While the delta variant is concerning, there are several concerns and dangers in the world that we co-habit with and continue attending school despite of. The psychological and learning disruptions for isolating children at home are more concerning to me than my child contracting COVID.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children and staff wear masks during school hours to protect unvaccinated populations (e.g., children under the age of 12 years). Further, the AAP strongly advocates for children attending school in person. My hope is that the Board carefully considers recommendations from academies, like the AAP (i.e., a panel of experts regarding pediatric physical, mental, social and developmental health), when deciding about the 2021-2022 AY.

Thank you,

Tracy Hellem

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## Mask usage in the fall

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**Kelly McKinnie** <kellymckinnie@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:29 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi,

I will have a 4th and a 6th grader in MCPS schools this fall. Please, please, please, require masks for all students and teachers/administrators this fall. I was really proud of MCPS last year and all they did to keep our kids safe. It worked! As we see case numbers rise again I would very much like to see MCPS continue to use a science based approach to determining when masks should no longer be required. Elementary schools will have classrooms full of unvaccinated students, middle schools will be a little better and hopefully HS schools will have many vaccinated students. I say masks for all until case numbers are way down and all students can be vaccinated!

Thanks for listening.

Kelly McKinnie

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## Covid Task Force

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**Timothy Mitchell** <timothy.b.mitchell@me.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:30 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To whom it may concern:

I am unable to be present for today's COVID task force meeting, however, I would like my comments submitted for the record.

As a physician I have been on the front lines of dealing with the pandemic for the past 18 months. Over the past few months it appeared that there was a light at the end of the tunnel, infections and deaths had dramatically fallen since the introduction of wide-spread vaccination. However, over the past few weeks there has been an abrupt change in the outlook of this pandemic. The delta variant has thrown us a curveball and we are now seeing exponential growth in infections. The delta variant does not appear to be sparing children like previous variants did. Worldwide there has been a significant increase in childhood deaths related to COVID-19. Here in the United States children's hospitals in areas with low vaccination rates have seen a significant increase in hospitalizations.

Unfortunately, those between ages 5-12 are unable to be vaccinated leaving them vulnerable to this disease. It's true many will either be a symptomatic or mildly symptomatic. Others, however, will end up with long-COVID symptoms and god forbid worse outcomes. We have to take this vulnerable population into consideration with crafting a plan to return to the classroom.

It is vitally important for our kids to be able to return to the classroom. We are never going to eliminate the risk of adverse outcomes, but there are simple, straightforward steps that we can take to reduce the risk of spread.

- 1) Continue to strongly encourage vaccination in all individuals are eligible.
- 2) For employees who have decided not to vaccinate, implement masking with N-95s, face shields, and weekly COVID testing.
- 3) Implement mask mandates for all school age children, regardless of age or vaccination status. It has been shown that vaccinated individuals are still able to spread the disease. We should be attempting to reduce the risk of spread as much as possible.

Again, I feel that it is vitally important to allow kids to return to the classroom this fall, however, we must do so in a safe and logical manner.

Sincerely,

Timothy Mitchell, MD

- Father of a soon to be kindergartner in the MCPS system.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please implement a mask mandate

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**Dylan Rincker Counseling** <dylanrinckercounseling@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:35 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

MCPS

I am writing a short and direct email in my support of mask wearing in schools where kids 12 and under are enrolled. This should be the case until ample time has been provided to get this demographic effectively vaccinated.

Sincerely,

Dylan Rincker, Lowell Elementary Parent

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## Covid restrictions

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**sasha\_abrahamson@yahoo.com** <sasha\_abrahamson@yahoo.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:40 PM

I am writing to let you know that we feel very strongly that masks should be mandatory in MCPS schools. Until our children under the age of 12 are able to be vaccinated, masks are best protection. Additionally, for those immune compromised people who cannot get the vaccine, we all need to do our part to decrease the spread. Furthermore, as covid is on the rise again in our community, we should not have to choose between our children's safety and in-person learning.

Thank you,  
Sasha Abrahamson and Jop Geurtjens

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**Mask mandate comment**

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**Rachel Kantor** <patteecanyonoutdoorschool@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:47 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

In light of the delta variant now circulating in Missoula County and the significantly increased risk it poses in terms of transmissibility, as well as the increased health impacts it can cause in children compared to the older variants, and the up to 30% (exact number is debatable due to lack of research) possibility of children developing Post Acute Sequela of Covid 19 (as someone currently experiencing this I do not wish this upon anyone, especially for a child), and finally, the lack of vaccination for younger children and the low vaccination rate in older children, I ask that a mask mandate be put in place for all students and staff at MCPS. A mask requirement in schools is also the recommendation of the AAP and the CDC, organizations whose recommendations have been followed previously by MCPS and used to justify previous school decisions in regards to covid19 policy, so I hope those recommendations continue to be followed to ensure the greatest chance of student and staff safety.

Thank you,  
Rachel Kantor

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## Masking policy

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**Audrey Elias** <campbell.02@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:47 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon!

I am writing to both thank the MCPS board for making difficult choices that kept our children safe and in school last year, and to ask that a mask mandate be put in place for the coming year, whether across the board or related to certain metrics in the community (% vaccinated in the school, cases/100k, test positivity rate, etc.).

My son is an upcoming 4th grader at Lowell Elementary. We were able to send him to school and after-school care without worry, even during the height of the 2020 pandemic, because we knew everyone in that school cared for his health and the health of their fellow staff and faculty members. Masking was not a big deal, it was expected, and it was informed by science. The Secretary of Education is recommending mandatory masking for the coming year, and I hope the school board is strong enough and smart enough to follow their recommendations.

I know many comments have been made regarding supposed problems with masking. As a health-care provider and a researcher, these claims are spurious at best, logically inconsistent and wildly unscientific. Educators should know better than to base policy that impacts the health and education of our children on fearful and spurious claims. I urge you to live up to the example you set so gracefully last year, and institute a masking policy that is not "optional."

Thank you for your attention--

Audrey Elias, PT, PhD

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**(no subject)**

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**Mica Kantor** <27kanmic@student.mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 4:56 PM

Hi, I am going to 7 grade at Washington Middle school. I would not feel safe going to school if masks were not required.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Public comment for covid task 8/3/21 meeting

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**Melissa Matassa-Stone** <melissa\_matassa@hotmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 6:50 PM

I support that CDC guidance be used in the determination of a mask mandate for students and staff, especially for those students ages 12 and under as this population is not eligible for vaccination.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Matassa-Stone

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Mask wearing during the 2021-2022 AY.**

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**Brian Gregoire** <gregoire.brianj@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 7:19 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear COVID task-force,

First of all, thank you for the time and effort that you have put into this complicated scenario of guiding MCPS through COVID. Secondly, I want to voice my support in the wearing of wearing masks in MCPS buildings and classrooms for the coming academic year.

With the rise of the Delta variant and large amounts of our community at risk, I feel that it is the responsible thing to do for the greater good of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Brian Gregoire.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in MCPS

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**Isaac Kantor** <isaac@kantorlawmt.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 8:30 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us" <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>

Dear Dr.Watson and MCPS,

I encourage you to require masks for students and employees when MCPS opens this fall. With our COVID numbers on the rise, and the Delta variant being dangerous to children, many of whom are too young to be vaccinated, this is the wise choice, and also the recommendation of the CDC and other authorities. I have children at Washington Middle School and Sentinel High this year.

Thank you,  
Isaac Kantor

Sent from my iPhone

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Covid task force

A Stevens <a\_t\_stevens@hotmail.com>

Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 9:01 PM

To: "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I'm writing to submit public comment regarding mask requirements when school begins later this month.

I strongly urge you to require masks for all students, teachers, and staff. This is a simple requirement that many of us are already used to, that can drastically reduce the spread of COVID-19 as well as other illnesses. With the Delta variant taking hold around the country and world, and the likelihood of other variants developing and spreading as well, we need to remain vigilant. Since many of your students are too young to be vaccinated, this is the only way to keep them safe. And with breakthrough infections, and the vaccinated still capable of transmitting the virus, masking in the schools will also protect the families, friends, and community members of your students, teachers, and staff.

I cannot see any justifiable reason to NOT make masks a requirement of attendance. We have made it this far in this pandemic. Please don't drop the ball at this critical moment.

My son is just old enough to start kindergarten this year, but I am not sending him to public school, in part because of COVID-19. If we remain vigilant now, we all hope the public health crisis will abate by next fall. Maybe then he can start school in a world that doesn't require masks. However, if we are reckless now, who knows how much worse the pandemic could get? Please require masks for everyone entering school buildings this school year.

Thank you,

Abigail Carey  
540 River Court  
Missoula, MT 59801

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please Require Masks in Schools

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**Noah Becher** <noah.becher@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:18 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

COVID-19 cases have been exploding across the nation and in Missoula county.

I urge MCPS to require masks for all. They are a low cost intervention and have very little to no downsides. CDC and AAP guidelines both recommend masks for all in schools.

My daughters are not yet in public schools but many of their daycare and preschool classmates have siblings in k-12 schools. I urge you to follow the expert recommendations and require masks to help keep them safe until we are past this pandemic or at least at much lower case rate.

Thank you,  
Noah Becher RN  
Noah.becher@gmail.com  
859-468-7107  
1125 Milton St, Missoula, MT 59802

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## **Covid task force comments**

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**Rachael Griess** <rachaelgriess@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:36 AM

Reply-To: Rachael Griess <rachaelgriess@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hi there,

I wanted to submit my statement to the COVID task force in support of MCPS following the recommendations of the CDC and AAP in requiring masking in school for age groups not yet eligible for vaccination.

(I was unable to submit my comment via the website link but reached out to the covid questions email).

Thank you,  
Rachael Herynk

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Support for Masks in Schools

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**Megan Schultz** <megantannerschultz@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:43 AM

Hello-

I have an incoming kindergartener, and I support masks in Missoula County Public Schools.

Until vaccinations are available to younger children, I feel masks are an important step to keeping our children safe.

Megan Schultz

1620 S 9th St W

Missoula, MT 59801

406-544-4800

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## **Pro Mask**

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**Travis D** <travisdoria@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:55 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

It is criminal that public comment is needed to advocate for scientific best practices. While the anti mask, anti vax people are more vocal, they are objectively wrong about the science.

To protect our children and our community, please follow the CDCs guidelines and have school children wear a mask all year.

Travis Doria

Travis Doria

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Public comment for covid task 8/3/21 meeting and MCOS school board meeting

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**Samantha Schmidt** <samschmidt406@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:32 AM

I support the mask mandate for all schools 12 and under as this population cannot receive the vaccination even if they wanted. They have a right to a safe learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group a mask mandate is the only option.

We have 2 children under the age of 12 and if there is not a mask mandate we will need to seek other safe options. This does not seem right to put that kind of burden on parents when a safe environment is not too much to expect as part of the education system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sam Schmidt

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**No masks for our young children so they can learn and live.**

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Susan Reneau <bluemountain@montana.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:35 AM

Dear School Board Trustees and School Superintendent Rob Watson,

**The email given to the audience last night at last night's COVID-19 Task Force meeting was publiccomment@mcps.org for sending this comment to you, but the correct email is publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, so I am resending my comments to you. Please give out the correct email when you are in a public meeting.**

I know I must write this email to you by Aug. 10 since you will vote on whether to force all children in Missoula County Public Schools to wear masks or not on that date at 6 p.m. at the School Board room at 909 South Avenue across from Sentinel High School. I hope you hear from many citizens that are equally concerned about the future of our children's education and mental development. I also hope that the media will do stories about the volume of parents and grandparents that have spoken to the Covid-19 Task Force that will give their recommendations to you on Aug. 10. I will be at the Aug. 10 School Board of Trustees' meeting to speak during the public comment period.

I know the media and public can listen to the testimony by contacting the School Board office if they didn't attend the Covid-19 meetings. The comments are enlightening. I hope you listen to these sincere citizens that took time out from their lives to speak because they are so worried about the welfare of their children.

I fear that you are not listening to the public and especially the parents that are raising our children in Missoula, but I continue to say that children should not wear masks in school. I call masks face diapers. When school opens this fall, children must not be required to wear cloth masks that not only smother fresh air and muffle words but cover up facial expressions and body language so necessary for learning. Wearing a mask while inside hampers proper breathing and forces a human to inhale carbon dioxide as they naturally exhale. Children tell me they become dizzy and develop headaches when they have to wear masks for six to eight hours.

After attending the Covid-19 Task Force meetings where hundreds of parents and grandparents spoke out against masks and a handful of people spoke in favor of masks, I am convinced these members have made up their minds to recommend to you that all children in Missoula County Schools must wear masks, which is a true tragedy.

My three sons attended Missoula public schools throughout elementary, middle and high school but if they were still in school, I would remove them from your school system and put them in a school system where masks are not required or allowed. I also would put them in a school district that never shut down last year. This angers me that parents facing this option now have to continue paying your school district through taxes but their children do not attend the schools they pay for.

I have read of no medical cases of Covid-19 in young children in Montana and the cases of young children having this virus is beyond low, worldwide. When children do contract this virus, symptoms are generally mild, except in limited cases where children were already extremely sick with other medical conditions. Overweight and sickly elderly adults are the targeted group of humans that have the problems with this virus that was manufactured in a lab in Wuhan, China, according to many reports as late as yesterday. The Communist Chinese government want all of us to refer to this virus as Covid-19 because they don't want credit for what they did to their people and the world.

If you are concerned about adult staff in your school system, require that all adult workers have the necessary vaccines. I was happy to get the vaccines as soon as I was allowed to have one, which was in early spring this year. My husband had his vaccines in January and February while in the hospital for surgery. These vaccines are modern medical miracles, as are all the vaccines that have been developed over the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, but this series of vaccines was developed in record time with record accuracy.

I also never supported the shutdown of our public schools in Missoula to in-classroom learning and the remote learning that took place for months. Hellgate Elementary, Valley Christian, St. Joseph Elementary and Loyola High School remained open and had no reported cases of illness from Covid-19. I always wondered why the media didn't do more coverage about the positive education taking place in those schools where in-person learning always took place to the betterment of the children.

The loss in education is profound for our Missoula students. Thanks to your decisions and that of the superintendent of schools, our Missoula students are more than a year behind academically and suffer from untold academic and mental problems. I talk to children I swim with and attend church with in our community. I know how they have suffered because of your poor decisions.

**You have cared more about the adult staff than the children that you are tasked to educate. If you order that children must wear masks, you once again do not have the best intentions in mind for children and care more for adults. You are catering to the Montana Education Association that represents the teacher's union.**

My focus of concern is for the students, not the adult staff. Children do not infect adults. Adults infect each other and infect themselves because of their lifestyle choices. I also have no patience for adults that refuse to get the vaccines that were developed in warp speed thanks to President Trump's Administration that funded all the development and developed all the distribution systems. Never in the history of modern medical history has a vaccine ever been developed so quickly and effectively.

Please choose Option 5 that allows parents the power to let their children wear masks or not. You do not give a child a band-aid with out parental permission but you order parents to wrap filthy cloth masks over their children's faces that do nothing to protect them from a microscopic virus that was engineered to kill adults.

You are not following any science. Face diapers are not science.

Show love for the children and let children return to their normal school experience in every way.

No masks. Open the schools completely. Get back to putting the children first.

Susan Campbell Reneau

Missoula resident in zip code 59803

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Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Susan Reneau** <bluemountain@montana.com>  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:15 AM

I find this statement confirming a public comment to be very condescending and inappropriate. Why do you assume that people will do the wrong thing? If there is a comment sent that has personal information in it, you have the ability to remove it or black it out in this day of technology.

A simple statement of receipt of a public comment is all you need to state without assuming that the person sending a public comment is doing something wrong.

You further anger taxpayers with this confirmation statement.

[Quoted text hidden]

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## masks for students

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**Wynne Winter** <jwinter00@me.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:51 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I'm writing to share my strong support for masks for our students this school year.

Many thanks,

Wynne Winter

11060 Windemere Drive

Missoula MT 59804

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in school

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DeRae Matuszek <deraematuszek@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:59 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

The CDC has today recommended that everyone in K-12 mask indoors. MCPS should be following the advice of our nation's health experts and require masks for students in the upcoming year. Especially considering that the Delta variant is more harmful to children than the original strain.

Thanks,  
DeRae Matuszek

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## public comment regarding masking in school

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**Maria Iles** <maria.c.iles@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:59 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Whom It May Concern,

I am seeing a lot of opinions being presented regarding mask usage and COVID safety in schools.

This is not a matter of opinion.

Based on recommendations from public health officials, the CDC, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is clear that all students returning to in-person school should be wearing masks regardless of vaccination status.

Furthermore, we are all aware that children under 12 are unable to be vaccinated and at further risk. It would be careless to allow students or teachers to return to in-person schooling without masks.

I hope that Missoula County Public Schools listens to science and medical professionals to guide them in medical decision making - much like we, as parents, trust you as our educational professionals for our children's educational needs.

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Maria Iles

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Unmask children

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**Lara Hammond** <laramurat@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:24 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I would like to express my strong support for unmasking our children for the school year 2021/2022.

My children have worn masks for more than 1000 hours this year. Studies have shown wearing masks increasing the inhalation of carbon dioxide in children to an unhealthy amount in just 3 minutes.

I am more concerned about the negative effects of long-term mask wearing than I am about Covid for my three young children. The virus does not appear to be targeting those younger than 12 years old. Influenza kills more young children than Covid does, and we have never required mask-wearing or flu shots to attend school.

Please change mask wearing in schools to be optional and a decision made at the family level.

Thank you for your time.

Lara Hammond

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## **MASK students, Staff and visitors in Missoula County Public Schools**

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**Nan Dunne Byington** <dunnebyington@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:30 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

To the Missoula County Public School Board,

THANK YOU so much for your public service. It's a huge commitment, with enormous responsibility. I am writing today specifically regarding your decision-making related to the COVID-19 pandemic. I want you to know **you have my support, the support of the majority of residents of Missoula, and most importantly, you have the support of medical science, and HISTORY, to mandate the use of masks for student, Staff and visitors in Missoula County Public schools.**

More than 72,000 kids in the USA are currently ill with COVID19 (CNN, 8.4.21). Most of them are having a miserable but survivable experience. Some are dying, horribly, of COVID19 induced pneumonia especially.

The McDonalds corporation is mandating masks in the face of the Delta variant spread; they are more worried about public health than any threat to loss of profit or 'prestige' (CBS News 8.3.21). I expect the same level of concern for public health from the Missoula County Public School Board.

Governor Kay Ivey (R-AL) is now blaming the citizens of her state for not vaccinating; Two months ago, the Alabama Legislature passed a vaccine passport ban on the last day of its 2021 session. Lawmakers rammed the bill through so fast, not even the bill's sponsor, state Sen. Arthur Orr, seemed to know what was in it. That bill prohibited schools and universities from requiring students to be vaccinated. That bill forced private businesses to accept customers who have refused to get vaccinated. Ivey signed that bill into law. **Don't be an ineffective hypocrite like Ivey.**

Governor Asa Hutchinson (R-AR) states he regrets signing a law banning local mask mandates, as COVID cases rise rapidly in the state. HE WAS ELECTED TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR including to protect public safety of the citizens of his state. "In hindsight, I wish that had not become law," he passive aggressively says, without taking personal responsibility for the fact that it was he who specifically asked lawmakers to allow school districts to adopt mask mandates. Hutchinson and others, like Desantis of FL are personally directly responsible for stopping their constituents from being able to follow CDC guidance and unfolding medical science. **Don't be frankly cruelly stupid like Hutchinson and Desantis.**

The following is sourced from a group of medical science researchers making an excellent effort to publicize high quality data in an accessible format. I urge you to consider this source to inform your decision making:  
<https://www.facebook.com/dearpandemic/posts/375965827365404>

Wearing a mask is one part of a practice of hygiene that has helped the world emerge from pandemics in the past until vaccines could be developed and administered. During the four influenza pandemics of the last 100 years, the world was able to significantly decrease deaths by practicing mitigation long before vaccines were fully developed. Almost 3% of the world's population died from the 1918 flu. By the 2009 flu pandemic, 0.001 to 0.007% of the world's population died. This

is due to the careful development of vaccines over time. But quarantine, mask wearing, and proper hygiene keep transmission of disease at a minimum until vaccines can be developed and administered. These practices are known to help even when effective vaccines are refused.

We are up against a unique time in history. Though this is a coronavirus, not an influenza virus, prevention measures do not change. So if you are vaccinated and in a hotspot where the Delta variant is prominent, wear your mask, keep social-distancing, and wash your hands. Mitigation saves lives.

[https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html?fbclid=IwAR1Rsy4j6tywC72IBPj6lCpnpgbp0M7ZogMBCh\\_1gWf\\_1bMZemYrfcJEUDE](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/past-pandemics.html?fbclid=IwAR1Rsy4j6tywC72IBPj6lCpnpgbp0M7ZogMBCh_1gWf_1bMZemYrfcJEUDE)

[https://virological.org/t/viral-infection-and-transmission-in-a-large-well-traced-outbreak-caused-by-the-delta-sars-cov-2-variant/724?fbclid=IwAR3y7FgbWgU757FXKE2XIDtbyDKDhP-ilj94zqInt4FFDjjR7xPbG\\_zwBYg](https://virological.org/t/viral-infection-and-transmission-in-a-large-well-traced-outbreak-caused-by-the-delta-sars-cov-2-variant/724?fbclid=IwAR3y7FgbWgU757FXKE2XIDtbyDKDhP-ilj94zqInt4FFDjjR7xPbG_zwBYg)

The CDC recommends that schools implement universal indoor masking for all students, teachers, and staff, even among people who are vaccinated.

It should be noted that the CDC issues recommendations, not mandates, so specific policies are still be left up to local and state officials, as well as businesses and schools.

The guidance reflects the changing situation with Delta as well as emerging evidence that vaccinated people may be more likely to get infected with Delta than previous variants, and thus can possibly transmit to others (though this probability is still dramatically lower than if unvaccinated). When cases are high, the chances of any person, vaccinated or unvaccinated getting exposed to the virus is higher, and masks help mitigate this risk.

The CDC guidance should make it easier for those who want to step up precautions in areas where transmission is high.

**We know many parents will be relieved at the recommendation for masking in schools since kids under 12 have not yet had an opportunity to be vaccinated. Again, the decision will be down to local schools and districts, but the CDC recommendation should bolster overall support for such policies.**

**We know the changing CDC guidance has raised some eyebrows over these many months, but we do appreciate our public servants making difficult calls with rapidly changing information. We know this may feel like two steps forward and one step back, but we ARE making progress thanks to vaccinations. With Delta rising, taking a step towards more precautions in areas with high transmission and with lots of unvaccinated people indoors (schools) makes a lot of sense.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/.../fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

<https://www.statnews.com/.../cdc-recommend-masks-indoors.../>

Your work is particularly difficult at this time, and rarely will your decisions have a more weighty effect immediately, and into the futures of the children of Missoula. Please, resist the impassioned and poorly informed demands of a noisy minority. Please, adhere to science.

With deepest appreciation,

Nan Dunne Byington, RN, ND

2046 S 8<sup>th</sup> ST W, Missoula, 59801

406 544 2302

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**Require Masks and Vaccination for all in-person school students and staff**

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**Sneed Collard** <sbcollardiii@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:52 AM

Dear Dr. Watson & School Board,

I would like to thank you ahead of time for your patience and perseverance in resisting calls by a very vocal and misinformed minority wishing to do away with masks and vaccinations in our public schools. Although many of mask opponents may be well-intentioned, they clearly are being misinformed and misled by others, many of whom are pushing a very narrow and short-sighted political agenda. People who would not hesitate to cover their noses when they sneeze in order to prevent someone else from getting a cold now want to expose all of us to dangers far greater. And you know as well as I that most students have no trouble wearing masks to school, and have easily taken it in stride. My family is fully vaccinated and more than ready to wear masks, and we fully support a mandate that every other family attending public school must do the same.

Thank you very much for your time and your courage.

Sincerely,

Sneed Collard  
Missoula

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**Fwd: Public comment re best way to keep our kids safe this year**

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**Sarah Cobler** <sarahcobler76@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:54 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sarah Cobler** <sarahcobler76@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 2:40 PM

Subject: Public comment re best way to keep our kids safe this year

To: &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear Mr Watson and the MCPS Board,

Thanks for taking the time to solicit input from the community on the best way to keep our kids safe this year. Our son attended Rattlesnake Elementary, and is headed to Washington Middle School this year. We hope the school board will continue to use the best available science to guide its decisions, which currently make it clear that school aged kids (and everyone else on campus) should wear masks, and to the extent possible, social-distance at school.

Last year was tough to say the least, and all of us are ready for this public health disaster to be over. Unfortunately, it seems like we need to stay the course, and make difficult choices that balance some risk against the need to keep kids on a consistent school schedule. The best way to keep our schools open AND safe is to continue to require masks for anyone on campus and take other precautions as necessary and available, like providing additional handwashing stations, social distancing, taking advantage of outdoor classrooms, and the many other innovations our great teachers and school administrators will imagine.

Younger kids still don't have the option to get vaccinated, and even with vaccines, we're seeing COVID spread. Our kiddo will turn twelve this fall after school starts. We are eager to get him vaccinated, but know that won't be enough to keep him safe. Many of his class and teammates will be too young to vaccinate. His elderly grandmother lives at home with us. If schools aren't taking proper precautions, families like ours won't be able to attend school. We don't need or expect special treatment, but know we are not alone. Lots of elderly or otherwise immune-compromised folks will be negatively impacted if our schools become disease vectors.

I know board members, teachers and staff are being pressured by others to loosen restrictions. I understand - no one likes being told what to do. But these are remarkable times that require unusual steps. Thank you so much for serving our community, and doing all you can to keep our kids safe.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Cobler, Missoula  
(Address available upon request)

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Covid task force**

2 messages

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**Stephanie Wodarz** <chicosaur@msn.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:57 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello.

I was unable to make the Covid task force meeting due to work, but I did want to let you and the task force know that as a parent of kids at CS Porter I am very much in favor of masks until all school aged kids can be vaccinated.

Thank you,  
Stephanie Wodarz  
1427 Phillips St  
Missoula 59802

Get Outlook for Android

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## Vaccine and mask mandates

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**Adam Boomer** <adamboomer42@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:01 AM

Trustees,

As a patriot our first president George Washington has given us a blue print for how to handle a pandemic. He required vaccine for small pox for the Continental.

Among the Continental regulars in the American Revolution, 90 percent of deaths were caused by disease, and Variola the small pox virus was the most vicious of them all. (Gabriel and Metz 1992, 107)

On the 6th of January 1777, George Washington wrote to Dr. William Shippen Jr., ordering him to inoculate all of the forces that came through Philadelphia. He explained that: "Necessity not only authorizes but seems to require the measure, for should the disorder infect the Army . . . we should have more to dread from it, than from the Sword of the Enemy." The urgency was real. Troops were scarce and encampments had turned into nomadic hospitals of festering disease, deterring further recruitment. Both Benedict Arnold and Benjamin Franklin, after surveying the havoc wreaked by Variola in the Canadian campaign, expressed fears that the virus would be the army's ultimate downfall. (Fenn 2001, 69)

Time for the true Americans to do what's right.

Adam Boomer

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## Mask required please for return to school

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**jwoessner@bigsky.net** <jwoessner@bigsky.net>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:02 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Bill Woessner <william.woessner@umontana.edu>, Jean Woessner <jwoessner@bigsky.net>

Dear Superintendent Watson and the MCPS Covid Advisory Team and Missoula County School Board Members,

We are writing to support MCPS \*requiring\* masks to be worn by students and staff if schools will be back "in person" this fall.

We are retired educators, with children who matriculated through MCPS, and have been watching with alarm as the daily Covid cases increase, both statewide and locally here in Missoula County. With the rise of the more contagious and severe Delta variant, and the absence of a vaccine for children under the age of 12, masking is the prudent and proven procedure in prevention of the spread of the disease.

Please require masks!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jean Wilkerson Woessner, M.Ed.

William Woessner, PhD, Regents' Professor Emeritus, University of Montana

Sent from my iPhone



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Public comment on masks in schools

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**Angela Listug** <alistug@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:07 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I support the mask mandate for all schools with kids 12 and under as this population cannot receive the vaccination even if they wanted. They have a right to a safe learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group a mask mandate is the only option.

Thank you for your consideration.

Angela Listug-Vap

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**Fwd: Masks in public schools and task force meeting**

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**Lisa Davey** <ladavey25@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:07 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lisa Davey** <ladavey25@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021, 7:54 PM  
Subject: Masks in public schools and task force meeting  
To: <rwatson@mcps.org>

Dear Covid Task Force,

I apologize I won't be able to attend your meeting tomorrow. Masks have been reliable in slowing the spread of COVID 19, including variants. Now that Delta is catchable AND TRANSMITTED by vaccinated people, it is important to take precautionary measures to keep our kids healthy, as well as our teachers, counselors, administrators and everyone else. Even if older kids are old enough to get vaccinated, many will still live with children who are not able to be vaccinated. Additionally, the Delta variant has drastically changed the equation. It means that if my child brings it home from school, I could get it and give it to my mom who is at high risk. It also means that my high risk teenager, who opted for MOA last year and missed out on a Freshman year in order to stay safe will not be safe at school once again. Between him being vaccinated and having masks at school I feel safe sending him to in person school, where he needs to be. Telling parents of kids at risk that MOA is an equal but separate option is discrimination, plain and simple. We cannot let masks become something teens self regulate. I know that when the bulk of people quit wearing masks I felt uncomfortable wearing mine in public and quit again until the new information came out. When I have gone to places like the Food Bank, where everyone was still wearing masks, I put mine on no problem and appreciated blending in. If an adult who understands the science, along with the peer pressure is succumbing to the peer pressure, I don't think most teens will make the choice most based on public health, even if they want to. Finally, schools teach science. Follow the science. Masks are proven to mitigate spreading (and flu numbers will be lower as well!) and changing guidance is part of the equation. As the mom of a vaccinated teen at high risk who desperately wants to return to school, and who deserves access to his public education and on order to be fair to all students and keep our community safe I strongly urge you to require all MCPS students wear masks this fall.

Sincerely,

Lisa Davey  
Hellgate High Parent (and graduate)  
Logan Wilson's mom  
406-240-4105

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## In support of masks in our schools

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**Erin Hendel** <eehendel@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:11 AM

I am unable to attend in-person school board meetings due to work conflicts, but I want to express my strong support for continuing mask requirements for students, staff, and teachers in our Missoula public schools. This protects the most vulnerable among us until the new surge abates.

Thank you!  
Erin Hendel

Parent of a Rattlesnake Elementary student



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Support for Masks in Schools

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**Sierra Lowney** <sierralowney@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:11 AM

Hello MCPS Board and Administrators,

We fully support masking in schools, as both the CDC and the American Pediatrics Association have recommended this as a proven mitigation strategy to help stop the spread of Covid19. Both of our students are under the age of 12, thereby not being eligible for vaccination. Please continue mask requirements while the FDA works toward approving vaccination for younger students.

Sincerely,

Sierra and Matt Lowney

Parents of a 6th grade student at CS Porter and a 1st grade student at Franklin Elementary

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**Mask support if necessary!**

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**Anne Hanson** <annewhanson@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:12 AM

Hello,

I have two children at Washington Middle School in the 7th grade. My older son graduated from Hellgate last year. I'm writing to let you know that I'm strongly in support of my children wearing masks in school, whenever it is deemed necessary by the CDC, Missoula County Health Department and Missoula County Public Schools. I claim to be neither a scientist or medical professional and so I would prefer the experts make the call!

My kids just want to be at school. They missed their 6th grade experience last year and desperately want to have a more normal experience. They have both been vaccinated, however, have done several camps over the summer where they still had to wear masks without a problem.

I've honestly never heard them complain about wearing masks. Often, over the last year, I would get frustrated wearing one, but they never did! Kids are resilient and want to be safe.

I support mask wearing if necessary to have a safe and productive school year. My children support this too.

Thank you,  
Anne Hanson

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Yes to mask mandate

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**Jennie Bucher** <jbucher.vn@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:15 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Covid Task Force Committee and MCPS School Board Members,

I am strongly in favor of a mask mandate for MCPS this fall, as hard as that is. The Delta variant is so dangerous, and affects kids and even the vaccinated. The risks are too great. Please stand strong, and protect our kids. I am a recently-retired MCPS teacher, and I thank you for your careful work.

Jennie Bucher

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **In favor of masks**

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**Blake Bucher** <blakewbucher@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:17 AM

Dear Covid Task Force and MCPS School Board,

I am worried about children's and teacher's health this fall. Please mandate masks to keep them safe. It is terrible, but it has to be. Please!

Thank you for your work,  
Blake Bucher

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## In support of mask mandates

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**Morford, Scott** <scott.morford@mso.umt.edu>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:22 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hi,

I'm a parent of an MCPS elementary student. She is 9 years old and is not yet eligible to receive a vaccine.

I was not able to attend the recent in-person meeting due to work. Please know that I strongly support mask mandates for students and staff this upcoming school year.

Regards,

Scott Morford, Ph.D.  
Research Scientist  
University of Montana  
<http://ntsg.umt.edu/>  
406.461.4910

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## MCPS Mask Mandate

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**Hannah Hilley** <hilleyhh@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:22 AM

Superintendent Watson, members of the board, parents and community members,

I am writing in support of a district wide mask mandate. I understand that the current data for serious child illness due to covid infection is encouraging and that the incidence is rare. But I urge you to consider the children who **are** compromised, those who could potentially be in that small percentage. I am aware the opposition labels this as 'living in fear' but I ask you to put yourself in those parent's shoes. Wearing a mask is a simple and selfless thing to do to protect others. I believe we need to teach our children more empathy and what a great place to start. Let's ask them to make a small sacrifice and frame it so they understand they are doing something good for someone else. It does not have to be fear based. It is an act of humanity in support of those who need us and who deserve to feel safe at school.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my request and for doing all the hard things these last 18 months, your work does not go unnoticed.

Best regards,  
Hannah Lewis

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## Please keep kids safe with mask mandates

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**Genevieve Krause** <genevievekrause@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:24 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To whom it may concern,

My son, Oscar Polley, is a second grader at Chief Charlo Elementary. Last school year we had to home school to protect our family from covid and found it was extremely hard on Oscar's emotional wellbeing. Now that the adults in Oscar's life are vaccinated we are very much hoping to send him back to school in a few weeks, but since he is not yet eligible for a covid vaccine we will only feel safe doing so if the school has a mask mandate in line with current CDC recommendations.

Just as we ban smoking at schools because of the potential for second hand smoke to harm children we must also insist on masking to protect them from a virus that is mutating to become more dangerous to children. Even if some parents choose to smoke indoors at home and endanger their own children, we do not allow them to endanger other children by smoking at school. Even if some parents choose to endanger their children by allowing them to go unmasked in other public spaces we cannot allow them to endanger other children at school.

Sincerely,  
Genevieve Krause

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**Fwd: health measures in schools**

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**Beth Berlin** <bethofmissoula@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:32 AM

see below

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Beth Berlin** <bethofmissoula@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 3:40 PM  
Subject: Re: health measures in schools  
To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

This comment is in response to the Missoula County Public school board seeking comments from local residents on health measures necessary to protect students, teachers, and staff against the new and highly contagious delta Covid-19 variant.

The Board must take all the necessary science based measures to keep everyone under their jurisdiction safe. That also means adhering to what medical doctors refer to as the "precautionary principle " when all the data on the variant and its aggressive nature is not yet available or is emerging. The board has a duty especially to protect the unvaccinated youth who are not yet eligible for the vaccine. We already know that children are now getting sick from this variant and that many could and have developed long hauler symptoms. For these reasons, the board must require mask wearing in closed spaces and social distancing.

Please do the right thing and take all the necessary steps to protect those that are most vulnerable!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,  
Beth Berlin  
3608 Creekwood rd  
Missoula, MT

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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**(no subject)**

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**Elyse Johnson** <elysejohnson.mt@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:34 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hi covid task force committee

I am a mother of a second grade and kindergartner and I would like masks to continue to be mandatory through the school district. While a good percentage of kids recover from covid new studies are showing that kids continue to have lung problems long after recovery and their brain scans aren't showing as much activity as kids who didn't have it. I think it's especially important with the delta variant to require masks until a vaccine is available to those 5 and up and we have 80% of kids in that age range vaccinated. My kids have done fine wearing masks and have no ill effects from wearing them at school. Missoula has been good about following the CDC recommendations so far so please continue to do so in regards to our children who are at risk.

Thank you for your time

Elyse Johnson

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**Mask up Missoula!**

2

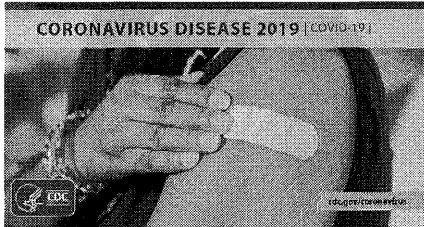
**Painter, Sally** <sally.painter@mso.umt.edu>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:47 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear MCPS board of trustees,

I am writing to urge you to require all students and teachers at Missoula schools to wear masks at school per the CDC guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

**Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People | CDC**

If you are fully vaccinated, you can start doing many things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic. The following recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings. For related information for healthcare settings, visit Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations ...

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Children under 12 cannot at this time be vaccinated against the Covid virus. Their only defense is to be masked and to try to maintain social distance.

Please consider the health and safety of these kids and their families.

Sincerely,

Sally Painter  
MCPS parent  
17 Columbine Rd Missoula  
[sally.painter@umontana.edu](mailto:sally.painter@umontana.edu)

Sally Painter  
Biological Sciences HS104  
University of Montana  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula MT 59812  
406 243 6749  
[sally.painter@umontana.edu](mailto:sally.painter@umontana.edu)

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**2021-2022 School Year**

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**Annie Davis** <davisannie1209@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:48 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Greetings MCPS Board of Trustees,

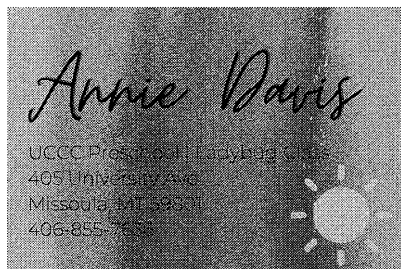
My name is Annie Davis and my son attends Chief Charlo Elementary School. He will be starting 1st grade this fall. I am feeling so grateful for all the care, concern, planning, and action taken last year to implement the covid safety protocols that worked so well at keeping staff and students as safe as possible. A most sincere thanks to all involved.

I urge you and the Covid Task Force to revisit those plans and discuss each measure just as carefully as we move into the 2021-2022 school year. In particular, I am confident that the decision to continue with a mask mandate will be embraced as recommended by CDC and countless pediatric providers for our vulnerable and unvaccinated children.

Thank you for allowing families the opportunity to contact you with our thoughts on this matter. I will hope that your upcoming meeting will be productive and based in science and data.

Sincerely,

Annie Davis  
104 Grandview Way  
Missoula, MT 59803  
406-855-7636





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## We Need a Mask Mandate to Safely Attend School

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**Alena Furlong** <racheterale@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:27 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear COVID-19 Committee:

Thank you for your work during this extremely difficult time. On the Missoula Public Schools website (<https://www.mcpsmt.org/domain/599>) there is posted a statement released by Superintendent Rob Watson on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 which in part states: *"As educators, we know the importance of safety and the critical tie to student success. We know that students can't learn when they don't feel safe. In our classrooms and schools, we strive to create a safe environment so that all kids can learn."* This was in response to recent human rights and equity struggles but also specifically mentions safety and is an appropriate reminder as you are dealing with how to reopen schools with the COVID-19 pandemic continuing, indeed worsening.

The key must be safety. We know that masking is one important way to lessen the spread of COVID-19 and keep children, staff and their families safe. If it was seen as important last fall and contributed to the ability to keep schools open, it is even MORE important to continue masking this fall with the more transmissible Delta and other variants rampant in our communities. One only has to look to schools in the south that have already opened without masks and had to quarantine large amounts of students and staff due to spread of the Delta variant of COVID-19. <https://www.newsweek.com/over-160-students-already-quarantine-arkansas-school-district-deals-delta-spread-1615475>.

The scientific community is clear. Masking should occur in all schools. The CDC states this. The American Society of Pediatric Doctors state this. The actual data shows that COVID-19 is affecting children and the transmission rates are increasing everywhere. Concerningly, long COVID-19 appears to be affecting school age children with 4.4% of the children having symptoms persisting through 28 days, 5.1% among those aged 12-17 and 3.1% of those 5-11 ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642\(21\)00198-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(21)00198-X/fulltext)). Further studies even suggest that vaccinated people can spread COVID-19. With all these things known, it seems the only logical thing, the responsible thing, the safe thing, is to continue universal masking in schools. Especially in elementary schools since those children have not had the chance to be vaccinated yet.

Another area the schools need to be addressing to help stop the spread of COVID-19 is appropriate ventilation in all areas. In addition to ventilation, there should be assessment of whether an investment of portable filters to clean the air in classroom spaces is needed. This would help not only with COVID-19 but the smoke we are

experiencing now and in the future. If funding for this isn't available from federal grants, perhaps this is something the PTA can help with. We would be happy to contribute financially to help purchase appropriate equipment and I would think other parents would as well.

Nick is a physician who works with COVID-19 patients from our community. He knows the data. He sees first-hand the effects of COVID-19 on patients and their families. His **STRONG RECOMMENDATION** would be for continued masking. And honestly, even then, it might not be enough.

I know you are tired. I am tired. We all are tired. But this is where we must reach down and summon up the courage to continue to do what is right, what is the best for our children, when it is even harder than before and others want to quit. Yes, there are negatives to masking. But it is better than the alternative. I'd rather have a child who hasn't contacted COVID-19 able to get an education wearing a mask than a child whose health is forever compromised. Or a dead child.

Talk to the kids. Kids (especially elementary students) don't have a problem wearing masks, especially if it means being able to be in school with their friends and teachers. It is primarily the adults who are complaining, resistant and ill-informed.

It is choices like these (masking, ventilation and vaccination) that will determine if Missoula is able to move forward and through the pandemic with the least possible harm. We must look out for the most vulnerable in our society and do the best we can for them. And by doing so, we will protect us all and provide an example for our children of how a caring, responsible society responds in times of extreme danger and controversy. That is an education in itself.

Thank you.

Alena & Nick Furlong, M.D.

Lewis & Clark Elementary Parents

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Covid taskforce**

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**Ilana Abrahamson** <i\_abrahamson@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:55 AM

Reply-To: Ilana Abrahamson <i\_abrahamson@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hi,  
I am writing in hopes that mcps enforces a mask mandate for next school year. Covid cases are rising again, and our youngest students can't get vaccinated. I do not feel comfortable sending my 2 elementary aged kids to school without a mask mandate until they are eligible for a vaccine.

Thank you,  
Ilana Abrahamson

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

The logo for Missoula County Public Schools, featuring the text "MISSOULA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS" in white, uppercase letters on a dark, textured rectangular background.**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask mandate

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**Chris & Patrick Ryan** <mcryan2010@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:59 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Please require that kids wear masks in the classroom. It's so important that students meet in the classroom and that they are safe. An easy way to at least help achieve this is to have the kids wear masks. There is absolutely no good argument against this requirement. Our grandkids are at risk. The last thing any of us want is a children's pandemic.

Please listen to reason, science, medical personnel and the CDC and not these right wing nut-cases.

Thank you,

Chris and Patrick Ryan  
1709 Arlington Drive  
Missoula

Sent from my iPad

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## In favor of masking

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**Annie Florin** <anniefloirin78@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:03 AM

Hello, Dr. Watson,

I want to express my opinion that mandatory masking in the schools this coming school year is critically important to the social, emotional, physical, and educational health of our children.

When I evaluate the pros/cons of masking/not masking, I see few compelling reasons in favor of not masking. On the flip side, the risks of not masking are numerous:

- kids contracting Covid (missed school, possible long term health impacts, possibility of acute illness)
- staff contracting Covid (missed work, possible long term health impacts, possibility of acute illness, lack of staffing)
- kids and staff exposing their loved ones to Covid after contracting it at school
- frequent quarantining leading to gaps in social, emotional, educational growth and well-being
- families impacted by disruptions to work, school routines (financial, job security, housing security, parental stress)

This is not an individual health decision, this is a community health decision. Our kids deserve to have leaders and adults who are willing to do what is uncomfortable in the short term for the benefit of all for the long term. This is ultimately what we want our kids to learn: integrity, respect, care, sound decision making.

Please, please encourage the school board to vote in favor of mandated masking for all in schools this school year.

Best,  
Annie Florin

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## **Mask Policy**

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**Ian Foster** <ifoster8@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:04 AM

Please, Please, Please. Follow The Science. It is that simple. If the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC are saying to mask unvaccinated individuals, they are doing it because it is what the best available science says to do in order to limit the spread of covid 19 and the variants. My kids were masked all last year at local private schools/preschools and didn't mind it for a second because it was simply what was needed. Sadly, it continues to be. Please don't bow to unfounded falsities. Masks should be worn by all to protect all.

Thank you,  
Ian Foster

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Please start the school year requiring masks K-12

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Jori Quinlan <jori.quinlan@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:09 AM

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

I am writing to provide public comment to the Board of Trustees for your meeting August 10.

I strenuously urge the Board of Trustees to continue to follow the best available public health recommendations put forward by the CDC, the local MCCHD, the AAP, and other respected entities in making public health decisions for the Missoula County Public Schools, based on local conditions. At this time, this means starting the school year requiring that masks be worn by everyone in the building.

My daughter will be a 2nd grader at Chief Charlo Elementary, and my husband is a teacher at Willard. Both were in in-person school last year. That decision, though difficult, was made easier by the numerous precautions taken by MCPS to ensure the safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Neither my husband nor daughter found masks to be difficult or unduly uncomfortable to wear. In fact, masks enabled, they did not inhibit, learning. Since teachers and learners felt safer, the learning environment worked better. My daughter learned and saw that as members of a school community, we do things to take care of each other and keep each other safe. As the community opened up, we felt safer visiting Grandma, knowing that both our school-exposed family members had at least been protected by the fact that everyone in their schools wore masks (I was exposed to far fewer people in my job, but we were masked as well).

Further, research has continued to demonstrate that masks are one of the most effective preventative measures available to us besides, of course, vaccines. Until significantly more people are vaccinated, and so long as the Delta variant (or any subsequent variant) continues to increase numbers in our community, the safe decision for Missoula schools is to start the school requiring masks of all individuals. As the CDC learned from the recent RI outbreak, this is true even for vaccinated people (like teachers or high school students) who can also spread the virus, even if they are highly unlikely to suffer severe cases themselves.

Please demonstrate what we expect our kids to learn at MCPS - that some sources of information are more reliable than others, that expertise is developed through study, learning, testing, and science, and that sometimes we do things not just because it protects us, but also to protect the most vulnerable in our community, including kids who can't be vaccinated yet, their elderly family members, and other at-risk students and faculty and family members, etc. Please require masking by all students, staff, and faculty at MCPS, K-12, regardless of vaccination status, until conditions improve and merit a change to that policy.

Thank you,

Jori Quinlan

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please ensure safety of our children

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**Deborah Schmidt** <reverdddeb@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:22 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

As a grandparent of two MCPS elementary students, I implore you to take every precaution to ensure that our kids can attend school, in person, safely.

Our younger children cannot be vaccinated, and masks save lives. Please allow the schools to require masks for everyone's sake.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Rev. Deborah B. Schmidt

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## COVID-19 2021/2022 School Year

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**alecia lane** <alecia.leach@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:27 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Good Morning,

I just wanted to let you know that I will be extremely disappointed if you require students to wear a mask as well as have any type of hybrid school schedule or model. Kids have an extremely low risk of being severely ill with COVID-19. When a child is trying to learn something like reading, a mask hinders their ability to do that. Non-Verbal communication makes up 70% of total communication. A mask really makes it hard for our kids to learn and also socialize normally. Not to mention, half the time they don't wear them properly. I'm all about vaccinations and being cautious but I feel we need to think about these kids and their well-being for things beyond just COVID-19. I hope you consider the facts and also the negative implications of masks when you make a decision. Thank you so much for listening.

Best,  
Alecia Lane

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MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks

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**Rachel Nordhagen** <rachel.nordhagen@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:48 AM

Hello,

My daughter went to school online all last year and we have been very excited for her to come back to in person learning. However, with the recent surge in cases we are hesitant. I ask that MCPS mandates mask wearing for the safety of our children. I will not be sending my kid back to school if masks are not required.

Thank you,

Rachel

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## Mask policy

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**Joan Mattelin Garrett** <joanmattelin@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:14 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Whom it May Concern:

I am definitely disappointed that our kids need to wear masks again this fall but, the unwillingness of people to get vaccinated that had led to the current uptick in Covid 19 cases make it a necessity. I look forward to the winter when children under 12 will have the opportunity to get vaccinated. When all kids have had the opportunity to be vaccinated or when the community puts our children first and make an effort to create herd immunity we need to have masks required in the elementary schools.

Please don't put the choice to wear a mask

On the shoulders of elementary age children. That is not a pressure we should add to their shoulders right now

I do hope classes will be able to play together outside this fall during recess.

Thank you for your thoughtful handling of Covid policies so far.

Joan Garrett

Lewis and Clark parent

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please require masks!

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**Reggie Spaulding** <rsspaulding@hotmail.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
Cc: "Spaulding, J -FS" <J.Spaulding@usda.gov>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:24 PM

Hello,

I am writing in support of requiring masks in MCPS schools (that is, if the State is allowing this; it's not clear to me what you are allowed to mandate now). It seems that there is much evidence that children are safe at school with 3 feet of distancing, mask wearing, and lots of hand washing.

My spouse and I are not in support of virtual school, especially for our 16-year-old, who is fully vaccinated, and suffered mental health difficulties when staying home. However, if our 10-year-old cannot get vaccinated, and his classmates are not wearing masks, I imagine we would grudgingly consider signing him up for online academy, or pulling him out of the system.

Reggie Spaulding  
she/her  
406-241-2293

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**Re: Public comment for covid task 8/3/21 meeting**

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**Kimberly Shappee** <kimberly.shappee@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:27 PM

To: Samantha Schmidt &lt;samschmidt406@gmail.com&gt;, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: talong@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS,

We are asking you to enforce the mask mandate for schools this year. So much change and unknown and with the variants, until our young kids can be vaccinated it seems the cautious way to go. We want to look back on this time and say we were considerate of all, not cavalier, during a global health crisis.

Sidenote: 6 million americans voluntarily enlisted in WWII. There were no guarantees with WWII and D Day and Normandy. This is something we do for the other- for all- we think bigger here.

We so appreciate all you have done for so long and how hard this continues to be-Grateful for your time and thought on this.

Kim Shappee

On Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 5:41 PM Samantha Schmidt <samschmidt406@gmail.com> wrote:

I support the mask mandate fir all schools 12 and under as this population cannot receive the vaccination even if they wanted. They have a right to a safe learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group a mask mandate is the only option.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sam Schmidt

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KIM SHAPPEE  
c: 406.396.1521  
o: 406.728.0035

theathenapack.com

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KIM SHAPPEE  
c: 406.396.1521  
o: 406.728.0035

theathenapack.com

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask mandate

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**Allison LeProwse** <aleprowse@outlook.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:28 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello!

I would like to request an optional mask policy at our schools. If other schools in our surrounding area are doing optional I believe we can too.

Please consider this, thanks!

Allison

Sent from my iPhone

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## **Masks in school for 2021/2022**

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**Whitney Banks** <whitneybanks@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:33 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi I understand that you are taking comment from community members regarding masks in schools this school year. We really appreciated all of the efforts of MCPS last year and I wanted to first off thank you for helping to keep our children safe last year by requiring masks. We have a student under 12 who can obviously not yet get the vaccine, we also have a baby who's immune system is still developing and we all know how bugs can easily spread between children. Masks are obviously a hassle but there is no cost too high to protect our children. Particularly in light of the highly transmittable Delta variant I think masks at school are the only reasonable answer.

Thank you for your time,  
Whitney Banks

406-304-2550

Whitney Banks

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Require masks!**

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**Laura Hall** <laurasuehall82@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:40 PM

Hello,

Please require the wearing of masks this fall for students, teachers and staff. The delta Covid variant is in Missoula county and as I write this, the CDC is showing we have HIGH community spread in Missoula County. Protect our students and teachers and REQUIRE masks, please.

Sincerely,

Laura Hall

Resident of Missoula

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**COVID restrictions for 2021-2022 academic year**

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**Kitten Beck** <kittenfern@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:47 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thanks to all on the committee for your time and effort toward arriving at the safest solution for our students, faculty and staff.

Our family's first choice is for in-person learning and mandated masks. In the event that the virus is not containable under those conditions, we would prefer online learning.

We are committed to the health of our community over the inconvenience of wearing a mask and infinitesimal possibility of complications from the vaccine. We do not share the view that the vaccine is to be feared either on medical or ideological grounds. There is far more to be feared from not taking these easily accessible, FREE measures to protect ourselves and one another.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks for school

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**Thai Williams** <trwilliams@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:51 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi. As a teacher of young children with disabilities who are not yet old enough to get vaccinated and many of whom are medically fragile, along with the spread of the Delta variant, please follow CDC guidelines and have students return to school with masks. Thank you.

Thai Williams

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# KEEPING KIDS SAFE

An evidence-based approach to protecting kids during the school year

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommend that in order for schools to remain open, which is of critical importance to the education and wellbeing of children and families, certain public health measures must be instituted and adhered to, like universal mask wearing.

## Why now?

### Delta has changed the game

- Delta is 200% more transmissible and results in up to 1000x higher viral load compared to previous variants.
- This translates into a  $R(0)=6-10$ . Meaning, on average, one person infects 6-10 people. This is similar to the  $R(0)$  for chickenpox and higher than the  $R(0)$  for smallpox.
- Vaccinated individuals who become infected can spread the Delta variant to others.

## Kids don't have an immunity wall.

### Not enough kids are protected for an effective immunity wall

- For example, only 30% of children have SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in Texas, meaning a **majority of kids have yet to be exposed to COVID-19** (Messiah et al., 2021).
- Many children haven't had the opportunity to be protected by the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Only 12+ are eligible
- Not enough eligible adolescents are vaccinated.
  - Only 39% of 16-17 year-olds and 27% of 12-15 year-olds are fully vaccinated in the United States (AAP, July 28, 2021)

## We can do it safely during a pandemic.

### Study after study shows the effectiveness of a layered approach in K-12 schools

- In **Missouri**, schools that implemented masks, physical distancing, and increased ventilation had much lower transmission than in the community (Dawson et al., 2021)
- In **Utah**, despite high community incidence and an inability to space students' classroom seats  $\geq 6$  ft apart, high student mask use resulted in low transmission and no school-related outbreaks in 20 Salt Lake County elementary schools (Hershow et al., 2021)
- In rural **Wisconsin**, masking requirements and student cohorting within schools allowed transmission risk to remain low (Falk et al., 2021)
- A study in **Florida** found a layered approach is especially needed when community spread is high (Doyle et al., 2021)

## We need to do it for our kids' health.

### COVID-19 in kids can range from mild to severe illness

- As of July 22, 2021, over 4.1 million COVID-19 pediatric cases have been reported. The CDC estimates that the "true" burden is 26,838,244 pediatric cases in the U.S.
- In 23 states, 16,878 pediatric hospitalizations have been reported. The CDC estimates 209,264 cumulative pediatric hospitalizations in the U.S. as a whole.
  - Hospitalization rates for COVID-19 are higher than for the 2009-10 H1N1 pandemic.
- As of May 2021, 3,742 MIS-C cases have been linked to COVID-19.
- Over 400 pediatric deaths have been reported since the beginning of the pandemic. Although this seems low compared to adults, **COVID-19 is now a top 10 cause of death for adolescents in the United States.**
- Mortality is not the only negative outcome. Long COVID-19 (or Post-acute Sequelae of COVID-19 [PASC]) has been reported among kids.
  - The British National Health Service is reporting that 7-8% of kids experience long COVID-19 and is opening new pediatric clinics for long COVID-19 around the country.

## We need to do it for our community.

### We need to stop transmission among kids to stop spread in the community.

- Kids spread SARS-CoV-2 as efficiently as adults. Several outbreak investigations have demonstrated transmission among children, adolescents, and young adults, including transmission to older household members.
- Living with a child engaged with in-person school without public health mitigation measures increases the odds of COVID-19 for the household (Lessler et al., 2021)
- Children who got COVID-19 at two Utah daycares spread it to household members (Schwartz et al., 2020)

## A collective approach is far more effective.

### A collective approach is far more effective than an individualistic approach

- While masks provide protection to the wearer, they primarily serve as source control and the greatest benefits occur if everyone wears them.
- Kids are highly influenced by peers and teachers. If all peers are required to wear masks, social desirability will play a factor into compliance.
- Using vaccination status to determine who should wear a mask in schools will be a huge burden on teachers and staff and nearly impossible to enforce

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Please have students wear masks**

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**Ms. Thai** <lovethosepez@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:53 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

As the parent of an only child with Asthma who is just getting the opportunity to return to school after over a year in remote learning, please have children return to school with a mask mandate. Thank you.

mother 9th grader at  
Hellgate

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**Fwd: masks at school**

1 message

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**Lisa Davey** <ladavey25@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:56 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lisa Davey** <loganhwilson@gmail.com>  
Date: Mon, Aug 2, 2021, 11:28 PM  
Subject: Fwd: masks at school  
To: ladavey25@gmail.com <ladavey25@gmail.com>

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:** masks at school  
**From:** Lisa Davey <loganhwilson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 2, 2021, 23:24  
**To:** rwatson@mcpsmt.org  
**CC:**

Dear Covid Task Force, I recently received information that you were considering lifting the mask mandate at school next year, if my information is correct. I would like to add that I am fully vaccinated, but I'm writing this anyway out of decency and concern for fellow students and concern for the staff.

Please respond with what you plan to do, with terms I can understand as an autistic 15 going on 16 year old. If my information is correct, please read the rest of this email.

As a high-risk person and as a teen with common sense, this shocks me and is unacceptable from my point of view. I shall endeavor to enumerate the reasons why, for your erstwhile consideration.

1. I am a high-risk person, and doing so endangers my well-being.
2. Several members of my family are high-risk, and thus this endangers them by proxy.
3. The schools will become plague epicenters, and I don't think anyone wants that.
4. The virus has killed millions of people, and if by doing this, you kill off most of the next generation, you are setting back progress on several fronts, including getting rid of this virus, since it affects children and adolescents now.
5. Some of my friends are high-risk, and this endangers their well-being. I will NOT sit idly by and let that happen.
6. I would've thought this task force had more common sense, having been assembled to stop this virus getting any worse. Pfizer is only around 63% effective against the Delta variant, which is the dominant strain in Montana now.

In conclusion, please in the name of the health and safety of all involved, please amend your plans to include social distancing and masking requirements for the student body and staff, regardless of vaccination status, as well as requiring proof of vaccination, double-checked against hospital records or the like. Thanks a lot-Artemi Wilson, Hellgate Knight.

**masks**

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**Eric Chesebro** <ebcheese@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:59 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello

In our family we have children who will be 4th and 6th graders in MCPS schools this fall. We hope that MCPS decides to require masks for all students and teachers/administrators this fall. We were very happy with how MCPS dealt with covid last year and all they did to keep our kids safe. Your approach worked and that should encourage us to take a similar approach this year. If the number of infections continue to rise again we would very much like to see MCPS continue to use a science based approach to determining when masks should no longer be required. This is especially true since the delta invariant seems to affect children more and our children are both under 12 and cannot be vaccinated. This seems to have the possibility to blow up into a situation which could be even more dangerous than last year. We hope that you decide to require masks for all until case numbers are way down and all students can be vaccinated!

Thanks for listening.

Eric Chesebro

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask protocols for 2021-2022 school year

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**Jennifer McGiboney** <rileyandjen@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:02 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Good afternoon,

I writing to express my support for masks being OPTIONAL, and an individual choice for the upcoming school year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer McGiboney

Sent from my iPhone

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**Mask issue**

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**Alison Eckley** <alieckley@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:05 PM

My daughter will be a freshman this fall. She spent all of last year having to wear a mask to school every day at Lolo. She hated it and I hated it for her. Kids are all over each other all the time in school and out. They certainly don't wear masks or social distance away from school and guess what, no issues! I implore you not to force these kids to wear masks again this year. They are not good for their mental health or physical health. It should be a personal choice.

Thank you.

Alison Eckley  
Sentinel HS parent

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## Public Comment on 2021-2022 Masking Requirements

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**Michael Garder** <mlgarder@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:15 PM

Hello,

I am submitting a public comment in favor of masking requirements for classrooms for the coming school year as the CoVID-19 pandemic appears to be escalating once again.

In more normal times, children in classrooms are often incubators for the flu and the common cold where it is then spread to the parents of those children. Given the current lack of approval for the vaccination of children, and the continued slowing of willing vaccination participation in the adult population, classrooms risk being a major transmission vector for CoVID-19 like it is for ailments of the past.

Masks are an effective way to stop the spread of respiratory illnesses. As stated on the MCPS website, the dress code is established for a few reasons, the minimization of safety hazards among them. Given the use of the dress code for less health-focused reasons -- like gang colors -- creates a circumstance where the dress code is used and applied inconsistently despite the stated goals of having and enforcing a dress code.

Therefore, for health reasons and the norms as established by existing MCPS policies make it reasonable and in the best interests of minimizing safety hazards among students and adults for masks to be mandated.

Thank you for considering this comment.

--

Michael Garder (he/him)  
mlgarder@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**Fwd:**

2 messages

**Saxon Holbrook** <saxon.holbrook@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:35 PM

I understand that MCPS is considering not requiring masks for students.

Are you paying any attention to what is going on in the country right now? Delta is a very serious threat, even to those who are vaccinated.

Please do the right thing and require masks to protect your students and your employees.

Best Regards,  
Saxon

Saxon Holbrook  
20146 US HWy 10 E  
Clinton, MT 59825  
406.544.1342

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robert Watson** <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>  
Date: Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:55 AM  
Subject: Re:  
To: Saxon Holbrook <saxon.holbrook@gmail.com>

Thank you for your comments. Our Board of Trustees will be making the final decision on this issue. Please make sure to send your comments to publiccomment@mcpsmt.org so that your comments can be shared with the Board. Thank you.

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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On Mon, Aug 2, 2021 at 9:23 PM Saxon Holbrook <saxon.holbrook@gmail.com> wrote:

I understand that MCPS is considering not requiring masks for students.

Are you paying any attention to what is going on in the country right now? Delta is a very serious threat, even to those who are vaccinated.

Please do the right thing and require masks to protect your students and your employees.

Best Regards,  
Saxon

Saxon Holbrook  
20146 US HWy 10 E



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Parent choice

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**Alyse Tait** <alyse.tait@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 1:57 PM

Mask wearing should be up to the individual and not a mandate.

I am mostly concerned with mental health and the repercussions mask wearing has on the children's emotional well being. The suicide rates have been significantly higher than any covid deaths among the same age group.

Please protect the children and allow them to breathe.

Sincerely,  
Alyse Tait  
801-230-3229

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Masking

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rebecca nasgovitz <rebecca@cherrypines.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 2:38 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello,

I am writing to express my concern for our students, staff and overall community. Considering k-5 children have not been vaccinated and we have not been provided any data regarding the percentage of students in each school 12+ that have been vaccinated, I see no option other than universal masking for the coming school year. It is a shame this vaccine is not being treated as other vaccines in our schools and instead is "optional". It is concerning that the school board could potentially be influenced by folks who argue for no masking. No one's rights should cross boundaries into potentially harming classmates and community members. Perhaps we could leverage the possibility of offering no masks as an incentive to schools who had reached 70% or higher vaccination rate? I understand we cannot mandate students provide their vaccination status but if parents and students volunteered said information it could allow for the possibility of mask requirements being adjusted based on actual data at each school? I believe we should be basing school decisions on school data now that a good portion of our students are eligible for the vaccine. Why base decisions on community data which may not accurately reflect each school? Unfortunately, we all know how this virus spreads and considering the lack of statistics around our school populations we have to assume our schools are unsafe environments.

Thank you for consideration,

Rebecca Nasgovitz

Sent from my iPhone

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## Masks for kids under 12

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Jessica Kehoe <jess@alpineptmissoula.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 2:38 PM

To the MCPS Board:

I want to thank you for all the work you have been doing to manage this stressful time for our community. I want to comment in support of a mask mandate for this upcoming year, for all schools with kids 12 and under. I strongly feel that this is the best option because this population cannot receive the vaccination even if they wanted. These kids have a right to a safe learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group, a mask mandate is the only option to protect all kids, their families, and their teachers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jessica Kehoe

--

Jessica Kehoe, DPT  
Alpine Physical Therapy, South  
5000 Blue Mountain Road  
Missoula, MT 50804  
406-251-2323



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**Parent/Support to a return to masking**

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Sara Berndt <seberndt@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 2:55 PM

Hello,

In respect for your time, I will keep this email extremely concise:

As a mother with a child in this district, and as an employee in MCPS I want to ***strongly voice my support for a return to mask requirements*** as cases are warranting it at this time.

The Delta variant is real, and so are students/staff that cannot (for whatever reason) be vaccinated at this time. It is our responsibility to protect the vulnerable, and masking is a small sacrifice to ask.

Thank you,  
Sara Berndt  
BSHS

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## Mask mandate

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**Emma Wright** <emmabwright@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:02 PM

*As a parent of 2 children under 12, and as a family physician working in primary care, I strongly support the mask mandate for all schools with kids 12 and under as this population cannot receive the vaccination even if they wanted. They have a right to a safe learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group a mask mandate is the only option. Thank you for your consideration.*

*Emma Wright, MD*

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**Mask mandate**

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**Megan Pfaff** <megan@marketplacemt.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:04 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello,

I am reaching out to you to express my concerns with not requiring face masks for schools in the fall. My daughter will be a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Hawthorne. She did a full year of MOA to help keep her 4-year-old high risk sister safe from COVID. Mentally she cannot do another year of MOA, plus she needs in person learning to progress educationally. We do not have the option to vaccinate children yet and I am very concerned with the new Delta variant hitting kids harder than without a mask mandate, we will see an increase in COVID numbers in children and children like my high risk 4-year-old could die if her sister brings home the virus.

Please help keep our kids safe while being able to go back to in person school by keeping the mask mandate for schools. As a teaching institute, please listen to the science.

Thank you,

Megan

Megan Pfaff

Pronouns: She/Her

**Marketplace Media & Events**

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## Mask Mandate

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**Bellon, Chelsea** <chelsea.bellon@mso.umt.edu>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:05 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

With the current uprise in cases, please consider implementing a mask mandate for children unable to become vaccinated. I know for me specifically, as a single mother trying to attend college to further my degree, having a sick child would be detrimental.

***Chelsea Bellon***

**Pronouns: she, her, hers**

**Public Health Wellness Program Coordinator, Montana Public Health Training Center**

**Research Specialist, MW CTR-IN CEOC**

**University of Montana**

**e: chelsea.bellon@mso.umt.edu**

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:05 PM

To: chelsea.bellon@mso.umt.edu

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Please Require Masking in Schools

2 messages

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John florin <john\_florin@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:06 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello, Dr. Watson,

I want to express my opinion that mandatory masking in the schools this coming school year is critically important to the social, emotional, physical, and educational health of our children.

When I evaluate the pros/cons of masking/not masking, I see few compelling reasons in favor of not masking. On the flip side, the risks of not masking are numerous:

- kids contracting Covid (missed school, possible long term health impacts, possibility of acute illness)
- staff contracting Covid (missed work, possible long term health impacts, possibility of acute illness, lack of staffing)
- kids and staff exposing their loved ones to Covid after contracting it at school
- frequent quarantining leading to gaps in social, emotional, educational growth and well-being
- families impacted by disruptions to work, school routines (financial, job security, housing security, parental stress)

This is not an individual health decision, this is a community health decision. Our kids deserve to have leaders and adults who are willing to do what is uncomfortable in the short term for the benefit of all for the long term. This is ultimately what we want our kids to learn: integrity, respect, care, sound decision making.

Please, please encourage the school board to vote in favor of mandated masking for all in schools this school year.

Best,

John Florin  
233 Kensington Ave  
Missoula Mt  
59801

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**masks**

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**Robert Saldin** <robsaldin@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:14 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, Rwatson@mcpsmt.org

Dear Dr. Watson and MCPS,

In response to the new realities of the pandemic, I write to urge you and the school board to require masks in schools this fall, in accordance with CDC guidelines. Like many, I had hoped and assumed that this wouldn't be necessary. However, the rise of the Delta variant has changed things and put the unvaccinated--including all kids under 12--at a serious health risk. Given the altered situation, and with vaccines for kids on the horizon, going back to required masks clearly makes sense until Delta is brought under control and kids are able to get the vaccine. Without such a requirement, I would feel uncomfortable sending my kids--1st and 3rd graders--back to school this fall. I would also add that I encourage you to implement a vaccine requirement--for faculty, staff, and children (when eligible). Schools already require vaccines for a variety of other things, so such a requirement for the COVID vaccine clearly has precedent. It is this simple step that will allow us to move on and resume school without masks and social distancing, something I'm confident we all want.

Thanks for your consideration.

Rob Saldin

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Fwd: Covid task force!

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**Linda white** <lindaewhite23@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 3:58 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

See message bellow

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Linda white <lindaewhite23@gmail.com>

**Date:** August 3, 2021 at 2:13:49 PM MDT

**To:** rwatson@mcpsmt.org

**Subject:** Covid task force!

We do not support kids wearing masks during the school year! These kids have been playing together and in camps together all summer not wearing masks. The COVID numbers have not risen. These children need to build up their immune systems. I feel not all children should HAVE to wear a mask it should be a choice within the child and parent. These kids are suffering from wearing masks and not being able to see and communicate with their peers. I do NOT want my two children wearing masks at school I am against making masks mandatory

Thank you,  
Linda White  
Parent at Jeanette Rankin and C.S. Porter

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

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**Jessica Seaich** <jessielsmt@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 4:05 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I support masking so that we all stay safe from Covid Delta variant. It's a simple thing that really slows the spread, plus fewer cases of flus and colds. Please enforce masking for all returning teachers, students, and staff.

Thank you!

Jessica Seaich

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:****From:** Jessica Seaich <jessielsmt@yahoo.com>**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021, 2:36 PM**To:** rwatson@mcpsmt.org**CC:**

Hello!

I support masking so that we all stay safe from Delta. It's a simple thing that really slows the spread, plus fewer cases of flus and colds. Please enforce a masking for all returning teachers, students, and staff.

Thank you!

Jessica Seaich



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## No Mask Mandate

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Erika Palmer <palmer.erikal@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 4:28 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Consider my family worth Five votes for NOT mandating masks for the MCPS return to school.

We do not support a mandate and urge you to consider only optional masking!

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## Comment on Upcoming School Year

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**Travis Linneman** <travis@gwevergreen.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 4:47 PM

Dear Board of Trustees,

We were shocked to learn you are considering a 100% remote option for the upcoming school year. We feel that this option is a horrible idea. First, with only a few weeks to plan once the decision is made this puts all parents at a horrible disadvantage when trying to plan for work and school. Second, most evidence at this time points to online classes being far less effective the more disadvantaged the student. We can not see how a 100% remote schedule can be chosen if the board cares about reducing inequality in our society.

If you choose to offer a remote option for students and parents who wish to choose this option we support you. We support whatever mitigation methods including masks you feel is best. We support a strong public school system. If the board chooses to force students into remote learning we can no longer support this school district or these public schools.

Travis & Jolene Linneman

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## Mask Mandates

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**Marcy Allen** <marcyallen@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:01 PM

Rob,

I am writing in support of Missoula County Public Schools to follow CDC guidelines and implement a mask mandate at school. We have spent the last year at home because of having a high risk child in the house. I hope that both my kids can go back to school in the fall. If they could wish for anything, it would be to never do online school again.

I encourage the board to follow CDC guidelines, so that we can all get back to normal. We also have a grandma in a nursing home, taking proper precautions is important so that we can continue to see her and not put her or other tenants at risk.

Thank you,

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in schools

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**Joyce Brobeck Dege** <alpindaz@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:02 PM

It is unfair and unsafe for masked students to be forced to be around unmasked students. There is no choice for them to be in a "safe" environment if unmasked students are allowed to be near them.

Students who choose to not wear a mask have a clear choice. They can choose to wear masks or do on-line school. Masks do not hurt them or endanger them, though they may be a bit less comfortable. Their parents may choose a temper tantrum about their rights. Do they really have a right to potentially infect staff and other students because of their right to choose?

Do students who choose the recommended safe route of wearing masks and socially distancing have the right to protect themselves and their families from Covid?

Given the current situation with the Delta variant, my vote is for K-12 masks.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in Schools #2

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**Joyce Brobeck Dege** <alpindaz@bigsky.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:11 PM

I forgot to leave my name. Please reply if it is needed. I am a retired MCPS teacher and totally understand the inconvenience of masks and social distancing in school.

Is it worth spreading covid further to give in to those who feel they have a right to spread the disease unknowingly? The risk is less with masks.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Keep Masks in Missoula Public Schools**

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**Dannette Fadness** <dannettefadness@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:25 PM

Greetings,

I am writing in support of mandating Masks in Missoula Public Schools to keep our kids safe from COVID. The pandemic is not over and it will not be until we take it seriously and get everyone vaccinated. Without masks we risk our kids, parents, teachers, grandparents and the entire community.

Trust science and Mandate Masks in MCPS k-12 schools!

Thank you,  
Dannette Fadness  
Missoula Resident and Grandmother of eight children in the MCPS school district!

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Comment on 2021-2022 Year

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**Alyssa Shepard** <alyssashepard@live.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:29 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To whom it may concern,

There shouldn't be a mask mandate for schools as there isn't a mask mandate for Montana. I believe these kids have gone through enough with the last year they had that was also taken away from them. From personal experience, my son dreaded going to school last year. He was in 1st grade. He's never not liked school until last year when he couldn't play with other kids. He couldn't interact with other kids. That's what school is for. To teach our children life, social interactions, etc. This is teaching our children to live in fear. Meeting new people with a mask on is intimidating for children. My son learns new words and reading best by reading lips and seeing how you say a new word. He can't thrive this way.

If people are concerned, they can have their kids wear masks but to mandate them again is extreme.

Best,

Alyssa Shepard

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**to mask or not to mask**

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**James and Ellie Sippel** <ejsippel@hotmail.com>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:31 PM

8/4/21

Dear MCPS,

I have been a substitute teacher for MCPS for 6 years. I feel that last year went quite well given the circumstances. I was very happy to see students in school and they were happy to be there as well. I actually did not experience distress from the students about wearing masks. The youngest kids hardly seem to care that they are wearing masks and never got mad about being told to adjust their masks, if they slipped. I think it's more of a problem for adults. I do believe that kids should not wear masks when they are playing outside in their pod groups. I believe there is enough fresh air to dissipate the virus as most kids have plenty of space between themselves.

I've come to your website to find out whether I or our students will be masking up this Fall. After reading through the wide range of public comment already submitted, I'd like to submit an opinion. I think there should be one or two elementary schools that will be mask-free, depending on the number of parents that want their children unmasked. Perhaps the same thing could be done with the middle or high schools. Though, since those over age 12 can be vaccinated, I am less worried about those who refuse the vaccine. If they don't mind the risk of getting sick and passing on Covid to other unvaccinated people, I guess I shouldn't be too concerned about them either. Though, I see some fault with parental opinions that seem to underestimate the problem of the Delta variant for children. Yesterday, I noted the news out of Louisiana, where the Children's Hospital is seeing kids in their hospital with Covid-19 and a few in the ICU. The numbers aren't high, but they far exceed the numbers of sick children for the entire course of the pandemic until now. One-half of their Covid patients are now under age 12. Recent study data shows that the Delta Variant is much more contagious and can be spread by vaccinated people as well. If we were to act conservatively, we would insist all students under age 12 be masked. But, since there are a number of parents who don't seem to mind the risk and believe this is not a pediatric disease, let them have their own school campus. I'm sure there are a number of teachers that would volunteer to work in such a school. By December we should know if that was a good idea or not. We can just hope that no child will get seriously ill with Covid-19.

Good luck with your decision,  
Ellen Sippel

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**Wear Masks healthcare provider recommendation**

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**Charlotte Creekmore** <charlottecreekmore@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:40 PM

Hello, I am a family nurse practitioner in primary care locally & also have elementary, middle and high schooler... 2 of which are of age for vaccination, and would like to emphasize and recommend that we follow CDC recos for school wearing masks. Vaccinations for an elementary school kids will probably not happen until the depth of winter or spring. Elementary students won't be vaccinated in fall and need to be protected. Thank you for taking this seriously. Covid at the health department I on the rise and the delta variant and we need to follow CDC reco for mandated masking in schools. Pretty simple. Thanks soo much for having a strong science based voice on this topic. Avoiding school shit downs due to covid will be a positive fallout of this as well. We trust that you will follow science and CDC recos and community Heath risk. Thanks much for your consideration. Charlotte Creekmore APRN FNP-C

Sent from my iPhone

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in schools

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**Elaine Sheff** <esheff@herbsmt.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:49 PM

Hello,

I wanted to add my comments as a concerned parent of 2 high school vaccinated children.

We are very concerned about the spread of the Delta variant. Last school year, our boys attended MOA.

It was a lonely and very emotionally challenging time for them. We were very excited for them to get back to school this year.

But... We feel that ALL students and faculty (etc.) in every MCPS school should be wearing masks.

If mask wearing is not mandated in the high schools, we are concerned that most students would choose not to wear masks.

If it isn't a mandate, we will be unlikely to send our boys back to school.

As MOA did not meet their needs last year, we would probably be seeking some other form of high school for them.

I know you all are in a very difficult place to make a decision, with many opposing and strong viewpoints.

I hope that you will choose the health of our children above all else.

Thank you,  
Elaine Sheff

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## Mask

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**david kuhnle** <beargrassdavid@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 5:53 PM

Hello Board,

Just wanted to thank you for your continued and exhausting work to help protect our children

I personally trust the medical professionals and would encourage the school board to listen to the medical community. It seems that Mask helped last year and I hope we can continue this year with in person school and keep our kids safe

I support you and the board with mask mandates. I have two children in school and feel the Mask can only help protect everyone in the classroom.

Thank you for all your help  
David Kuhnle  
Missoula, Mt

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Never trust wiring instructions sent via email. Cyber criminals are hacking email accounts and sending emails with fake wiring instructions. These emails are convincing and sophisticated. Always independently confirm wiring instructions in person or via a telephone call to a trusted and verified phone number. Never wire money without double-checking that the wiring instructions are correct.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## I support mask requirements in Missoula schools

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**jessica kautz** <jessicakautz@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 6:15 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hi there,

I wanted to state my strong support that masks be required in Missoula schools this fall. I kept my 9-year-old home last year because of Covid risk. We decided to send him back this year, but if masks are not required, we will keep him home again. It will be a shame because he would prefer to be with his classmates, but I am not willing to gamble on his health or the health of anyone else in our community.

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully,  
Jessica Kautz

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## Mandatory Masks in MCPS Schools Will Save lives and Public Health

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Bob Luceno <lucenos@msn.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 6:17 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am an MCPS parent of 5 children, four of whom have graduated through the MCPS System and received a fine education at with one still in school and at home. This youngest of my five has a chronic life threatening and lifetime medical condition. Last year he stayed home and utilized the Msla Online Academy. Because of your wise, proactive Covid driven mask mandate last year, MCPS had very successful outcomes in mitigating the transmission of COVID 19.

By April, he was able to return to his high school campus and resume in person instruction and yet, feel safe at the same time. MOA has its positives but is not the same as in person instruction. I implore you to continue the system wide mask mandate as we begin another school year August 30th to include all K - 12 students, staff, custodians, teachers, monitors and school bus drivers. Why?

It is even more critical this next school year to resume your wise and proven mask and covid mitigation protocols Aug 30th and it is no time to relax standards, if anything, **to double them down!** The reason I say this is because we are currently experiencing nationwide and in Missoula, a new even more dangerous, mortal and infectious Covid threat, a different more highly virulent, transmissible and deadly disease, the Delta Variant Mutation from India!

This new Covid mutation is 200 times more transmissible, contagious and is significantly more deadly with long term effects. In addition, **this Delta Variant now in Missoula goes after childrens Immune Systems more successfully** unlike last years Covid strain! Our K - 8 students who cannot be vaccinated are especially at risk. To not have a comprehensive campus / staff / student mask mandate is to especially not protect these thousands of exposed vulnerable Missoula students and it literally places their lives in daily mortal danger. This would be tantamount and analagous to the US Army sending unvaccinated soldiers into a lethal battle zone without any means to defend themselves against biological or chemical warfare tactics. The US Army has comprehensive and mandatory battle gear including bullet proof vests to protect them against the thousands of bullets coming at them in a war zone along with biological and chemical weapons.

Our MCPS Students will likely face millions of daily lethal and killer Covid 19 Delta Variant infectious Microbe clouds in our schools. Will you not defend them as they daily navigate in a Delta Variant Covid Battlefield? Just one asymptomatic infected Delta Variant student, teacher, staff or bus driver will be exhaling millions of potentially killer microbes into the air if there is no mask mandate. Please, please protect our children in school, on campus and in their school buses this fall, especially the most vulnerable who cannot be vaccinated through the age of 12.

As a parent and citizen, I attended both Covid Task Force meetings this week at MCPS chaired by Supt. Rob Watson. The Task Force and School Board did a terrific and difficult job last year in protecting all concerned on campus with their wise, proactive and comprehensively implemented mask etc protocols. As a former Missoula City Council Representative for Ward 3, it was quickly apparent to me at the Task Force Meetings that a disproportionately stacked, well organized, passionate, activist and sometimes threatening citizen majority attended and spoke at these two meetings. Most were polite, calm and civil. Others were rude,

threatened the Task Force members and attempted to start a ruckus and disrupt both meetings. Supt. Rob Watson did a great job maintaining order. Interestingly, this large, sometimes loud group all believe they are right, had a right to express themselves in a civil tone but some do not reside in the MCPS school district and others with no current children in the school district.

Every single survey and study this well organized opposition group referenced in their testimony related to last years less infectious to children Covid Virus and not our current Delta Variant Covid Strain which currently is a different, mortal infectious disease threat especially to childrens immature immune systems. Thus, their data and survey's referenced were and are 100% irrelevant to the Delta Variant we all now confront . Some of these folks directly and verbally threatened Task Force members up at the table, not by name but in their hostile, emotional, angry and frightening anti-government and anti-institutional rhetoric and attitudes. I actually wondered to myself if some of them would lose physical control of themselves and rush the Task Force. One man almost lost control as he himself stated he was very angry and had a difficult time composing himself while speaking. In both meetings he repeatedly shouted out from the audience at the Task Force in word and tone in a beligerant egging on manner. I was very grateful a police officer was present at yesterday's final Task Force meeting! I highly recomend you have at least three police officers present at your August 10th Meeting School Board Meeting next week.

Thousands of MCPS parents not present at the Task Force meetings this week who are working in the daytime, on vacation, carrying on with their busy lives are relying on the Task Force and School Board to continue your wise, compassionate and fiduciary duty which is not only educating but protecting students on campuses and not relax the mask mandate and covid protocols in place. You are our elected representatives and we rely on you to also make the tough decisions which now includes holding firm against this new more lethal Covid Delta Variant already in Missoula, maybe even strengthen your current protocols as appropriate. Please keep the mask mandate in force this fall and protect all on MCPS campuses, especially K-8. In order to achieve this outcome you likely will need to apply the mask mandate to all grades and adults on campus and in school buses.

Sincerely,

Robert Luceno  
P O Box 7026  
Missoula, MT



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## In support of mandatory masks

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**Janna Lundquist** <janna@jannalundquist.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 6:43 PM

Dear MCPS leadership,

I'm writing to express my support of making masks mandatory for students this fall.

It's an important way to keep them safer until vaccines for young children become available.

Thanks!

Janna, mom of 2 Paxson Elementary students

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Janna Lundquist Consulting

Clarity yields results

406.531.4658

\*Sent on the move, so please excuse brief responses and typos.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Fwd: Mask Mandate

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**Antara Quinones** <antaraquinones@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 6:45 PM

Hi,  
I am a mother of 2 in the Missoula School system. Given that there is no current vaccination available for children under 12 and that we have a highly contagious variant in our community (Delta) as well as we have not yet reached herd immunity, I STRONGLY urge you to continue to mandate mask wearing at school.  
Thank you for working to keep our community safe, healthy and open.  
Antara Quinones, DPT, CLT-LANA

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Antara Quinones

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Antara Quinones

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## **Masks for school year 2021-22**

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**DANIEL JO BECK** <beckmsla@msn.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 6:50 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am writing to urge that Missoula County schools continue with a mask mandate for the 2021-22 academic year. We must listen to SCIENCE and to our local doctors and public health care professionals. There is only one way to keep our students, staff and faculty safe: masks for all irregardless of vaccination status. It will be impossible for teachers to track who's vaccinated and who is not and they already have enough on their plates. With the delta variant (and further variants in the future) being so much more contagious, we must do everything possible to keep our students safe and hopefully not return to online instruction. This shouldn't be a political issue but it is. Again, listen to the science and doctors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jo Beck  
605 Carter Court  
Missoula

Sent by Jo from her I-phone

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**Revised to remove some personal information --- Re: Comment on Covid 19 plan**

1 message

**Beth Covitt** <bcovitt@umich.edu>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:01 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, Pam Wright &lt;pcwright@mcpsmt.org&gt;, "Robin K. Saha" &lt;rsaha32@yahoo.com&gt;

[Apologies. Can you please share the REVISED public comment below rather than previous similar version. I would like to removesome personal information. Sorry, I should have figured that out before I sent previous version. Thanks for your assistance.]

Hello,

As parents of a student entering third grade in MCPS, we'd like to add our comments regarding the District's Covid 19 plan.

The current evidence of asymptomatic transmission of the Delta variant, including among and by fully vaccinated individuals, is extremely concerning. This news/data comes to us at the same time that we're learning more children are being affected by the Delta variant - maybe just because it is more transmissible, but from what we've read, it's yet to be determined if it is also more dangerous for young people.

Our son has not attended in-person school for over a year (he participated in MOA last year). We all (including our son) REALLY want him to go back to school in person this month - for his social and academic growth, but also because we are a two working parent family and are not able to sustain serving as his learning coach this academic year.

However, like so many families, we are also concerned about our child's health and the health of all the students and teachers and other personnel who will be interacting together at MCPS schools.

Given these circumstances, we would very much like to see MCPS adopt a policy that requires masks for everyone inside of school buildings. This policy removes some of the worry and desire to ask questions about, for instance, who is vaccinated and who isn't vaccinated. This policy aims to protect everyone. Ideally, we would also like to see vaccines mandated for everyone who works at or attends MCPS who is eligible. To our understanding, this is most likely going to be needed to shift Covid from pandemic to endemic status in the shortest time possible. We also understand, however, that MCPS and other MT organizations are constrained by House Bill 702. We would personally support MCPS requiring vaccinations anyhow and seeing what happens when the issue goes to court.

Thank you for including this comment in MCPS planning work.

Sincerely,

Beth Covitt and Robin Saha



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **School andMasks**

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**Jo Ann Kidder** <jk8345@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:17 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I am concerned about school children under 12 years who cannot be vaccinated and are returning to class this fall. For their safety and the safety of their families, I feel that it must be mandatory for the children to wear masks.

Please institute this policy: mandatory mask wearing for school kids.

Thank you.

Jo Ann Kidder  
Missoula, MT

Sent from my iPhone

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask mandate in schools

1 message

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**Nicole Sullivan** <nms2112@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:29 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Please follow the science. The risk to children is EXTREMELY low, practically non-existent. Adults who are concerned can feel free to wear a mask or get vaccinated, or both. Masking children is unhealthy, forcing them to breath carbon dioxide and bacteria all day long, not to mention the psychological damage of teaching them to be afraid of each other. In the future, when we look back at what we did to our children during this period of time, we will be deeply ashamed. Don't make it worse than it already is. DON'T MASK OUR CHILDREN.

Thank you,

Nicole Sullivan  
Missoula, MT

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## **Masks should be a CHOICE**

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**Kristin Williams** <kander83@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:32 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

PLEASE let families decide whether their kids should wear masks for the 2021-2022 school year. I know other districts surrounding us, particularly Hellgate Elementary, have already made it a choice for families and have not mandated mask wearing for this upcoming year. Last fall, Hellgate Elementary also continued in person learning while MCPS had only 2 in person days a week and had no rise in Covid-19 cases. From family and friends that I have talked to about this, their educational experience was a night and day difference from what we found ourselves in with MCPS last year.

Also, please consider how a mask mandate might affect our children emotionally, socially and mentally. My upcoming 8th grader has really been looking forward to starting school again, mostly in hopes that her 8th grade year will look much different than 7th grade because of the lift in Covid restrictions. We even got her vaccinated in hopes that she would not have to wear a mask this year. When I told her that there were rumors going around that MCPS might require masks, she lost all excitement and is now saying that she will dread going to school if masks are required. Enough is enough. Last year was extremely hard in so many ways, I would love for our kids to be able to go back to school without masks and have more of a "normal" year for their social, mental and emotional health. Please consider how a mask mandate might affect our children in these three areas of health. If families feel that mask wearing is best for them, great, they can send their kids in masks but please don't impose this on everyone. We should have a CHOICE. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thanks,  
Kristin Williams  
Parent of children at Meadow Hill and Jeanette Rankin

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## Do Not Require Masks

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**brian sweatland** <basweatland@yahoo.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:43 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am vehemently opposed to requiring my children to wear masks in public schools. Masking school-aged kids is not based on available scientific evidence, and promotes a harmful learning and socialization environment.

The survival rate of school-aged children with confirmed cases of covid is 99.99% nationally. In Montana, there are no reported covid fatalities for children aged 19 and under.

Locally the immunization rate is 61%, not including those with naturally acquired immunity. If adults remain concerned about contracting covid from children, the onus for protection needs to be on the adults, not on the children who are not at risk. We have been living with covid for 18 months. We know those most at risk: the elderly, the obese, and those with comorbidities. Yet you ask those least likely to be harmed or transmit the virus to bear a disproportionate share of the daily burden.

If you need adults to teach a class, I will be the first to volunteer as a substitute.

You do not understand the psychological and intellectual harm your covid policies are causing. My children are both very successful students academically, socially, and in athletics. They hate school now. Learning of this masking debate left them disgusted with adults and the education system. My son would not return to the classroom if not for school athletics. You are teaching these kids every wrong possible lesson: fear over resilience; neuroticism over rationalism; defeat over optimism. No parent would choose to raise their own children this way.

You are not going to find a zero risk scenario in this environment, including in school. But to ask those least at risk to bear the largest burden is wrong.

Brian Sweatland  
Missoula, Mont.

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## Masks at MCPS

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**Becky Belsom** <beckybelsom@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 7:56 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I, along with many of my healthcare colleagues who have children in the MCPS system, are appalled at what we are witnessing occur in states across the southeastern United States. Hospitals are at capacity, understaffed and admitting children into their ICUs for covid and its complications. These states have a similar vaccination rate as we do here in Montana. I am frightened for what is to come for our community. We cannot ensure that all children will have a covid 19 vaccine that would give them a layer of protection against covid. Given our lack of options for fighting this virus, the only sensible approach we can take to protect our children and teachers is to enact a mask mandate at MCPS.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Belsom, MD

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masking for kids under 12

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**MIKE BUCKLEY** <mbuckley\_missoula@hotmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:00 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Since vaccines are not permitted for children under 12 years of age, and the virus is rebounding, it is my opinion that masks should be considered mandatory for all individuals under 23 years of age .

Mike Buckley 240-6604

Sent from my iPhone

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## MCPS Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

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**Mark Livesay** <mark@ultramaxsports.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:00 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

We have children and live in Missoula County, we were planning to attend the "public" meeting on Tuesday, August 10th. We have been informed that it has now been changed to a broadcast meeting in order to keep the community from attending. We would like some explanation on that or be referred to who could provide that explanation.

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**"Next Level Western Hunting Education"**

**Mark Livesay | Owner**

M: 573-881-7171 E: mark@ultramaxsports.com

W: <https://www.treelinepursuits.com> | W: <https://www.treelineacademy.net>

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Please keep masks!**

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**Jessica Eirkson** <jessica.eirkson@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:01 PM

Hello, I'm asking you to please require masks for the beginning of this coming school year. This is especially urgent with the new challenges presented by the delta variant. We need to protect all our students, but especially our youngest students, who are not yet eligible for vaccinations. Please put the health and safety of our children before politics.

Thank you,  
Jessica Eirkson

Sent from my iPhone

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## Require masks for pre-K through 8 (at least)

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**Caitlin Derry** <caitlinderry@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:26 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am the mother of two students in the district, both of whom are vaccinated. I strongly encourage MCPS to require masks for all students and staff for pre-K through 8th grade. This is critical as some many students in that population are not yet eligible for vaccines. I also worry that without a mask requirement many families with unvaccinated children will feel obligated to keep their kids out of school until a vaccines are available. This could be detrimental to our students and our community.

I am also open to requiring masks for high school students and staff, but this feels less critical. At the high school level, at least students and staff have the opportunity to protect themselves with a vaccine. If COVID cases continue to increase in Missoula County over the next fews weeks, however, universal masking in all MCPS public schools may be necessary to keep kids healthy and in school.

Thanks for your care for our community,

Caitlin Derry

Sent from my iPad

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**masking**

1 message

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**Eric Hutchins** <ericfhutchins@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 8:40 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I strongly support requiring all students and staff at all grade levels to wear masks. The inconvenience of wearing a mask is minimal compared to students' right to be safe in school. Also, not requiring masks risks creating a need for more drastic measures as the school year progresses and risks exacerbating transmission throughout the community.

Michelle Frodey Hutchins  
Missoula

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**Fwd: In support of masking**

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**Melodie Stenger** <melodiestenger@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:22 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Melodie Stenger <melodiestenger@gmail.com>  
**Date:** August 3, 2021 at 1:23:30 PM MDT  
**To:** rwatson@mcpsmt.org  
**Subject:** In support of masking

Hello, Rob, and hello to the Board-

I have two children in MCPS- one rising freshman at Hellgate, another an 8th grader at Washington. I am writing today in support of continued masking in K-12 schools this fall. There are many of us who share this position, and a great number of them already feel that showing up in person to large groups is risky, given the Delta variant. I hope you will accept our email messages instead.

Why support masking? The coronavirus will continue to mutate the more it spreads. The more it mutates, the greater the likelihood that it not only "breaks through" the vaccines we have currently developed, but does so with greater severity. When that happens is something that cannot be predicted. It could happen here, though. It could happen soon.

It is true that the numbers indicated that those who are currently vaccinated do not \*seem\* to be at risk of grave complications or death due to the Delta variant. But they can spread it. And if they can spread it, it speeds up the possibility that we will have a worse variant, and soon. I don't want to go back to the world where my kids can't see their grandparents or go to the library or have birthday parties.

My kids are already used to masks. Let's stick with it a little longer and see if we can't manage to contain the COVID-19, and all of its variants.

Sincerely,  
Melodie Velasco Stenger

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## Masks for schools

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**Becca Snyder** <beccans@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 9:49 PM

Hello,

I'm a nurse practitioner and mom of two elementary aged children at Jeannette Rankin. I truly hope that the school board will mandate masking in the schools, at least in the elementary school age, per the CDC guidelines and upon the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics. This population of students will not be vaccinated to begin the school year and I worry that a recommendation vs a mandate will allow political objectives and opinions to outweigh the recommendation of infectious disease experts. Our kids wore masks all of last year without issue. With the spread of the delta variant, I feel that it is equally important this year to not allow political pressure to override children's health and safety. Please require masks in school.

Thanks,  
Becca

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Adding my comment on mask mandate in schools

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**Ronnie Damato** <mrdamato1987@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:27 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Everyone this concerns,

Thank you for hearing from me regarding the decision on masking for schools. It is my opinion that the use of masks on school aged children should ultimately be a decision made by the families and children that are forced to wear them. We have allowed the fear of this virus to negatively affect our children's school careers enough. It is time we allow these children to be children and not continue to induce unnecessary stress on their developing minds. It should be a choice wear a mask if you like dont wear a mask if you choose thats fine too. It should be a choice made by families not board members. I have two elementary aged children that attend Russell.

Thank you,

Ronnie Damato

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Masks**

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**Pat** <dptmsla@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:33 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

It would be irresponsible of you, and a dereliction of your sacred duty to protect student and staff health to fail to require masks for all students who are not vaccinated against Covid-19. Vaccination should be made a condition of employment and required of all students as soon as they become eligible.

Denis P. Thane

MCPS retired teacher

Sent from my iPad

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## Masks and such!

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**Michelle Cooney** <mbctg@live.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 12:52 PM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I'm letting you know my point of view on masks especially. I am the secretary for Jeannette Rankin Elementary. Masks at an elementary level are a literal nightmare. Not one mask is made the same or worn the same. Most are too big, not worn correctly and made of poor material. I've had kids in severe anxiety attacks about forgetting masks at home.

Crying, covering their face with hands and shirts. What has this come to? It's heartbreaking to see children's mental health in such a rapid decline...I miss the days of smiles and laughing. The all consuming mask/vaccine debate is a nightmare. Everyone should have the CHOICE to do what they feel is right for themselves and their family. Get it in writing if you have to....but make it a choice! Oh, and this goes for vaccinations as well.

Michelle Cooney

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## Masks School Year 2021-2022

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Liz Filler <lizzie.lu@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 10:31 PM

To Whom It Concerns:

I would like to see masks required in the schools. My reasons:

1. The Centers for Disease Control and the American Association of Pediatrics recommend masks in school. The CDC is the pre-eminent authority around the globe on human health matters. These are educated researchers and doctors telling us what we need to keep our children safe. Not conspiracy-theorists spreading misinformation, disinformation, and lies. I honestly don't understand why equal time and weight is being given to both sides of this "debate".
2. The whole "my body, my choice" narrative is not a true choice when the majority of our students are not old enough to have a vaccine as a choice. The choice is being taken away from them. At the very least, please wait to remove a mask policy until ALL families have the choice to have their kids vaccinated and protected, and until the new daily COVID cases are declining instead of rising. With the new Delta variant out there, the infection spread is now more contagious. It's spread is exponential. Before Delta one carrier on average infected 2 other people. Now it is closer to 6 people per infected carrier. Imagine how that will race through a classroom of unvaccinated and unmasked students.
3. Since July 29th, nearly 4.2 million children have tested positive for COVID-19 since the onset of the pandemic. Almost 72,000 cases were added the past week, a substantial increase from the prior week when 39,000 cases were reported. The cases are increasing dramatically (source American Academy of Pediatrics). The opposition says that kids don't get as sick and they hardly ever die. They don't talk about long-COVID or MISC-C. They don't talk about teenagers and young adults having strokes. Kids are getting sick, and it can be prevented by wearing a mask, social distancing, and frequent hand-washing. Why would we take the most important step - the masks- out of the known solution for reducing the spread of COVID? It doesn't make sense.

I am a parent. My husband and I have 3 children, none of whom are old enough to be vaccinated yet. We were put in the unfair position of deciding at the end of the school year ( a very very long school year) if we wanted to continue having our children stay in the Missoula Online Academy, or move to in-person school. Last year's policies worked very well. We were impressed with how low the positive cases were. We felt optimistic that with the vaccine being readily available, and the policies in place for masking, social distancing when able, and hand-washing, we could take on the risk of letting our kids return to in-person. Our now-First Grade twins would get to see what school was really like, they would get to make friends, learn those valuable social skills after a year of online school. Our son, transitioning to junior high, wouldn't miss out on the valuable life skills that only middle school can offer as a young boy approaching his teen years. We were excited to get back to normal. Masked, sure, but much more normal than online school.

Instead, we feel like the rug was pulled out from under us. Enrollment for MOA is closed. Our crystal ball of vaccines, low positivity rates, and school policy designed to protect our children was completely wrong. Instead, we are facing quickly rising COVID cases. We are up to 20 average Daily New Cases per 100k people in the past 7 days. A month ago it was single digits. We were close to being on track for containment, and now, we have skipped all the way to Accelerated Spread. By the time school starts, we could easily be above the 25 cases per mark, which is considered the "tipping point" and if the County Health Dept hadn't been stripped of its powers, would have us back under a county-wide mask mandate. A mask mandate that WORKED.

Please, please keep the mask policy in the schools until the vaccines are available in schools and until the new daily cases of COVID are low again. If you can't do that, you should offer to reopen enrollment in the MOA. Those of us who trusted that our kids would be taken care of deserve at least that chance.

Sincerely,  
Liz Filler

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## 2021-2022 masking plan

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**Katy Meinbresse** <katynaf@gmail.com>

Wed, Aug 4, 2021 at 11:45 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

My child is a rising 1st grader at Paxson and this will be our first time using the actual school after a year of MOA kindergarten. We really appreciate the safety measures put into place last year to protect staff, students and families. I am hoping for more of the same this year, especially as Missoula and the country experience another surge in cases.

Please require universal masking in schools this fall. There is no way to verify vaccine status and this point is moot for my own sons age group- first graders.

In situations where masking is not required please be direct about the school boards recommendation that everyone who can does get vaccination. And where appropriate state that vaccines are "recommended" instead of ambivalent language like "optional."

Thank you,

Katy Meinbresse

Sent from my iPhone

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## Protecting Students from Covid-19 and its variants

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**Jeanne Brabeck** <jmbmslamt@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 2:23 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to remind you of your responsibility to protect our MCPS students K-12 from Covid-19. As a retired MCPS elementary teacher, the grandmother of two elementary school students and a middle school student, and as a concerned citizen, I believe that the same school vaccination requirements that currently apply to other infectious diseases such as measles, mumps, diphtheria, etc. should be applied to Covid-19. Plainly stated, Covid-19 vaccinations should be required of all students who are currently eligible, specifically, those 12 years of age and up. Additionally, students under age 12 should be vaccinated once an approved vaccine is made available for them.\*

Covid-19 will not be disappearing any time soon. We must adjust to safely living with it. Keeping up one's immunity will, most likely, require periodic boosters for all of us in the future. Getting a vaccination is not a political issue. It's simply a health issue. In getting vaccinated, we are protecting ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and our fellow Americans. Period!

Our children, teachers, and support staff deserve nothing less than a safe environment at school. I would also expect MCPS to follow CDC guidelines with respect to wearing masks. Should the CDC determine that wearing masks indoors is not only needed for unvaccinated students under age 12, but for others as well, (at least for now) to keep the highly contagious Delta variant at bay, so be it!

In conclusion, I thank you for your service to our district. I know your job is not an easy one in the best of times. Being a school board member is not a paid position, but rather a public service. It can be often be an under appreciated position as well. The past eighteen months have been extremely difficult for everyone as we figure out how to survive a pandemic. So, let's pull together to beat this thing for the benefit of all.

Respectfully,

Jeanne M. Brabeck

\* Students with underlying health issues which prevent them from getting vaccinations of any kind would be exempt, of course.

Sent from my iPad

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## Please continue to require masks in schools

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**Alison Dimond** <alison.dimondkardos@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:52 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, rwatson@mcpsmt.org

Dear School Board Trustees, COVID Task Force Members, and Superintendent Watson,

Thank you so much for your service and care for our community and children during this extremely challenging time. I'm sure we all hoped COVID-19 would not continue to be a major consideration when we returned to school this fall. But sadly, with continuing low vaccination rates that have kept us from reaching herd immunity, and mutations of the virus resulting in more contagious variants, COVID-19 remains a major health concern.

**To keep our children and community safe, please continue to require masks for all students, teachers, and staff in Missoula County Public Schools. I believe that not doing so will put our children and MCPS staff at significant risk and be a major liability risk for the school district.**

In the 2020-21 school year, you all did a wonderful job of making careful, well researched, science-based decisions about COVID safety protocols, implemented the protocols very effectively, and -- most importantly -- kept in-school transmissions low and children and staff as safe as possible. I strongly urge you to continue to use the same strong and effective protocols and decision making processes and criteria you proved were effective last year. Based on the specifics of data in our community -- including rising case loads, Delta variant, lack of herd immunity/relatively low vaccine rates -- and increasing scientific understanding of the COVID-19 virus and its variants, I believe **the MCSP response must include continuing to require masking of all people in the school, ventilation, social distancing when not masked, and ongoing contact tracing and reporting.**

I'm sure you are also following the science and experts' recommendations very closely. However, I'm including some evidence to back up my request for maintaining inschool masking and other COVID protocols for the record.

In early July 2021, the CDC guidance recommended that all unvaccinated people in schools continue to wear masks indoors. Virtually all students in elementary school are unvaccinated because they are under 12, and therefore, are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Furthermore, recent studies -- including a recent report from the CDC -- shows that due to the Delta variant or COVID-19, even vaccinated people are increasingly becoming infected and are able to spread the virus. This supports the need for even vaccinated teachers, staff, and students to continue to wear masks indoors to keep unvaccinated children safe from the virus. Finally, a multitude of scientific studies show that masks are highly effective at reducing the spread of COVID in group settings (some examples are provided below)

Credible studies illustrating the effectiveness of wearing masks in reducing spread and infections of COVID-19

- Effectiveness of Mask Wearing to Control Community Spread of SARS-CoV-2, February 2021 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2776536>
- An evidence review of face masks against COVID-19, PNAS January 26, 2021, <https://www.pnas.org/content/118/4/e2014564118>
- Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools  
Updated July 9, 2021, [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission\\_k\\_12\\_schools.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html)
- COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools, American Academy of Pediatrics, <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

I'm a parent of two elementary school kiddos in MCPS. Thanks for considering my comments.

Best, Ali

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Alison Dimond Kardos

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## masks in the schools

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Deb Pengelly <dpengelly@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:58 AM

**The reason we had the mass vaccination clinics was so we could get to the point we didn't have to wear masks. If people choose not to get vaccinated, that is their decision but don't penalize the people who have seen the need to be vaccinated. We did this so we could return to a normal routine without having to wear a hot, uncomfortable mask.**

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Deb Pengelly  
Records Clerk Big Sky High School  
3100 S Ave W Missoula, MT 59804  
dpengelly@mcpsmt.org  
Fax 406.329.5902  
Phone 406.728.2400 X8030

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## Enough

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**Pete Hasquet** <phasquet@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:50 AM

Hasn't it become brutally honest to everyone yet that the CDC is really just guessing, like the rest of us? So please ignore any of their recommendations. It's crazy to continue to require young kids to wear masks. The chance of them getting sick or dying of Covid is less than being struck by lightning. Remember a year ago when we were told that the reason kids needed to mask up was to protect "grandma and grandpa?" We were told that we needed to wear masks to protect vulnerable populations. Well, I have news for you, the most vulnerable populations now have access to vaccines and most of them are probably vaccinated. So stop messing with our kids heads. As a bus driver it makes me sick to see these kids treating masks as something normal. I hate to think what they're breathing in and out through their filthy masks every day and I'm not talking about Covid. Time to stand up to ridiculous recommendations. For most school aged kids this is nothing more than a bad cold.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## MCPS mask wearing

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**Helena Koelle** <hkoelle@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 7:28 AM

Dear Dr. Watson,

I am a parent of a second grader at Paxson, I'm concerned about the recent rise in covid cases and schools reopening soon.

I would like to see a national vaccine mandate. Since that is extremely and unfortunately unlikely, I would like to see a k-12 mask requirement.

Thank you, Helena Koelle

Sent from my iPhone

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## Upcoming School Year

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**Janel Chin** <janelfalk@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:27 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I am writing as a parent of both a Rattlesnake Elementary and Washington Middle School student. Thank-you for all your work to educate my children and keep them safe while doing so. Since the COVID-19 vaccine was made available to teachers, staff and other members of our community over the age of 12 I have been dismayed to read that a substantial number of those eligible to receive it have not done so. In light of this and the fact that almost all the students at Rattlesnake Elementary are under the age of 12 and thus not eligible to be vaccinated, I am hoping that MCPS will require universal wearing of face coverings when groups of potentially unvaccinated individuals are meeting indoors. As recognized by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Missoula City-County Health department, requiring universal mask wearing reduces the risk of transmission when groups gather indoors. For the first year of the pandemic, to minimize our families' risk, I worked from home and my older daughter attended the Online Academy. Now that she and I are both vaccinated we have returned to more in-person interactions but it is concerning to me that my younger, unvaccinated daughter may be forced to choose between attending school on-line or attending in-person but with unvaccinated individuals who are not wearing face coverings. I was so grateful for the opportunity for my younger daughter to attend school in-person last school year and feel hopeful that MCPS will continue to make prudent choices to keep teachers, students and staff as safe as possible during the upcoming school year.

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Janel Chin

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks should be mandatory.

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**Billy Belsom** <billybelsom@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:33 AM

Members of the Board,

I respectfully encourage you to make mask use mandatory throughout the Missoula County Public School System.

I ask that you follow the advice of the medical professionals, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Center for Disease Control. Please ignore the talking heads on television and ignore those who believe that television personalities and facebook conspiracy theorists should be believed over those who have studied and trained in health care and infectious disease control. Please respect the scientists, the physicians, and the nurses, all of whom have dedicated their training and careers to this very issue and care deeply for the health of our community.

Please look at the rapidly rising infection rates in our community at this very moment. Please look at the infection rates in children in those states who have declined to require mask use in schools. Please see the children's hospital ICU beds at capacity and the exasperation of health care professionals in those jurisdictions.

I acknowledge that masking is not ideal in an educational scenario. Sadly, the ideal is far out of reach at this moment in history. The health of our children and our community is in your hands, and I trust you will make the right decision and require mask use throughout the public school system.

Sincerely,  
Charles W. "Billy" Belsom, Jr.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please require masks

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**Pelah Hoyt** <hoyt.pelah@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:35 AM

Hello,

Thank you for all of your hard work to prepare for school re-opening. I urge you to require masks for all elementary school students and staff. I will have two fifth graders at Rattlesnake Elementary this fall. Requiring masks for all students and staff at the school will help keep them and other students safe who can't yet be vaccinated. Masks will also significantly improve academic opportunities and parents' ability to work this year by reducing the spread of covid. Without masks, not only will more students get covid, but students will also lose more school days when they are exposed to covid and become close contacts.

MCPS staff, students, and parents did a great job last year. Requiring masks can make this fall successful too.

Sincerely,

Pelah Hoyt

Sent from my iPhone

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**Fwd: Comments for COVID task force**

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**Alex Metcalf** <alm450@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:42 AM

Board,

Please see below my letter with Covid-related comments and the reply from Superintendent Watson implying that it would not reach the Board if only sent to him. I implore the Board to ensure all comments submitted directly to Superintendent Watson are forwarded to the Board for your consideration. I have forwarded mine here in case for some reason that is not possible, but it would be fairly inconceivable that comments would not reach you if sent to him.

Sincerely,

Alexander L. Metcalf

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>  
**Date:** August 5, 2021 at 7:59:51 AM MDT  
**To:** Alex Metcalf <alm450@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Comments for COVID task force

Thank you for your comments. Our Board of Trustees will be making the final decision on this issue. Please make sure to send your comments to publiccomment@mcpsmt.org so that your comments can be shared with the Board. Thank you

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

*Confidentiality Notice:*

*This email message, including any attachments, is for the sole use of the intended recipients and may contain confidential and privileged information. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply email and destroy all copies of the original message.*

On Tue, Aug 3, 2021 at 6:26 AM Alex Metcalf <alm450@gmail.com> wrote:  
Superintendent Watson,

Please pass these comments along to the MCPS COVID19 Task Force. As their meetings are held in person, I'm afraid they're hearing disproportionately from folks who don't mind entering a room with several other people while the Delta variant is spreading. I assume this is biasing the comments quite severely.

I do not know what the right answer is, but the Task Force must seek to protect the mental and physical health of our kids by following the guidance of healthcare professionals and public health officials. Junk science, spewed by no matter how many people, remains bogus. Masks are not burdensome; they do not cause oxygen deficiency; they are incredibly effective at preventing the spread of COVID. These facts are not disputable.

I would ask the Task Force to consider that the majority of negative mental health effects suffered by children during this pandemic have been related to not being able to attend school, not from having to wear a mask. Masks and distancing precautions will reduce spread, protect kids and teachers from COVID, and reduce the need for school closures and quarantines.

I strongly urge the Task Force to ignore the politics of this issue and instead follow CDC guidance. Require masks. Put distancing protocols in place. Think HARD about ventilation. Stagger class days for older kids to allow younger kids to attend more frequently. Do not be distracted by the silly question of whether mitigation measures work or not - they do - and embrace creative ways to implement them given the specific configuration, location, and staffing of each school.

The Delta variant is a different beast. It can infect vaccinated individuals at still low, but higher rates. It can be spread by infected folks equally, whether unvaccinated or vaccinated. The vaccines will prevent serious illness, but kids are not vaccinated and are suffering levels of infection and hospitalization in other states higher than at any other point in the pandemic. We do not know the long term effects of Covid in children. We want to limit opportunities for the Covid virus to mutate again. All of this means MCPS MUST require all teachers to be vaccinated. It's how we protect the kids best. Whomever says you cannot do this is wrong. You can. We do this all the time. Immunization requirements are standard operating procedure. They have been upheld in court, including by the SCOTUS this week. Stare down whomever is saying you can't do it and do it. Take them to court if necessary. Do it for our vaccinated teachers and staff who can still be infected and spread it to loved ones, do it for your unvaccinated students to protect them from covid, and do it for all of us to prevent school closures and quarantines where students can't go to school and parents can't work.

Thank you for your work and service.

Sincerely,

Alexander L. Metcalf, Ph.D.

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## Masks in School 2021-2022

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**Matthew Barrett** <mdb2929@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:58 AM

Hi MCPS team -

wanted to share my thoughts on masks in school for 2021-2022 school year. I support the mask mandate for all schools with kids 12 and under. Its a simple thing to do and not only helps prevent transmission of covid but in general kept kids healthier and in school MORE which is the goal right? Under 12 kids are not eligible for any covid vaccines making this population the most vulnerable and we as adults must protect them as best we can. Kids have a right to a safe and supportive learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group masks mandate is the only option.

Thank you for your consideration -

Matt

Matthew Barrett  
406-544-9966  
mdb2929@icloud.com

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks

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**Wella Hein** <30heiwel@student.mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:06 AM

To: "Publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <Publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

In my opinion we should keep masking in school because it's safer for everyone. I do realize some kids don't like masks. I don't mind ml need to protect my brother who is high risk.

Sincerely,

Wella Hein

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**Wear masks!**

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**Mari Bender** <marigb365@aol.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:07 AM

I encourage the MCPS administration and the school board to enforce the wearing of masks in our schools this coming school year.

Last week 72,000 children were diagnosed with COVID-19. This includes children 18 years and younger so it is imperative that all students wear masks until we get this virus under control. We do not know all of the long term effects that children face with this virus and so it is essential to keep all children as safe as possible.

Thank you, Mari Bender

Sent from my iPad

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**masks at school**

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**Artemi Serket** <loganhwilson@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:11 AM

Dear Covid Task Force, I recently received information that you were considering lifting the mask mandate at school next year, if my information is correct. I would like to add that I am fully vaccinated, but I'm writing this anyway out of decency and concern for fellow students and concern for the staff.

*Please respond with what you plan to do, with terms I can understand as an autistic 15 going on 16 year old. If my information is correct, please read the rest of this email.*

As a high-risk person and as a teen with common sense, this shocks me and is unacceptable from my point of view. I shall endeavor to enumerate the reasons why, for your erstwhile consideration.

1. I am a high-risk person, and doing so endangers my well-being.
2. Several members of my family are high-risk, and thus this endangers them by proxy.
3. The schools will become plague epicenters, and I don't think anyone wants that.
4. The virus has killed millions of people, and if by doing this, you kill off most of the next generation, you are setting back progress on several fronts, including getting rid of this virus, since it affects children and adolescents now.
5. Some of my friends are high-risk, and this endangers their well-being. I will NOT sit idly by and let that happen.
6. I would've thought this task force had more common sense, having been assembled to stop this virus getting any worse. Pfizer is only around 63% effective against the Delta variant, which is the dominant strain in Montana now.

In conclusion, please in the name of the health and safety of all involved, please amend your plans to include social distancing and masking **requirements** for the student body and staff, regardless of vaccination status, as well as requiring proof of vaccination, double-checked against hospital records or the like. Thanks a lot-Artemi Wilson, Hellgate Knight.

---



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## masks in schools

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**Mary Hall** <mary.hall380@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:44 AM

I strongly support, and encourage you to, requiring masks in schools. I am now retired, but for 12 years I worked for Montana's Parent Training and Information center as an advocate for parents and students with disabilities.

Mask use protects our most vulnerable students, i.e., those with disabilities and complex health issues. MCPS programs serve many of these students. These are students who are at high risk of dying if infected with Covid.

Please do the right thing and protect all students.

Mary Hall

---





Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please Mandate Masks In Schools

---

**Julie Goodkind** <jdgoodkind@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:47 AM

Dear Missoula County Public School Board,

I am writing to request the school board require masks be worn by all persons present at schools this fall, and take the same precautions the schools took last winter and spring to keep children safe. Wearing optional masks serves little purpose because, among other reasons, we can't vaccinate kids under 12, and many over 12 are not vaccinated in this community. We want the kids back in school, but how can we send kids to school in harm's way? Schools are supposed to be safe places. With the Delta variant sweeping through town, schools are not safe places without masks.

If we don't have masks in school, we're going to see a lot more illness and hospitalizations in children. We will also see a lot more absences from school for kids who are sick and/or quarantining. We have all learned this year that keeping kids in the classroom is the best for their mental, social, and developmental well being. It is a small price to pay to wear a mask to keep kids in school learning. It's a simple solution that worked well.

Please follow the recommendations of doctors and the CDC and require masks for Missoula County Schools !

Sincerely,  
Julie Goodkind

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks should be mandatory.

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**Billy Belsom** <billybelsom@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:33 AM

Members of the Board,

I respectfully encourage you to make mask use mandatory throughout the Missoula County Public School System.

I ask that you follow the advice of the medical professionals, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Center for Disease Control. Please ignore the talking heads on television and ignore those who believe that television personalities and facebook conspiracy theorists should be believed over those who have studied and trained in health care and infectious disease control. Please respect the scientists, the physicians, and the nurses, all of whom have dedicated their training and careers to this very issue and care deeply for the health of our community.

Please look at the rapidly rising infection rates in our community at this very moment. Please look at the infection rates in children in those states who have declined to require mask use in schools. Please see the children's hospital ICU beds at capacity and the exasperation of health care professionals in those jurisdictions.

I acknowledge that masking is not ideal in an educational scenario. Sadly, the ideal is far out of reach at this moment in history. The health of our children and our community is in your hands, and I trust you will make the right decision and require mask use throughout the public school system.

Sincerely,  
Charles W. "Billy" Belsom, Jr.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please require masks

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**Pelah Hoyt** <hoyt.pelah@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:35 AM

Hello,

Thank you for all of your hard work to prepare for school re-opening. I urge you to require masks for all elementary school students and staff. I will have two fifth graders at Rattlesnake Elementary this fall. Requiring masks for all students and staff at the school will help keep them and other students safe who can't yet be vaccinated. Masks will also significantly improve academic opportunities and parents' ability to work this year by reducing the spread of covid. Without masks, not only will more students get covid, but students will also lose more school days when they are exposed to covid and become close contacts.

MCPS staff, students, and parents did a great job last year. Requiring masks can make this fall successful too.

Sincerely,

Pelah Hoyt

Sent from my iPhone

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**Fwd: Comments for COVID task force**

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**Alex Metcalf** <alm450@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:42 AM

Board,

Please see below my letter with Covid-related comments and the reply from Superintendent Watson implying that it would not reach the Board if only sent to him. I implore the Board to ensure all comments submitted directly to Superintendent Watson are forwarded to the Board for your consideration. I have forwarded mine here in case for some reason that is not possible, but it would be fairly inconceivable that comments would not reach you if sent to him.

Sincerely,

Alexander L. Metcalf

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Robert Watson <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>  
**Date:** August 5, 2021 at 7:59:51 AM MDT  
**To:** Alex Metcalf <alm450@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: Comments for COVID task force

Thank you for your comments. Our Board of Trustees will be making the final decision on this issue. Please make sure to send your comments to publiccomment@mcpsmt.org so that your comments can be shared with the Board. Thank you

Rob Watson, EdD  
Superintendent  
Missoula County Public Schools  
Phone: 406-728-2400 ext. 1023

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I do not know what the right answer is, but the Task Force must seek to protect the mental and physical health of our kids by following the guidance of healthcare professionals and public health officials. Junk science, spewed by no matter how many people, remains bogus. Masks are not burdensome; they do not cause oxygen deficiency; they are incredibly effective at preventing the spread of COVID. These facts are not disputable.

I would ask the Task Force to consider that the majority of negative mental health effects suffered by children during this pandemic have been related to not being able to attend school, not from having to wear a mask. Masks and distancing precautions will reduce spread, protect kids and teachers from COVID, and reduce the need for school closures and quarantines.

I strongly urge the Task Force to ignore the politics of this issue and instead follow CDC guidance. Require masks. Put distancing protocols in place. Think HARD about ventilation. Stagger class days for older kids to allow younger kids to attend more frequently. Do not be distracted by the silly question of whether mitigation measures work or not - they do - and embrace creative ways to implement them given the specific configuration, location, and staffing of each school.

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Thank you for your work and service.

Sincerely,

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## Masks in School 2021-2022

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To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:58 AM

Hi MCPS team -

wanted to share my thoughts on masks in school for 2021-2022 school year. I support the mask mandate for all schools with kids 12 and under. Its a simple thing to do and not only helps prevent transmission of covid but in general kept kids healthier and in school MORE which is the goal right? Under 12 kids are not eligible for any covid vaccines making this population the most vulnerable and we as adults must protect them as best we can. Kids have a right to a safe and supportive learning environment and until the vaccination is available for this age group masks mandate is the only option.

Thank you for your consideration -

Matt

Matthew Barrett  
406-544-9966  
mdb2929@icloud.com

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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Sent from my iPad

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## masks at school

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*Please respond with what you plan to do, with terms I can understand as an autistic 15 going on 16 year old. If my information is correct, please read the rest of this email.*

As a high-risk person and as a teen with common sense, this shocks me and is unacceptable from my point of view. I shall endeavor to enumerate the reasons why, for your erstwhile consideration.

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6. I would've thought this task force had more common sense, having been assembled to stop this virus getting any worse. Pfizer is only around 63% effective against the Delta variant, which is the dominant strain in Montana now.

In conclusion, please in the name of the health and safety of all involved, please amend your plans to include social distancing and masking **requirements** for the student body and staff, regardless of vaccination status, as well as requiring proof of vaccination, double-checked against hospital records or the like. Thanks a lot-Artemi Wilson, Hellgate Knight.

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## masks in schools

---

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To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:44 AM

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Mask use protects our most vulnerable students, i.e., those with disabilities and complex health issues. MCPS programs serve many of these students. These are students who are at high risk of dying if infected with Covid.

Please do the right thing and protect all students.

Mary Hall

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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## Please Mandate Masks In Schools

---

**Julie Goodkind** <jdgoodkind@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 9:47 AM

Dear Missoula County Public School Board,

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If we don't have masks in school, we're going to see a lot more illness and hospitalizations in children. We will also see a lot more absences from school for kids who are sick and/or quarantining. We have all learned this year that keeping kids in the classroom is the best for their mental, social, and developmental well being. It is a small price to pay to wear a mask to keep kids in school learning. It's a simple solution that worked well.

Please follow the recommendations of doctors and the CDC and require masks for Missoula County Schools !

Sincerely,  
Julie Goodkind

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## Support of Masks at 2021 school start

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**Molly Bradford** <mhaislnut@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:27 AM

We have seen your draft proposal to be discussed at the upcoming school board meeting in terms of mask usage and schedules for the upcoming school year.

We are in full support of this program.

Masks are not only essential for stopping the spread of covid, but also greatly reducing and limiting disruptions for students that may have previously been considered a close contact if masks were not worn. In addition, the spread of coughs, common colds and the flu are greatly reduced.

The opportunities for a full school day, complete schedule, and a return to normalcy with cafeteria use and rotation with art, music, PE, etc are amazing. We see wearing masks as a simple, easy tool to get us there.

As well, we greatly appreciated the distribution of vaccines for the older students last Spring 2021 and look forward to our younger students having the same opportunities this Winter.

Thank you

Molly & Spencer Bradford

Parents of Hellgate HS Freshman and Rattlesnake Elementary 3rd grader

406.880.0880

\*sent from my phone

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## Face masks

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**Marisa Wright** <marisajwright@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:05 AM

Hello,

I'm writing to say I FULLY support the use of face masks for students attending school this year. With two young kiddos at Hawthorne it's a huge worry, and a huge relief that you're leaning towards continuing to mask up.

Thank you,

Marisa Wright

Sacred Roots Doula  
Spinning Babies® Certified Parent Educator  
Certified ISR Instructor  
(406) 880-3286

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Thank you for the mask policy

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**Damon Banks** <damondrewbanks@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:15 AM

Hello,

I just read through the mask policy that was just released and I want to say thank you for the common sense policies. I fully support the policy and I appreciate putting the kids safety first.

Damon Banks

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**masks in schools**

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Travis Goodkind <travis.goodkind@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:16 AM

Dear Members of the School Board,

**I am writing to request the school district mandate masks in schools for the 2021-2022 year.** The plan to make masks optional goes against the guidance of both the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics; ignores the science on COVID transmission in kids and on the effectiveness of masks; and fails to give our youngest kids—who are not yet vaccine eligible but will be soon—a chance to evade infection after over a year of sacrifice. **All available evidence indicates that SARS-CoV-2 will spread wildly in schools without mitigation efforts—including universal masking—firmly in place. The CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics agree;** both agencies have released guidance indicating that schools should mandate masks for students, staff, and visitors. **As a local leader, you should listen to them.**

Though infections in our state declined in the late spring and early summer as vaccination rates increased, new variants like Delta pose a serious threat. The Delta variant is much more transmissible than previous variants, and data from our local area reflect that troubling reality. **Infections in Missoula County have increased significantly over the last days alone.** In addition, the age distribution of new infections and hospitalizations has also shifted downward, with **young kids representing a greater proportion of infections and hospitalizations** than in previous months. **This will only get worse if kids return to school without required masking and other mitigation strategies in place.**

The science is clear on COVID and kids is clear: **children can be infected with SARS-CoV-2, can get sick with and die of COVID-19, and can spread the virus to others.** As of the first week of July 2021, more than 200,000 kids in the U.S. had been

hospitalized and nearly 400 kids had died from COVID. A tragically disproportionate number of these kids who experienced severe illness or death were young people of color, whose social and economic vulnerabilities put them at especially high risk. While kids are less likely than adults to experience severe illness or death, the long term consequences of COVID infection on neurological, lung, metabolic, and cardiovascular function are still unknown. Recent studies estimate that anywhere from 10-45% of kids under 12 who are infected with SARS-CoV-2 experience “long haul” symptoms that last more than five weeks after diagnosis, even if they experience mild acute infection. This is all to say, kids have not been and will not be spared in this pandemic. Importantly, **kids can also transmit COVID to their unvaccinated, immunocompromised, and otherwise vulnerable family members and friends**, which further contributes to community spread and the emergence of new variants of the virus and puts the “end” of this pandemic further out of reach.

Thankfully, over the past year and a half, we have learned a lot about how to reduce transmission and infections, and **masks have emerged as a particularly important, scientifically proven mitigation strategy**. Evidence from the CDC shows that the relatively low levels of infections in kids seen during the 2020-2021 school year were, in large part, the result of school closures and widespread mitigation efforts in schools, including mask mandates. Though kids transmit COVID as efficiently as adults and are infected at similar rates to adults, **mask mandates in schools prevented high levels of in-school transmission during the 2020-2021 school year**. The proven effectiveness of masks is a key reason behind the CDC’s and American Academy of Pediatrics’ current recommendation that students and staff continue to wear masks in schools during the 2021-2022 school year. Again, the science here is clear: **reopening schools without mask mandates and other mitigation efforts in place while the Delta variant surges will result in high levels of transmission and infection in kids, which can further contribute to household and community spread, even among the vaccinated**. We shouldn’t wait for Delta to spread in schools before putting mask mandates in place; we can and should act in order to prevent any unnecessary disease, death, and suffering.

I think we can all agree that masks were highly effective at preventing illness (cold, flu,



cough, etc) this past school. Our kids were healthier and missed ZERO days of school due to illness, thanks to masks.

**Families are depending on you to follow the science and protect the health and safety of our kids and community.** Our kids deserve to go to school without worrying about getting sick and spreading the virus to their immunocompromised, unvaccinated, or otherwise vulnerable family members, friends, and neighbors. **We shouldn't ask our young kids and their parents to choose between going to school and staying healthy and safe.** Young kids will be eligible for vaccines within the next few months. We should give them the opportunity to be vaccinated before asking them to enter our schools and classrooms unprotected. **The science supports masks in schools.** Wearing masks is a small sacrifice to make in order to ensure that our kids can remain safe while going to school, which we know is important for their intellectual, social, and emotional development.

**I am asking you to listen to the experts, follow the science, and reject the plan to make masks optional.** Masks should be required, especially for our most vulnerable unvaccinated students. I am happy to be in touch with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Travis Goodkind  
406.396.9255

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## THANK YOU!

2 messages

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**Mikaela Badzioch** <mabadzioch@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:20 AM

I am so relieved that you have made the decision to require face masks. I am sure you will get a lot of negative feedback, but this parent is grateful for you making the safest call regarding them.

Thank You,  
Mikaela Badzioch

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Thank you!

2 messages

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**Melissa Gordon** <melissagordon74@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:23 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am writing to thank you for your thoughtful consideration to CDC guidelines in drafting the MCPS reopening plan. As the parent of a child too young to be vaccinated, I am incredibly thankful that universal masking will be in place. THANK YOU!

Melissa Gordon

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## 2021/22 School year

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**Alison Reintjes** <alisonreintjes@hotmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:27 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thank you for today's update on covid protocols and likely masking scenario.

As the mother of two MCPS students, I am writing to say I am in support of the masking outlined in today's email. I would prefer the option for students to select to eat outdoor lunch. I'd also prefer no "mask breaks." Without masking, our family would likely select to pull our students from the public schools.

Thanks for your continued work!

Ali

**Alison Reintjes**

2501 Duncan Drive

Missoula, Montana 59802

ph: 330.806.2478

www.alisonreintjes.com

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

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**Beth Morey** <eamorey@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:29 AM

To: Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us, Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I'm confused why COVID safety measures are being done away with during unmasked time i.e., eating. Shouldn't we maintain these measures when masks are not possible? Please explain your rationale. Thank you!

Beth Morey

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 5, 2021, at 10:02 AM, Missoula County Public Schools <noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

**Dear MCPS Families:**

Thank you for your interest and questions related to the COVID Reopening Plan for Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Also, thank you for your patience as we finalized our plan with the latest local and national guidance. In revising the phase 3 plan for the upcoming year our COVID task force remained focused on the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. You can find the full Phase 3 Reopen Plan [HERE](#).

As you look through our plan, it is important to note that while many of the mitigation strategies are still in place, we expect this year to be much different than last year. As you may recall, we started last year in a hybrid school model, however this year we will be starting with every day for every student and a longer school day than last year. In addition, some of the other pre-COVID school routines will return - lunch in the cafeteria, normal rotation of elective programs, opportunities to participate in school activities programs as well as opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools. We are excited to start the school year and look forward to offering a different experience than last year, while at the same time maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

While we know there continue to be risks related to possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we are reflecting on what we have learned about this pandemic over the past year to manage that risk, balance the need for mitigation strategies with the educational needs of students, and forge ahead with recovery efforts. I would like to share relevant details and strategies listed below related to how we intend to operate our schools in the coming months.

**Mitigation Strategies**

We will continue to work with the health department to trace, identify and notify close contacts to all positive COVID cases associated with MCPS. New guidance from the CDC should greatly reduce the number of students considered close contacts, if universal face coverings are used. We will also continue with cleaning procedures, maintenance of our ventilation systems, and enhanced hand hygiene practices.

Classrooms will operate much like they did in pre-COVID times, while maintaining 3 feet or as much as possible between students or groups, while implementing other mitigation strategies.

We will continue to ask that families keep their students home if they are ill, particularly if they are unvaccinated for COVID-19. Testing will be available to all students and staff via MCPS or the Missoula City-County Health Department. A reminder of our family guidance for keeping a child home [here](#).

MCPS will update staff and families on vaccination eligibility and opportunities for 5-11 year-olds and encourage all vaccine-eligible students and staff to consider getting vaccinated, if it is right for you and your

family. While COVID vaccines are encouraged, we cannot require COVID vaccines, which is explained in state law [HERE](#).

### **DRAFT Face Covering Guidelines**

*Please note: These guidelines will need to be reviewed and approved by our Board of Trustees. This discussion will occur at the Board meeting on August 10, which starts at 6pm. The meeting will be virtual, on zoom. Please check our website for the zoom link to the meeting. You can also watch the meeting on MCAT. The Board will take verbal public comment over zoom before a final decision is made. You may also provide written comments for the Board to consider, using the following email address: [publiccomment@mcpsmt.org](mailto:publiccomment@mcpsmt.org).*

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**As of August 16, 2021, until further notice, to be reviewed after the first 6 weeks of school.**

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- Face coverings are not required when outdoors.
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- In some circumstances, staff may lower face covering while teaching, presenting, speaking or providing directions as long as they can maintain appropriate distance (6ft) from others. This decision will be left to the discretion of the individual staff member. However, face coverings should be used when working with small groups or individual students.
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- To be determined by Staff, there will be opportunities for students for routine "mask breaks" throughout the day, if appropriate distancing can be maintained.
- For details regarding face coverings (types and proper use), MCPS follows the CDC guidance titled: "Your Guide to Masks."

These guidelines will remain in effect for *at least* the first 6 weeks of school and will be routinely reviewed by Administration, COVID task force and Board of Trustees. These guidelines may be modified, reduced or extended. Factors that will be used in decision making include, but are not limited to, local incident rate (new cases, per 100,000, 7 day rolling average), local vaccination rate by age group, and district data related to school associated positive COVID cases and/or transmission.

### **RATIONALE**

As provided by MT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and MCCHD.

- Children younger than 12 years do not have the opportunity to be vaccinated, and will not likely have this opportunity until late fall/early winter.
- CDC guidance regarding who is determined to be a close contact has changed to acknowledge the use of face coverings in K-12 settings. Last school year, any student within 6 feet of a positive case would be considered a "close contact" and would have to quarantine, 10-14 days. This school year, if *both* the positive case and other students are correctly and consistently using face coverings, the other students may not be considered close contacts and may not have to quarantine.
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If you would like to provide public comment for our Board of Trustees regarding the face covering guidelines or any other COVID protocol, please use the following email: [publiccomment@mcpsmt.org](mailto:publiccomment@mcpsmt.org) . If you have COVID-19 related questions regarding our phase 3 reopening, you can email our district team at [covidquestions@mcpsmt.org](mailto:covidquestions@mcpsmt.org). We will do our best to respond in a timely manner.

Thank you for your interest in our reopening plans.

Rob Watson, EdD

Superintendent

Missoula County Public Schools

Brooke Krininger, MPH, BSN, RN, CPAN

Missoula County Public Schools

Health Services Supervisor

Vinny Giammona

COVID Recovery Coordinator

Missoula County Public Schools

Links to COVID Guidance and Data:

**Local**

COVID Data: MCCHD - Updated Daily

Statement from MCCHD regarding use of face coverings - July 27, 2021

**State**

Letter from MT Acad of Pediatricians - July 27, 2021

Memo from State Supt, OPI - May 18, 2021

DPHHS Summary COVID Data - July 2, 2021

**National**

CDC Guidelines - July 9 and updated July 27

American Academy of Pediatrics: School Guidelines, July 20, 2021



Public Health Emergency Response  
Phone | 406.258.4755  
Fax | 406.258.4781



Contact, General:  
Hayley Devlin  
Public Information Officer 406-880-0317

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 27, 2021

## COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations Hit Levels Not Seen Since Spring in Missoula County; Health Officials Urge Community to Take Precautions

Missoula City-County Health Officials are urging the community to reignite their diligence in preventing the spread of COVID-19 as cases and hospitalizations in the County hit levels not seen since spring.

On Tuesday, July 27, Missoula County reported 30 new COVID-19 cases— the highest number reported since March 27, 2021 before COVID-19 vaccines were widely available to the general public. There are 100 active cases in the County, a figure not seen since April 12, 2021. Twelve individuals are currently hospitalized in Missoula County, which is the most COVID-19 patients the community has seen since April 20, 2021. Furthermore, the seven-day rolling average of new COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people rose to 12 after hitting an all-time pandemic low of three just four weeks ago on June 26, 2021.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tuesday reversed course on its recommendation that fully vaccinated individuals could forego masking inside enclosed public areas. With this news, local health officials are urging the public to start wearing masks again.

“Every layer of protection counts right now and dusting those masks off is a wise choice. With the highly transmissible Delta variant present in our community, those who are old enough to get vaccinated should do so immediately. Children 11 and younger especially should wear masks, social distance, and frequently sanitize their hands until a vaccine is approved in their age group,” stated Health Officer D’Shane Barnett.

COVID-19 Incident Commander Cindy Farr added, “We are at a critical point where those who have been delaying their vaccines, those who have been hesitating, need to step forward and protect themselves and our community. We have come too far to slide back now.”

Health Officials say it is especially critical that parents and guardians get children 12 and older vaccinated against COVID-19 before they head back to the classroom next month, as summer



camps and other child programs have been attributed to large COVID-19 clusters across the nation.

The Health Department's COVID-19 vaccine clinic at the Southgate Mall is open seven days a week; no appointment necessary. All three FDA-authorized vaccines are available each day. COVID-19 vaccine appointments are free to the insured and uninsured. Clinic staff are always available to sit down and discuss any questions or concerns a patient may have before they decide to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 testing is also critical to slowing the spread of the original strain and the highly transmissible Delta variant. All Missoula County residents, whether symptomatic or not, can book free COVID-19 tests at the Flynn Lane testing clinic or at a mobile testing clinic. Individuals who are exposed to large volumes of people at work are especially encouraged to take advantage of this service.

**Southgate Mall Vaccine Clinic: 2901 Brooks St, Missoula, MT 59801**

Monday - 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday – Thursday - 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Weekends – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Flynn Lane COVID-19 Testing Clinic: 4025 Flynn Lane, Missoula, MT 59808**

Monday – Friday - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday - Closed

Sunday - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Mobile COVID-19 Testing:**

Tuesday – Clinton Fire Station 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Seeley Lake Community Foundation 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday – Lolo Community Center 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Frenchtown Fire Station 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

***COVID-19 Incident Commander Cindy Farr is available for media inquiries between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Please connect with Cindy via cell at 406-396-4094.***

# Montana Chapter

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



## Montana Chapter

July 26, 2021

RE: Update to Masking Recommendations in Schools

Dear Montana School Leaders and School Board Members:

We are writing as Montana pediatricians who are also family and community members of the students in your schools. The COVID-19 pandemic has truly had an enormous impact on children. But, unfortunately, this pandemic is not yet over and thus we need to ensure the continued safety of our students.

We send this letter today as you navigate the difficult decision about face masks in schools for the upcoming academic year.

We applaud you and your staff's efforts to continue implementing the other mitigation strategies that have been found to decrease SARS-CoV-2 virus transmission in schools, including physical distancing, ventilation, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, and contact tracing, as well as supporting local health care providers who offer the opportunity for vaccination to students 12 years and older. We are writing today to urge you to review the recommendation for universal masking for all students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, as outlined in the national American Academy of Pediatrics updated COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools, published July 18, 2021<sup>1</sup>. MTAAP endorses this guidance. Here are some of the main reasons:

1. Children younger than 12 years do not have the opportunity to be vaccinated, and will not likely have this opportunity until late fall/early winter. Children can become seriously ill with COVID-19, and can have prolonged symptoms after initial mild or even asymptomatic infection.
2. The Delta variant of this virus has now been detected in Montana, and this variant has been found to be much more contagious as well as even cause mild disease in vaccinated people. Cases and hospitalizations are increasing from earlier this month, and the Delta variant is rapidly becoming the predominant variant in Montana.
3. Schools will face challenges monitoring masking policies in those who are not vaccinated. Additionally, though fully vaccinated people are very unlikely to become significantly ill with COVID-19 or transmit the virus, the risk is not zero.

**Montana Chapter**  
3031 Grand Ave #157  
Billings, MT 59102  
Phone: 844/228-7480  
E-mail: info@mtpeds.org

### **Montana Chapter Executive Committee**

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**Vice President**  
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**Chapter Web site**  
www.mtpeds.org

<sup>1</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021, July 18). *COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools*. services.aap.org.

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

The Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is Incorporated in Montana

4. Face masking has been shown to decrease the spread of other respiratory virus illnesses which mimic COVID-19 symptoms, and therefore decrease teacher and student absences.

Undoubtedly, questions will be raised about the health, socio-emotional and communication hurdles related to masking, but we encourage you to contact your local health care providers, or members of the MTAAP, who should be able to answer these questions. Additionally, the AAP website, [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org), has many resources on these topics, such as [Mask Mythbusters](#).

**We remain in support of universal masking in schools, at least until all students have had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 illness. Let us prioritize allowing children to safely attend your schools, which are fundamental for their development and well-being.**

Sincerely,

The Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics



## MEMORANDUM

**TO: School District Superintendents**  
**FROM: Montana OPI Superintendent Elsie Arntzen**  
**DATE: May 19, 2021**  
**SUBJECT: Planning for the 2021-2022 School Year**

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As you prepare to plan for once again welcoming students back into the classroom for the 2021-2022 school year, I want to first thank you for all of the tremendous work you, your educators, your classified staff, and your administrators have done to not only keep our school doors open in many of your districts, but more importantly keep our students safe and learning. This past year has been unprecedented, and you have been tremendous leaders in your communities, and our wonderful Montana teachers have continued to put our amazing Montana students first.

On February 12, 2021, Governor Greg Gianforte issued a directive implementing Executive Order 2-2021. In the memo, he rightfully noted that "access to school is essential to the development, social, mental, and educational needs of school-age children." Further, he said that "schools should make reasonable efforts to follow school guidelines and best practices recommended by the CDC and the Montana Office of Public Instruction."

Since that time, our state has continued to reopen, and there have been many changes to state and local policies on the required use of masks or face coverings. As a result of a change in state law, many counties have eliminated their requirements for the wearing of masks or face coverings in public space and private businesses.

In light of the changes occurring across the state, as we move into the 2021-2022 school year, **the OPI strongly recommends that school districts across Montana rescind, or allow to expire, any existing face covering mandates, and develop policies that make the wearing of face masks and other coverings optional, voluntary, and a matter of family choice.** Further, the OPI supports schools making



the decision to remove those mandates for the remainder of the present school year, as well as for any summer instruction programs.

We in Montana have proven that we can keep our children safe and keep them learning. We cannot enter another school year subjecting our students to any additional loss of instructional time. We also cannot perpetuate the notion that masks will be a permanent feature in our state's classrooms. I encourage you to evaluate your policies and work toward removing masks wherever possible.

It is important that our children have as normal a school experience as possible – as soon as possible. This is one way to help accomplish that objective. I sincerely hope your school districts will consider this guidance as they plan for the new school year. Thank you for putting our Montana students first. I am here to serve you if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elsie Arntzen

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elsie Arntzen', is written over a large, faint circular outline. The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name 'Elsie' being more legible than the last name 'Arntzen'.



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Face coverings at school

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**Karen Laughlin** <klaughster@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:34 AM

Our family 100% supports our children continuing to wear masks during school until at the very least they are able to get vaccinated. We hope you continue to support this as well.

Thank you!

Karen Laughlin (Paxson mom)

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## Students and Masks

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**Brad Tschida** <betschida54@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:34 AM

Board members and Superintendent:

I am curious as to why you do not provide the option for parents to choose whether or not to send their children to school with or without masks.

If masks work, the students wearing them will be safe, according to the science you follow. The children without masks would be more susceptible to contracting the virus, not spreading it.

Furthermore, children up to 17 or 18 are at a statistical "zero" chance of succumbing to the China virus. Yes, there might be a fatality, but there also might be a fatality from influenza, pneumonia or other medical condition. A child might succumb to heat stroke, or falling off playground equipment. Are you going to prepare a strategy for every potential injurious situation? You may as well rewrite the Code of Hammurabi while you're at it.

The mouth is the dirtiest part of our bodies and you want children to ingest and re-ingest the filth and bacteria from their mouths. You will make them more ill from such an action than from allowing them to breathe freely.

You are elected to serve the people, yet when the people turn out to voice their displeasure, you convert open meetings into "Zoom" meeting, which is tantamount to no meeting at all. Of what consequence are you so afraid? That parents will voice their displeasure over your actions? If so, find a pair of big boy or girl pants and do the job for which you were elected.

I have grandchildren in local schools and abhor the decision to enforce a mask mandate in 2020. Do not make the same ill-guided and illogical decision this year. Yes, I would agonize if one of my grandchildren, or another student died from infection. However, the grief would be no less if they died from some other cause, accidental or otherwise. Use the God-given intellect you have and make the reasonable choice to give control for children's behavior to parents. Apart from such an action, be prepared to lose multiple students to homeschool or other community based schooling alternatives.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email with a simple reply.

Respectfully,

Rep. Brad Tschida

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## Masking

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**Claire Phinney** <clairephinney@icloud.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:36 AM

My son is particularly vulnerable to severe effects of covid, and missed out on last year's learning through MOA due to an unfortunate teacher match. I plan to send him back to Paxson in the fall so he doesn't miss his second grade education too, but if universal masking is not required and followed, we won't be able to return again in the Fall. Please take the safety and education of our children into account when adjusting your school guidance. Their education - and lives even - are in your hands.

Please support universal masking until ages 5-11 can be vaccinated!!

Thank you,  
Claire Phinney  
Concerned Parent

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

3 messages

**Beth Morey** <eamorey@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:29 AM

To: Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us, Robert Watson &lt;rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I'm confused why COVID safety measures are being done away with during unmasked time i.e., eating. Shouldn't we maintain these measures when masks are not possible? Please explain your rationale. Thank you!

Beth Morey

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 5, 2021, at 10:02 AM, Missoula County Public Schools <noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

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Thank you for your interest in our reopening plans.

Rob Watson, EdD

Superintendent

Missoula County Public Schools

Brooke Krininger, MPH, BSN, RN, CPAN

Missoula County Public Schools

Health Services Supervisor

Vinny Giammona

COVID Recovery Coordinator

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Missoula County Public Schools | 909 South Ave. West, Missoula, MT 59801 | 406-728-2400

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: eamorey@gmail.com

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:29 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

---

**Beth Morey** <eamorey@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:47 AM

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>, publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us, Robert Watson <rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us>

Also, I'm concerned that you're not fully committing to always following the CDC and AAP recommendations on masking, full stop.

Any reevaluation should only drop indoor masking if these experts explicitly say it's okay to do so (and should follow who they say is okay to drop masking).

I strongly encourage you to fully commit to always following expert medical opinion, period.

Thank you for your time.  
Beth Morey  
MCPS parent

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 5, 2021, at 10:29 AM, Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## support of face coverings

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**annie watson** <annie.schaub@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:46 AM

Hello,

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of student and staff health within MCPS. I am writing to voice my support of the Face Covering Guidelines.

Thank you for prioritizing student and staff health.

Annie Watson

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## Masks in K-12 schools

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**Elizabeth Allsworth** <elizabeth@allsworth.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:47 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing specifically in regard to schools that include children under the age of 12. I have a child in 4<sup>th</sup> grade as well as a child in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I am in strong support of the use of masks as an easy, affordable, life protecting action within the schools. In-person learning is certainly the best option and to do that safely, masks are necessary. For me, masks are like glasses to help me see better, or hearing aids to help me hear better, or even pony-tail holders to keep hair out of my face, or shin guards to protect my legs in soccer. Masks are an effective tool.

Please require the use of masks for teachers and students in any school building which contain students under the age of 12. I can understand that some people with disabilities or unique circumstances may not be able to wear masks and exceptions may need to be made. However, until vaccines are provided and a large enough percentage of the school population is vaccinated, I am much more comfortable and able to sleep at night if masks will be required. My family has experienced the loss of loved one due to COVID. Just like we have learned not to play with matches in our fire prone area, there is no need to mess with the COVID fire either. Masks are vital.

I am happy to discuss more should you want to talk with me in person,

Elizabeth Ballinger Allsworth

401-787-2751

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Please enforce masking**

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**Kate Leary** <kateml41@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:02 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear School Board:

As a mom of an MCPS second grader and kindergartener, I'm very concerned about sending my children back to school if masking indoors isn't required. Until young children can get the COVID vaccine, I think it is essential to mask up. Thank you for considering and keeping our kids safe.

Kate Leary  
Missoula

Sent from my iPhone

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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## Support for Masks

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**Sarah Kragelund** <sarahkragelund51@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:07 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I support a mask mandate for all MCPS buildings and pre-K-12 schools in accordance with the recommendations by the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and local health departments due to the substantial increase in positivity rate and Delta variant in our community. MCPS students of all ages have demonstrated they're quite capable of complying with mask recommendations and other mitigation factors despite concerns or objections raised by adults. Masks can help ensure a safe learning environment and protect the greater community, as well as minimize further disruptions to learning due to exposure and illness. A consistent requirement across the district recognizes the seriousness of the crisis we face and removes the individualistic burden of an "honor system" or age-based separation.

Thank you for your efforts and consideration!

Sarah



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## Face Covering Guideline Comment

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**Ryan Sudbury** <rsudbury@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:07 AM

I am an MCPS parent, with two kids at Rattlesnake Elementary. I support the proposed face covering guidelines. I think that these requirements are probably needed given most students cannot be vaccinated and there is still unfortunately a fair amount of community spread going on.

I further support MCPS' periodic review of the guidelines, and adding or subtracting requirements as needed.

Thank you for your diligent work on all of these things as we as a community learn more and try to cope.  
-Ryan Sudbury

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**No Masks for our kids!!!**

1 message

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**Diana Wilsey** <dianawilsey@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:15 AM

Our kids have been mask free all summer in everything from day care, to camps, to the YMCA activities and everything in between. Our kids are resilient and in the least effected majority of people being effected by covid. Masks should be a personal choice from parents and not a mandate that is political! Missoula is not masked and hasn't been all summer. Our governor took away the emergency and the mandate for the reasons of vaccination rates and numbers going down. The numbers will always fluctuate, just like any flu or virus. Our kids need to breathe!! Our kids are depressed in masks. Suicide rates TRIPLED in children due to the masks. Adults don't wear them as often as we are forcing the kids to and that is WRONG!! No masks when school starts is a priority amongst the majority of parents, school staff and children.

-A concerned parent and a teacher

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**DRAFT Face Covering Guidelines**

2 messages

**Adam Rissien** <ariss13@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:21 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, dlorenzen@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees,

My child attends Franklin Elementary and after reviewing the draft face covering guidelines, I strongly urge the board to **vote in favor** of making them final. In particular, it is important to continue relying on the stated rationale to support finalizing the draft guidelines:

**RATIONALE**

As provided by MT Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and MCCHD.

- Children younger than 12 years do not have the opportunity to be vaccinated, and will not likely have this opportunity until late fall/early winter.
- CDC guidance regarding who is determined to be a close contact has changed to acknowledge the use of face coverings in K-12 settings. Last school year, any student within 6 feet of a positive case would be considered a "close contact" and would have to quarantine, 10-14 days. This school year, if *both* the positive case and other students are correctly and consistently using face coverings, the other students may not be considered close contacts and may not have to quarantine.
- The Delta variant of this virus has now been detected in Montana, and this variant has been found to be much more contagious as well as even cause mild disease in vaccinated people. Cases and hospitalizations are increasing from earlier this month, and the Delta variant is rapidly becoming the predominant variant in Montana.

Basing decisions that affect the health and safety of my child, and all those in close contact to him, must absolutely be based on the best available science and direction from health experts. Policies recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the CDC and MCCHD are necessary to effectively reduce COVID-19 infections.

In no uncertain terms, I strongly urge the board to set aside calls to forego face coverings as they are not based on the best available science and direction from health experts, and represent a fringe (though vocal) minority within our community that may be misinformed, or are motivated by political inclinations rather than what is best for our children's health and the safety of those we seek to protect from this deadly virus.

Thank you,  
Adam Rissien

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:21 AM

To: ariss13@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Coverings**

3 messages

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**Brittany Flemmer** <bc\_mount89@hotmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:27 AM

If a parent wants to have their child wear a face covering that is their right. The same goes for if a parent wishes to not have their child wear one. If you are scared of the virus have your child wear a covering and let those who are not, have their kids be free from covering their faces everyday.

The argument will be I'm sure "if you don't want your child to wear one than pull them or do the MOA." But why can't those who are for the mask do that if they are so fearful? I do not want my children or anyone else's nor any adults to have to mask up. It should be a choice made by the parents and any individual adult whether they have their kids mask up or any staff member. The decision should be an individual one, not a mandated one by the school, the government, or the CDC!

Please make it a personal choice whether to cover or not, let each parent and individual decide this for themselves.

Brittany Flemmer

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: bc\_mount89@hotmail.com

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:28 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Brittany Flemmer** <bc\_mount89@hotmail.com>  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:37 AM

In addition to my precious email I would like to state that we do not know the long term effects that wearing a face covering everyday like we have had to do this last year and a half will do to the lungs etc... of our children. In the future it is both the wearing of the mask or choosing not to that could be equally harmful. That is why it should be the parents of the child's choice and the right for any adult to decide whether they mask up or not.

Brittany Flemmer

On Aug 5, 2021, at 11:28 AM, Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org> wrote:

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Support for masking in MCPS**

1 message

**Corrie Rogers** <cringsage@yahoo.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:33 AM

Reply-To: Corrie Rogers &lt;cringsage@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Our family supports MCPS requiring masks in a school setting for the beginning of the 21/22 school year. We would like our children to be able to attend in-person school and we believe that to do so, masking should be required for at least the first 6 weeks of the school year. This is especially true for elementary schools, where most of the children aren't eligible for the vaccine at this time. Thank you for your continuing work to keep our kids and your staff safe.

Corrie and Dan Rogers, parents of CS Porter Middle School and Big Sky HS students

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Masks**

1 message

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**Greg Browning** <gregbrowning@outlook.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:41 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hi Rob,

I'm writing to voice my opinion that requiring our kids and educators to wear facemasks is silly. If people choose to wear one or have their kids wear one, that is fine. This should not be mandatory. I would encourage you to listen to the many parents in this community who are vehemently opposed to this mandate.

My thanks for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Greg Browning

5111 Victor Place

Missoula, MT 59803

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Face Mask

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**Carie Edson** <carie.lynn.edson@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:48 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am strongly opposed to continuing the face mask guidelines for children within the school setting. My daughter has special needs and will struggle to learn and develop relationships with other students if she has to continue speaking through a mask. She is hard to understand and the emotional stress will be significant.

Emotionally all my children suffered from the inability to engage in natural ways with their peers and instructors. They all struggled with anxiety and depression. Please reconsider the guidelines until there is adequate information to do so.

Thank you.

Carie Edson.

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## Immunization requirements

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**Alex Metcalf** <alm450@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:49 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board:

Immunization documentation has long been required for school employment and attendance. The recent law adopted by the MT state legislature and signed by the Governor violates long-held moral and legal principles protecting the public health from individuals whose personal choices may threaten the health and safety of others. I strongly encourage the Board to require vaccines and challenge the legality of this ill-conceived state law.

A legal challenge to this state law will prevail, but even if you don't believe it will, rising to this fight will protect students and staff during the most critical months ahead while a challenge is brought, heard by the courts, and a decision reached. No judge will order a hold on your policy and put these kids at risk before they've heard arguments. Do not shy away from this fight - win or lose, you will protect our kids, teachers, and staff.

I strongly urge you to adopt the mask requirement as drafted and add the vaccine requirements to your policy.

Thank you for your service in these challenging times,

Alexander L. Metcalf, PhD



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks in Schools

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**Joe Leary** <jleary1977@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:50 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Please continue to enforce the use of masks in schools. The delta variant has made it to Montana, and the health of our children is more important than the ideology of the willfully ignorant.

Thank you!

Joe Leary

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## Masking For Students

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**Jenny Wilson** <tigerjenny@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:50 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

As the parent of 3 kids in the MCPS system, I am emailing to ask that the board approve the masking guidelines that were sent out via email on 8/5. Two of our kids are too young to receive the COVID vaccine. The oldest received her second shot a couple of days ago.

MCPS has done a good job of doing what is needed to help keep COVID numbers in Missoula low compared to the rest of the state (and a lot of the country). Please don't fall down on that responsibility for our community now. For the physical and mental health of our kids (and the people they are closest to) it's so important that we take every step we can to keep life a little more "normal" this year. Masking will keep our town from having to implement tougher restrictions around events, sports, and other activities that make Missoula a wonderful place to live.

Again, please approve the masking guidelines for the upcoming school year. Kids should wear masks when indoors (except for when eating/drinking) at school.

Best,  
Jenny Hall

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**Masks**

1 message

**Tatyana Pasyuk** <pasyukt@yahoo.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:53 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi, this is Tatyana Pasyuk. Mother of 5 children. I will have 4 children going to school this fall. And last year was the hardest year of my life, trying to home school kids and dealing with masks everywhere. We all had anxiety, stress and wished it would all go away. As this summer coming to an end and kids are excited for school I am bagging , please DO NOT force these children to wear masks again. They all had such an amazing summer with friends and family . The school is stressful enough for a lot of kids as it is. Please don't make them go through the same thing they went through last year. Let the kids breath and learn like they did before.

Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

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## Mask Policy

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**James Florin** <precisionbassman@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:56 AM

Please do not allow political agendas to endanger the health of my grandchildren. Following CDC guidance as it evolves in response to the spread of COVID-19 and its variants is the prudent course. Of the five scenarios Superintendent Watson recommended, I respectfully encourage you to adopt either of these two:

- Required mask use for all students pre-K through grade 12
- Required mask use for students pre-K through grade 8, recommended use for grades 9-12

Thank you,  
James Florin

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## Mask wearing in schools

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**Caroline Lonski** <clonski@bigsky.net>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 12:02 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Caroline & Jason Lonski <lonski@bigsky.net>, hushlo <hugoslonski@gmail.com>

Dear esteemed MCPS Board members,

Masks have been proven to reduce the transmission of harmful viruses with no ill effects to people without special respiratory needs. Wearing a mask at school is far more desirable for my son than having to return to online schooling. Please keep our administrators, teachers, and students safe this upcoming school year by following CDC and WHO recommendations for mask wearing in public schools.

Thank you and stay well,  
Caroline Lonski

[https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR3OpGW2JICsOikEvL9s6tRV\\_PpuyVcika6xfBv8fEHYh76u83RDBM1MUg](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-children-and-masks-related-to-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR3OpGW2JICsOikEvL9s6tRV_PpuyVcika6xfBv8fEHYh76u83RDBM1MUg)

Sent from my iPhone

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## Parent Comment in Support of Draft Face Covering Guidelines

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**Jon Byington** <jonathonbyington@hotmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 12:20 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I have two sons attending Sentinel High School, a daughter attending CS Porter Middle School, and a daughter attending Jeanette Rankin Elementary School. I appreciate and support the draft face covering guidelines, especially because my daughter who is under the age of 12 cannot yet be vaccinated.

I recognize face coverings are a burden and no one likes to wear them. But with the Delta variant numbers trending upward, the close proximity among students in classrooms, and the duration of hours while inside a building, I think the benefits of masks far outweigh the burdens.

I am strongly in support of requiring face coverings while indoors and on buses.

Jonathon Byington

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## No more masks

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**Faith Meusey** <faithmeusey@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 12:27 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees,

Given the amount of teachers and staff who have been vaccinated at this point, it's time to let parents choose if their children wear a mask to school.

I am asking each and every one of you to consider the importance of the negative effects wearing masks has already caused to our children's mental, social, and emotional health. You have all heard the statistics of the rise in depression and suicide in children along with other serious issues.

Please consider how hard it is for children (in kindergarten through second grade especially) to learn without seeing their teachers' lips moving. Our children do not need to fall further behind.

Please, let parents choose what is best for their children!

Thank you for your time,

Faith Meusey

Jeannette Rankin

Sent from my iPhone

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## Support for masks

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tmcguire@bresnan.net <tmcguire@bresnan.net>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 12:43 PM

Dear Dr. Watson, Administrators and MCPS School Board,

First and foremost, I would like to extend my gratitude for all the decisions made during the 2020-21 school year. The protocols put in place undoubtedly kept staff and students as safe as possible during these unprecedented times. These are extraordinary circumstances that no one should have to deal with, but here we are.

I would like to offer my full support of masks in school, especially while we are at a substantial or high rate of transmission within Missoula County. Between students and staff, MCPS population numbers in the thousands. We are part of a larger community and we must take that into consideration. Missoula is a medical hub for rural areas that surround our city and beyond. Having only two hospitals, it is imperative that we keep our Covid numbers low so that there will be available beds for those in need of other care. We, as a city, are not trending in the right direction at the present time.

I would suggest following the recommendations of the experts in this field. I would hope that we as parents above all could see the importance of the recommendation by the American Academy of Pediatrics. It would seem reasonable to put a masking requirement in place and to review our community's transmission status on a monthly/quarterly/semester basis. I would also recommend that if masking is required at one level, it should be the same for all. There is already a tremendous amount of division between those for and against masking and by having a consistent policy across the board, I would think it beneficial for our teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views.

Sincerely,

Kim McGuire  
MCPS parent

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## Support for universal masking

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**Brett Bell** <brettmBell@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org  
Cc: Stephen Sisk <stephen.sisk@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 12:51 PM

Dear Missoula County Public School Board members,

I'm writing today to express my strong support for a universal mask requirement for all Missoula County Public School students grades K-12 in advance of your meeting to decide this matter on August 10.

I am a family physician and mother of two girls, both of whom are too young to attend public school yet but who attend day care and preschool with the siblings of many MCPS students. I see many MCPS students in my clinic on a regular basis. I am concerned for my own children, my young patients and the entire Missoula community.

Data show that when schools follow guidelines like universal masking, illness exclusion policies and hand hygiene, then outbreaks of COVID-19 are low in schools.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics have both recommended that children return to in-person instruction AND that schools implement universal masking. Children under age 12 cannot be vaccinated and in other areas of the country more and more children are getting sick from COVID, and some of them are dying.

Requiring universal masking in schools makes good sense because it is a much easier policy to implement compared to a patchwork of different policies for different grades or student vaccination status. This sends a clear and consistent message to students that is the easiest for teachers and administrators to enforce.

Universal masking will help to protect not just unvaccinated children in schools but will help protect the entire community in Missoula

I urge the MCPS school board to make the right decision, even if it is unpopular or controversial, and follow the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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Brett Marie Bell, MD, MPH  
brettmBell@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masking

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**Jessie Tuberty** <jptube@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:17 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I support required masking at all levels of public school preK- 12th grade. This is the way responsible adult decision makers protect vulnerable children. Doing so will lead our community to know we did our very best for them. Why would Missoula's children deserve less than the best? Thank you, Jessica Tuberty, MD

Sent from my iPhone

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**Please require mask in elementary schools this fall**

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**Iris Owen** <irisannkelly@hotmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:18 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I have twin daughters returning to second grade at Paxson Elementary after a year in the MOA program. This decision to return to in-person school was a difficult one to make, and I still feel anxious at the idea of sending my children back to school. I'm writing today to ask that you please continue to require mask in the public schools this fall. It would be too great a risk to send our children to school without mask, until they have the option to become vaccinated.

Thank you,  
Iris Owen

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**Mask**

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**Erik Carlson** <erikmcarlson1979@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:26 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I want to know where the evidence is behind my kid having to wear a mask at school for prevention of the spread of COVID. It has been over a year now and there is no evidence that kids are the super spreaders they were thought to be in the beginning of the pandemic. There's a bunch of studies that show the opposite, and also there are studies on the detriment of a child (who mind you kids are not the cleanest when it comes to anything) wearing a mask has shown to be unhealthy contain lots of bad bacteria and viruses. Not to mention the mental effect it has on a child not to see a smile or give a smile to someone else. Life is lived in the margins there's no heat or no heat in the winter it's what temperature would you like, it's my opinion and I'd like a reply back on this that the risk posed by wearing a mask is far greater than the risk posed by COVID. We live in a free country wear a mask if you choose but my kid should not be forced to wear one!

Sincerely a concerned and angry parent.

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## face coverings in the schools

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**Helena Koelle** <hkoelle@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:46 PM

Greetings Board of MCPS,

I just read that you will vote on August 10 regarding use of face coverings in school.

I would prefer a national vaccination requirement over masks for children, but that's clearly not going to happen any time soon, if ever.

So I would like you to vote yes to

- Face coverings are required for all students, staff and volunteers or guests, regardless of vaccination status. (YAY)
- Face coverings are not required when outdoors. (SENSIBLE given science pointing to low outdoor transmission)
- Face coverings are not required while eating/drinking. (WILL students be distanced while eating?)

etc.

Thank you for your time.

Helena Koelle,



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

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**Comment- Mask K-12**

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**L Ellington-Staal** <roamus928@hotmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:49 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity for interested community members to provide comments regarding mask wearing in our K-12 schools.

I attended the COVID taskforce meeting on Tuesday, 8/3/2021 and though I did not comment then, I'd like to add my voice to those who did.

It is my hope that all school boards in Montana will follow the science and decide to have a normal, mask-optional school year. It will be very disappointing if the Missoula School Board prioritizes virtue-signaling over parental choice, kids' well-being, and the science.

I once heard that data doesn't lie but those who use it do. We all know we can Google until we find what we want to support our beliefs. However, it is my opinion solid data shows children face extremely low risk from COVID. Additionally, empirical evidence (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.05.19.21257467v1>) from schools last year has shown that the existence of a mask mandate is not correlated with a school's COVID-19 rate.

Lastly, in direct opposition to what one of the pro mask individuals stated at the Tuesday meeting, many children, especially those with special needs like hearing loss, autism, and sensory issues, **struggle** to learn and engage in a classroom setting with masks. Many individuals at Tuesday's meeting voiced the concerns raised by experts about the impact of masks on mental and emotional health, as well as socialization, speech, and language learning. It is also a concern that masks worn by children for many hours a day, taken off and put back on, can harbor potentially harmful bacteria.

It is my strong hope the input from concerned community members will be taken to heart and when reviewed by the Board, have impact on their final decision.

Regards,

Leslie Ellington-Staal

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## Covid guidelines for fall 2021 - comments

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**C. Alina Cansler** <alina.cansler@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 1:50 PM

Hi,

I am sending this email as public comments on the public schools for fall of 2021. Simply put, I expect you to follow—at a minimum—the CDC recommendations. Currently CDC recommends “universal indoor masking by all students, staff, teachers, and visitors to K through 12 schools regardless of vaccination status.”

The delta variant also causes me, a parent of a child entering kindergarten, increased concern for my child’s safety. We now have evidence of breakthrough infections of vaccinated individuals, but we do not know the rate of those breakthrough infections. We also have evidence that more kids are getting sick due to the Delta variant, but we don’t know if a higher proportion of kids contracting Covid have serious complications due to the Delta variant. Therefore, I expect you to apply the precautionary principle, where you use increased caution when there’s increased uncertainty, and put protective measures in place to keep my young child safe from hospitalization and “long-Covid” by requiring masking.

I do support having kids in the classroom five days a week, engaging in their normal activities. We know that having them out of the classroom is also detrimental to their long-term education and social development. But universal masking of everyone entering and at school is a concrete step that lets us keep the kids in the classroom, while also keeping the kids in the community safe. Please follow the national CDC guidance.

Once vaccines are available to younger children, and vaccine rates of younger children in Missoula County are high, then it will be time to reevaluate if masks are still needed in schools.

Sincerely,  
Dr. C. Alina Cansler

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Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Kids in masks

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**Kathy Armstrong** <musk@reagan.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 2:07 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

It is an absolute joke that you are demanding our children go back to wearing masks yet our government is allowing hundreds of thousands of migrants into the country WITH Covid 19. My family just got back from Greece and had we tested positive we wouldnt of been allowed back into our own country yet these people are coming in in droves, with covid 19.

I think its shameful that nearly 80 people, myself included went to the MCPS Covid task force meeting and all but about 8 of those people very passionately expressed their support FOR MASK CHOICE, ironically the next day they moved the following weeks meeting to a Zoom instead of in person. Cowards! If you want to wear one, feel free, I am fully capable of taking care of my own health and my children's.

This so called pandemic has a higher survival rate than the annual flu and most kids are not even affected.

please dont lose sight, you work for your constituents. Do what the people are asking.

thank you

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## Mask mandate

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**Ruby Kikkert** <rubykikkert@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 2:08 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

You've got to have a mask mandate AND require certified and classified to get COVID vaccine. My 7 and 10 year old grandchildren, and others their ages, can't do this for themselves. It's up to us responsible adults to protect them. I'm disgusted and tired of all this individual rights rhetoric. Children are getting COVID (5 kids and 1 teacher at Philipsburg day care) AND dying (look at the news).

If unvaccinated, unmasked people are willing to risk their kids lives, sadly that is up to them. But let them get a job elsewhere where they aren't endangering others kids. And if they want to use public schools, let them mask their kids. It only makes sense.

**STAND UP FOR OUR KIDS!!!!**

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## No mask requirements should be imposed

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**Victoria Parks** <victoriaparksmt@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 2:08 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

For the record, I do not think there should be mandatory mask wearing for MCPS. It should be an individual choice, just like whether one chooses to be vaccinated or not.

- Victoria Parks

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**face mask policy**

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**Martha Amrine** <marthaamrine@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 3:37 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: Brett Amrine &lt;brettamrine@gmail.com&gt;

Hello! I am a mom to an 8 and 11-year-old who are students at MCPS. For those kids under 12 who do not yet have the option for the vaccine, our family would like to see a "masks required" policy at this time. In addition to the 12 and unders inability to get vaccinated, our 11-year-old has an autoimmune condition which means that we do not know how the Covid-19 virus would affect him if he were to contract it. I'm sure a handful of other students have heightened risks like our child.

We have been thoroughly impressed with MCPS's leadership in setting and implementing safety measures over the last year and a half. School has been THE safest environment for our kids' social interaction outside our family which has been extremely important for their overall wellbeing. Thank you for your thoughtful leadership during this pandemic.

Martha and Brett Amrine

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**Upcoming School Year and Masks**

1 message

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**Michelle** <thenowels@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 3:51 PM

I am emailing as a concerned parent in regards to the up coming year and mask requirements. I think for the overall well being for all ages, masks should be a personal choice. Every families situation is different and that should be a personal choice. The mental health of our children should be top priority as this virus has shown not to affect this yay age group in the way it has in much older generations. There has not been one study that proves masks are effective. I will always support parent choice when it comes to making any medical decisions. Please ask parents what they want. I feel like a majority of people voicing opinions are all for masking everyone indefinitely. Send out a questionnaire, ask parents if they would be in support of parent choice. We should be encouraging health and fitness to truly beat this virus. Let's teach our kids that instead.

Michelle (parent of children in middle and elementary school)

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**Please present the data**

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**Steven Duello** <chipd@sbcglobal.net>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 3:59 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I have read through the 120 pages of comments. Scientific data has been presented by those against masking. I was unable to find a comment with scientific data from those in favor of masking. If it is necessary for our kids to wear masks again, please present the evidence to support this. How many kids in Montana have died of Covid? How many became critically ill? How does this compare to other years? If vulnerable people have been vaccinated, why are unvaccinated kids a threat to them? There are schools in our country and in Montana that never mandated masking. How do they compare to schools that mandated masks? Kids have been around each other all summer without following Covid policy. Has there been serious consequences to this? Does the contact tracing data show kids transmitting Covid to vaccinated adults? Please use the scientific data from the past year and a half to guide your decision and present this data to the public.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Please mandate masking

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**Valerie** <valeriekrex@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:02 PM

My son attends Paxson and therefore is not old enough for the vaccine. This puts him at risk of delta and it's unknown factors. Masking works when everyone does it, so Please mandate masks for all students and teachers. Our community's health depends on it.

Thank you,  
Valerie Krex

Sent from my iPhone

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask Mandate

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**RYAN CLARK** <rclark4876@aol.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:15 PM

Good afternoon,

It was recently brought to my attention that MCPS is considering a mask mandate for the 2021-22 school year. I have a child that will be entering his freshman year at Big Sky High School, with 2 more to follow in the coming years. I respectfully request that masks be a decision made by parents, not the school board. Anyone who has taken the time to inform themselves understands the risks associated with Covid. I believe that this has gone on long enough and I am more concerned with the long term affects of sending our children to school with masks. If MCPS chooses to continue with a mask mandate, I will be forced to consider pulling my children from this school district. Please let the parents choose.

Respectfully,  
Ryan Clark  
406-552-9583

Sent from my iPhone

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Do NOT mandate masks! Let it be family/personal choice

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**M Campbell** <meagan.j.campbell@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:38 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Board of Trustees,

I implore you not to mandate masks for our children in any capacity. As parents it is our right, our choice, our decision with our children not yours! There is a plethora of information out there to make informed decisions.

I won't go into the science, the constant whiplash of the CDC, (you can find studies and opinions on every side of the issue) or the power trips of various individuals throughout our county and country, the act of making our children pawns in this political football pandemic; Instead I will say, our country is based on freedoms and that include personal choice and personal responsibility without the micro oversight of various government/public entities. It should be a parent's decision.

Two other comments; one as the CDC bases their recommendations for the entire country, a reminder we are NOT California, Minnesota or New York! We should not be treated the same, our overall population alone requires we are not treated the same. Second, schools require parents to sign paperwork giving permission to give a child an aspirin, yet you want to mandate medical requirements for my child without my permission/authorization for 6 to 8 hours a day. This is unacceptable.

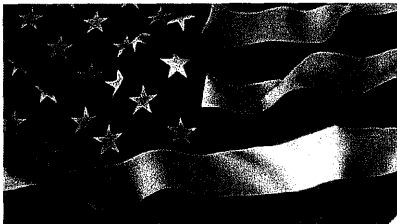
Again, I ask you to leave masking as a family/personal choice and not a requirement/mandate in the schools.

Thank you,

**Meagan Campbell**

**C: 360.609.6401**

**E: meagan.j.campbell@gmail.com**





**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## I strongly support requiring masks in school

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**Pamela Gherlein** <pkgherlein@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:39 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, "rwatson@mcpsmt.org" <rwatson@mcpsmt.org>

Thank you so much for working to keep our children and community safe. Everyone at MCPS did a fantastic job last year keeping our kids healthy and I highly support the wearing of masks this coming year. I live with my granddaughter who is a rising kindergartener at Paxon this year.

Pamela Gherlein

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## AGAINST mask mandate in school

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**Kendra McConaughey** <klmcconaughey@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:42 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Hello,

I am emailing to say I am 100% against forcing a child or teacher to wear a mask in school any longer. This should be a choice of the parent to decide what is healthy for their own child. You cannot force my child to wear a mask. They have been in camp all summer long with no masks and now you require this for control!? I decide what my child puts on their body and no one else. If a parent chooses to put a mask on their child this is their choice and I support that. Therefore my decision should be equally supported for no mask. Enough is enough. My child will go to school maskless and no one will force anything on him. This is outrageous. Thank you for your understanding.

Kendra

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## **NO SCHOOL MASKS**

**Nellie Winn** <nwin85@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 4:57 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

My name is Janelle Winn. I am a Missoula Montana born and bred Mother of 4 children, 1st grade, 8th grade, 10th and 12th. All whom have expressed udder shock and sadness to having to wear masks again after enjoying the FREE FRESH AIR with their friends at birthday gatherings, sporting events, parks,, friends houses.. getting to be normal kids with a normal summer, and now to have that ripped away from them is sickening to me.

I am shocked and appalled that the school may be "requiring" masks this school year! Even the Missoula courthouse does not enforce mask wearing inside its doors.. I thought our Missoula Montana community was past this and that our children can start to piece back some normalcy with friends and school.

I have thought alot about not having my children return to school if there was a mask mandate and now I have a hard decision to make.

Families should have the right to choose what's right for them. You should have no right to force children into covering their faces.

My youngest is autistic and has a hard time understanding social situations with peers and new adults in "normal circumstances".

Without being able to "SEE" others expressions to help him understand what's being said is heartbreaking for me. It's cutting him of from others in even more ways than what he already has to deal with.

And lastly I believe wearing masks for long periods of time is extremely unhealthy long term. Have others done it and have been unaffected? Yes. Should our children be forced to do it during school hours when everyone else is allowed to go without in our whole town and state? A definite loud and firm NO.

My name is Janelle Ranae Winn-McFarland and I am 100% AGAINST SCHOOL MANDATORY MASKS!!!

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Upcoming School Year and Masks**

1 message

**Michelle** <thenowels@gmail.com>

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 3:51 PM

I am emailing as a concerned parent in regards to the up coming year and mask requirements. I think for the overall well being for all ages, masks should be a personal choice. Every families situation is different and that should be a personal choice. The mental health of our children should be top priority as this virus has shown not to affect this yay age group in the way it has in much older generations. There has not been one study that proves masks are effective. I will always support parent choice when it comes to making any medical decisions. Please ask parents what they want. I feel like a majority of people voicing opinions are all for masking everyone indefinitely. Send out a questionnaire, ask parents if they would be in support of parent choice. We should be encouraging health and fitness to truly beat this virus. Let's teach our kids that instead.

Michelle (parent of children in middle and elementary school)

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Thank you!**

2 messages

**Charla Fontaine** <charla.fontaine@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:44 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for a well thought out reopening plan. You are all doing a great job! Thank you for all you do for our children and for our community!

With sincere thanks,  
Charla Fontaine

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:44 PM

To: charla.fontaine@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**No masks**

2 messages

**Nicole Sobczak** <nikkisobczak@icloud.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:48 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I think it should be the parent's choice whether their child wears a mask or not . This is ridiculous. We are all pretty much living life normally but now not in school . I do not support this in anyway !

Nikki Sobczak

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:48 PM

To: nikkisobczak@icloud.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**mask wearing fall 2021**

1 message

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**Sally Ann Chisholm** <srchisholm@me.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 5:59 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Please note my STRONG support for the mask guidelines proposed by MCPS per email on August 5th 2021. Mask requirements are appropriate given the risk factors to children under 12 as well as vaccinated individuals. This is part of the solution to managing this pandemic. Please approve these recommendations.

Sally Ann Chisholm  
239 E Central Ave  
Missoula 59801  
4062392354

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Masks**

2 messages

**randimeyer** <randimeyer@ymail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:22 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Let's get real people. Kids are going to be kids. So you are telling me the 6 hours they will be in school they will be required to wear a face mask, but you can guarantee that those same kids are going to be arriving at school without it and removing it as soon as they leave, as well as hanging out with friends, family, gatherings without, but for those few hours they are at school they will be required to wear it? For what? To protect? Let's get back to reality, influenza kills more people and yet we don't require face masks during flu season. If your sick, stay home. If anything, the school should be prepared to excuse more absences and allow make up work time so that kids/parents aren't afraid of their kids getting too far behind if they need to stay home. You can guarantee schools around Missoula County won't be requiring like Stevensville, Lolo, Frenchtown. More and more families will continue to leave so their kids can have normalcy back in their lives.

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S10e, an AT&T 5G Evolution capable smartphone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:22 PM

To: randimeyer@ymail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**In favor of requiring masks in school**

1 message

**Beth Gherlein** <bgherlein@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:28 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing to express my strong support for the COVID mitigation policy proposed by Superintendent Watson, particularly the requirement that all students, faculty, staff, and guests be required to wear a face covering inside MCPS buildings, regardless of vaccination status.

I am the parent of a 2021-2022 kindergartener at Paxon. I also co-own and run a Missoula business, Tandem Bakery, with my husband. The safety of my child and our family, as well as my family's income and the stability of my business will all be deeply affected by the decisions made here tonight. Like many employers in Missoula, my business needs employees who feel they can safely send their kids to school while they work. And like many, many working parents, I need to know that my child is safe at school while I work. The Delta variant is here, it is making kids (who are still ineligible for vaccination) sick, and requiring masks in school for everyone will help us avoid another year of shutdowns and home schooling. Masks will help keep kids in school and working parents working. Please put our kids and our community first.

Thank you,  
Beth Gherlein

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Autumn 2021**

2 messages

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**Combe, Jennifer** <Jennifer.Combe@mso.umt.edu>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 6:40 PM

Hello MCPS,

Thank you for asking for comments regarding mask wearing this upcoming school year.

I believe that by supporting others, we rise. Teachers and staff are vulnerable, kids with respiratory disease are vulnerable, and a community response can protect them. I hope that wearing masks is mandated for the upcoming school year, at least until the age 5 & up trial is over and vaccines are available for children.

Thank you for the extra work, love, and care you've put in over the past 1.5 years. The work load has been immense and your response is outstanding.

Best,

Jennifer Combe

Art Education, The University of Montana

**Jennifer Combe** she/her/hers

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

School of Visual + Media Arts

College of the Arts + Media

fa102 I Missoula, MT I [jennifer.combe@mso.umt.edu](mailto:jennifer.combe@mso.umt.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

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**Comment: Masks Should Not be Required**

2 messages

**Jake Besmer** <jmbesmer@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 7:14 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Missoula County Public School Board-

I'm writing in response to the upcoming decision to be made and on the Superintendent's recommendation. I believe that the plan of wearing masks for students is completely unacceptable and an irrational decision. After the last 18 months of our children suffering from the changes in the learning environment we now need to fight for our children to have a positive school experience where they can learn, connect, develop social skills and flourish. If the general public in Missoula is not required to wear a mask indoors, why would you require it of our youngest, most cherished members in our society, the kids. The down sides to wearing a mask are not worth the sacrifice. Our vulnerable/high risk members of our community that are most susceptible to COVID now have options to avoid this virus (vaccine for adults, healthy children are not affected adversely by the virus, MOA for those with vulnerable family members and much greater knowledge of how to avoid the virus than we did 18 months ago). Our community now has great options for those that are high-risk, the entire community should not be forced to suffer any further, particularly our children.

You can go to bars, concerts, breweries, restaurants, weddings, sporting events with no masks and have a grand old time.....but then we turn around and force our children to suffer through more! This is VERY wrong. Follow what the local community is doing, it is not your place to take this further. Please stand up for our children and make the right decision to not require masks. Make them recommended like the rest of the city.

Parent of 2 Elementary Children,  
Jake Besmer

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 7:15 PM

To: jmbesmer@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**(no subject)**

2 messages

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**sherry White** <potomacfam@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 7:31 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I fully support masks for all students and in person learning.  
Sherry White

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 7:31 PM

To: potomacfam@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**mask wearing in the schools**

2 messages

**Nancy McCulloch** <missoulanancy@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:08 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Rob Watson, members of the task force, and MCPS Board of Trustees:

First of all, thank you for your thorough consideration of public input on the issue of mask wearing. I know that this is a contentious issue and that you have devoted many hours to listening and deliberating among different options. This task has been arduous and even unpleasant at times. I believe that you will make a thoughtful decision based on the welfare of the MCPS community.

I support universal mask wearing in MCPS this coming school year for the following reasons:

- 1) The Delta variant is far more potent and transmissible than the original COVID virus. It is relatively new, and the medical community is still learning about it. Children have not been shown to have any special protection against it.
- 2) Children below the age of 12 are vulnerable because they cannot be vaccinated. School staff, bus drivers, and families of students, even if vaccinated, are also vulnerable to spread of the variant due to the number of connections and interactions within the school community.
- 3) Masks worn consistently have proven to be effective against the spread of the virus. Children are resilient and can adjust to masks. The public has masked before and can do it again. It is a simple and proactive way to allow students to receive in-person education safely. CDC is recommending this course of action in the schools.

A universal mask mandate in MCPS would not only protect the health and lives of children and adults in the MCPS community. It would also provide peace of mind because we would know that we are taking the greatest possible precaution. As a parent of children who attended schools in MCPS and as a retired teacher from MCPS, I urge you to take the strongest action for the health of our community and choose universal mask wearing in our schools this fall.

NM

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:08 PM

To: missoulanancy@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**masks in schools**

1 message

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**Sara Wolf** <swolf@cusd.me>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:09 PM

I previously attended my senior year at Hellgate. I had to wear a mask all year. Enough is enough. Most of us are vaccinated, and we want to live our lives again. We're all exposed to each other outside of school, so no masks in school is no different. PLEASE do not deprive younger students of ANOTHER normal year of school. Nobody is going to look back and thank the school for making people wear masks. They will look back with hostility and bitterness because yet another school year heightened depression and anxiety among children. I urge you to be bold and give students their life back. ESPECIALLY considering they are the least affected age group. Please don't let them suffer any longer.

---

**COVID Concerns for 2021-2022 school year**

2 messages

**Tim Wilson** <timwilson5@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:17 PM

To: rwatson@mcpsmt.org, publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear COVID Taskforce,

In reviewing the proposed COVID guidelines for the upcoming school year, I was shocked at how lax they were. This pandemic is far from over, and the increasing rate at which variants such as Delta are arising should drive home just how much work must still be done before we can consider things "back to normal".

I was pleased to see that the CDC guidelines released today recommend masking and distancing going into this fall. Quite frankly, however, for the sake of our children's safety, CDC guidelines should be seen as a step below what is necessary. In order to curb what has proven to be a highly infectious and extremely mutation-prone virus, our actions must be just as decisive and adaptive. Once Delta reaches the school, we will have already missed the optimal window for restrictions to be effective. There is no reason to inflict this on students or their families when we have the power to think ahead and prevent a worst-case scenario.

In this vein, MCPS has the opportunity to take steps to decisively prevent our schools from becoming hot spots or, worse yet, breeding grounds for the next variant. I would request that the Taskforce consider the following modifications to CDC guidance:

- Vaccinations are **mandatory** for all students and staff electing to attend in-person. We already require inoculations for measles, polio, and mumps, among others. Given the severity of this disease compared to the aforementioned, its eradication should be handled similarly - through strict vaccination policy. We did it with smallpox, we can do it again.
- At-home options for those unable/unwilling to vaccinate. While there is no doubt that in-person learning is more beneficial to children than remote, **not dying or killing those around them** is considerably more impactful to their education in the long run. If this is not feasible, the parents of the unvaccinated can shoulder the burden of the cost of providing their own in-home tutors as those of us who followed guidelines did last year.
- Masking is enforced with **extreme prejudice**. Failure to properly and consistently mask needs to be treated with the same "no tolerance" attitude as bullying. Masking, while unpleasant, is not difficult; failure to do so should result in loss of privileges or suspension due to the impact it could have on students' well-being. Teachers and staff need to be given the authority and backing of the school system when it comes to enforcing these guidelines.

I understand that the topic of vaccinations can be sensitive for those unacquainted with how science, pharmacology, and virology operate. However, this science has existed for decades and has been proven to work time and again. In the face of a health crisis of this magnitude, politics, religion, and non-scientific opinions simply have no place. I am vaccinated and have had no ill effects from it whatsoever. Neither has any member of my family, all but the youngest of whom are fully vaccinated. This includes my immunocompromised son who normally can't get vaccines due to an allergy to the culturing proteins and wife who is still embroiled in a battle against cancer and is unable to fight off even minor infections. My family cannot afford to have COVID or any of its variants make their way into our home.

Thank you for your time,  
Tim Wilson

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 8:17 PM

To: timwilson5@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Encouraged & Grateful**

2 messages

**Melissa Bangs** <melissa@playingmonopolywithgod.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:14 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear MC PS board members,

I am reaching out to say that I am deeply encouraged and grateful to see the level of time and thought that you have put once again into this plan moving forward.

I am utterly relieved to see that kids & staff will still be required to wear masks.

Thank you for the many levels and layers of this plan and for your continued diligence.

Warmly,  
Melissa

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:14 PM

To: melissa@playingmonopolywithgod.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!





Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mandate Masks in Schools 2021-22 to Protect Young Children**

2 messages

**AB PolarBear** <abwinne@hotmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:29 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I urge you to mandate masks in the MCPS until such time that younger students ages 5-11 are eligible for a vaccine. Please make masks mandated throughout the school system, as many families, such as mine, have young children at home.

I don't want my older student to be more likely to bring the virus home and infect my younger, unvaccinated child. The delta variant makes this risk even more viable. Masks are an affordable, common sense solution to protect young children, who are currently unable to be vaccinated.

Thank you,  
Annabelle Winne  
Mom of 7th and 3rd Graders at MCPS

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:30 PM

To: abwinne@hotmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

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**Erin Cooper** <emdcooper@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:31 PM

Please help us to protect our children and most vulnerable population by mandating the wearing of masks in school. It is an exceptionally small sacrifice for the benefit it provides to our kids and community.

The idea of having family choice is ludicrous in the midst of a public health crisis. We do not allow family choice in matters of public safety (ie seatbelts, car seats, smoking, etc). We don't get to choose to endanger others. Masks are most effective when everyone is wearing one.

I've been a teacher for over a decade, and I would do anything to protect my students. Now, as a parent, I will do anything to protect my kids. That may mean pulling them out if I don't feel their safety is taken seriously because of the need to pander to a misinformed group of people with no regard for the common good.

Erin Cooper

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: emdcooper@gmail.com

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:31 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask**

2 messages

**Trevor Subith** <tsubith@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:39 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello I would really like the kids to only be recommended to wear masks. I have 4 kids in mcps. Thank you for your time.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:39 PM

To: tsubith@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masking policy for MCPS**

2 messages

**Erin Correia** <erincorreia@gmail.com>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:11 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear Board Members,

I know you have a tough decision hanging over you, and that the decision you make is bound to anger one group of people or another. I do not envy that. As a very concerned parent, though, I feel the need to speak up.

I urge you...beg you even, to please stay strong and keep the safety of our community as the top priority. People will yell about personal choice and freedom, but those personal choices and freedoms can only exist to an extent where they do not cause harm to others.

Wearing a mask does not harm anyone. Is it comfortable? No. Is it an inconvenience? Yes. Would we all prefer they not be necessary? Absolutely. But the sad fact is that they are. They are absolutely necessary.

Until we can stop community spread, or until at least 6 weeks after vaccines become readily available to all school-aged children, and families are given a choice and opportunity to protect their children, your decision is their only line of protection. You have the opportunity to make in-school learning as safe as it can possibly be during a deadly pandemic, or to allow loud voices to put our entire community at risk.

My family 100% supports a masking mandate in MCPS schools, and begs you to vote in favor of it.

Thank you for your consideration!

Erin Correia  
Concerned Jeannette Rankin parent

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 11:11 PM

To: erincorreia@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**Proposed Mask Mandate - AGAINST**

2 messages

Craig Couch &lt;craigcouch@outlook.com&gt;

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 4:46 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Missoula County Public School board,

As you convene to discuss whether it's a good idea to mask children for 6+ hours a day when school starts in the fall, please soberly consider what further damage this will do to our children. The physical and psychological harm that forcing our children to mask and be taught by masked instructors is widely understood and obvious. We don't need to apply partisan pseudo-science while leaving our rationality at the door to understand this or to see it for ourselves with our own eyes.

Face masks have many side effects including reduced blood oxygen levels, elevated carbon dioxide levels, chronic stress and anxiety attacks. They contribute to headaches, withdrawal behaviors, shortness of breath/hyperventilation, chest pain, immunosuppression, hypoxia, insomnia, depression, fatigue, increased skin temperature, skin rashes, compromised cognitive performance, dizziness, listlessness and increased heart rate just to name a few. They are also a major threat to a child's development and ability to read expressions. The ability to see, appreciate and communicate through facial expressions is crucial to a child's social development. These conditions are harmful and abusive for Missoula's school children.

In addition, the "science" (which may be more properly characterized as political partisan and biased, not to mention constantly conflicting, interpretation of inconclusive and inadequate data) has failed to demonstrate any reasonable correlation between widespread public mask wearing and the mitigation of the spread of respiratory viral illness pandemics. Early in the pandemic, the same federal health officials openly stated this fact, only later to change their stance on the matter multiple times. Moreover, many scientific data has clearly suggested that the spread of viral infection by asymptomatic people is simply a myth. Dr. Anthony Fauci himself has famously said this on video less than 2 years ago. It is clear political pressure has influenced this science.

MCPS must not allow political pressure or otherwise heavily biased and disputed present-day theories to influence decisions regarding the health and safety of our children. MCPS must not allow this constantly changing and clearly politically influenced pseudoscience to determine policies regarding public health which compel our citizens to make personal health choices which defy their own better judgment. This becomes especially egregious when those are our children, and the policies that are mandated do not clearly mitigate a risk with uncertain probability of occurrence and low impact (school aged children have been largely unaffected by COVID-19 and not shown to be significant carriers or spreaders of the infection) at the cost of accepting a myriad of known risks with high probabilities of

occurrence and well understood significantly negative impacts. This decision would be irrational, reckless, and dangerous to our children.

I realize that not every parent may see this the way I do. Many still perceive the risks that COVID presents to our children and teachers as more significant than I do. While we could argue those reasons objectively, the simple solution here is to do as we have always done with regard to the health of our children - allow their own parents to make those decisions for their children themselves on an individual basis. Masks are available and there is no reason they should not be allowed for those that choose to wear them. This includes both children and educators. An additional layer of protection is widely available for free in the form of a vaccine which is apparently highly effective in inoculating parents, teachers and children from the risk of infection. With these tools readily available for use by anyone that personally perceives this risk for themselves or their children, there is no reason to mandate or compel everyone to do the same if doing so violates their own perceived risk evaluation of the situation and wishes for the well being of their own children.

In light of the arguments and evidence of the harmful side effects of masking children and the readily available tools for potentially mitigating the threat of infection on an individual and voluntary basis, mandating this policy would be not only unnecessary to ensure the safety of the community, but it would likely cause far more harm than the very threat it is intended to mitigate. There is simply no compelling or rational reason to mandate masking are children at school.

Sincerely,

Craig Couch  
Father of 4 MCPS Children, Ages 7-15  
Certified Program Management Professional, Professional Business Analyst & Risk Management Professional  
Former member, Missoula Climate and Energy Team

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: craigcouch@outlook.com

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 4:46 AM

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Coverings at Missoula Schools**

2 messages

**Clark Chatlain** <cdchatlain@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 6:30 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board Members,

I am writing to express my support for having Missoula students continue to wear masks in Missoula classrooms. Given the current surge we are facing with Covid, it is the best way to keep our children and students safe.

Thank you.

Clark Chatlain

Father of a Missoula 7th Grader

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 6:30 AM

To: cdchatlain@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**FW: School Year 2021-2022**

1 message

**sankovic** <sankovic@earthlink.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 6:53 AM

Updating this email to Dr. Watson, the recent email from MCPS stated cleaning will remain the same. I still believe MCPS is over reacting when it comes to the mask policy but at least you are not as bad as last year.

Respectfully,  
Michael Sankovic

----- Original message -----

From: sankovic <sankovic@earthlink.net>  
Date: 8/4/21 16:22 (GMT-07:00)  
To: rwatson@mcps.k12.mt.us  
Subject: School Year 2021-2022

Dr. Watson,  
Recently in the news I heard you were considering relaxing the cleaning requirements in schools. I strongly urge you to reconsider this at least for elementary school. Most illness is from little people putting their fingers into their mouths. Since they touch everything in sight this last year was evidence of how a good cleaning policy reduces childhood illness. Although the masks helped to a certain degree I believe cleaner surfaces contributed the most when it came to the reduction in overall illness. As for the mask policy I feel it needs to be relaxed to individuals who want to wear the masks and not a blanket policy of 100% use. It is my opinion, looking at Hellgate and Lolo districts, that MCPS was paranoid when it came to decisions made concerning students in the classroom last year. Our children need to be in an active school environment for their future success. Online classes are good for colleges, advanced high school students, troublesome children and those with parents that have the time to make sure their children study but not for the working parents of MCPS students in general. Our next generations need to be more intelligent and have great personal skills than they can get/achieve through computers and Zoom.

Very Respectfully,  
Michael Sankovic



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**Time for change**

2 messages

**Richard Wilkins** <wilkinsrichard2000@yahoo.com>  
To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 8:06 AM

Its time to change your thinking. Especially concerning what you have been receiving as far as "information" from the media. In the link below a spokesperson for the German newspaper Bild, the largest newspaper in Germany with almost 1.5 million subscribers, admits to the world that the "scientific" data to support the justification of policies like closing schools, quarantines, masking children, and social distancing, NEVER EXISTED. It was ALL lies and propaganda and they are BEGGING the public to forgive them for what amounts to crimes against humanity. The other news media around the globe will be soon to follow, just watch and see. As many of us have told you in public comment, what you have been doing to our children is Unconstitutional, illegal and it is child abuse, and we will not tolerate it. Which is why you will now cower behind a screen at a zoom meeting because you dont have the GUTS to face us, to face the truth. The time of lies and tyranny is OVER.  
Germany's largest newspaper BILD apologizes for Covid coverage -- 'We ask your forgiveness'...

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: wilkinsrichard2000@yahoo.com

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 8:06 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**I support masks in Missoula Public Schools**

2 messages

**Mike Schaedel** <mikeschaedel@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 8:51 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: abrei cloud &lt;abreicloud@hotmail.com&gt;

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mike Schaedel. I am a parent with two kids who will be attending Rattlesnake Elementary this school year. I am writing to voice my support for the use of masks in MCPS this year as long as they are needed. Our kids are not eligible to be vaccinated at this point and the Delta variant has been making more kids sick than the original variety of COVID. COVID numbers are currently on their way back up in Missoula County. The science has shown that masking is a safe and effective way to limit the spread of COVID and is the only proven mitigation measure available to kids under 12.

I know that there is a vocal minority that is pushing for no masks in MCPS. But please know that I am part of the majority of people who want to see MCPS make science-based decisions that will keep our kids safe. Please require masks for everyone in the schools until we have the ability to vaccinate our children and the large majority of students are vaccinated.

Thanks for your time.

Mike Schaedel  
509 Linden st  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-239-1867

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 8:51 AM

To: mikeschaedel@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

---

**NO Masks!!**

2 messages

**sarah davis** <sarahmike740@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:15 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

My husband and I are absolutely 100% against mask mandate in Missoula county public schools. We have children on both middle and grade schools in Missoula  
This is out of control. These poor children!!

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:15 AM

To: sarahmike740@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## NO Mask For Klds

1 message

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**Joe Moderie** <moderiejoe@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:17 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am voicing my opinion on my kids wearing masks in school.

The mask is more harmful than good if you truly follow the science, Then no kid would ever wear a mask. Please quit harming our kids. I say NO to Mask in school.

Thank You Joseph Moderie

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask Mandate

1 message

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**Donald Rasset** <ressetda@hotmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:53 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

School Board Members.

Please set our children free! Let's start school this Fall free of masks and open class rooms.

I am a property tax payer in Missoula County. I vote regularly.

Donald Rasset

1910 Wyoming St. E

Missoula, MT 59801

406-925-1912

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**Mask requirements for children**

2 messages

Mage Lee &lt;magerlee@hotmail.com&gt;

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:53 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear Parents, Teachers, Administrators and children of Missoula Public Schools,

I am writing to express my honest Opinions and facts about the validity, value and potential dangers of forcing children to wear masks for an extended period or at all. I understand that there are many opinions about the value of masks in the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases such as covid. I understand that many people are afraid of being exposed to infectious pathogens and the potential illnesses being caused by such exposure. However, although I have heard many opinions about the value of masks, I have not seen any evidence showing the value of masks in stopping or even significantly diminishing the spread of Covid. I have however read a study by Stanford University including over 35,000 People that shows that masks not only fail to stop viruses but do have many psychological and physiologically damaging effects. I have attached the Stanford study to this e-mail for those who have the time/energy to seriously consider what is contained in this study. I downloaded the study off the National Institute of Health Website and the URL is on the top for those who want to confirm its validity. A brief synopsis is this: First, the scale of this virus is such that the size of the pores in the mask make it physically impossible for the mask to stop any significant movement of the virus; Secondly, the psychological effects include keeping the wearer in a perpetual state of fear causing increased cortisol levels that lead to decreased resistance to disease and increased incidence of numerous associated psychological and physiological problems; Thirdly, the rebreathing of carbon Dioxide increases the risk of numerous physiological problems including acidosis in the blood and decreased learning capacity. In fact, the level of CO2 that builds up in the blood after a short time with mask wearing is a violation of OSHA workplace standards.

I believe that we are all on the same boat when it comes to desiring what is best for the children. It is important however to consider that we shouldn't take actions that potentially put our children at such great risk just to make ourselves feel more comfortable in the face of fear and uncertainty. Especially considering the low risk to children with this virus. There is only around 400 deaths of children WITH covid (not necessarily from it) in the United States from this entire ordeal. I am not callous about the death of any child, but life is inherently risky and the risk of this virus to children is lower than the potential risks of continuous mask wearing. We would love to send our third grader back to her school in the fall but if masks are required, we will be pursuing home school or other options for our child. We are not opposed to other parents choosing to have their children wear masks if that is what they feel is best for their family.

Sincerely,

DR Mage R. Lee D.C.

P.S. If anyone would want to discuss this further, I can be reached on my office cell phone 406-880-7453

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

**Stanford mask study.docx**

54K

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:53 AM

To: magerlee@hotmail.com

[https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7680614/COVID-19 Information](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7680614/COVID-19%20Information)

[Public health information \(CDC\)](#)

[Research information \(NIH\)](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 data \(NCBI\)](#)

[Prevention and treatment information \(HHS\)](#)

[Español](#)

- [Journal List](#)
- [Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection](#)
- [PMC7680614](#)

## Elsevier Public Health Emergency Collection

Public Health Emergency COVID-19 Initiative

[Med Hypotheses](#). 2021 Jan; 146: 110411.

Published online 2020 Nov 22. doi: [10.1016/j.mehy.2020.110411](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mehy.2020.110411)

PMCID: [PMC7680614](#)

PMID: [33303303](#)

**Facemasks in the COVID-19 era: A health hypothesis**

[Baruch Vainshelboim\\*](#)

[Author information](#) [Article notes](#) [Copyright and License information](#) [Disclaimer](#)

### Abstract

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### Introduction

Facemasks are part of non-pharmaceutical interventions providing some breathing barrier to the mouth and nose that have been utilized for reducing the transmission of respiratory pathogens<sup>[1]</sup>. Facemasks can be medical and non-medical, where two types of the medical masks primarily used by healthcare workers<sup>[1], [2]</sup>. The first type is National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-certified N95 mask, a filtering face-piece respirator, and the second type is a surgical mask<sup>[1]</sup>. The designed and intended uses of N95 and surgical masks are different in the type of protection they potentially provide. The N95s are typically composed of electret filter media and seal tightly to the face of the wearer, whereas surgical masks are generally loose fitting and may or may not contain electret-filtering media. The N95s are designed to reduce the wearer's inhalation exposure to infectious and harmful particles

from the environment such as during extermination of insects. In contrast, surgical masks are designed to provide a barrier protection against splash, spittle and other body fluids to spray from the wearer (such as surgeon) to the sterile environment (patient during operation) for reducing the risk of contamination <sup>[1]</sup>.

The third type of facemasks are the non-medical cloth or fabric masks. The non-medical facemasks are made from a variety of woven and non-woven materials such as Polypropylene, Cotton, Polyester, Cellulose, Gauze and Silk. Although non-medical cloth or fabric facemasks are neither a medical device nor personal protective equipment, some standards have been developed by the French Standardization Association (AFNOR Group) to define a minimum performance for filtration and breathability capacity <sup>[2]</sup>. The current article reviews the scientific evidences with respect to safety and efficacy of wearing facemasks, describing the physiological and psychological effects and the potential long-term consequences on health.

Go to:

### **Hypothesis**

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced a global public health emergency of severe acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) causing illness of coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) <sup>[3]</sup>. As of October 1, 2020, worldwide 34,166,633 cases were reported and 1,018,876 have died with virus diagnosis. Interestingly, 99% of the detected cases with SARS-CoV-2 are asymptomatic or have mild condition, which contradicts with the virus name (*severe* acute respiratory syndrome-coronavirus-2) <sup>[4]</sup>. Although infection fatality rate (number of death cases divided by number of reported cases) initially seems quite high 0.029 (2.9%) <sup>[4]</sup>, this overestimation related to limited number of COVID-19 tests performed which biases towards higher rates. Given the fact that asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic cases is several times higher than the number of reported cases, the case fatality rate is considerably less than 1% <sup>[5]</sup>. This was confirmed by the head of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases from US stating, “the overall clinical consequences of COVID-19 are similar to those of severe seasonal influenza” <sup>[5]</sup>, having a case fatality rate of approximately 0.1% <sup>[5], [6], [7], [8]</sup>. In addition, data from hospitalized patients with COVID-19 and general public indicate that the majority of deaths were among older and chronically ill individuals, supporting the possibility that the virus may exacerbates existing conditions but rarely causes death by itself <sup>[9], [10]</sup>. SARS-CoV-2 primarily affects respiratory system and can cause complications such as acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), respiratory failure and death <sup>[3], [9]</sup>. It is not clear however, what the scientific and clinical basis for wearing facemasks as protective strategy, given the fact that facemasks restrict breathing, causing hypoxemia and hypercapnia and increase the risk for respiratory complications, self-contamination and exacerbation of existing chronic conditions <sup>[2], [11], [12], [13], [14]</sup>.

Of note, hyperoxia or oxygen supplementation (breathing air with high partial O<sub>2</sub> pressures that above the sea levels) has been well established as therapeutic and curative practice for variety acute and chronic conditions including respiratory complications <sup>[11], [15]</sup>. In fact, the current standard of care practice for treating hospitalized patients with COVID-19 is breathing 100% oxygen <sup>[16], [17], [18]</sup>. Although several countries mandated wearing facemask in health care settings and public areas, scientific evidences are lacking supporting their efficacy for reducing morbidity or mortality associated with infectious or viral diseases <sup>[2], [14], [19]</sup>. Therefore, it has been hypothesized: 1) the practice of wearing facemasks has compromised safety and efficacy profile, 2) Both medical and non-medical facemasks are



ineffective to reduce human-to-human transmission and infectivity of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, 3) Wearing facemasks has adverse physiological and psychological effects, 4) Long-term consequences of wearing facemasks on health are detrimental.

Go to:

## **Evolution of hypothesis**

### **Breathing Physiology**

Breathing is one of the most important physiological functions to sustain life and health. Human body requires a continuous and adequate oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) supply to all organs and cells for normal function and survival. Breathing is also an essential process for removing metabolic byproducts [carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)] occurring during cell respiration <sup>[12], [13]</sup>. It is well established that acute significant deficit in O<sub>2</sub> (hypoxemia) and increased levels of CO<sub>2</sub> (hypercapnia) even for few minutes can be severely harmful and lethal, while chronic hypoxemia and hypercapnia cause health deterioration, exacerbation of existing conditions, morbidity and ultimately mortality <sup>[11], [20], [21], [22]</sup>. Emergency medicine demonstrates that 5–6 min of severe hypoxemia during cardiac arrest will cause brain death with extremely poor survival rates <sup>[20], [21], [22], [23]</sup>. On the other hand, chronic mild or moderate hypoxemia and hypercapnia such as from wearing facemasks resulting in shifting to higher contribution of anaerobic energy metabolism, decrease in pH levels and increase in cells and blood acidity, toxicity, oxidative stress, chronic inflammation, immunosuppression and health deterioration <sup>[24], [11], [12], [13]</sup>.

### **Efficacy of facemasks**

The physical properties of medical and non-medical facemasks suggest that facemasks are ineffective to block viral particles due to their difference in scales <sup>[16], [17], [25]</sup>. According to the current knowledge, the virus SARS-CoV-2 has a diameter of 60 nm to 140 nm [nanometers (billionth of a meter)] <sup>[16], [17]</sup>, while medical and non-medical facemasks' thread diameter ranges from 55 µm to 440 µm [micrometers (one millionth of a meter)], which is more than 1000 times larger <sup>[25]</sup>. Due to the difference in sizes between SARS-CoV-2 diameter and facemasks thread diameter (the virus is 1000 times smaller), SARS-CoV-2 can easily pass through any facemask <sup>[25]</sup>. In addition, the efficiency filtration rate of facemasks is poor, ranging from 0.7% in non-surgical, cotton-gauze woven mask to 26% in cotton sweater material <sup>[2]</sup>. With respect to surgical and N95 medical facemasks, the efficiency filtration rate falls to 15% and 58%, respectively when even small gap between the mask and the face exists <sup>[25]</sup>.

Clinical scientific evidence challenges further the efficacy of facemasks to block human-to-human transmission or infectivity. A randomized controlled trial (RCT) of 246 participants [123 (50%) symptomatic]] who were allocated to either wearing or not wearing surgical facemask, assessing viruses transmission including coronavirus <sup>[26]</sup>. The results of this study showed that among symptomatic individuals (those with fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose ect...) there was no difference between wearing and not wearing facemask for coronavirus droplets transmission of particles of >5 µm. Among asymptomatic individuals, there was no droplets or aerosols coronavirus detected from any participant with or without the mask, suggesting that asymptomatic individuals do not transmit or infect other people <sup>[26]</sup>. This was further supported by a study on infectivity where 445 asymptomatic individuals were exposed to asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 carrier (been positive for SARS-CoV-2) using close contact

(shared quarantine space) for a median of 4 to 5 days. The study found that none of the 445 individuals was infected with SARS-CoV-2 confirmed by real-time reverse transcription polymerase <sup>[27]</sup>.

A *meta*-analysis among health care workers found that compared to no masks, surgical mask and N95 respirators were not effective against transmission of viral infections or influenza-like illness based on six RCTs <sup>[28]</sup>. Using separate analysis of 23 observational studies, this *meta*-analysis found no protective effect of medical mask or N95 respirators against SARS virus <sup>[28]</sup>. A recent systematic review of 39 studies including 33,867 participants in community settings (self-report illness), found no difference between N95 respirators versus surgical masks and surgical mask versus no masks in the risk for developing influenza or influenza-like illness, suggesting their ineffectiveness of blocking viral transmissions in community settings <sup>[29]</sup>.

Another *meta*-analysis of 44 non-RCT studies (n = 25,697 participants) examining the potential risk reduction of facemasks against SARS, middle east respiratory syndrome (MERS) and COVID-19 transmissions <sup>[30]</sup>. The *meta*-analysis included four specific studies on COVID-19 transmission (5,929 participants, primarily health-care workers used N95 masks). Although the overall findings showed reduced risk of virus transmission with facemasks, the analysis had severe limitations to draw conclusions. One of the four COVID-19 studies had zero infected cases in both arms, and was excluded from *meta*-analytic calculation. Other two COVID-19 studies had unadjusted models, and were also excluded from the overall analysis. The *meta*-analytic results were based on only one COVID-19, one MERS and 8 SARS studies, resulting in high selection bias of the studies and contamination of the results between different viruses. Based on four COVID-19 studies, the *meta*-analysis failed to demonstrate risk reduction of facemasks for COVID-19 transmission, where the authors reported that the results of *meta*-analysis have low certainty and are inconclusive <sup>[30]</sup>.

In early publication the WHO stated that “facemasks are not required, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons” <sup>[14]</sup>. In the same publication, the WHO declared that “cloth (e.g. cotton or gauze) masks are not recommended under any circumstance” <sup>[14]</sup>. Conversely, in later publication the WHO stated that the usage of fabric-made facemasks (Polypropylene, Cotton, Polyester, Cellulose, Gauze and Silk) is a general community practice for “preventing the infected wearer transmitting the virus to others and/or to offer protection to the healthy wearer against infection (prevention)” <sup>[2]</sup>. The same publication further conflicted itself by stating that due to the lower filtration, breathability and overall performance of fabric facemasks, the usage of woven fabric mask such as cloth, and/or non-woven fabrics, should only be considered for infected persons and not for prevention practice in asymptomatic individuals <sup>[2]</sup>. The Central for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) made similar recommendation, stating that only symptomatic persons should consider wearing facemask, while for asymptomatic individuals this practice is not recommended <sup>[31]</sup>. Consistent with the CDC, clinical scientists from Departments of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology in Australia counsel against facemasks usage for health-care workers, arguing that there is no justification for such practice while normal caring relationship between patients and medical staff could be compromised <sup>[32]</sup>. Moreover, the WHO repeatedly announced that “at present, there is no direct evidence (from studies on COVID-19) on the effectiveness face masking of healthy people in the community to prevent infection of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19” <sup>[2]</sup>. Despite these controversies, the potential harms and risks of wearing facemasks were clearly acknowledged. These including self-contamination due to hand practice or non-replaced when the mask is wet, soiled or damaged, development of facial skin lesions, irritant dermatitis or worsening acne and psychological discomfort. Vulnerable populations such as people with mental

health disorders, developmental disabilities, hearing problems, those living in hot and humid environments, children and patients with respiratory conditions are at significant health risk for complications and harm <sup>[2]</sup>.

### Physiological effects of wearing facemasks

Wearing facemask mechanically restricts breathing by increasing the resistance of air movement during both inhalation and exhalation process <sup>[12], [13]</sup>. Although, intermittent (several times a week) and repetitive (10–15 breaths for 2–4 sets) increase in respiration resistance may be adaptive for strengthening respiratory muscles <sup>[33], [34]</sup>, prolonged and continues effect of wearing facemask is maladaptive and could be detrimental for health <sup>[11], [12], [13]</sup>. In normal conditions at the sea level, air contains 20.93% O<sub>2</sub> and 0.03% CO<sub>2</sub>, providing partial pressures of 100 mmHg and 40 mmHg for these gases in the arterial blood, respectively. These gas concentrations significantly altered when breathing occurs through facemask. A trapped air remaining between the mouth, nose and the facemask is rebreathed repeatedly in and out of the body, containing low O<sub>2</sub> and high CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations, causing hypoxemia and hypercapnia <sup>[35], [36], [11], [12], [13]</sup>. Severe hypoxemia may also provoke cardiopulmonary and neurological complications and is considered an important clinical sign in cardiopulmonary medicine <sup>[37], [38], [39], [40], [41], [42]</sup>. Low oxygen content in the arterial blood can cause myocardial ischemia, serious arrhythmias, right or left ventricular dysfunction, dizziness, hypotension, syncope and pulmonary hypertension <sup>[43]</sup>. Chronic low-grade hypoxemia and hypercapnia as result of using facemask can cause exacerbation of existing cardiopulmonary, metabolic, vascular and neurological conditions <sup>[37], [38], [39], [40], [41], [42]</sup>. **Table 1** summarizes the physiological, psychological effects of wearing facemask and their potential long-term consequences for health.

**Table 1**

Physiological and Psychological Effects of Wearing Facemask and Their Potential Health Consequences.

Physiological Effects	Psychological Effect	Health Consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hypoxemia</li> <li>• Hypercapnia</li> <li>• Shortness of breath</li> <li>• Increase lactate concentration</li> <li>• Decline in pH levels</li> <li>• Acidosis</li> <li>• Toxicity</li> <li>• Inflammation</li> <li>• Self-contamination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activation of “fight or flight” stress response</li> <li>• Chronic stress condition</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• Mood disturbances</li> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased predisposition for viral and infection illnesses</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Hypertension</li> <li>• Cardiovascular disease</li> <li>• Cancer</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> </ul>

### Physiological Effects

- Increase in stress hormones level (adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol)
- Increased muscle tension
- Immunosuppression

### Psychological Effect

- Compromised cognitive performance

### Health Consequences

- Alzheimer disease
- Exacerbation of existing conditions and diseases
- Accelerated aging process
- Health deterioration
- Premature mortality

In addition to hypoxia and hypercapnia, breathing through facemask residues bacterial and germs components on the inner and outside layer of the facemask. These toxic components are repeatedly rebreathed back into the body, causing self-contamination. Breathing through facemasks also increases temperature and humidity in the space between the mouth and the mask, resulting a release of toxic particles from the mask's materials <sup>[1], [2], [19], [26], [35], [36]</sup>. A systematic literature review estimated that aerosol contamination levels of facemasks including 13 to 202,549 different viruses <sup>[1]</sup>. Rebreathing contaminated air with high bacterial and toxic particle concentrations along with low O<sub>2</sub> and high CO<sub>2</sub> levels continuously challenge the body homeostasis, causing self-toxicity and immunosuppression <sup>[1], [2], [19], [26], [35], [36]</sup>.

A study on 39 patients with renal disease found that wearing N95 facemask during hemodialysis significantly reduced arterial partial oxygen pressure (from PaO<sub>2</sub> 101.7 to 92.7 mm Hg), increased respiratory rate (from 16.8 to 18.8 breaths/min), and increased the occurrence of chest discomfort and respiratory distress <sup>[35]</sup>. Respiratory Protection Standards from Occupational Safety and Health Administration, US Department of Labor states that breathing air with O<sub>2</sub> concentration below 19.5% is considered oxygen-deficiency, causing physiological and health adverse effects. These include increased breathing frequency, accelerated heartrate and cognitive impairments related to thinking and coordination <sup>[36]</sup>. A chronic state of mild hypoxia and hypercapnia has been shown as primarily mechanism for developing cognitive dysfunction based on animal studies and studies in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease <sup>[44]</sup>.

The adverse physiological effects were confirmed in a study of 53 surgeons where surgical facemask were used during a major operation. After 60 min of facemask wearing the oxygen saturation dropped by more than 1% and heart rate increased by approximately five beats/min <sup>[45]</sup>. Another study among 158 health-care workers using protective personal equipment primarily N95 facemasks reported that 81% (128 workers) developed new headaches during their work shifts as these become mandatory due to COVID-19 outbreak. For those who used the N95 facemask greater than 4 h per day, the likelihood for developing a headache during the work shift was approximately four times higher [Odds ratio = 3.91, 95% CI (1.35–11.31) p = 0.012], while 82.2% of the N95 wearers developed the headache already within ≤10 to 50 min <sup>[46]</sup>.

With respect to cloth facemask, a RCT using four weeks follow up compared the effect of cloth facemask to medical masks and to no masks on the incidence of clinical respiratory illness, influenza-like illness

and laboratory-confirmed respiratory virus infections among 1607 participants from 14 hospitals <sup>[19]</sup>. The results showed that there were no difference between wearing cloth masks, medical masks and no masks for incidence of clinical respiratory illness and laboratory-confirmed respiratory virus infections. However, a large harmful effect with more than 13 times higher risk [Relative Risk = 13.25 95% CI (1.74 to 100.97)] was observed for influenza-like illness among those who were wearing cloth masks <sup>[19]</sup>. The study concluded that cloth masks have significant health and safety issues including moisture retention, reuse, poor filtration and increased risk for infection, providing recommendation against the use of cloth masks <sup>[19]</sup>.

### **Psychological effects of wearing facemasks**

Psychologically, wearing facemask fundamentally has negative effects on the wearer and the nearby person. Basic human-to-human connectivity through face expression is compromised and self-identity is somewhat eliminated <sup>[47], [48], [49]</sup>. These dehumanizing movements partially delete the uniqueness and individuality of person who wearing the facemask as well as the connected person <sup>[49]</sup>. Social connections and relationships are basic human needs, which innately inherited in all people, whereas reduced human-to-human connections are associated with poor mental and physical health <sup>[50], [51]</sup>. Despite escalation in technology and globalization that would presumably foster social connections, scientific findings show that people are becoming increasingly more socially isolated, and the prevalence of loneliness is increasing in last few decades <sup>[50], [52]</sup>. Poor social connections are closely related to isolation and loneliness, considered significant health related risk factors <sup>[50], [51], [52], [53]</sup>.

A *meta*-analysis of 91 studies of about 400,000 people showed a 13% increased mortality risk among people with low compare to high contact frequency <sup>[53]</sup>. Another *meta*-analysis of 148 prospective studies (308,849 participants) found that poor social relationships was associated with 50% increased mortality risk. People who were socially isolated or felt lonely had 45% and 40% increased mortality risk, respectively. These findings were consistent across ages, sex, initial health status, cause of death and follow-up periods <sup>[52]</sup>. Importantly, the increased risk for mortality was found comparable to smoking and exceeding well-established risk factors such as obesity and physical inactivity <sup>[52]</sup>. An umbrella review of 40 systematic reviews including 10 *meta*-analyses demonstrated that compromised social relationships were associated with increased risk of all-cause mortality, depression, anxiety suicide, cancer and overall physical illness <sup>[51]</sup>.

As described earlier, wearing facemasks causing hypoxic and hypercapnic state that constantly challenges the normal homeostasis, and activates “fight or flight” stress response, an important survival mechanism in the human body <sup>[11], [12], [13]</sup>. The acute stress response includes activation of nervous, endocrine, cardiovascular, and the immune systems <sup>[47], [54], [55], [56]</sup>. These include activation of the limbic part of the brain, release stress hormones (adrenalin, neuro-adrenalin and cortisol), changes in blood flow distribution (vasodilation of peripheral blood vessels and vasoconstriction of visceral blood vessels) and activation of the immune system response (secretion of macrophages and natural killer cells) <sup>[47], [48]</sup>. Encountering people who wearing facemasks activates innate stress-fear emotion, which is fundamental to all humans in danger or life threatening situations, such as death or unknown, unpredictable outcome. While acute stress response (seconds to minutes) is adaptive reaction to challenges and part of the survival mechanism, chronic and prolonged state of stress-fear is maladaptive and has detrimental effects on physical and mental health. The repeatedly or continuously activated stress-fear response

causes the body to operate on survival mode, having sustain increase in blood pressure, pro-inflammatory state and immunosuppression <sup>[47], [48]</sup>.

### **Long-Term health consequences of wearing facemasks**

Long-term practice of wearing facemasks has strong potential for devastating health consequences. Prolonged hypoxic-hypercapnic state compromises normal physiological and psychological balance, deteriorating health and promotes the developing and progression of existing chronic diseases <sup>[23], [38], [39], [43], [47], [48], [57], [11], [12], [13]</sup>. For instance, ischemic heart disease caused by hypoxic damage to the myocardium is the most common form of cardiovascular disease and is a number one cause of death worldwide (44% of all non-communicable diseases) with 17.9 million deaths occurred in 2016 <sup>[57]</sup>. Hypoxia also playing an important role in cancer burden <sup>[58]</sup>. Cellular hypoxia has strong mechanistic feature in promoting cancer initiation, progression, metastasis, predicting clinical outcomes and usually presents a poorer survival in patients with cancer. Most solid tumors present some degree of hypoxia, which is independent predictor of more aggressive disease, resistance to cancer therapies and poorer clinical outcomes <sup>[59], [60]</sup>. Worth note, cancer is one of the leading causes of death worldwide, with an estimate of more than 18 million new diagnosed cases and 9.6 million cancer-related deaths occurred in 2018 <sup>[61]</sup>.

With respect to mental health, global estimates showing that COVID-19 will cause a catastrophe due to collateral psychological damage such as quarantine, lockdowns, unemployment, economic collapse, social isolation, violence and suicides <sup>[62], [63], [64]</sup>. Chronic stress along with hypoxic and hypercapnic conditions knocks the body out of balance, and can cause headaches, fatigue, stomach issues, muscle tension, mood disturbances, insomnia and accelerated aging <sup>[47], [48], [65], [66], [67]</sup>. This state suppressing the immune system to protect the body from viruses and bacteria, decreasing cognitive function, promoting the developing and exacerbating the major health issues including hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, Alzheimer disease, rising anxiety and depression states, causes social isolation and loneliness and increasing the risk for prematurely mortality <sup>[47], [48], [51], [56], [66]</sup>.

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### **Conclusion**

The existing scientific evidences challenge the safety and efficacy of wearing facemask as preventive intervention for COVID-19. The data suggest that both medical and non-medical facemasks are ineffective to block human-to-human transmission of viral and infectious disease such SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19, supporting against the usage of facemasks. Wearing facemasks has been demonstrated to have substantial adverse physiological and psychological effects. These include hypoxia, hypercapnia, shortness of breath, increased acidity and toxicity, activation of fear and stress response, rise in stress hormones, immunosuppression, fatigue, headaches, decline in cognitive performance, predisposition for viral and infectious illnesses, chronic stress, anxiety and depression. Long-term consequences of wearing facemask can cause health deterioration, developing and progression of chronic diseases and premature death. Governments, policy makers and health organizations should utilize prosper and scientific evidence-based approach with respect to wearing facemasks, when the latter is considered as preventive intervention for public health.

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## CRediT authorship contribution statement

**Baruch Vainshelboim:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Writing - original draft.

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## Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask policy**

2 messages

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**Jennifer Noreus** <jenn.noreus@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:19 AM

Hello - I am writing to strongly encourage the school board to approve the recommendation that masks be mandatory for all students, teachers and other adults indoors at school for at least the first 6 weeks of the school year and hopefully longer if the delta variant continues to be an issue and/or the vaccine approval for younger children is delayed. As a parent of two children that are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine, I strongly believe that it's the duty of the school system and our community to protect them. My children understand the risk of Covid and do not want to go to school unless masks are required for all students and adults, particularly with the new Delta variant. If masks are not required, my children would choose to wear them but that protects others not them from potentially infectious peers.

Thank you,  
Jennifer

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: jenn.noreus@gmail.com

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:19 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Masks should be optional

2 messages

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**Joseph Haferman** <joehaferman@blackfoot.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:26 AM

Stop the mandates they are not constitutional.

Masks should be optional, this is just common sense, if you are scared of the flu virus, then wear a mask.

Studies from the CDC show there is no difference between wearing a mask or not in contracting virus.

Half of all Delta cases are vaccinated people according to CDC.

Masks force children to inhale dangerous levels of carbon dioxide, according to studies.

Herd immunity for Covid was reached in January of 2021, when cases began to drop before the vaccine.

Use common sense — if the vaccine was effective, then cases would not be increasing.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: joehaferman@blackfoot.net

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:26 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Mask policy for the upcoming school year**

2 messages

**Armond Duwell** <armond.duwell@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:26 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Whom It May Concern,

I urge the school district to require masks among students faculty and staff for all grade levels for the duration of the upcoming school year.

1. A huge portion of the school system has not yet had the opportunity to be vaccinated. They are vulnerable.
2. Even among populations that have been vaccinated, many of them have younger siblings that have not. Given that we are experiencing break-through infections among vaccinated people, this means that my older vaccinated daughter could infect her younger unvaccinated brother inadvertently.
3. Making masks optional is not a viable option.
  - a. Making masks optional signals that it isn't important.
  - b. We generally don't entrust children to make decisions that can have profound effects on other's health, and there is no reason to make an exception in this case.
  - c. Peer pressure is significant, and could coerce students into making poor decisions for them, their family, and others.
4. This is the current recommendation from the CDC, which are in the best position to make an informed decision about public health policies. It is hard to imagine that we are in a better position to make an informed decision than they are.

So, for all these reasons, please require masks for students, faculty, and staff at all levels for the duration of the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Armond Duwell  
Parent of a 7th grader and 2nd grader.

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:26 AM

To: armond.duwell@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**comment in support of mandatory masks in schools**

2 messages

**Sarah Richey** <richey.montana@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:38 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear School Board Members,

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication.

I am a parent of two Lewis and Clark Elementary students. I'm writing to support the mandatory masks in school policy as we begin the new school year.

Masking rules are just one of many rules we have asked our kids to follow in order to contribute to a safe school environment. Even before this pandemic, we asked our kids to follow all kinds of rules to keep the community safe. Creating and adapting rules to keep everyone safe is nothing new. Let's keep up our good efforts at managing risk in our schools-- in this case, requiring masks (a well-documented, effective way to reduce covid spread) during this new phase of the pandemic.

Thank you,  
Sarah Richey  
Missoula, MT

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:39 AM

To: richy.montana@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Mandated in OUR schools**

2 messages

**Matt Manley** <mmanley@firstsolution.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 1:53 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Please stop hiding behind procedure and deceit. Ignorance of what your parent constituents want you to hear about your decision to force our children to wear is NOT an endorsement.

Your constituents do NOT want their children to be forced to wear masks. Each having their own reasons. It is NOT your job to challenge their reasons, it is YOUR JOB to hear them. Candidly, you do not know better. You do not have empirical evidence to be better informed than they and ultimately, it is their children's lives that your decision is going to affect. Are you prepared to be accountable for the damages that will result from your decision?

Best regards,  
Matt Manley  
Owner/Consultant  
First Call Computer Solutions

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 1:53 PM

To: mmanley@firstsolution.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Please enable a mask mandate for this upcoming school year**

2 messages

**Marc Dousset** <mtdousset@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:19 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

With the very contagious delta variant raging, I feel it is the safest approach for our kids.

Thank you for your consideration.

--

Marc D.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 2:20 PM

To: mtdousset@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Covid response at MCPS**

2 messages

**Gwen Hoppe** <ghoppe@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 3:43 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Response Team,

I have already commented but would like to add that it seems like the tentative plan is based on what we have learned from the original Covid19 and not the Delta variant. For example, the no masks for outdoors. I personally know a fully vaccinated person that probably got their recent Covid breakthrough illness from being maskless outdoors with people for lunch. Thank you for considering stronger restrictions.

Gwen Hoppe

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 3:44 PM

To: ghoppe@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Thanks**

2 messages

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**April Foster** <april.dds@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 4:38 PM

Dear Board-

Thank you for following science guided CDC and AAP recommendations regarding masking. I know you will deal with a lot of unhappy parents no matter what decision you make. I want you to know I appreciate you following the advice of experts in epidemiology and pediatrics.

April Foster

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: april.dds@gmail.com

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 4:39 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask mandates**

2 messages

**Mary Hoffman** <jaxnblu@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:28 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

While I recognize that COVID is a real virus, I also know that there are many real risks we and our children risk every day. Yet we as parents and grandparents weigh the pros and cons for our family in all that we do.

As a parent of 5 children who have completed their time at school, I now have grandchildren who are facing different challenges. It saddens and angers me that they may have to attend school wearing a mask that has dangerous side affects that they may not realize until they are older. Breathing through a mask is a health risk in itself and most definitely will have side effects. Not to mention the social and psychological effects it will bring.

I find it very inappropriate that children are potentially mandated to put themselves at risk by wearing a mask all day during school. The school district should not have that control over our children! Parents should be allowed to parent. Please let the parents decide for their own children if they want them to wear masks or not. After all, if masks do work, those that wear them will be protected!

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:28 PM

To: jaxnblu@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Against masks in school**

3 messages

**Sarah Hoffman** <dandocrane@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:17 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

As a parent and foster parent I know how hard mask wearing is on children.  
Let their faces be free.  
It isn't fair and it should be a choice the family makes not the city

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:17 AM

To: dandocrane@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Sarah Hoffman** <dandocrane@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:31 PM

To: Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

This is my grand daughters 64 yr old grampa that owns a verry visible buisness in missoula and my employees have not worn a stinking germ ridden mask on a single job this last year even where they were required by our contractor customers! The negative impacts of wearing a mask far out weigh the ability of clear communication and the stigma of a fear laden additude that programs our impressionable youth

[Quoted text hidden]

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**no mask mandate**

2 messages

**Natalie Shurtz** <natalie.shurtz24@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:53 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To those making decisions for MCPS

I agree with other MCPS student families that mask use should be a family choice. please don't mask my kids for another whole year!!

Sincerely-

Natalie Shurtz

--

Warm Regards,

Natalie Shurtz

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:53 PM

To: natalie.shurtz24@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Support wearing face masks in public school**

2 messages

**Erin Noonan-Wright** <enoonanwright@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:57 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am writing to express strong support for kids and adults to wear face masks in school regardless of vaccination status. I have two daughters attending Lewis and Clark elementary school, and both are unable to be vaccinated due to their age. I don't believe it is fair to expose them to harm from getting COVID at a public school to support someone's perception of preserving their freedom and rights to not wear a mask. Thank you, Erin Noonan-Wright

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 9:57 PM

To: enoonanwright@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

---

**Unmask the children!!!**

2 messages

**Joanne Diehl** <joannemdiehl@icloud.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:27 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Parents will make the best decision for their own children about masking. If individuals are vaccinated and still masking this is their choice. Making the children suffer for their own agenda is child abuse!

Sincerely,  
Jo Diehl.

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 10:28 PM

To: joannemdiehl@icloud.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**re: Phase 3 Reopen Plan**

1 message

**Speth** <kits\_meow@yahoo.com>

Fri, Aug 6, 2021 at 11:23 PM

Reply-To: Speth &lt;kits\_meow@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To whom it may concern:

I read your Phase 3 Reopen Plan and was relieved to read that you will, for now, be requiring masks. My 11 year old daughter was in school all of last year but I wouldn't have returned her this year if you were not requiring masks inside. She can't be vaccinated yet and with Delta variant I wouldn't be willing to take that risk even if she herself were masked. I approve of the way you are handling the 2021 school opening. You really have done a great job through COVID and during difficult times and so have every single staff and volunteer members. Thank you.

Elspeth Pevear

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

---

**Reopening with masks please**

2 messages

**Susan Sullivan** <sjsull55@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:48 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi there Missoula County officials -

I am aware of the divide on this topic, but feel that public health is telling us to reopen with masks. We have a rapidly evolving situation, and public health is being threatened again. For the good of our teachers, our students and our community, it is not that difficult to mask up and stay somewhat socially distant. The variant and the unvaccinated are causing a surge that will just continue unless we try to diminish the spread.

Please require masks. Public safety should follow the science on this.

Thanks!

Susan Sullivan

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:48 AM

To: sjsull55@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**No masks**

2 messages

**Adam McConaughey** <adammcconaughey@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 7:36 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Our children should not have to wear masks at school this year. Do independent research and you will find so my studies that show this is so bad for them. I will not be sending my child to school wearing a mask.

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 7:36 AM

To: adammcconaughey@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks Mandate in School**

1 message

**Gabriel Earle** <gabrielearle@yahoo.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 12:38 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;, Darby Earle &lt;darbyearle@gmail.com&gt;, Jersey Earle &lt;earlejersey@gmail.com&gt;, Kendall Earle &lt;kendallearle@gmail.com&gt;

To Whom it May Concern:

My wife and I have kept our family safe for decades without your help. Your help keeping our family safe is unwanted, and your intervention is unwelcomed. You are neither equipped nor qualified to assume the responsibility for the safety of my family.

For three consecutive academic years these students have had to deal with mask mandates. Stop the ridiculousness. Do not vote to mandate masks.

Gabriel Earle  
406-240-7950  
gabrielearle@yahoo.com

---

**Strongly opposed to mask mandate**

2 messages

**Liz Manley** <liz@missoulaphoto.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:07 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I am strongly opposed to a mask mandate for K-12 students.

1. Masks do not stop the spread of viruses.
2. The virus has not negatively impacted children, with zero children in Montana dying from it. Thank you, God.
3. This virus has a 99+% survival rate for most people.
4. We do not know the long term physical and mental damage to children (and adults) from wearing masks.
5. Parents and guardians should be decision makers about whether or not their children should cover their faces for up to 8 hours per day (that is just terrifying!), NOT a small group of elected and non elected administrators. That is NOT your role. The school board works for the families of schools and should be listening to the valid concerns from community members and applying reason. Canceling the opportunity for individuals to offer public comment at the August 10th meeting is a cowardly act of control. You should be ashamed of yourselves for that!

The people working hard to retain freedom, including health freedom, will not stand for this. Until this is overturned, are you all prepared to take responsibility for damages to the sweet children of Missoula County? Because you need to know, it will all be on you.

~ Liz Manley

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:07 PM

To: liz@missoulaphoto.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Comment: Dr. Watson's Masking Plan

1 message

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**Patrick Murphy** <murphypaddynt@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:32 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula County Public Schools Board Members-

I just wanted to drop a quick comment in support of Dr. Watson's proposed masking plan for the return to school for MCPS K-12 students. It is logical, reasonable, and I completely understand and am behind the rationale he has provided.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Patrick Murphy



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks in school**

2 messages

**Schuyler Hermes** <schuyler.hermes@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:59 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon.

I would like to express concerns. My stand point is that this needs to be up to family's to decide to individually. My child was a victim of abuse by extended members of our family. It is extremely triggering for her to have to wear it one. Children were not required to wear them in Plains during the spring term last year. We noticed significant recovery in her once masks were removed. My child will not be wearing one. It would be a dereliction of educational duty for a public school to deny her growth socially and academically over an illness not much worse than a severe flu.

Schuyler Hermes  
406-274-0822

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 3:59 PM

To: schuyler.hermes@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**No mandatory masking of our children**

2 messages

**sarah taylor** <sarallison@hotmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 5:46 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I am a mother of a Lolo elementary student and aunt to Lewis and Clark children.

Masking should be up to the parents and children if they want to wear a mask. Please do not issue mandatory masking of our children. I could state the argument against masking but you've heard it a million times. I've heard the opposing view a million times. There are good people on both sides of this argument so please let parents make their own informed decision about the welfare of their children.

Thank you  
Lolo mom Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 5:46 PM

To: sarallison@hotmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Clinton Decker** <cdecker406@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 8:03 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To the Superintendent and Trustees,

I am writing to express my opposition to a mask mandate for the 2021/2022 school year.

Vaccines are widely available, hand washing and sanitation procedures are highly effective. If families and students choose to wear masks that is their absolute right to do that, just as every family and student should have the right to not wear a mask as well.

Do the right thing and allow the parents to choose as they are our children and we as parents will do what's best for our children.

Clinton Decker  
4259 Muggle Ln  
Missoula, MT 59808  
(406) 214-5541

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 8:03 PM

To: cdecker406@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Yes to masks**

2 messages

**Linda Noson** <linda.noson@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 9:42 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello:

As a grandmother of two children in Missoula, I and their parents strongly support having them wear masks to school. Neither child has objected. I agree parents have a right to protect their children as they see fit. However they do not have the right to impose an action that may have deadly consequences on another child. Perhaps home schooling could be an option for them. I can't imagine the school district agreeing to allow students to play football without a helmet because some parents were against it. That would be ridiculous. And yet not wearing a helmet would not harm the rest of the team. Covid will. I do not envy you the vitriol that will be coming your way. Sadly it would seem that the anti-maskers are a highly motivated and angry group. Please act to protect our children.

Sincerely,

Linda Noson  
Linda.noson@gmail.com  
2726 Highland Drive  
Missoula, Mt 59802

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Linda Noson  
Missoula, MT 59801

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Linda Noson  
Missoula, MT 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 9:42 PM

To: linda.noson@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**support of masking for all ages at MCPS**

1 message

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**kirsten tullius** <kirstentullius@yahoo.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 10:10 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello

I am writing to inform all interested parties that I support the proposed masking plan that has been shared with all MCPS families. I have 2 children that are not eligible for the COVID vaccine yet and I trust MCPS to follow the medical professionals recommendations regarding masking in indoor places such as schools. It is recommended by the CDC, the AAP and the MT chapter of AAP that all children 2+ mask up indoors. It is my recommendation we follow these guidelines to help ensure our children can have the safest school year possible.

Thank you for your consideration

Kirsten Kuhnle

MCPS Parent

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask Mandate**

2 messages

**Lanny Logan** <langasman@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:27 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To Whom It May Concern,

It is time the Freedom of Choice is honored concerning the thought of forcing our school students to wear mask to school.

This is a a choice. If a student chooses to wear a mask or not to wear a mask to school, either choice should be respected. If your child is sick, Use common decency and keep them home. Use your head.

Let's be reasonable Missoula.

Respectfully,

Lanny Logan

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:27 AM

To: langasman@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask requirement in MCPS schools**

2 messages

**Rob Stenger** <stenger.rob@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:04 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS Trustees,

I am writing to you in my capacities as a physician in our community, an MCPS parent of two COVID-vaccinated students (ages 12 and 14) and as the physician member of the Missoula City-County Board of Health.

As you are well aware, we are experiencing another uptick in COVID disease activity, including increased hospitalizations and deaths. This increase is being fueled by the delta variant, which has shown an increased ability to be transmitted, even among vaccinated individuals. While universal vaccination is the best possible protection against a resurgence of COVID in our community, the majority of our MCPS students will not be eligible for vaccination until sometime in the fall or early winter. Current Missoula County vaccination rates stand at around 30% for 12-14 year olds and 50% for 15-19 year olds.

I strongly urge you to require universal masking for students, teachers and staff in MCPS schools for the start of the fall semester. The CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and others have issued well-reasoned and researched guidance recommending masking in schools. I understand that this issue is controversial, but the science is clear. Masking is probably one of the most effective and least disruptive COVID mitigation measures available to schools, especially until more of our children are eligible for vaccination. Universal masking in schools is likely to significantly reduce the number of students, teachers and staff who will require absence from school or work for either COVID illness or quarantine after exposure. This is one of the most important things you can do to keep all of our students in school and reduce the transmission of COVID in our community.

As an aside, I would encourage MCPS to do whatever you can to encourage vaccination of all eligible MCPS students, teachers and staff, up to and including vaccination requirements to attend in-person school or participate in extracurricular activities or group travel.

Finally, I would like to applaud all of you for your leadership over the past year. I believe MCPS has been a model for transparency, clarity and public accountability in decisionmaking around COVID. You have made good decisions that have kept our kids in school and protected the public health. Keep up the good work.

Rob Stenger, MD, MPH

Physician Member  
Missoula City-County Board of HealthProgram Director  
Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:04 AM

To: stenger.rob@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**I support requiring masks in schools**

2 messages

**David Tyson** <david.r.tyson@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:19 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: rwatson@mcpsmt.org

To the MCPCS Board of Trustees:

My name is David Tyson and my daughter will begin Kindergarten at Paxson this Fall. As you are aware, the CDC and American Pediatric Group are strongly encouraging school boards to require masks in schools for everyone, regardless of vaccination status. I urge you to approve the Superintendent's Covid reopening plan which requires face coverings in MCPS buildings.

As Covid-19 cases are on the rise and there is currently no vaccine available for young children, she and others will be safer if masks are required for all students and faculty. Thank you for making this difficult decision that ultimately will better protect our children and their teachers.

Sincerely,  
David Tyson  
1101 S 5th St W,  
Missoula, Mt 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:19 AM

To: david.r.tyson@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Masks**

2 messages

**Jamie Matthew** <doublemaintenance@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 11:39 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon.

As a father of two Highschool students I ask that you consider not enforcing a mask mandate. This country was founded on our rights and this is a right to choose. Hear allot about my body my choice, transgender , list goes on and on. Why should you be able to tell me my kids need to use a mask. If I choose not to get vaccine for me or my children that's my choice and I have to live with that discussion if something happens.

If you want to wear a mask great your choice if you want to get vaccinated your choice if I don't my choice. I also believe no judgment either way if wear a mask or not. Again my body my choice.

If a mask mandate put in I believe you will further draw a line of who's to blame. Let our children have a normal school year.

No masks please.

Jonathan Matthew.

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 11:39 AM

To: doublemaintenance@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Masks**

1 message

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**Holly Shoup** <hollyshoup@yahoo.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 1:09 PM

Reply-To: Holly Shoup <hollyshoup@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am writing in response to the mask situation. I have 3 children attending this year and I dont agree with them wearing masks.

My thoughts are its a choice, not a demand. If someone chooses to wear the mask, cool, if not, also cool.

This situation is getting out of control. Please stop forcing masks.

Holly Shoup

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**face masks**

2 messages

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**Larissa Karabensh** <lkarabensh@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 2:09 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello

I am writing to express my concern for implementing face masks at MCPS.

I feel like the high schoolers should have a choice in whether they wear masks or not. There was a push to get these kids vaccinated, many have done so and now you are going to require masks?! And if you are going to require them, then are you going to make them wear them while playing sports, in the cafeteria etc... it makes no sense!

Larissa Karabensh

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 2:10 PM

To: lkarabensh@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Strategic Plan**

1 message

**StormyNite** <stormynite1228@yahoo.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 3:24 PM

Reply-To: StormyNite &lt;stormynite1228@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

You all should be arrested. Your Inclusion and Equity training is nothing but Critical Race Theory!

You obviously feel the Montana laws are subject to interpretation. Let's see how the Attorney General feels about your blatant attempt to break the law. My next email, as well as everyone I know... will be to him. I think those of you who vote for this gross EQUITY plan are asking for legal intervention and deserve jail time. All parents should pull their students out and home school them. You obviously do not have our children's best welfare in mind and should resign your positions immediately.

Barb Starmer  
Missoula, MT

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**2021-2022 school year**

2 messages

**Mike Kantor Kantor** <aleta.mk@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:05 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Dr. Watson and MCPS,

I request that you require all staff and students to wear face masks for the foreseeable future. Rates in Montana are shooting up and not enough people are vaccinated to let down our guard. Using the "honor system" for masking the unvaccinated will leave others at risk from the unvaccinated who refuse to do so for political reasons. We should follow the recommendations of the CDC. Also, learning on-line is not a good option for a third year. Our children need to socialize and at-risk-students are the ones who suffer the most when schools do not meet in person.

Respectfully,  
Aleta Kantor

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:05 PM

To: aleta.mk@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**MCPS mask policy 2021 -2022**

2 messages

**Henry Davey** <hdavey406@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Greetings MCPS covid task force and MCPS board of trustees,

I am writing in support of requiring MCPS students wearing masks for the upcoming school year to help slow the spread of Covid-19 and particularly the Delta variant. Not only will this help to protect students and staff, but it will help protect the community at large. In addition I would expect this simple measure to increase the in person attendance at the schools as high risk individuals are less likely to op-out if they feel safe at school. This is a simple measure that can prevent unnecessary suffering and save lives. Failure to take preventative measures during a pandemic is disrespectful of students, staff and community. Please demonstrate responsibility and respect by supporting masking up at MCPS this fall.

Sincerely, Henry Davey

Concerned grandparent of MCPS students and a Missoula resident.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: hdavey406@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Mandate**

1 message

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**Kendall Earle** <kendallearle@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 6:08 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

Myself being not only a student in the MCPS School district, but also a Registered Behavior Technician, I do not think you should vote to mandate masks this school year or ever for that fact.

It has been long enough, it's time to stop.

Not only have we been on our own free will not wearing masks for these past four months now, but we've already tried wearing masks for over the past year. Clearly they don't work, they only make anxious people feel better. The minority. That is their issue.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

---

**Masks in schools**

2 messages

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**Amanda Attard** <amandamae.attard@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:04 PM

To whom it may concern,

Please consider NOT issuing a mask mandate for children in school this year. As I'm sure it's been observed, student mental health is severely affected by having a reduced school schedule, and by wearing masks. I do understand that this will put many people at a higher risk of catching the virus, and I hope there is an online school option for those who need it. But for my children, they need to be in school. In our society, it has become essential for parents to be able to send their kids to a full school day in order to work. Most families in the valley need both parents to work in order to afford to live here, and there isn't enough affordable and quality childcare in order for that to happen. It's a difficult situation. Three of my four children are school aged and all of them previously loved school. When the schools had to shut down, and adopt a hybrid model, my children really struggled. My high school senior, who is a very studious, organized person who loves school, loves teachers, and wants to be one herself, has grown to hate it over the course of the pandemic and considers dropping out. My high school sophomore is now wishing he could drop out of school and just start working. My junior high girl is a spatial thinker and needs to be moving, touching, interacting, and online school did absolutely nothing for her but frustrate her and put her in a screen-stupor. The impact that this lack of normalcy has had on my kids is enormous. Please don't hear me put all the pressure of creating normalcy for my kids and the passion for learning all on the school, my husband and I are doing everything we can to create normalcy for them at home and try to give them a passion for learning and growing no matter how it looks. But as I said before, our current society and family systems rely heavily on the school system in order for parents to work and provide food and clothing and a home for our families. Please consider normalcy for our kids this school year. The mental health crisis goes far beyond COVID-19, let's put some emphasis on that and take it seriously.

Thank you.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Unconstitutional , unlawful breach if rights... do NOT mask our children!**

2 messages

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**Mallory Henkins** <malloryidahostars@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 9:11 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Do NOT mask our children!

Not only is masking our children over -reaching boundaries on so many levels it is also unconstitutional and illegal.

It is our rights as parents to protect the best interest of our children and it is not up to the school board, district or any other entity to mandate /require something that is against the parents consent.

By trying to push your mandates/requirements on our children you're not only stepping on our rights but you are breaching what is already set in place by the constitution which states that such requirements are illegal and unlawful unless otherwise stated in a state of emergency by the governor...

And we are NOT in a state of emergency.

Do NOT mask our children!

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 9:11 PM

To: malloryidahostars@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask**

2 messages

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**Geni Goodman** <genigoodman@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:11 PM

For the safety of the teachers as well as students please make a mask mandate. We've got to Protect our community

Sent from my iPhone

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: genigoodman@gmail.com

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:11 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Michelle dunn** <michelledunn.0518@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:09 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I'm not sure if you're actually listening to all the parents or just opening up public comment to appease the process. Leave this choice up to the parents. How is it that you can have large groups all over Missoula with concerts, gatherings, eating together and yet you're going to mask the children? I stand for the choice to be left up to the families.

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:10 PM

To: michelledunn.0518@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

3 messages

**Micah Dalbey** <pickstrum@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:46 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, covidquestions@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees and district team,

My name is Micah and my wife and I have 6 children in MCPS. First, I want to thank you for your leadership during this trying season. I know it hasn't been easy. Second, we love Missoula and our public schools. Third, I'm writing to ask you to side with our governing authorities and health department by leaving masks as optional for this fall. I believe the board and public school officials exist to serve the wishes of the parents and it seems obvious to me from the last public forum that the overwhelming majority of parents support being able to choose. Those who are nervous can wear masks, but requiring all our children to continue this for another year when so many are in favor of allowing people to make their own choice - it just doesn't make sense, especially in light of such low COVID numbers among our school children last year.

Speaking personally, our kids really struggled last year hearing their teachers and having wet, germ infested masks on their faces all day. Again, we love MCPS schools, but honestly, we are exploring other schooling options in the event that the board goes against the state and county guidance and the will of the parents on this. And for the record, I don't question that the use of masks reduces the spread of germs, but the question is *at what cost?* And most importantly for me, should a board that is elected to represent the will of the parents make decisions in line with what parents want?

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Respectfully,  
Micah

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:01 AM Missoula County Public Schools <noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

**Dear MCPS Families:**

Thank you for your interest and questions related to the COVID Reopening Plan for Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Also, thank you for your patience as we finalized our plan with the latest local and national guidance. In revising the phase 3 plan for the upcoming year our COVID task force remained focused on the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. You can find the full Phase 3 Reopen Plan [HERE](#).

As you look through our plan, it is important to note that while many of the mitigation strategies are still in place, we expect this year to be much different than last year. As you may recall, we started last year in a hybrid school model, however this year we will be starting with every day for every student and a longer school day than last year. In addition, some of the other pre-COVID school routines will return - lunch in the cafeteria, normal rotation of elective programs, opportunities to participate in school activities programs as well as opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools. We are excited to start the school year and look forward to offering a different experience than last year, while at the same time maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

While we know there continue to be risks related to possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we are reflecting on what we have learned about this pandemic over the past year to manage that risk, balance the need for mitigation strategies with the educational needs of students, and forge ahead with recovery efforts. I would like to share relevant details and strategies listed below related to how we intend to operate our schools in the coming months.

**Mitigation Strategies**

We will continue to work with the health department to trace, identify and notify close contacts to all positive COVID cases associated with MCPS. New guidance from the CDC should greatly reduce the number of students considered close contacts, if universal face coverings are used. We will also continue with cleaning procedures, maintenance of our ventilation systems, and enhanced hand hygiene practices.

Classrooms will operate much like they did in pre-COVID times, while maintaining 3 feet or as much as possible between students or groups, while implementing other mitigation strategies.



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**GET THE MASKS OFF OUR KIDS!**

2 messages

**Diana Wilsey** <dianawilsey@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:04 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/masks-children-parenting-schools-mandates-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-biden-administration-cdc-11628432716?fbclid=IwAR11SLVP1MvAa7nQPj0fDB\\_ipOchslO2XCcoUNAsnBc-N6fU3eFwYZfdyJI](https://www.wsj.com/articles/masks-children-parenting-schools-mandates-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-biden-administration-cdc-11628432716?fbclid=IwAR11SLVP1MvAa7nQPj0fDB_ipOchslO2XCcoUNAsnBc-N6fU3eFwYZfdyJI)

There have been ZERO conclusive studies to show that masks do anything against the Corona Virus.... but there have been numerous CONCLUSIVE studies that show masks DO HARM!!!!

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:04 AM

To: dianawilsey@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

3 messages

**Christopher Reidy** <reidy.christopher@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:30 AM

To: Missoula County Public Schools &lt;noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear School Board, COVID task force members, and Mr. Watson,

Thank you for your thoughtful preparation for the upcoming school year.

I am writing in support of the superintendent's planned mandatory masking policy. As a critical care (ICU) physician in Missoula, I have seen firsthand how devastating COVID related illness can be. As an MCPS parent I agree strongly with masking to reduce the risk to our children until all have the opportunity to receive the COVID vaccine.

Thank you for keeping our children safe.

Chris Reidy MD

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:00 AM Missoula County Public Schools <noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

**Dear MCPS Families:**

Thank you for your interest and questions related to the COVID Reopening Plan for Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Also, thank you for your patience as we finalized our plan with the latest local and national guidance. In revising the phase 3 plan for the upcoming year our COVID task force remained focused on the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. You can find the full Phase 3 Reopen Plan [HERE](#).

As you look through our plan, it is important to note that while many of the mitigation strategies are still in place, we expect this year to be much different than last year. As you may recall, we started last year in a hybrid school model, however this year we will be starting with every day for every student and a longer school day than last year. In addition, some of the other pre-COVID school routines will return - lunch in the cafeteria, normal rotation of elective programs, opportunities to participate in school activities programs as well as opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools. We are excited to start the school year and look forward to offering a different experience than last year, while at the same time maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

While we know there continue to be risks related to possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we are reflecting on what we have learned about this pandemic over the past year to manage that risk, balance the need for mitigation strategies with the educational needs of students, and forge ahead with recovery efforts. I would like to share relevant details and strategies listed below related to how we intend to operate our schools in the coming months.

**Mitigation Strategies**

We will continue to work with the health department to trace, identify and notify close contacts to all positive COVID cases associated with MCPS. New guidance from the CDC should greatly reduce the number of students considered close contacts, if universal face coverings are used. We will also continue with cleaning procedures, maintenance of our ventilation systems, and enhanced hand hygiene practices.

Classrooms will operate much like they did in pre-COVID times, while maintaining 3 feet or as much as possible between students or groups, while implementing other mitigation strategies.

We will continue to ask that families keep their students home if they are ill, particularly if they are unvaccinated for COVID-19. Testing will be available to all students and staff via MCPS or the Missoula City-County Health Department. A reminder of our family guidance for keeping a child home [here](#).

MCPS will update staff and families on vaccination eligibility and opportunities for 5-11 year-olds and encourage all vaccine-eligible students and staff to consider getting vaccinated, if it is right for you and your family. While COVID vaccines are encouraged, we cannot require COVID vaccines, which is explained in state law [HERE](#).

**DRAFT Face Covering Guidelines**



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**My 3 children went through MCPS**

2 messages

**Janet Sedgley** <sedghog@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:10 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

And I support the Missoula School Board's right (and actually responsibility) to require masks as kids head back to school. This decision can be changed later.

I believe it is traditional for teachers to start with strong structure and discipline and then slowly ease off as the school year progresses. In the same way, MCPSs should start with masks and then ease off later if that seems appropriate.

Janet Sedgley  
720 Michigan Ave  
Missoula, MT  
406-370-4796

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:10 AM

To: sedghog@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Opposed to mask mandate**

2 messages

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**gingerbounce2@gmail.com** <gingerbounce2@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:29 AM

To the Superintendent and Trustees,

I am writing to express my opposition to a mask mandate for the 2021/2022 school year.

Vaccines are widely available, hand washing and sanitation procedures are highly effective. If families and students choose to wear masks that is their absolute right to do that, just as every family and student should have the right to not wear a mask as well.

Do the right thing and allow the parents to choose as they are our children and we as parents will do what's best for our children

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: gingerbounce2@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:29 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks 2021-2022**

2 messages

**Brittany Simanton** <brittanys2006@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:59 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Good morning,

I am urging you this year to please make masks optional for our children. If parents want to send their children with masks they absolutely can. I do not believe they should be required for our children and it should be a choice. I think by making masking optional in our schools everyone wins.

A full day of masks for our kids is going to do more harm than good. My own child who is absolutely beautiful and bright struggles with anxiety and break outs due to wearing a mask. I do not want to see her struggle this year; it breaks my heart.

Our kids deserve to be able to breathe freely this year. Please, let them do so.

Brittany Simanton  
(406) 459-1093

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:59 AM

To: brittanys2006@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

## Mask Policy for 21-22 school year

2 messages

**Amy Schott** <aschott@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:01 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

First I want to thank the Covid task force for the job they've done over the last 18 months. It's no easy task and they've handled the unknown very well.

I'm writing in opposition to the drafted mask mandate for MCPS schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

The word choice is described as the right, power or opportunity to choose. As parents, we make choices all day every day that we think are best for our children. Our job is to assess risks and keep our children safe (mentally & physically) in the best way we feel possible. To be denied the right to make this choice for our children is heartbreaking. They will spend more hours at school between September and June than anywhere else and to know the majority of those hours will once again be spent without seeing their friends or teachers faces, without being able to communicate non-verbally, without feeling as free as they have the past 2 months is crushing to me as a parent. I work with a group of athletes at Big Sky High School and I can tell you with 100% certainty, forcing them to wear a mask instead of giving them the choice whether or not to do so makes a mental difference that I cannot put into words.

All summer I've seen staff & students in & out of the school for meetings, sports practices, weight lifting, etc. without masks and so far have yet to hear of any outbreak. My group in particular is together 2-3x a week and are in constant close quarters (I am the head cheer coach there and we spend 95% of our time stunting). We did not have a single case on our team last year nor have we encountered one this summer. My team understands how effective hand washing, drinking water and eating well are to keep your immune system strong for all germ encounters, not just Covid 19.

Not only am I a fellow MCPS staff member, I'm also the parent of a soon-to-be sophomore and soon-to-be 1st grader. They both had their school years rocked by this virus last year (like so many other students) and I want to do everything in my power to give them every bit of normalcy they deserve. Leaving the choice of masks up to us to discuss as a family is something I feel very strongly about. How will I explain to my 7 year old that he has to wear his the whole time he's in the classroom, but his teacher can remove theirs if they choose, so long as they're 6 ft. away? If the teacher is that far away from students, wouldn't it make sense that the students should also be able to remove their masks?

We have been able to make our own decisions regarding masks for the past 3 months now and while it may seem as though there is a massive outbreak happening again, the numbers simply don't support that thought process. As of today, the Montana DPHHS map shows 188 active cases in Missoula County. with a population of roughly 121,520 people, that puts our positive active cases at 0.15% of our county's population. Map is linked here and is updated every week day. <https://montana.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c34f3412536439491adcc2103421d4b> The age group we are asking to be forced to wear masks is the least affected by this virus. According to the CDC, between 1/4/2020 & 7/31/2021 there have been a total fo 606,390 deaths involving Covid 19 with only 416 of those being between the ages of 0 & 18. That is only 0.069% of all death involving this virus. Link here to data:<https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Deaths-Focus-on-Ages-0-18-Yea/nr4s-juj3> Only 5% of ALL reported Covid 19 deaths, Covid was the only reported conditions. All other deaths averaged 4 other contributing factors to the death. Listed here under "Comorbidities and other conditions" [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid\\_weekly/index.htm#SexAndAge](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#SexAndAge) Scientifically, it does not make sense to go to these extreme measures for these age groups. Our children's immune systems are brilliant but they are not able to work properly under these measures. They need to be exposed to a certain number of germs and bacteria to learn to do their jobs.

In addition to my role as a coach at Big Sky, I also work at Community Medical Center and would like to address another bit of misinformation regarding this virus and hospitalization. At this moment, our community is under the impression that our hospitals are at capacity or close to it because of positive Covid patients and that could not be farther from the truth. Yes, we have positive cases being hospitalized but that is not the reason we are having to go on divert (sending patients to other nearby hospitals). We, like SO MANY other businesses in town, are incredibly short staffed. We have 33 beds on our Med/Surg unit, but just a few weeks ago had to go on divert when we only had 15 beds full (with 0 of them being Covid positive) because we simply don't have the staff to safely handle more patients.



Lastly, I will leave you with a short 6 minute YouTube clip of an Indiana Doctor of Functional & Family medicine addressing a local school board on their own Covid mandate and protocol. He's intelligent, well spoken, and brings to light why our current mitigations aren't working. I encourage you to take a few minutes out of your day to truly listen to what he's trying to say. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR11\\_x0ojp3d511gHZe4FxFHb8Z6OcleTTcZyrk\\_dvy0kOGrqcpuNbAhBWg&v=\\_9KnhUu7Ba4&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR11_x0ojp3d511gHZe4FxFHb8Z6OcleTTcZyrk_dvy0kOGrqcpuNbAhBWg&v=_9KnhUu7Ba4&feature=youtu.be)

I appreciate you all taking the time to read through my plea for family choice.

Thank you,  
Amy Schott

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: aschott@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:02 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**public action lawsuit**

2 messages

**Zach B** <zbrackett0@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:15 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

The mask mandate negatively and disproportionately impacts protected classes of students. This includes hearing disabled and children diagnosed with autism. Our child has worked tirelessly to understand and recognize facial emotions. Facial expressions are keystone to communication, learning, and growth. Wearing a mask causes my child and others who struggle to regress. They become scared and confused when an adult attempts to communicate with them while hiding their face. They struggle to understand their intents in an environment fraught with fear and hostility. The mask mandate may have been justified in 2020 to mitigate the spread of a pandemic, but with most of the population vaccinated and transmission rates of the virus well within control, this justification has vanished. The bottom line is the benefits of persisting the mask mandate do not outweigh the harm it causes disabled children.

I have every intent of filing a class action law suit against the district for the harm this unusual mandate, which runs opposite of the recommended policies of the state, is causing my child and others.

On a personal note - you all are vaccinated and it's time to stop. Sowing fear in the classroom and forcing children to fear others has caused egregious harm. Rates of child suicide, mental illness, and deaths by child abuse have soared in Montana over the last year. People like yourselves have everything to do with it. Clinging to a mask mandate most certainly does not make you woke, better than conservatives, or good people. It makes you a coward who doesn't understand how to weigh the costs and benefits of their actions.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:15 AM

To: zbrackett0@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Support of universal masking**

2 messages

**Bonnie Brown** <bsgarvens@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 12:26 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula County Public School Board,

I'm writing in support of universal masking in Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-2022 year.

We all recognize that students learn best in person, and that a return to the classroom is important for students' academic and emotional wellbeing. However, the medical community nationwide has also seen a rise in pediatric COVID-19 cases, and we are experiencing a rapid increase in Covid cases in Montana due to the delta variant. The long-term negative effects of COVID-19 in both children and adults is also an area of active research and concern.

Universal masking is safe and effective, and can help students and staff return to school together with minimal interruptions. While vaccines are the most important step for individual and community protection and dramatically reduce severe cases of Covid, they are not available to children under 12, and may not entirely reduce transmission of the more contagious delta variant. Requiring or policing vaccine status among older students and staff is also not practically feasible.

As both a physician and mother of young children, I strongly support masks and a return to in-person learning for our kids. This is in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers of Disease Control.

Please prioritize kids in our community by recommending vaccines for those who can take them, and with universal masking in the classroom.

Let's get back to school.

Bonnie Brown, MD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 12:26 PM

To: bsgarvens@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Please mask up!**

2 messages

**Linda Torma** <ltorma50@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 1:33 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

As a retired nursing professor, I fully support the continued use of masks by students and staff alike to help us weather this latest surge of the Delta variant of the coronavirus. It is true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of the cure when it comes to this virus. I am vaccinated, but continue to mask indoors as we have a long way to go before we can 'return to normal'. It is important that our kids be able to return to school safely, and we must do all that we can to protect the vulnerable among us.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and welfare of the children in our community.

Sincerely,

Linda Torma, PhD, APRN, GCNS-BC

406-360-6134

314 Connell Avenue, Missoula, MT 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 1:33 PM

To: ltorma50@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

## Allow Parental Choice in respect to masks

2 messages

Amy Livesay &lt;amy@ultramaxsports.com&gt;

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:32 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To the Board of Trustees:

In Montana we have bears, correct? And when a bear shows up, there are things to do and not to do. I would guess most of us feel like either shooting it with a gun or running when in fact neither of those are the most effective escape options. If we think it through and remember what we have been taught, we know that we should say something to scare it away, start to back away slowly and if necessary use our bear spray.

COVID is similar. As cases rise, we feel like we have to do something regardless of if the cases are actually causing death and regardless of if the something is actually effective. Masking feels like we are doing something when in fact we are not. And indeed in the case of children there is not even a need to do anything.

Children are more likely to die in a car wreck than with COVID. Are parents keeping them out of cars? Are they putting them in bubble wrap or making them wear helmets in the car? No. They are not because life has some risk that we have all lived with for all of time. COVID poses no more risk to children than the flu. Kid have been getting sicknesses for years and recovering because they are resilient. This risk is no different than anything they have faced for all of time.

IF there were a significant risk to children, masking them would not be the answer. Masks in general let out 97 percent of the virus particles AND if there is even a 3 percent gap in the mask, it is virtually useless because the particles will just go out around the nose or the side of the face. While most kids try to be fairly compliant with their masks, they move them around all the time, get their snot on them, put them in their mouth and undoubtedly have gaps in them. They have never been and never will be a good protection from a virus.

With that said, I 100 percent support any kiddo or person who wants to wear a mask to school. They do not deserve to be shamed or ostracized or told that they cannot wear their mask. Indeed I am not asking for their to be a mandate against masks.

I am asking that there not be a mandate at all. Kids who do not feel comfortable in a mask should also not be judged or shamed for their decision. Parents know their children the best and should have the right to help them make a choice as whether to wear a mask or not.

The teachers and staff at the schools should also be given this freedom. It is unkind and tyrannical to require someone, who needs to work to make a living, to wear a mask all day especially when it violates their conscience.

America is the land of freedom not tyrannical mandates.....

**Amy Livesay**

Owner, Ultramax Sports

573-268-4709

Follow my blog at [Treelinewife.com](http://Treelinewife.com)

If you are a hunter, follow my husband at [TreelinePursuits.com](http://TreelinePursuits.com) or @Treeline\_Pursuits on Instagram

*"Be Strong and Courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9*

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:32 PM

To: amy@ultramaxsports.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Covid Task Force**

2 messages

**Sarah Fangsrud** <sarahfangs@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:49 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear MCPS Covid Task Force

I'm a Paxson parent to an upcoming third grader and a new kindergartner. Both my boys need to get back to school this year. My husband and I want to send them back to public school but we have concerns about their safety and the safety of our community in school. The delta variant is spreading fast in Missoula. Luckily we know that there are safety measures that we can take that work to prevent the spread in our schools. Those safety measures include mandatory masking for all students and teachers. Masking works. Social distancing works. These are facts proven again and again by the medical community and by the data. The WHO, the CDC, and the American Academy of pediatricians all recommend masking in schools. It's ridiculous that masking in schools is even up for debate in Montana. It is our responsibility to keep our children safe. I'm writing you to support mandatory masking in schools to protect our children. I trust that Missoula County public schools will do the right thing and implement mandatory masking for all elementary school students, as none of these children are eligible for the vaccine. I also support mandatory masking for middle school and high school to slow the spread in our community and protect children and teachers. Please make the right choice so parents can safely send our children back to school where they can thrive this year.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Fangsrud  
Paxson Parent

--

Sarah Fangsrud

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:49 PM

To: sarahfangs@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Please allow mask mandates as needed**

2 messages

**Justin Whitaker** <buddhistethics@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:50 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear board of trustees,

As a father of a young child and long-time Missoula community member, I am writing to ask that you allow mask mandates \*as needed\* this fall in all county public schools.

I am deeply saddened by the misinformation being presented by a very loud but small contingent of anti-mask community members and hope that my voice and others help to convince you to follow health authorities and not conspiracy theories.

For your consideration, I'll note to recent articles that particularly trouble me:

As reported on Aug 6, Montana is seeing exponential growth in new COVID-19 cases:

<https://www.mtpr.org/montana-news/2021-08-06/montana-covid-cases-showing-exponential-growth-health-department-says>

And while kids tend to do well with COVID on average, it's a numbers game. If 20 kids get it, maybe one or two end up in the hospital; if 2000 get it, things get scary, as Florida is amply showing:

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2021/08/02/florida-leads-the-nation-in-kids-hospitalized-for-covid/>

Let's not become the next Florida when it comes to our kids' health.

My thanks,

Justin Whitaker  
1637 S. 7th St. West  
Missoula, Montana

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:50 PM

To: buddhistethics@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**2021-22 mask policy comment**

2 messages

**Jessie Schandelson** <jessiemcq@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:30 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon,

I am a local citizen and mother of two young children who are not yet able to receive the Covid vaccine. My daughter will be entering sixth grade at Washington Middle School, and our family strongly urges the School Board to protect our children and other community members by requiring masks for all students/teachers/staff for the 2021-2022 school year. Wearing a mask is an easy and proven way to reduce disease transmission, and it's an important part of an effective strategy to reduce Covid in our schools and homes.

My daughter chooses to wear her mask to protect not just herself but also many other vulnerable people in her life, such as her grandparents and those who are immunocompromised or who cannot yet be vaccinated. We were heartened to review the draft plan now under consideration and support its rationale and guidelines, and we ask the School Board to please require masks to help prevent the spread of Covid in our schools and communities.

Thank you for all you do to help to protect the health and safety of all MCPS students, staff and families.

Sincerely,

Jessie Schandelson

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:31 PM

To: jessiemcq@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Please follow health guidance on COVID**

2 messages

**Anna Noson** <anna.noson@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:35 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees,

First of all, I want to thank you for serving our community and taking your personal time to ensure our kids safety and access to quality education.

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of the COVID policy recommendations of our school superintendent, the MCPS COVID task force, and the CDC for next school year, including mandatory masks in class for all students. I have two children in MCPS schools who are vaccinated, but not all age groups have access to vaccinations, and vaccination rates are too low among vaccine-eligible students to stop the spread of COVID, especially with more contagious variants.

Nobody likes to wear masks, but this is not a matter of personal preference, it's about safe access to in-person school for all children. Everyone agrees our children learn better and our most vulnerable kids receive better care in the classroom. Last year with mask policies in place, we had a successful school year with few outbreaks. We all look forward to when masks are no longer needed, but my kids are ready to do their part to stop the spread of COVID and protect our immuno-compromised friends and family.

Thanks again for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Anna Noson

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:35 PM

To: anna.noson@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask comment**

2 messages

**Sean Parks** <grumpyuncle sean@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:39 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi,

Please require masks for all students, teachers, and other staff at Rattlesnake elementary school. My two children are not old enough to be vaccinated, and I think their health and safety are quite important.

Ideally, all teachers and staff would also be required to be vaccinated.

Thank you,  
Sean Parks

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:39 PM

To: grumpyuncle sean@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Support of mask requirement**

2 messages

**Roxane Weikel** <roxane.weikel@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:50 PM

To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

I support requiring masks for all children and staff this fall. This seems to me to be the best way to:

- 1) Guard against needing to go all virtual again.
- 2) Protect children from this highly contagious disease that will result in some children being hospitalized.
- 3) It's reasonable to assume that this will prevent some deaths (even in children) and /or complications such as long haul syndrome.

We are so close to hopefully having a vaccine for children ages 5 - 11 which certainly will change the risks.

My grandkids didn't seem to be concerned about masks last spring. Kids seem really adaptable.

Thank you for your service.

Roxane Weikel

Missoula resident and grandparent of MCPS students.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:50 PM

To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks**

2 messages

**John Rincker** <johnrincker1@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:06 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

It is always the responsibility of the school district to protect the health and safety of the children in your care. Masks are a simple and effective method to help protect our children. Do not be intimidated by those who can't see the forest for the trees. Mask up all students and adults. Safety first.

Thank you!

John Rincker

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:06 PM

To: johnrincker1@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask requirement**

2 messages

**Madeleine McKelvey** <madeleinemckel@aol.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:11 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am relieved to hear that a masking requirement is being considered for MCPS. I am guardian for a student who is too young to get a vaccine, and I strongly support masking and other safety measures as recommended by CDC.

Madeleine McKelvey  
20 willowbrook Lane  
Missoula 59802

Sent from my iPad

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: madeleinemckel@aol.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

[Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>](mailto:publiccomment@mcpsmt.org)

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## Masks in the classroom

2 messages

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**Jeremy Reinicke** <jeremyreinicke@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:20 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to express my opinion that masks should be mandated in Missoula County Public Schools until infection rates are reduced in our community. I have two children in the public school system and my spouse is a teacher. I am concerned about my family's well being but I am also concerned about the health and economic stability of our community as a whole. I understand the importance of in person learning but allowing classes to resume without any mitigation effort will most certainly increase infection rates in Missoula. It appears the easy solution here is to require masks in the classroom. I would like to think that we could educate people on the value of wearing masks and taking other measures to end a global pandemic in hopes that people would make responsible informed decisions but this has not proven to be effective.

We can have in person learning and keep our community healthy and prosperous by simply mandating masks in the classroom. Please consider this for the well being of our community.

Thank you.

Jeremy Reinicke.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:21 PM

To: jeremyreinicke@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**I Support masks**

2 messages

**Kate Bratches** <kate.yaya@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:26 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I support masks for all MCPS children- If you don't support wearing masks maybe those kids should not be at school but instead home schooled.

Kate Bratches

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:26 PM

To: kate.yaya@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**a kind request for mask mandate**1 message

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**Jennifer** <jayrye@bresnan.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 6:23 PM

Hello,

First and foremost, thank you all for your service to our community and most importantly students. My children have enjoyed a great education through Lewis and Clark, Washington, Sentinel and Hellgate. We are very appreciative.

Last year, my kids attended school in person and it was well coordinated and I feel like they kept busy and benefitted from the instruction in class.

As much as I hate them having to wear masks, the right decision is obvious. Mask wearing must be mandated in the schools to protect students and teachers. Kids need to be in school and learning. Most importantly, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that healthy unvaccinated children are getting very ill, dying, or even developing pulmonary damage that they will carry with them through life. As adults, it is our job to protect their health and foster their learning. With vaccinations and masks, we can best do this.

None of us like this. Yes it is hard. Yes we are angry and scared. But this is our war to fight and we have tools to end this. Just as generations before us who served in the military to protect our country, we need to do what is asked of us by experts, some of whom have spent majority of their lifetime working in public health, immunology, infectious disease, and medicine careers/research.

It is my hope that the teachers and children feel supported by all of us who aren't in school, and let them do their work and learning.

Jennifer Ryan



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**Public Comment for 8/10 meeting. Re-opening of schools**

1 message

**Morgen Hunt** <mebx3@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:27 PM

Reply-To: Morgen Hunt &lt;mebx3@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

My name is Morgen E. Hunt. I am a parent, community member and a school bus driver. I **do not** represent **nor** do I speak for my employer Beach Transportation. Yes, I am a school bus driver!!! We come in all shapes and sizes and our backgrounds are quite diverse. We are professionals - our employer demands it.

I drive school bus because I LOVE CHILDREN! I feed off their energy!! There is nothing quite like being up before the rest of the world and getting the kids to school. However, what I experienced as a driver last year was horrible. I watched in disgust as my usually rambunctious, bubbly children became sullen and depressed. It made me sick to my stomach. My youngest son is a Junior at Hellgate this year. He, like many other students hit a wall last year. His father and I have spent the past days, weeks and months restoring him to his old self and enjoying his excitement as things returned to normal. **WE MUST NOT GO BACKWARDS!!!!**

I have been managing the health and wellness of **MY** family for the past 23 years. That is **MY** job, **NOT** yours! If it is now your job, then I must ask you where were you when my son got the flu and I had to make a decision regarding his care, whether to vaccinate him and at what point he could resume his daily activities? **I didn't need you then and I do not need you now.** Where were you my son and daughter, both with life and death allergies were exposed to the very thing that could have caused them great harm? **I didn't need you then and I do not need you now.**

**AND WHERE WERE YOU LAST YEAR WHEN MY SON HIT THAT WALL AND BECAME SO DEPRESSED I WAS ASKED WHAT IS THE POINT? WHY GO ON?**

From the beginning this should have been a choice for those of us **responsible** for the care of **our** children. It should be a choice now. Families are more than capable of making decisions regarding **their children**. I would implore you not to rob these children of any more of their youth than they have already been. If you do, I will certainly not be a witness to it and will sadly forgo my return to Beach Transportation.

I am **EXHAUSTED** by the politicization of a virus that 98% recovery rate. Covid is much less likely to cause serious illness in children. Those making these policies do not know, nor appreciate the lives we lead here in Montana and they do **not** care about or for our children.

In the end you will be responsible for having went along with unproven policies to spare the lives of children from a virus of whom according to data will recover. More importantly you will also be responsible for causing even more depression and despair that will take US PARENTS, years to rebuild.

I would like to know exactly how concerned and involved with that process will you be??? Will you be as hands on as you are now and will you **mandate** that every child who suffers (and that is many) will get the best possible care as they endeavor to get back to who they once were??? Will you **mandate** that they get to the doctor's office to get the care that they need and their anti-depressants as well?? Of course you won't because it is **NOT YOUR JOB!!!!**

I would really like to know where this ends for you? With **which** "variant" of this virus does this end? I feel quite confident that there will be another and another. If you intend to insert yourselves in **our** lives I surely know many parents that could use a hand with some bills and car pooling as well.

Please also tell me what happens when my masked, vaccinated child ends up in the hospital with an adverse reaction to the vaccine as many are experiencing. Aren't said vaccines supposed to keep you safe? So, I can expect you at the hospital for "support" and to advise on further treatments for my child?

This is the road you are choosing to take and it will have consequences for you. A child can get and recover from this virus, which is temporary. Your alternative causes unnecessary continued mental decline, learning deficiencies and ongoing depression.

The damage you will cause (**and already have**) is irrevocable. Our children cannot get that time back. You are stealing from them the best years of their lives. I hope this weighs on you heavily as you **mandate one "solution" for ALL**.

You have NO IDEA the devastation you have already caused. If you'd like to see it I invite you to take a ride with a bus full of children...

.....I for one will not be.

Thank you for keeping me from doing a job that I love. You are destroying the most beautiful souls we have and I hope sincerely that it keeps you up at night because it should.

Make the right decision and make it **our choice**.

Bus#197

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask Mandate

1 message

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**Tracy Herndon** <tracy\_herndon@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:39 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am a parent of 2 kids in MCPS, both of whom are vaccinated and I support the continued mask mandate.

Thank you,  
Tracy Herndon

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## Mask Mandate for Upcoming School Year

1 message

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**Morgen Hunt** <mebx3@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:59 PM

Reply-To: Morgen Hunt <mebx3@yahoo.com>

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/rbachtd/videos/190536626442413/>



**Ryan**

Watch this real doctor walk into a school board meeting  
and completely destroy the so called fake science  
coming...

**PLEASE TAKE THE STATEMENTS FROM THIS PHYSICIAN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN  
MAKING YOUR DECESION.**

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Support for masks in schools**

2 messages

**Ginny Wright Therriault** <ginnytherriault@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:51 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I want to express my support for elementary schools to require masks. I truly think the kids know how to wear the masks and are probably better at it than adults. More variants are starting to appear. I think it is imperative that the students not bring home any variants to parents or other family members. Also, most important is the fact that our teachers and other staff members not be exposed to the variants and vice versa. It will be a different situation, perhaps, when students 12 and under can be vaccinated. The science makes sense.

Thank you for allowing me to write this comment. I live 6 blocks from Paxson Elementary School and am friends with kids in the neighborhood.

Ginny Therriault  
223 E. Central Ave.  
Missoula, MT 59801

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:51 PM

To: ginnytherriault@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Jessica LaRubbio** <jlarubbio@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 10:12 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

I am a parent to two elementary age students and I support masking in school. This is a simple, but effective, strategy to mitigate spread. It is wise to maintain the mandate at this time, especially in light of the Delta variant's more contagious pattern and presence in our community. My child is too young to be vaccinated and also suffers from asthma. A mask mandate will protect my child.

Thank you,

Jessica LaRubbio

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 10:12 PM

To: jlarubbio@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**results of pro-mask petition**

2 messages

**Jaclyn Foster** <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:30 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Over the past week I have collected signatures from Montana residents who are in favor of school mask mandates per CDC and AAP guidelines, and who wanted to express their support for local school board control to State Superintendent Arntzen and Governor Gianforte. The results of this petition have been delivered to both state offices, and since 52.9% of the respondents were from Missoula, I thought you would like to see them as well in advance of tomorrow's meeting. We had 787 respondents who gave a Missoula County zip code, out of a total of 1486 responses. This petition not only indicates strong support for mask mandates for MCPS, but strong statewide support (contrary to the narrative that Missoula is alone in this position). A full list of signatures has been provided to each member of the MCPS school board.

The text of the petition reads:

The signers of this petition support mask mandates in Montana public schools for the Fall 2021 semester. They ask the MT state government to allow school districts the freedom to enact such mandates in accordance with the most recent guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control.

AAP Guidance, July 19, 2021: "Everything possible must be done to keep students in schools in-person...All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use). The AAP recommends universal masking in school at this time for the following reasons:

- a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccination
- protection of unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and to reduce transmission
- lack of a system to monitor vaccine status among students, teachers and staff
- potential difficulty in monitoring or enforcing mask policies for those who are not vaccinated; in the absence of schools being able to conduct this monitoring, universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without the added burden of needing to monitor vaccination status
- possibility of low vaccination uptake within the surrounding school community
- continued concerns for variants that are more easily spread among children, adolescents, and adults"

CDC Guidance, July 27, 2021: "Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the guidance for fully vaccinated people. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place."

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:30 AM

To: jaclynfoster93@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

## text of three public comments in MCPS meetings

1 message

**Jaclyn Foster** <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:31 AM

08/02/2021: A lack of mandates that leaves masking “up to parents” actually leaves the issue up to 5-year-olds. As a parent, I can send my kindergartener to school with a mask and talk to her all I want about the importance of wearing it, but at her maturity level it’s absurd to think she’ll keep it on all day if her friends aren’t or if her teacher can’t remind her to put it back on after lunch. It’s the job of adults to provide the structure and guidance needed to keep children safe. We need a mask mandate for the same reason I don’t offer my kid the “option” to have ice cream for dinner, or to play kickball in the street. Kids aren’t ready to carry the full responsibility for their safety and risk long-term complications they don’t understand, and parents need to know that their teachers are empowered to keep them as safe as possible according to AAP and CDC guidelines. Given Delta’s transmission rates, a recent study expects that without masks, 70% of all students will be infected within 3 months, a figure completely beyond the resources of our healthcare system — with mask mandates, that figure drops to 40%, reducing transmission by nearly half and buying time for the vaccine to be approved for ages 5-11.

08/03/2021: After yesterday’s meeting I watched a press conference by Dr. Mark Kline, Physician-in-Chief at Children’s Hospital New Orleans. He dispelled the myth that only children with pre-existing conditions are getting sick, saying: “Half the children we are seeing [hospitalized] with COVID were perfectly healthy.” He goes on to say “This delta variant is every infectious disease specialist’s worst nightmare.. There was a myth.. that children were somehow immune... It has become very clear that children are heavily impacted.” You know, during the best case/worst case exercise yesterday and today I heard a lot of worst case scenarios that boil down to “what if people get mad at us.” You want to know my worst case scenario? My kid brings covid home to my newborn and either one of them is hospitalized, or gets long covid. Or the pediatric ICUs fill up and my kid gets appendicitis or my newborn gets RSV. Or we lose our apartment during a housing crisis due to covid medical bills or tons of missed work due to repeated covid exposures. The CDC reports that over 200,000 children have been hospitalized with covid, pre-delta variant. Rates of hospitalization and disability affect children’s mental health, as does the fear of bringing covid home to at-risk family members. The British National Health Service says 7-8% of children experience long covid, and preliminary research suggests it’s caused by long-term neurological damage.\* Yesterday some commenters referenced a study in Germany purporting to show elevated CO2 levels due to masks. I got curious and looked up the study, and found out that it has since been retracted. The equipment they used to measure the CO2 levels was used incorrectly. Pulse oximeter data while masking has consistently shown CO2 levels within acceptable limits. While some people do experience a sense of breathlessness while masking, it is psychological, not physiological. As someone who experienced an anxiety disorder myself as a teen, I have a lot of sympathy for that. But I also know from personal experience that we know how to treat anxiety in children and teens. We don’t know how to treat long covid, or even if we will be able to. Last year we had three cases per 100k at the end of August, and we saw a giant wave within months. Today we saw we’re at 18 per 100k and on the rise, and delta is as contagious as chicken pox. We need masks. Nobody should have the right to expose my kid to a disease that’s only getting more dangerous for kids.

08/10/2021: Because we don’t have school transmission data on the delta variant, and news out of other states indicates it impacts kids worse, please keep the mask mandate for the first 6-8 weeks while we gather local data. We can reassess once we have a better picture of what delta looks like in our community. A leaked CDC internal document says the battle has changed against covid as a result of delta, and we don’t want to go in underprepared. Utah is hospitalizing a child under 12 every other day and expects the rate to increase. Louisiana and Arkansas pediatric hospitals are at capacity with children with tubes down their throats, half of whom had no pre-existing conditions. The Governor of Arkansas has been on the news regretting opposing masks and begging schools to implement mandates. Four Mississippi schools so far have already had to go online after only one or two weeks without masks. An intubated 11-month old couldn’t find a hospital bed at the largest children’s hospital in the nation in Houston and had to be airlifted 150 miles away. Child hospitalizations are at their highest rate in the whole pandemic. We’re incredibly lucky to not be the first state hit with this variant, and we should learn the lessons of other states while we still can. A study in the Lancet suggests 1 in 22 kids experience long covid — that’s one kid from every class acquiring a disability.

My family doesn’t have the option to do online learning — we can’t afford to have a parent lose work hours supervising that. We need our kid to be safe in school and not let cases build up to the point where we have to get back to phase 1 or 2. And let’s not pretend recommending masks means all parents who want kids masked can keep them masked. My kindergartener isn’t going to keep her mask on all day if her friends aren’t because she’s 5 and she isn’t capable of long-term reasoning yet. Young children benefit from 100% consistency, not a hodgepodge of different rules for different families, and at that age I don’t even have the choice to protect her via



vaccination. Masks are her only line of defense and she deserves a school experience that supports that. It's truly a difficult situation that no matter what the policy is, there's no solution here where individual choice occurs in a consequence-free vacuum. The founding fathers understood that in a healthy society, freedom is more complicated than doing whatever we want. Even George Washington mandated inoculation at Valley Forge and advised the Virginia legislature to mandate childhood inoculation,\* and some of the strongest local government measures in the revolutionary era were about preventing disease outbreaks. Public schools and public health is about the public good, and that's what the CDC and AAP guidelines are all about.

\*George Washington wrote in 1777: "If I was a Member of that [Virginia] Assembly I would rather move for a Law to compell the Masters of Families to inoculate every Child born within a certain limitted time under severe Penalties."

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Forced Masking**

2 messages

**Rena Wetherelt** <rena.wetherelt@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 5:30 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Forced masking is not without adverse effects. Serious physiological effects to the nervous system, brain, cardiovascular system and more occur when carbon dioxide levels in the blood are elevated. Studies have been conducted and published in the American Medical Association's Journal Pediatrics which measured levels of carbon dioxide in inhaled air of masked children over six times higher than a safe level within minutes of masking. The AMA published the report June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and retracted it within days. Why? is a question to be answered another time. Hard copies of the report along with many other reports of psychological, periodontal, dermatological and other adverse results from prolonged masking have been sent by mail to each of you. Imagine the distress caused to those with acne, hearing impairments, anxiety. What about children with glasses! You would be forcing behavior with adverse medical effects. Forcing children as young as four years old to wear a mask from the time they get on the bus until they return home hours later with only brief breathing breaks. If they balk, an adult will be nearby to FORCE them to comply.

Forced masking for long hours is sadistic child abuse, wrong on every level.

Montana law allows a cause of action against any party, including a school district, who a parent deems as interfering with their rights. The prevailing party in an action filed pursuant to this action is entitled to reasonable attorney fees and costs. Not only will we not comply, we will seek legal remedy on behalf of our children. If you vote to keep it voluntary, thank you.

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 5:30 AM

To: rena.wetherelt@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Protect our children**

1 message

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**elaine meeks** <meekselaine@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 6:59 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us" &lt;publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;

MCPS Board of Trustees,

There is nothing more precious to me than my grandchildren. They attend school in your district and we have been extremely pleased with the education they have received thus far. My grandson is too young to be eligible for vaccination. Masks and distancing are his only protection from COVID-19 infection.

As a retired school administrator from the Polson School District, I believe that the well being of the children is of utmost importance. I applaud the efforts last school year by MCPS to protect our children and continue to deliver high quality education under extreme circumstances.

I urge you to adopt the recommendation of your administrators and require masks with a reasonable review process. I hope the loud and uninformed anti mask proponents will not sway you from making the right decision for the children of MCPS.

Thank you for considering my input as you make this important decision.

Elaine Meeks

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**Masks at MCPS for Fall 2021**

1 message

**Susan Mace** <susanmace113@outlook.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:50 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear Superintendent Watson & MCPS Board of Trustees,

Thank you for your service to our community. Your work over the last 17 months has surely been more than you bargained for when you volunteered to be on the Board. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Throughout the entire pandemic, this Board has made tough decisions based on the most current data for the benefit of our students and everyone in our community with whom they come in contact. The Delta variant presents another such opportunity. Although it is difficult to revoke freedoms, we know that masks, social distancing, hand washing and staying home when you don't feel well are the basic actions we can all take when we are in public to minimize the spread of this strain of COVID. Those are the precautions that all of us took to reduce new infections prior to vaccines being available and we should implement those precautions again with the awareness that Delta is a more transmissible strain, even amongst those who are vaccinated. Both the CDC and our local health department are strongly recommending returning to masking.

The high schools are the only schools in our district where students are even eligible for vaccination, leaving most students in our district completely unprotected if there is not a mask requirement. Even when students are eligible for vaccination, many families have chosen for various reasons not to be vaccinated, and the message I have gotten from the principal of our school is that students will not be discriminated against based on vaccination status. Thus, masks, social distancing, and other precautions should be the standard for students, teachers and staff who spend their days in classrooms, intermingling with different groups of students, and eating in close proximity to others. Additionally, thought should be given to being ready to reimplement the alternate schedules of last year, requiring unmasked eating to occur outside, flexibility to expand online learning again, and various other precautions and protocols to protect our students and the larger community, while continuing to work towards the goal of educating children.

Thank you,

**Susan Mace**  
**406-531-2600**

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Policy**

2 messages

**Nicole Whitescarver** <nmwhitescarver@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:14 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been teaching for 17 years. This year will be my 7th at Sentinel High School.

Last year was miserable. The schedule and policies changed constantly and were a barrier to student and teacher success. Students were self isolating, they didn't participate in group discussion and were terrified of one another. When they did speak it was muffled and unintelligible.

I am writing with the hope that you can all understand that not all teachers want to wear masks in the classroom. We have had the chance to be vaccinated as have students and their families. Please allow families and teachers the choice in wearing a mask.

I would rather take a leave of absence than wear a mask all day for another year. I would rather quit than watch students suffer in silence, isolated by distance and fear.

Please make masks optional and lower class sizes for physical distancing. Use the federal and local funding to provide effective healthy supports for teachers and students.

Thank you,  
Nicole Whitescarver

--

*N.M. Whitescarver*  
Art Educator  
Sentinel High School

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:15 AM

To: nmwhitescarver@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Scientific information to review**

2 messages

**Sherri Howe** <sherrihowe22@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:21 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Please review this information before making a decision on mandating our children to wear masks. Please share this video with your board members.

Make an informed decision rather than a politically charged decision or a decision based on misinformation.

[https://youtu.be/\\_9KnhUu7Ba4](https://youtu.be/_9KnhUu7Ba4)

With respect,  
Sherri Howe

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Thank you,  
Sherri Howe

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Thank you,  
Sherri Howe

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:21 AM

To: sherrihowe22@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Covering Requirement**

2 messages

**Luke Jackson** <jacksonluke801@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:38 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello Mr Watson and MCPS Board -

I am in favor of the proposed face covering for all students students, staff, volunteers and guests regardless of vaccination status while indoors or on buses. Please consider my support when making this decision.

Thank you!

Luke Jackson

406.546.6828

Parent to rising 6th Grader at Washington School

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:39 AM

To: jacksonluke801@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**VOTE YES on a MASK MANDATE**

2 messages

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**Carleen Hathaway** <chathaway@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:58 AM

Good morning Dr. Watson and Members of the MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing this morning to request you once again require face masks be worn by students, staff and guests into MCPS facilities. Please do not allow your emotional buttons to be pushed in making this decision. This decision, like numerous others that were made and enacted, needs to be based on science, on evidence and on the absolute obligation to keep our students, staff and community as safe as possible.

I have watched in front offices of schools where students were not allowed to come to school unless their vaccination records were up-to-date. Vaccinations (MMR) that are required of kids to attend school. That's in place for the health and safety of students and staff in our schools.

A few years back, all staff members were required to provide proof of having been vaccinated against whooping cough. That was for the health and safety of students and staff.

There is no use of tobacco (smoking, chewing, vaping) on school grounds for the health and safety of students and staff.

Weapons of any kind are not allowed on campus because their use by a person poses a threat to the health and safety of others.

The consideration of all above instances were based not on emotion but on facts that those situations pose a potential threat to the health and safety of others. Individual families do not get to say whether or not they will follow those rules.

The COVID virus poses a proven threat to the health and safety of others. Mitigation procedures as carried out by our custodial/maintenance staff are necessary as well as appreciated. But the added use of wearing masks reduces those risks even more.



Children can and have gotten COVID. Whether it was a mild case or not should have no bearing on the issue. Why would anyone be ok with the possibility that their child *could* catch a potentially deadly virus? Makes no sense. And just because 'some kids' have had mild cases does not mean that others' bodies would react the same way. I am not willing to put my 5 year old granddaughter's life on the line to test that theory.

You have scientific fact-based evidence that masks greatly reduce the spread of this virus. That is what you need to base your decision to mask or not upon. The backlash, warned of by some, should you enact a mask mandate should be tolerable in place of the backlash of your staff using up the self funded insurance plan should they be hospitalized for COVID, the backlash of short staffed classrooms with a spread, the backlash of having to scramble again to create online learning for all, the backlash of again closing down doors to other establishments because of a spread, the backlash of overflowing hospital wards and not enough medical personnel to attend to patients, and certainly, the backlash of watching families witness the death of a loved one, who was vulnerable to COVID.

The District put in place a mask mandate last school year and we were successful in handling it emotionally and physically. That is not to say all were happy with that mandate. But with this new variant running through the world, I do not want my family, friends, co-workers or myself to become a COVID statistic, counted in the LOSS column.

It is a small and simple step to take to protect yourselves and others around you. People are not being asked to wear haz-mat suits and rubber gloves. It's a mask through which you can breathe.

Do you wear your seatbelt? Does it protect you 'just in case'? Do you follow the rules by not smoking on school grounds because it's a risk to yourself and others? Did you get polio last month? Last year? In your lifetime?

Please base your decision on facts, not on emotions. I don't envy your need to make this decision but I will be impacted by it. I am hoping that impact will come in the form of my family, friends, co-workers and me being able to remain COVID-free because my employer and my community recognized the need to mask-up!

Please don't let this COVID variant get a foothold in Missoula.

Thank you. I wish you all good health.

**Carleen L. Hathaway**  
MMCEO Secretary-Treasurer  
Porter Para Ed



#MeandMyShadow

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: chathaway@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:59 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks in school**

2 messages

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**Heather Holbrook** <heatherholbrook@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:08 AM

Board of Trustees,

I wanted to send in my support for Dr. Watson's draft proposal to begin the school year with universal masking. I know there are a lot of loud voices who are against masking. I know this will be a tough decision with a lot of controversy. I wanted to make sure my voice was heard, even if it's a quiet voice. I was hopeful mid-summer that we would not need masks in school this year, however with the resurgence of the virus in our area as well as the dire situations for those seeking medical care in the southern parts of our country right now, I think masking is a simple safeguard we can enact to protect our community more. Our elementary students do not have the opportunity to get the vaccine and as such do not have the same level of protection that the rest of us have access to. I know there are also other vulnerable populations within our schools that also need to be protected with a safe school environment. I and my children have no problem wearing a mask to protect those around us who need it. I feel masking in schools will allow our school year to be more normal with less disruptions for the students. My children are ready and excited to go back to school and do not feel like masks are harmful in anyway. The argument of parent choice in masking does not work, as we know that masking is only effective when all or at least the vast majority of individuals wear them. I appreciate the board's decision to enforce masking in our schools based on science as well as the recommendations of the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Thank you,

Heather Holbrook  
Parent to 4 in MCPS schools

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: heatherholbrook@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:08 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Universal Face Coverings--Is "mask" a controversial word now?**

2 messages

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**Ronda Schiess** <rondaschiess@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:11 AM

Masks must be mandatory for all students and staff in every school this year for the following reasons:

1. To protect our unvaccinated, and thus very vulnerable children from this more dangerous, way more contagious Delta variant.
2. To protect our children's essential in-class education experiences. If unmasked students or teachers spread the disease, schools will have to quarantine large numbers of students and staff which may eventually lead to school shut-downs and a return to remote learning.
3. To reassure parents who might be reluctant to send their kids into a potentially dangerous situation, and to increase the chances that they will be able to go to work themselves instead of having to either care for a sick child, or homeschool their kids.
4. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ronda Schiess  
Retired 5th Grade Teacher

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: rondaschiess@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:11 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Recommendations**

2 messages

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**Kristi Steinberg** <krististeinberg18@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:40 AM

Hello,

I am the parent of an MCPS 6th grader and am writing to express my support for the proposed mask recommendations. I believe our students need to be back in classrooms with a regular schedule and that masking is the safest way to make that happen. I am getting tired of hearing the argument that you can't require masks. We make students wear shoes and clothes. They can wear masks.

Thank you.

Kristine Steinberg

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: krististeinberg18@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:40 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**No Mask Mandate**

2 messages

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**Janice Fortney** <bnjfortney@comcast.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:49 AM

Please do not ignore the great harm done to our children caused by COVID hysteria. Any attempt by Missoula County Public Schools to continue to forcibly mask our children will only cause more depression and suicide attempts, a risk with far greater consequences than COVID. Please do NOT impose a mask mandate. Let parents make their own decisions regarding their children's health. It would be better to offer online learning for at-risk children than to mandate masking!

Janice Fortney  
A Concerned Missoula Citizen

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: bnjfortney@comcast.net

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:50 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Willy Williams** <Willysauto@outlook.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:57 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

This is out of control. If there is a mandate to wear masks the only choice you leave me is to pull my child out of public school. I am

Beyond pissed about this. There is way more parents not wanting their kids masked up at school than parents that want their kids masked up at school. I believe the school board is over stepping their bounds at this point. My child will not be attending school this year. I will home school him.

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:57 AM

To: Willysauto@outlook.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask guidelines**

2 messages

**Amish, Stephen** <Stephen.Amish@mso.umt.edu>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:13 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

1. Masks save lives.
2. Masks are a safe and easy way to protect kids under 12 and vulnerable people from the spread of Covid.
3. Masks are not unsafe or dangerous for kids to wear.

Steve Amish  
Conservation Genomics Group  
Flathead Lake Biological Station  
Division of Biological Sciences  
University of Montana  
406.243.5285 office  
406.214.1701 cell  
stephen.amish@mso.umt.edu

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:13 AM

To: Stephen.Amish@mso.umt.edu

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>**

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**Yes to masks in school**

1 message

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**Agatha Light Podrasky** <aslight42@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:31 AM

I am writing to express my support of requiring masks for all students, staff, volunteers and anyone in MCPS schools this fall. Children under 12 cannot yet be vaccinated and can contract, experience symptoms (including severe in some cases) and spread the prevalent delta variant of covid-19. Masks are a simple and effective way of decreasing airborne particles and droplets that spread the covid-19 virus.

---

**Mandate COVID vaccinations in schools, not masks**

2 messages

**Eva Dunn-Froebig** <evapdf@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:51 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Dear Missoula County Board of Trustees:

There is nothing we want more than our son to have a normal high school experience. We don't want him to wear a mask all day at school and we want him to be able to freely socialize with other kids and make new friends in the classroom and during extracurricular activities. We want spectators to attend his basketball games. We want to attend his band concerts and for him to see smiles in the audience. We want him to go to social events like the prom and Homecoming and to be able to see the expressions on his friends' faces.

We don't want him to wear a mask at school. No one wants their child to wear a mask at school. But it's going to be necessary due to more contagious variants-- unless we add COVID vaccines to the list of required vaccinations for students 12 and older and staff. Many of us have unvaccinated family members or high risk family members who are vaccinated and are still at risk, so we need to continue wearing masks for the time being. But, if we mandate that all Missoula County Public School staff and students 12 years old and older get the COVID vaccine, mask wearing may not be necessary at our high schools.

We understand that the Montana legislature has banned public school systems in Montana from requiring the COVID vaccine for eligible students. This is a morally repugnant directive and will likely end up being decided in the courts. In the meantime, we believe the Missoula County Public School system has a moral imperative to issue a COVID vaccine requirement in order to protect everyone in the community. Medical and religious exemptions for COVID vaccines will still be available to anyone who wants to make that argument, but with a requirement in place, the vast majority of students would be vaccinated and therefore provide substantial protection to the student body, and their friends and families. The scientific evidence is clear that face coverings offer significant protection when all are wearing them, but the vastly more contagious Delta variant of COVID has rendered them less effective. Vaccination provides much greater protection even against the Delta variant. It's clear that the only path forward is a vaccine requirement for all eligible students. By not requiring it this year, we are guaranteeing there will be more unnecessary and preventable disease and death in our community. It's inevitable despite the negligent actions of our state legislature, that a COVID vaccine will be required for public school students at some point.

Let's be ahead of that curve and do it now, in the interest of protecting our community. The highly effective vaccines that are readily available and free of charge have given us an opportunity to keep our students safe and have a normal school experience. Our hearts break thinking that our son may never have a normal high school experience.

Eva Dunn-Froebig  
Doug Hawes-Davis

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:51 AM

To: evapdf@gmail.com

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**Board Meeting Comment**

2 messages

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**Adrienne Hopkins** <ahopkins@missoulaagingservices.org>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:55 AM

Hello,

I would like to add this comment:

"I thank the MCPS Board for making the hard choices to do what is best for the students. Foster Grandparent and RSVP Tutor volunteers are ready, willing and able to go back to helping kids one-on-one to make it to grade level. We're here to help!"

Adrienne Hopkins

**Adrienne Hopkins**

*Foster Grandparent and RSVP Tutor Coordinator*

T 406.728.7682 F 406.728.7687

337 Stephens Ave. Missoula, MT 59801

**MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG**

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: ahopkins@missoulaagingservices.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:55 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Masks in schools**

2 messages

**Ericka Schenck** <e.schenck@me.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:22 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hi. I'm a parent of an incoming freshman and senior at Hellgate. Both are vaccinated. But I still want them and everyone else around them masked indoors. We have lost a family member to covid, and another has been very sick this week with a breakthrough infection. Even among the vaccinated, the risk of long covid in my children who already suffer some neurological issues (ADHD and concussion-related memory loss) is terrifying to me, and putting them at risk when it's so easy to protect them by enforcing masking is simply careless.

(Please see this, from the New York Times last week: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/health/long-covid-kids.html>)

The easiest, most equitable solution is requiring everyone in every school building to wear a mask (with exceptions for kids with certain disabilities and sensory issues). Anything short of that is a risk we shouldn't take - not with our kids, nor with the broader community - and is too complicated for already overworked teachers to try to enforce. The science is on the side of masking, especially with widespread delta variant infection. Just follow it.

Thank you,  
Ericka Schenck  
Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:22 AM

To: e.schenck@me.com

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**Back to School Plans**

2 messages

**Leah Rissien** <tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:34 AM

Reply-To: Leah Rissien &lt;tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Thank you so much for all the work you did to put together a draft plan for returning to school later this month. I think the plan is an excellent balance between making sure that all children, staff, and volunteers are using best health practices yet still allowing a measure of freedom when it is safe to do so.

Please do not listen to the small minority who are making a great deal of noise about wearing masks. There has been plenty of research to show that masks ARE effective. I 100% support mask wearing in school. My son is 9 years old and cannot be vaccinated. He and so many like him would not be safe at school unless there is a universal mask policy. Both the CDC and the AAP agree that masks should be part of all return to school plans.

I urge you to adopt the draft plan without modifications, unless they are toward more stringent mask requirements. Thank you!

Leah Rissien  
parent of a child at Franklin Elementary

**Leah Rissien, Norwex Sales Consultant**

P (614) 448-6576 | E [tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net)

[www.LeahRissien.norwex.biz](http://www.LeahRissien.norwex.biz)

[www.facebook.com/lmaGreenerCleaner/](https://www.facebook.com/lmaGreenerCleaner/)

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:35 AM

To: tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Request for Teacher Vaccination Mandate**

2 messages

**Saldin, Erin** <Erin.Saldin@mso.umt.edu>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:43 AM

To: "Rwatson@mcpsmt.org" &lt;Rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;, Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello, Superintendent Watson,

First, thank you for your recommendation to the Board that masks be required of all in Missoula Public Schools. It is a much-needed and very basic safety measure at this point. Thank you.

Second, it is not the only safety measure that we need. As a parent, I am horrified that the teachers in the public schools aren't required to be vaccinated. In our home, we are doing everything we can to mitigate the danger of COVID for our children; it's shocking to me that the schools are not doing the same by making sure that the teachers are all vaccinated. Since COVID is increasingly a pandemic of the unvaccinated, those teachers who haven't had their shots will likely get the virus, and they will be in classrooms with our most precious children.

My partner and I have been active members of the school community at Paxson, where our two girls attend. We continue to step up whenever there is a need for resources. We are proud of our public schools in Missoula, and proud to have children in the public schools. But I would be lying if I said I hadn't called every school that is not in the public system to see if they are requiring vaccinations of teachers, and that--if any had been--we would have left the system and institution that we love because we can't rely on it to protect our children.

Third, when vaccines are available for children, please require the COVID vaccine in the same way that you require all other vaccines in order to attend school. That's the only way we get through this and our children start learning once again.

It is with a fearful and heavy heart that we send our children back to school this fall.

All best,  
Erin Saldin

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:43 AM

To: Erin.Saldin@mso.umt.edu

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Re: covid task meeting!**

2 messages

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**Kristy Tripp** <kristytripp4@gmail.com>

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:56 AM

#NoMask #NoSchool #NotTrue

📌 To parents sending your children back to public school. Do not beg the school boards for rights you already have. The state of emergency was ended by the Governor and school board rules cannot supersede the law!

📌 Government liability related to covid-19 policies was limited by HB 435 with the limitations on requirements in sub-section 6.

(1) If a federal or state statute, regulation, order, or public health guidance related to covid-19 recommends or requires the use of a face mask, a government entity is not required to ensure face masks are being used or a face mask is sufficient to stop the spread of covid-19 to meet the standard of care.

Read and download full law text here:

<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2021/sesslaws/ch0516.pdf>

If a public school refuses to teach or admit a pupil, they are in violation of MT state constitution and various state laws, please seek legal counsel and sue these schools and boards.



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**No mandatory masking of our children**

2 messages

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**sarah taylor** <sarallison@hotmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 5:46 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I am a mother of a Lolo elementary student and aunt to Lewis and Clark children.

Masking should be up to the parents and children if they want to wear a mask. Please do not issue mandatory masking of our children. I could state the argument against masking but you've heard it a million times. I've heard the opposing view a million times. There are good people on both sides of this argument so please let parents make their own informed decision about the welfare of their children.

Thank you  
Lolo mom Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 5:46 PM

To: sarallison@hotmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Clinton Decker** <cdecker406@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 8:03 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To the Superintendent and Trustees,

I am writing to express my opposition to a mask mandate for the 2021/2022 school year.

Vaccines are widely available, hand washing and sanitation procedures are highly effective. If families and students choose to wear masks that is their absolute right to do that, just as every family and student should have the right to not wear a mask as well.

Do the right thing and allow the parents to choose as they are our children and we as parents will do what's best for our children.

Clinton Decker  
4259 Muggle Ln  
Missoula, MT 59808  
(406) 214-5541

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 8:03 PM

To: cdecker406@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Fwd: Yes to masks**

2 messages

**Linda Noson** <linda.noson@gmail.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 9:42 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello:

As a grandmother of two children in Missoula, I and their parents strongly support having them wear masks to school. Neither child has objected. I agree parents have a right to protect their children as they see fit. However they do not have the right to impose an action that may have deadly consequences on another child. Perhaps home schooling could be an option for them. I can't imagine the school district agreeing to allow students to play football without a helmet because some parents were against it. That would be ridiculous. And yet not wearing a helmet would not harm the rest of the team. Covid will. I do not envy you the vitriol that will be coming your way. Sadly it would seem that the anti-maskers are a highly motivated and angry group. Please act to protect our children.

Sincerely,

Linda Noson  
Linda.noson@gmail.com  
2726 Highland Drive  
Missoula, Mt 59802

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Linda Noson  
Missoula, MT 59801

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Linda Noson  
Missoula, MT 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 9:42 PM

To: linda.noson@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**support of masking for all ages at MCPS**

1 message

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**kirsten tullius** <kirstentullius@yahoo.com>

Sat, Aug 7, 2021 at 10:10 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello

I am writing to inform all interested parties that I support the proposed masking plan that has been shared with all MCPS families. I have 2 children that are not eligible for the COVID vaccine yet and I trust MCPS to follow the medical professionals recommendations regarding masking in indoor places such as schools. It is recommended by the CDC, the AAP and the MT chapter of AAP that all children 2+ mask up indoors. It is my recommendation we follow these guidelines to help ensure our children can have the safest school year possible.

Thank you for your consideration

Kirsten Kuhnle

MCPS Parent

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Mandate**

2 messages

**Lanny Logan** <langasman@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:27 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To Whom It May Concern,

It is time the Freedom of Choice is honored concerning the thought of forcing our school students to wear mask to school.

This is a choice. If a student chooses to wear a mask or not to wear a mask to school, either choice should be respected. If your child is sick, Use common decency and keep them home. Use your head.

Let's be reasonable Missoula.

Respectfully,

Lanny Logan

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:27 AM

To: langasman@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask requirement in MCPS schools**

2 messages

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**Rob Stenger** <stenger.rob@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:04 AM

Dear MCPS Trustees,

I am writing to you in my capacities as a physician in our community, an MCPS parent of two COVID-vaccinated students (ages 12 and 14) and as the physician member of the Missoula City-County Board of Health.

As you are well aware, we are experiencing another uptick in COVID disease activity, including increased hospitalizations and deaths. This increase is being fueled by the delta variant, which has shown an increased ability to be transmitted, even among vaccinated individuals. While universal vaccination is the best possible protection against a resurgence of COVID in our community, the majority of our MCPS students will not be eligible for vaccination until sometime in the fall or early winter. Current Missoula County vaccination rates stand at around 30% for 12-14 year olds and 50% for 15-19 year olds.

I strongly urge you to require universal masking for students, teachers and staff in MCPS schools for the start of the fall semester. The CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and others have issued well-reasoned and researched guidance recommending masking in schools. I understand that this issue is controversial, but the science is clear. Masking is probably one of the most effective and least disruptive COVID mitigation measures available to schools, especially until more of our children are eligible for vaccination. Universal masking in schools is likely to significantly reduce the number of students, teachers and staff who will require absence from school or work for either COVID illness or quarantine after exposure. This is one of the most important things you can do to keep all of our students in school and reduce the transmission of COVID in our community.

As an aside, I would encourage MCPS to do whatever you can to encourage vaccination of all eligible MCPS students, teachers and staff, up to and including vaccination requirements to attend in-person school or participate in extracurricular activities or group travel.

Finally, I would like to applaud all of you for your leadership over the past year. I believe MCPS has been a model for transparency, clarity and public accountability in decisionmaking around COVID. You have made good decisions that have kept our kids in school and protected the public health. Keep up the good work.

Rob Stenger, MD, MPH

Physician Member  
Missoula City-County Board of HealthProgram Director  
Family Medicine Residency of Western Montana

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: stenger.rob@gmail.com

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:04 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**I support requiring masks in schools**

2 messages

**David Tyson** <david.r.tyson@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:19 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Cc: rwatson@mcpsmt.org

To the MCPCS Board of Trustees:

My name is David Tyson and my daughter will begin Kindergarten at Paxson this Fall. As you are aware, the CDC and American Pediatric Group are strongly encouraging school boards to require masks in schools for everyone, regardless of vaccination status. I urge you to approve the Superintendent's Covid reopening plan which requires face coverings in MCPS buildings.

As Covid-19 cases are on the rise and there is currently no vaccine available for young children, she and others will be safer if masks are required for all students and faculty. Thank you for making this difficult decision that ultimately will better protect our children and their teachers.

Sincerely,  
David Tyson  
1101 S 5th St W,  
Missoula, Mt 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:19 AM

To: david.r.tyson@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Masks**

2 messages

**Jamie Matthew** <doublejmaintenance@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 11:39 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Good afternoon.

As a father of two Highschool students I ask that you consider not enforcing a mask mandate. This country was founded on our rights and this is a right to choose. Hear allot about my body my choice, transgender , list goes on and on. Why should you be able to tell me my kids need to use a mask. If I choose not to get vaccine for me or my children that's my choice and I have to live with that discussion if something happens.

If you want to wear a mask great your choice if you want to get vaccinated your choice if I don't my choice. I also believe no judgment either way if wear a mask or not. Again my body my choice.

If a mask mandate put in I believe you will further draw a line of who's to blame. Let our children have a normal school year.

No masks please.

Jonathan Matthew.

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 11:39 AM

To: doublejmaintenance@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks**

1 message

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**Holly Shoup** <hollyshoup@yahoo.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 1:09 PM

Reply-To: Holly Shoup &lt;hollyshoup@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I am writing in response to the mask situation. I have 3 children attending this year and I dont agree with them wearing masks.

My thoughts are its a choice, not a demand. If someone chooses to wear the mask, cool, if not, also cool.

This situation is getting out of control. Please stop forcing masks.

Holly Shoup

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**face masks**

2 messages

**Larissa Karabensh** <llkarabensh@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 2:09 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello

I am writing to express my concern for implementing face masks at MCPS.

I feel like the high schoolers should have a choice in whether they wear masks or not. There was a push to get these kids vaccinated, many have done so and now you are going to require masks?! And if you are going to require them, then are you going to make them wear them while playing sports, in the cafeteria etc... it makes no sense!

Larissa Karabensh

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 2:10 PM

To: llkarabensh@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Strategic Plan**

1 message

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**StormyNite** <stormynite1228@yahoo.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 3:24 PM

Reply-To: StormyNite &lt;stormynite1228@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

You all should be arrested. Your Inclusion and Equity training is nothing but Critical Race Theory!

You obviously feel the Montana laws are subject to interpretation. Let's see how the Attorney General feels about your blatant attempt to break the law. My next email, as well as everyone I know... will be to him. I think those of you who vote for this gross EQUITY plan are asking for legal intervention and deserve jail time. All parents should pull their students out and home school them. You obviously do not have our children's best welfare in mind and should resign your positions immediately.

Barb Starmer  
Missoula, MT

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**2021-2022 school year**

2 messages

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**Mike Kantor Kantor** <aleta.mk@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:05 PM

Dear Dr. Watson and MCPS,

I request that you require all staff and students to wear face masks for the foreseeable future. Rates in Montana are shooting up and not enough people are vaccinated to let down our guard. Using the "honor system" for masking the unvaccinated will leave others at risk from the unvaccinated who refuse to do so for political reasons. We should follow the recommendations of the CDC. Also, learning on-line is not a good option for a third year. Our children need to socialize and at-risk-students are the ones who suffer the most when schools do not meet in person.

Respectfully,  
Aleta Kantor

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: aleta.mk@gmail.com

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:05 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**MCPS mask policy 2021 -2022**

2 messages

**Henry Davey** <hdavey406@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Greetings MCPS covid task force and MCPS board of trustees,

I am writing in support of requiring MCPS students wearing masks for the upcoming school year to help slow the spread of Covid-19 and particularly the Delta variant. Not only will this help to protect students and staff, but it will help protect the community at large. In addition I would expect this simple measure to increase the in person attendance at the schools as high risk individuals are less likely to op-out if they feel safe at school. This is a simple measure that can prevent unnecessary suffering and save lives. Failure to take preventative measures during a pandemic is disrespectful of students, staff and community. Please demonstrate responsibility and respect by supporting masking up at MCPS this fall.

Sincerely, Henry Davey

Concerned grandparent of MCPS students and a Missoula resident.

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: hdavey406@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Mandate**

1 message

**Kendall Earle** <kendallearle@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 6:08 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

Myself being not only a student in the MCPS School district, but also a Registered Behavior Technician, I do not think you should vote to mandate masks this school year or ever for that fact.

It has been long enough, it's time to stop.

Not only have we been on our own free will not wearing masks for these past four months now, but we've already tried wearing masks for over the past year. Clearly they don't work, they only make anxious people feel better. The minority. That is their issue.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**Masks in schools**

2 messages

**Amanda Attard** <amandamae.attard@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 7:04 PM

To whom it may concern,

Please consider NOT issuing a mask mandate for children in school this year. As I'm sure it's been observed, student mental health is severely affected by having a reduced school schedule, and by wearing masks. I do understand that this will put many people at a higher risk of catching the virus, and I hope there is an online school option for those who need it. But for my children, they need to be in school. In our society, it has become essential for parents to be able to send their kids to a full school day in order to work. Most families in the valley need both parents to work in order to afford to live here, and there isn't enough affordable and quality childcare in order for that to happen. It's a difficult situation. Three of my four children are school aged and all of them previously loved school. When the schools had to shut down, and adopt a hybrid model, my children really struggled. My high school senior, who is a very studious, organized person who loves school, loves teachers, and wants to be one herself, has grown to hate it over the course of the pandemic and considers dropping out. My high school sophomore is now wishing he could drop out of school and just start working. My junior high girl is a spatial thinker and needs to be moving, touching, interacting, and online school did absolutely nothing for her but frustrate her and put her in a screen-stupor. The impact that this lack of normalcy has had on my kids is enormous. Please don't hear me put all the pressure of creating normalcy for my kids and the passion for learning all on the school, my husband and I are doing everything we can to create normalcy for them at home and try to give them a passion for learning and growing no matter how it looks. But as I said before, our current society and family systems rely heavily on the school system in order for parents to work and provide food and clothing and a home for our families. Please consider normalcy for our kids this school year. The mental health crisis goes far beyond COVID-19, let's put some emphasis on that and take it seriously.

Thank you.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Unconstitutional , unlawful breach if rights... do NOT mask our children!**

2 messages

**Mallory Henkins** <malloryidahostars@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 9:11 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Do NOT mask our children!

Not only is masking our children over -reaching boundaries on so many levels it is also unconstitutional and illegal.

It is our rights as parents to protect the best interest of our children and it is not up to the school board, district or any other entity to mandate /require something that is against the parents consent.

By trying to push your mandates/requirements on our children you're not only stepping on our rights but you are breaching what is already set in place by the constitution which states that such requirements are illegal and unlawful unless otherwise stated in a state of emergency by the governor...

And we are NOT in a state of emergency.

Do NOT mask our children!

---

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 9:11 PM

To: malloryidahostars@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask**

2 messages

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**Geni Goodman** <genigoodman@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:11 PM

For the safety of the teachers as well as students please make a mask mandate. We've got to Protect our community

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: genigoodman@gmail.com

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 8:11 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Michelle Dunn** <michelledunn.0518@gmail.com>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:09 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

I'm not sure if you're actually listening to all the parents or just opening up public comment to appease the process. Leave this choice up to the parents. How is it that you can have large groups all over Missoula with concerts, gatherings, eating together and yet you're going to mask the children? I stand for the choice to be left up to the families.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:10 PM

To: michelledunn.0518@gmail.com

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

3 messages

Micah Dalbey &lt;pickstrum@gmail.com&gt;

Sun, Aug 8, 2021 at 10:46 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, covidquestions@mcpsmt.org

Dear Board of Trustees and district team,

My name is Micah and my wife and I have 6 children in MCPS. First, I want to thank you for your leadership during this trying season. I know it hasn't been easy. Second, we love Missoula and our public schools. Third, I'm writing to ask you to side with our governing authorities and health department by leaving masks as optional for this fall. I believe the board and public school officials exist to serve the wishes of the parents and it seems obvious to me from the last public forum that the overwhelming majority of parents support being able to choose. Those who are nervous can wear masks, but requiring all our children to continue this for another year when so many are in favor of allowing people to make their own choice - it just doesn't make sense, especially in light of such low COVID numbers among our school children last year.

Speaking personally, our kids really struggled last year hearing their teachers and having wet, germ infested masks on their faces all day. Again, we love MCPS schools, but honestly, we are exploring other schooling options in the event that the board goes against the state and county guidance and the will of the parents on this. And for the record, I don't question that the use of masks reduces the spread of germs, but the question is *at what cost?* And most importantly for me, should a board that is elected to represent the will of the parents make decisions in line with what parents want?

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Respectfully,  
Micah

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:01 AM Missoula County Public Schools &lt;noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt; wrote:

**Dear MCPS Families:**

Thank you for your interest and questions related to the COVID Reopening Plan for Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Also, thank you for your patience as we finalized our plan with the latest local and national guidance. In revising the phase 3 plan for the upcoming year our COVID task force remained focused on the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. You can find the full Phase 3 Reopen Plan [HERE](#).

As you look through our plan, it is important to note that while many of the mitigation strategies are still in place, we expect this year to be much different than last year. As you may recall, we started last year in a hybrid school model, however this year we will be starting with every day for every student and a longer school day than last year. In addition, some of the other pre-COVID school routines will return - lunch in the cafeteria, normal rotation of elective programs, opportunities to participate in school activities programs as well as opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools. We are excited to start the school year and look forward to offering a different experience than last year, while at the same time maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

While we know there continue to be risks related to possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we are reflecting on what we have learned about this pandemic over the past year to manage that risk, balance the need for mitigation strategies with the educational needs of students, and forge ahead with recovery efforts. I would like to share relevant details and strategies listed below related to how we intend to operate our schools in the coming months.

**Mitigation Strategies**

We will continue to work with the health department to trace, identify and notify close contacts to all positive COVID cases associated with MCPS. New guidance from the CDC should greatly reduce the number of students considered close contacts, if universal face coverings are used. We will also continue with cleaning procedures, maintenance of our ventilation systems, and enhanced hand hygiene practices.

Classrooms will operate much like they did in pre-COVID times, while maintaining 3 feet or as much as possible between students or groups, while implementing other mitigation strategies.

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**GET THE MASKS OFF OUR KIDS!**

2 messages

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**Diana Wilsey** <dianawilsey@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:04 AM

[https://www.wsj.com/articles/masks-children-parenting-schools-mandates-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-biden-administration-cdc-11628432716?fbclid=IwAR11SLVP1MvAa7nQPj0fDB\\_ipOchslO2XCcoUNAsnBc-N6fU3eFwYZfdyJI](https://www.wsj.com/articles/masks-children-parenting-schools-mandates-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-biden-administration-cdc-11628432716?fbclid=IwAR11SLVP1MvAa7nQPj0fDB_ipOchslO2XCcoUNAsnBc-N6fU3eFwYZfdyJI)

There have been ZERO conclusive studies to show that masks do anything against the Corona Virus.... but there have been numerous CONCLUSIVE studies that show masks DO HARM!!!!

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: dianawilsey@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:04 AM

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**Re: COVID Reopening Plan**

3 messages

**Christopher Reidy** <reidy.christopher@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:30 AM

To: Missoula County Public Schools &lt;noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;, "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear School Board, COVID task force members, and Mr. Watson,

Thank you for your thoughtful preparation for the upcoming school year.

I am writing in support of the superintendent's planned mandatory masking policy. As a critical care (ICU) physician in Missoula, I have seen firsthand how devastating COVID related illness can be. As an MCPS parent I agree strongly with masking to reduce the risk to our children until all have the opportunity to receive the COVID vaccine.

Thank you for keeping our children safe.

Chris Reidy MD

On Thu, Aug 5, 2021 at 10:00 AM Missoula County Public Schools <noreply@mcps.k12.mt.us> wrote:

**Dear MCPS Families:**

Thank you for your interest and questions related to the COVID Reopening Plan for Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. Also, thank you for your patience as we finalized our plan with the latest local and national guidance. In revising the phase 3 plan for the upcoming year our COVID task force remained focused on the safety and welfare of our students, staff and community. You can find the full Phase 3 Reopen Plan [HERE](#).

As you look through our plan, it is important to note that while many of the mitigation strategies are still in place, we expect this year to be much different than last year. As you may recall, we started last year in a hybrid school model, however this year we will be starting with every day for every student and a longer school day than last year. In addition, some of the other pre-COVID school routines will return - lunch in the cafeteria, normal rotation of elective programs, opportunities to participate in school activities programs as well as opportunities for parents to volunteer in the schools. We are excited to start the school year and look forward to offering a different experience than last year, while at the same time maintaining a safe environment for all students and staff.

While we know there continue to be risks related to possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus, we are reflecting on what we have learned about this pandemic over the past year to manage that risk, balance the need for mitigation strategies with the educational needs of students, and forge ahead with recovery efforts. I would like to share relevant details and strategies listed below related to how we intend to operate our schools in the coming months.

**Mitigation Strategies**

We will continue to work with the health department to trace, identify and notify close contacts to all positive COVID cases associated with MCPS. New guidance from the CDC should greatly reduce the number of students considered close contacts, if universal face coverings are used. We will also continue with cleaning procedures, maintenance of our ventilation systems, and enhanced hand hygiene practices.

Classrooms will operate much like they did in pre-COVID times, while maintaining 3 feet or as much as possible between students or groups, while implementing other mitigation strategies.

We will continue to ask that families keep their students home if they are ill, particularly if they are unvaccinated for COVID-19. Testing will be available to all students and staff via MCPS or the Missoula City-County Health Department. A reminder of our family guidance for keeping a child home [here](#).

MCPS will update staff and families on vaccination eligibility and opportunities for 5-11 year-olds and encourage all vaccine-eligible students and staff to consider getting vaccinated, if it is right for you and your family. While COVID vaccines are encouraged, we cannot require COVID vaccines, which is explained in state law [HERE](#).

**DRAFT Face Covering Guidelines**

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**My 3 children went through MCPS**

2 messages

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**Janet Sedgley** <sedghog@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:10 AM

And I support the Missoula School Board's right (and actually responsibility) to require masks as kids head back to school. This decision can be changed later.

I believe it is traditional for teachers to start with strong structure and discipline and then slowly ease off as the school year progresses. In the same way, MCPSSs should start with masks and then ease off later if that seems appropriate.

Janet Sedgley  
720 Michigan Ave  
Missoula, MT  
406-370-4796

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: sedghog@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:10 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Opposed to mask mandate**

2 messages

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**gingerbounce2@gmail.com** <gingerbounce2@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:29 AM

To the Superintendent and Trustees,

I am writing to express my opposition to a mask mandate for the 2021/2022 school year.

Vaccines are widely available, hand washing and sanitation procedures are highly effective. If families and students choose to wear masks that is their absolute right to do that, just as every family and student should have the right to not wear a mask as well.

Do the right thing and allow the parents to choose as they are our children and we as parents will do what's best for our children

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: gingerbounce2@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:29 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks 2021-2022**

2 messages

**Brittany Simanton** <brittanys2006@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:59 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Good morning,

I am urging you this year to please make masks optional for our children. If parents want to send their children with masks they absolutely can. I do not believe they should be required for our children and it should be a choice. I think by making masking optional in our schools everyone wins.

A full day of masks for our kids is going to do more harm than good. My own child who is absolutely beautiful and bright struggles with anxiety and break outs due to wearing a mask. I do not want to see her struggle this year; it breaks my heart.

Our kids deserve to be able to breathe freely this year. Please, let them do so.

Brittany Simanton  
(406) 459-1093

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:59 AM

To: brittanys2006@gmail.com

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## Mask Policy for 21-22 school year

2 messages

**Amy Schott** <aschott@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:01 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org, nhobbins@mcpsmt.org, vmcdonald@mcpsmt.org, kmercer@mcpsmt.org, awake@mcpsmt.org, javgeris@mcpsmt.org, gdecker@mcpsmt.org, mgehl@mcpsmt.org, dllorenzen@mcpsmt.org, woldperson@mcpsmt.org, jvogel@mcpsmt.org

Hello,

First I want to thank the Covid task force for the job they've done over the last 18 months. It's no easy task and they've handled the unknown very well.

I'm writing in opposition to the drafted mask mandate for MCPS schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

The word choice is described as the right, power or opportunity to choose. As parents, we make choices all day every day that we think are best for our children. Our job is to assess risks and keep our children safe (mentally & physically) in the best way we feel possible. To be denied the right to make this choice for our children is heartbreaking. They will spend more hours at school between September and June than anywhere else and to know the majority of those hours will once again be spent without seeing their friends or teachers faces, without being able to communicate non-verbally, without feeling as free as they have the past 2 months is crushing to me as a parent. I work with a group of athletes at Big Sky High School and I can tell you with 100% certainty, forcing them to wear a mask instead of giving them the choice whether or not to do so makes a mental difference that I cannot put into words.

All summer I've seen staff & students in & out of the school for meetings, sports practices, weight lifting, etc. without masks and so far have yet to hear of any outbreak. My group in particular is together 2-3x a week and are in constant close quarters (I am the head cheer coach there and we spend 95% of our time stunting). We did not have a single case on our team last year nor have we encountered one this summer. My team understands how effective hand washing, drinking water and eating well are to keep your immune system strong for all germ encounters, not just Covid 19.

Not only am I a fellow MCPS staff member, I'm also the parent of a soon-to-be sophomore and soon-to-be 1st grader. They both had their school years rocked by this virus last year (like so many other students) and I want to do everything in my power to give them every bit of normalcy they deserve. Leaving the choice of masks up to us to discuss as a family is something I feel very strongly about. How will I explain to my 7 year old that he has to wear his the whole time he's in the classroom, but his teacher can remove theirs if they choose, so long as they're 6 ft. away? If the teacher is that far away from students, wouldn't it make sense that the students should also be able to remove their masks?

We have been able to make our own decisions regarding masks for the past 3 months now and while it may seem as though there is a massive outbreak happening again, the numbers simply don't support that thought process. As of today, the Montana DPHHS map shows 188 active cases in Missoula County. with a population of roughly 121,520 people, that puts our positive active cases at 0.15% of our county's population. Map is linked here and is updated every week day. <https://montana.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7c34f3412536439491adcc2103421d4b> The age group we are asking to be forced to wear masks is the least affected by this virus. According to the CDC, between 1/4/2020 & 7/31/2021 there have been a total of 606,390 deaths involving Covid 19 with only 416 of those being between the ages of 0 & 18. That is only 0.069% of all death involving this virus. Link here to data: <https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Provisional-COVID-19-Deaths-Focus-on-Ages-0-18-Yea/nr4s-juj3> Only 5% of ALL reported Covid 19 deaths, Covid was the only reported conditions. All other deaths averaged 4 other contributing factors to the death. Listed here under "Comorbidities and other conditions" [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid\\_weekly/index.htm#SexAndAge](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#SexAndAge) Scientifically, it does not make sense to go to these extreme measures for these age groups. Our children's immune systems are brilliant but they are not able to work properly under these measures. They need to be exposed to a certain number of germs and bacteria to learn to do their jobs.

In addition to my role as a coach at Big Sky, I also work at Community Medical Center and would like to address another bit of misinformation regarding this virus and hospitalization. At this moment, our community is under the impression that our hospitals are at capacity or close to it because of positive Covid patients and that could not be farther from the truth. Yes, we have positive cases being hospitalized but that is not the reason we are having to go on divert (sending patients to other nearby hospitals). We, like SO MANY other businesses in town, are incredibly short staffed. We have 33 beds on our Med/Surg unit, but just a few weeks ago had to go on divert when we only had 15 beds full (with 0 of them being Covid positive) because we simply don't have the staff to safely handle more patients.

Lastly, I will leave you with a short 6 minute YouTube clip of an Indiana Doctor of Functional & Family medicine addressing a local school board on their own Covid mandate and protocol. He's intelligent, well spoken, and brings to light why our current mitigations aren't working. I encourage you to take a few minutes out of your day to truly listen to what he's trying to say. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR11\\_x0ojp3d511gHZe4FxFHb8Z6OcleTTcZyrk\\_dvy0kOGrqcpuNbAhBWg&v=\\_9KnhUu7Ba4&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&fbclid=IwAR11_x0ojp3d511gHZe4FxFHb8Z6OcleTTcZyrk_dvy0kOGrqcpuNbAhBWg&v=_9KnhUu7Ba4&feature=youtu.be)

I appreciate you all taking the time to read through my plea for family choice.

Thank you,  
Amy Schott

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: aschott@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:02 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**public action lawsuit**

2 messages

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**Zach B** <zbrackett0@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:15 AM

The mask mandate negatively and disproportionately impacts protected classes of students. This includes hearing disabled and children diagnosed with autism. Our child has worked tirelessly to understand and recognize facial emotions. Facial expressions are keystone to communication, learning, and growth. Wearing a mask causes my child and others who struggle to regress. They become scared and confused when an adult attempts to communicate with them while hiding their face. They struggle to understand their intents in an environment fraught with fear and hostility. The mask mandate may have been justified in 2020 to mitigate the spread of a pandemic, but with most of the population vaccinated and transmission rates of the virus well within control, this justification has vanished. The bottom line is the benefits of persisting the mask mandate do not outweigh the harm it causes disabled children.

I have every intent of filing a class action law suit against the district for the harm this unusual mandate, which runs opposite of the recommended policies of the state, is causing my child and others.

On a personal note - you all are vaccinated and it's time to stop. Sowing fear in the classroom and forcing children to fear others has caused egregious harm. Rates of child suicide, mental illness, and deaths by child abuse have soared in Montana over the last year. People like yourselves have everything to do with it. Clinging to a mask mandate most certainly does not make you woke, better than conservatives, or good people. It makes you a coward who doesn't understand how to weigh the costs and benefits of their actions.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: zbrackett0@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 11:15 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Support of universal masking**

2 messages

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**Bonnie Brown** <bsgarvens@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 12:26 PM

Dear Missoula County Public School Board,

I'm writing in support of universal masking in Missoula County Public Schools for the 2021-2022 year.

We all recognize that students learn best in person, and that a return to the classroom is important for students' academic and emotional wellbeing. However, the medical community nationwide has also seen a rise in pediatric COVID-19 cases, and we are experiencing a rapid increase in Covid cases in Montana due to the delta variant. The long-term negative effects of COVID-19 in both children and adults is also an area of active research and concern.

Universal masking is safe and effective, and can help students and staff return to school together with minimal interruptions. While vaccines are the most important step for individual and community protection and dramatically reduce severe cases of Covid, they are not available to children under 12, and may not entirely reduce transmission of the more contagious delta variant. Requiring or policing vaccine status among older students and staff is also not practically feasible.

As both a physician and mother of young children, I strongly support masks and a return to in-person learning for our kids. This is in line with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the Centers of Disease Control.

Please prioritize kids in our community by recommending vaccines for those who can take them, and with universal masking in the classroom.

Let's get back to school.

Bonnie Brown, MD  
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: bsgarvens@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 12:26 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Please mask up!**

2 messages

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**Linda Torma** <ltorma50@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 1:33 PM

As a retired nursing professor, I fully support the continued use of masks by students and staff alike to help us weather this latest surge of the Delta variant of the coronavirus. It is true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of the cure when it comes to this virus. I am vaccinated, but continue to mask indoors as we have a long way to go before we can 'return to normal'. It is important that our kids be able to return to school safely, and we must do all that we can to protect the vulnerable among us.

Thank you for your continued support of the health and welfare of the children in our community.

Sincerely,

Linda Torma, PhD, APRN, GCNS-BC

406-360-6134

314 Connell Avenue, Missoula, MT 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: ltorma50@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 1:33 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

## Allow Parental Choice in respect to masks

2 messages

**Amy Livesay** <amy@ultramaxsports.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:32 PM

To the Board of Trustees:

In Montana we have bears, correct? And when a bear shows up, there are things to do and not to do. I would guess most of us feel like either shooting it with a gun or running when in fact neither of those are the most effective escape options. If we think it through and remember what we have been taught, we know that we should say something to scare it away, start to back away slowly and if necessary use our bear spray.

COVID is similar. As cases rise, we feel like we have to do something regardless of if the cases are actually causing death and regardless of if the something is actually effective. Masking feels like we are doing something when in fact we are not. And indeed in the case of children there is not even a need to do anything.

Children are more likely to die in a car wreck than with COVID. Are parents keeping them out of cars? Are they putting them in bubble wrap or making them wear helmets in the car? No. They are not because life has some risk that we have all lived with for all of time. COVID poses no more risk to children than the flu. Kids have been getting sicknesses for years and recovering because they are resilient. This risk is no different than anything they have faced for all of time.

If there were a significant risk to children, masking them would not be the answer. Masks in general let out 97 percent of the virus particles AND if there is even a 3 percent gap in the mask, it is virtually useless because the particles will just go out around the nose or the side of the face. While most kids try to be fairly compliant with their masks, they move them around all the time, get their snot on them, put them in their mouth and undoubtedly have gaps in them. They have never been and never will be a good protection from a virus.

With that said, I 100 percent support any kiddo or person who wants to wear a mask to school. They do not deserve to be shamed or ostracized or told that they cannot wear their mask. Indeed I am not asking for their to be a mandate against masks.

I am asking that there not be a mandate at all. Kids who do not feel comfortable in a mask should also not be judged or shamed for their decision. Parents know their children the best and should have the right to help them make a choice as whether to wear a mask or not.

The teachers and staff at the schools should also be given this freedom. It is unkind and tyrannical to require someone, who needs to work to make a living, to wear a mask all day especially when it violates their conscience.

America is the land of freedom not tyrannical mandates.....

**Amy Livesay**  
Owner, Ultramax Sports  
573-268-4709

**Follow my blog at Treelinewife.com**

**If you are a hunter, follow my husband at TreelinePursuits.com or @Treeline\_Pursuits on Instagram**

*"Be Strong and Courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9*

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: amy@ultramaxsports.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:32 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

---

**Covid Task Force**

2 messages

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**Sarah Fangsrud** <sarahfangs@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:49 PM

Dear MCPS Covid Task Force

I'm a Paxson parent to an upcoming third grader and a new kindergartner. Both my boys need to get back to school this year. My husband and I want to send them back to public school but we have concerns about their safety and the safety of our community in school. The delta variant is spreading fast in Missoula. Luckily we know that there are safety measures that we can take that work to prevent the spread in our schools. Those safety measures include mandatory masking for all students and teachers. Masking works. Social distancing works. These are facts proven again and again by the medical community and by the data. The WHO, the CDC, and the American Academy of pediatricians all recommend masking in schools. It's ridiculous that masking in schools is even up for debate in Montana. It is our responsibility to keep our children safe. I'm writing you to support mandatory masking in schools to protect our children. I trust that Missoula County public schools will do the right thing and implement mandatory masking for all elementary school students, as none of these children are eligible for the vaccine. I also support mandatory masking for middle school and high school to slow the spread in our community and protect children and teachers. Please make the right choice so parents can safely send our children back to school where they can thrive this year.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Fangsrud  
Paxson Parent

--  
Sarah Fangsrud

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: sarahfangs@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:49 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Please allow mask mandates as needed**

2 messages

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**Justin Whitaker** <buddhistethics@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:50 PM

Dear board of trustees,

As a father of a young child and long-time Missoula community member, I am writing to ask that you allow mask mandates \*as needed\* this fall in all county public schools.

I am deeply saddened by the misinformation being presented by a very loud but small contingent of anti-mask community members and hope that my voice and others help to convince you to follow health authorities and not conspiracy theories.

For your consideration, I'll note to recent articles that particularly trouble me:

As reported on Aug 6, Montana is seeing exponential growth in new COVID-19 cases:

<https://www.mtpr.org/montana-news/2021-08-06/montana-covid-cases-showing-exponential-growth-health-department-says>

And while kids tend to do well with COVID on average, it's a numbers game. If 20 kids get it, maybe one or two end up in the hospital; if 2000 get it, things get scary, as Florida is amply showing:

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2021/08/02/florida-leads-the-nation-in-kids-hospitalized-for-covid/>

Let's not become the next Florida when it comes to our kids' health.

My thanks,

Justin Whitaker  
1637 S. 7th St. West  
Missoula, Montana

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: buddhistethics@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 2:50 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**2021-22 mask policy comment**

2 messages

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**Jessie Schandelson** <jessiemcq@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:30 PM

Good afternoon,

I am a local citizen and mother of two young children who are not yet able to receive the Covid vaccine. My daughter will be entering sixth grade at Washington Middle School, and our family strongly urges the School Board to protect our children and other community members by requiring masks for all students/teachers/staff for the 2021-2022 school year. Wearing a mask is an easy and proven way to reduce disease transmission, and it's an important part of an effective strategy to reduce Covid in our schools and homes.

My daughter chooses to wear her mask to protect not just herself but also many other vulnerable people in her life, such as her grandparents and those who are immunocompromised or who cannot yet be vaccinated. We were heartened to review the draft plan now under consideration and support its rationale and guidelines, and we ask the School Board to please require masks to help prevent the spread of Covid in our schools and communities.

Thank you for all you do to help to protect the health and safety of all MCPS students, staff and families.

Sincerely,

Jessie Schandelson

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: jessiemcq@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:31 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Please follow health guidance on COVID**

2 messages

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**Anna Noson** <anna.noson@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:35 PM

Dear Board of Trustees,

First of all, I want to thank you for serving our community and taking your personal time to ensure our kids safety and access to quality education.

I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of the COVID policy recommendations of our school superintendent, the MCPS COVID task force, and the CDC for next school year, including mandatory masks in class for all students. I have two children in MCPS schools who are vaccinated, but not all age groups have access to vaccinations, and vaccination rates are too low among vaccine-eligible students to stop the spread of COVID, especially with more contagious variants.

Nobody likes to wear masks, but this is not a matter of personal preference, it's about safe access to in-person school for all children. Everyone agrees our children learn better and our most vulnerable kids receive better care in the classroom. Last year with mask policies in place, we had a successful school year with few outbreaks. We all look forward to when masks are no longer needed, but my kids are ready to do their part to stop the spread of COVID and protect our immuno-compromised friends and family.

Thanks again for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Anna Noson

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: anna.noson@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:35 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask comment**

2 messages

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**Sean Parks** <grumpyuncle sean@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:39 PM

Hi,

Please require masks for all students, teachers, and other staff at Rattlesnake elementary school. My two children are not old enough to be vaccinated, and I think their health and safety are quite important.

Ideally, all teachers and staff would also be required to be vaccinated.

Thank you,  
Sean Parks

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: grumpyuncle sean@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:39 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Support of mask requirement**

2 messages

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**Roxane Weikel** <roxane.weikel@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:50 PM

I support requiring masks for all children and staff this fall. This seems to me to be the best way to:

- 1) Guard against needing to go all virtual again.
- 2) Protect children from this highly contagious disease that will result in some children being hospitalized.
- 3) It's reasonable to assume that this will prevent some deaths (even in children) and /or complications such as long haul syndrome.

We are so close to hopefully having a vaccine for children ages 5 - 11 which certainly will change the risks.

My grandkids didn't seem to be concerned about masks last spring. Kids seem really adaptable.

Thank you for your service.

Roxane Weikel  
Missoula resident and grandparent of MCPS students.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 3:50 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks**

2 messages

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**John Rincker** <johnrincker1@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:06 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

It is always the responsibility of the school district to protect the health and safety of the children in your care. Masks are a simple and effective method to help protect our children. Do not be intimidated by those who can't see the forest for the trees. Mask up all students and adults. Safety first.

Thank you!

John Rincker

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:06 PM

To: johnrincker1@gmail.com

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask requirement**

2 messages

**Madeleine Mckelvey** <madeleinemckel@aol.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:11 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I am relieved to hear that a masking requirement is being considered for MCPS. I am guardian for a student who is too young to get a vaccine, and I strongly support masking and other safety measures as recommended by CDC.

Madeleine McKelvey  
20 willowbrook Lane  
Missoula 59802

Sent from my iPad

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 4:12 PM

To: madeleinemckel@aol.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks in the classroom**

2 messages

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**Jeremy Reinicke** <jeremyreinicke@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:20 PM

To Whom it May Concern:

I would like to express my opinion that masks should be mandated in Missoula County Public Schools until infection rates are reduced in our community. I have two children in the public school system and my spouse is a teacher. I am concerned about my family's well being but I am also concerned about the health and economic stability of our community as a whole. I understand the importance of in person learning but allowing classes to resume without any mitigation effort will most certainly increase infection rates in Missoula. It appears the easy solution here is to require masks in the classroom. I would like to think that we could educate people on the value of wearing masks and taking other measures to end a global pandemic in hopes that people would make responsible informed decisions but this has not proven to be effective.

We can have in person learning and keep our community healthy and prosperous by simply mandating masks in the classroom. Please consider this for the well being of our community.

Thank you.

Jeremy Reinicke.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: jeremyreinicke@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:21 PM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**I Support masks**

2 messages

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**Kate Bratches** <kate.yaya@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:26 PM

I support masks for all MCPS children- If you don't support wearing masks maybe those kids should not be at school but instead home schooled.  
Kate Bratches

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: kate.yaya@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 5:26 PM

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**a kind request for mask mandate**

1 message

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**Jennifer** <jayrye@bresnan.net>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 6:23 PM

Hello,

First and foremost, thank you all for your service to our community and most importantly students. My children have enjoyed a great education through Lewis and Clark, Washington, Sentinel and Hellgate. We are very appreciative.

Last year, my kids attended school in person and it was well coordinated and I feel like they kept busy and benefitted from the instruction in class.

As much as I hate them having to wear masks, the right decision is obvious. Mask wearing must be mandated in the schools to protect students and teachers. Kids need to be in school and learning. Most importantly, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that healthy unvaccinated children are getting very ill, dying, or even developing pulmonary damage that they will carry with them through life. As adults, it is our job to protect their health and foster their learning. With vaccinations and masks, we can best do this.

None of us like this. Yes it is hard. Yes we are angry and scared. But this is our war to fight and we have tools to end this. Just as generations before us who served in the military to protect our country, we need to do what is asked of us by experts, some of whom have spent majority of their lifetime working in public health, immunology, infectious disease, and medicine careers/research.

It is my hope that the teachers and children feel supported by all of us who aren't in school, and let them do their work and learning.

Jennifer Ryan

**Public Comment for 8/10 meeting. Re-opening of schools**

1 message

**Morgen Hunt** <mebx3@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 7:27 PM

Reply-To: Morgen Hunt &lt;mebx3@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

My name is Morgen E. Hunt. I am a parent, community member and a school bus driver. I **do not** represent **nor** do I speak for my employer Beach Transportation. Yes, I am a school bus driver!!! We come in all shapes and sizes and our backgrounds are quite diverse. We are professionals - our employer demands it.

I drive school bus because I LOVE CHILDREN! I feed off their energy!! There is nothing quite like being up before the rest of the world and getting the kids to school. However, what I experienced as a driver last year was horrible. I watched in disgust as my usually rambunctious, bubbly children became sullen and depressed. It made me sick to my stomach. My youngest son is a Junior at Hellgate this year. He, like many other students hit a wall last year. His father and I have spent the past days, weeks and months restoring him to his old self and enjoying his excitement as things returned to normal. **WE MUST NOT GO BACKWARDS!!!!**

I have been managing the health and wellness of **MY** family for the past 23 years. That is **MY** job, **NOT** yours! If it is now your job, then I must ask you where were you when my son got the flu and I had to make a decision regarding his care, whether to vaccinate him and at what point he could resume his daily activities? **I didn't need you then and I do not need you now.** Where were you my son and daughter, both with life and death allergies were exposed to the very thing that could have caused them great harm? **I didn't need you then and I do not need you now.**

**AND WHERE WERE YOU LAST YEAR WHEN MY SON HIT THAT WALL AND BECAME SO DEPRESSED I WAS ASKED WHAT IS THE POINT? WHY GO ON?**

From the beginning this should have been a choice for those of us **responsible** for the care of **our** children. It should be a choice now. Families are more than capable of making decisions regarding **their children**. I would implore you not to rob these children of any more of their youth than they have already been. If you do, I will certainly not be a witness to it and will sadly forgo my return to Beach Transportation.

I am **EXHAUSTED** by the politicization of a virus that 98% recovery rate. Covid is much less likely to cause serious illness in children. Those making these policies do not know, nor appreciate the lives we lead here in Montana and they do **not** care about or for our children.

In the end you will be responsible for having went along with unproven policies to spare the lives of children from a virus of whom according to data will recover. More importantly you will also be responsible for causing even more depression and despair that will take US PARENTS, years to rebuild.

I would like to know exactly how concerned and involved with that process will you be??? Will you be as hands on as you are now and will you **mandate** that every child who suffers (and that is many) will get the best possible care as they endeavor to get back to who they once were??? Will you **mandate** that they get to the doctor's office to get the care that they need and their anti-depressants as well?? Of course you won't because it is **NOT YOUR JOB!!!!**

I would really like to know where this ends for you? With **which** "variant" of this virus does this end? I feel quite confident that there will be another and another. If you intend to insert yourselves in **our** lives I surely know many parents that could use a hand with some bills and car pooling as well.

Please also tell me what happens when my masked, vaccinated child ends up in the hospital with an adverse reaction to the vaccine as many are experiencing. Aren't said vaccines supposed to keep you safe? So, I can expect you at the hospital for "support" and to advise on further treatments for my child?

This is the road you are choosing to take and it will have consequences for you. A child can get and recover from this virus, which is temporary. Your alternative causes unnecessary continued mental decline, learning deficiencies and ongoing depression.

The damage you will cause (**and already have**) is irrevocable. Our children cannot get that time back. You are stealing from them the best years of their lives. I hope this weighs on you heavily as you **mandate one "solution" for ALL**.

You have NO IDEA the devastation you have already caused. If you'd like to see it I invite you to take a ride with a bus full of children...

.....I for one will not be.

Thank you for keeping me from doing a job that I love. You are destroying the most beautiful souls we have and I hope sincerely that it keeps you up at night because it should.

Make the right decision and make it **our choice**.

Bus#197

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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## **Mask Mandate**

1 message

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**Tracy Herndon** <tracy\_herndon@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:39 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

I am a parent of 2 kids in MCPS, both of whom are vaccinated and I support the continued mask mandate.

Thank you,  
Tracy Herndon

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Mandate for Upcoming School Year**

1 message

**Morgen Hunt** <mebx3@yahoo.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 8:59 PM

Reply-To: Morgen Hunt &lt;mebx3@yahoo.com&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

<https://www.facebook.com/rbachtd/videos/190536626442413/>**Ryan**

Watch this real doctor walk into a school board meeting  
and completely destroy the so called fake science  
coming...

**PLEASE TAKE THE STATEMENTS FROM THIS PHYSICIAN INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN  
MAKING YOUR DECISION.**

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Support for masks in schools**

2 messages

**Ginny Wright Therriault** <ginnytherriault@gmail.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:51 PM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

I want to express my support for elementary schools to require masks. I truly think the kids know how to wear the masks and are probably better at it than adults. More variants are starting to appear. I think it is imperative that the students not bring home any variants to parents or other family members. Also, most important is the fact that our teachers and other staff members not be exposed to the variants and vice versa. It will be a different situation, perhaps, when students 12 and under can be vaccinated. The science makes sense.

Thank you for allowing me to write this comment. I live 6 blocks from Paxson Elementary School and am friends with kids in the neighborhood.

Ginny Therriault  
223 E. Central Ave.  
Missoula, MT 59801

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:51 PM

To: ginnytherriault@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

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**Jessica LaRubbio** <jlarubbio@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 10:12 PM

Hello,

I am a parent to two elementary age students and I support masking in school. This is a simple, but effective, strategy to mitigate spread. It is wise to maintain the mandate at this time, especially in light of the Delta variant's more contagious pattern and presence in our community. My child is too young to be vaccinated and also suffers from asthma. A mask mandate will protect my child.

Thank you,

Jessica LaRubbio

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: jlarubbio@gmail.com

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 10:12 PM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**results of pro-mask petition**

2 messages

Jaclyn Foster &lt;jaclynfoster93@gmail.com&gt;

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:30 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Over the past week I have collected signatures from Montana residents who are in favor of school mask mandates per CDC and AAP guidelines, and who wanted to express their support for local school board control to State Superintendent Arntzen and Governor Gianforte. The results of this petition have been delivered to both state offices, and since 52.9% of the respondents were from Missoula, I thought you would like to see them as well in advance of tomorrow's meeting. We had 787 respondents who gave a Missoula County zip code, out of a total of 1486 responses. This petition not only indicates strong support for mask mandates for MCPS, but strong statewide support (contrary to the narrative that Missoula is alone in this position). A full list of signatures has been provided to each member of the MCPS school board.

The text of the petition reads:

The signers of this petition support mask mandates in Montana public schools for the Fall 2021 semester. They ask the MT state government to allow school districts the freedom to enact such mandates in accordance with the most recent guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control.

AAP Guidance, July 19, 2021: "Everything possible must be done to keep students in schools in-person...All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use). The AAP recommends universal masking in school at this time for the following reasons:

- a significant portion of the student population is not eligible for vaccination
- protection of unvaccinated students from COVID-19 and to reduce transmission
- lack of a system to monitor vaccine status among students, teachers and staff
- potential difficulty in monitoring or enforcing mask policies for those who are not vaccinated; in the absence of schools being able to conduct this monitoring, universal masking is the best and most effective strategy to create consistent messages, expectations, enforcement, and compliance without the added burden of needing to monitor vaccination status
- possibility of low vaccination uptake within the surrounding school community
- continued concerns for variants that are more easily spread among children, adolescents, and adults"

CDC Guidance, July 27, 2021: "Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the guidance for fully vaccinated people. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place."

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:30 AM

To: jaclynfoster93@gmail.com

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## text of three public comments in MCPS meetings

1 message

**Jaclyn Foster** <jaclynfoster93@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 1:31 AM

08/02/2021: A lack of mandates that leaves masking "up to parents" actually leaves the issue up to 5-year-olds. As a parent, I can send my kindergartener to school with a mask and talk to her all I want about the importance of wearing it, but at her maturity level it's absurd to think she'll keep it on all day if her friends aren't or if her teacher can't remind her to put it back on after lunch. It's the job of adults to provide the structure and guidance needed to keep children safe. We need a mask mandate for the same reason I don't offer my kid the "option" to have ice cream for dinner, or to play kickball in the street. Kids aren't ready to carry the full responsibility for their safety and risk long-term complications they don't understand, and parents need to know that their teachers are empowered to keep them as safe as possible according to AAP and CDC guidelines. Given Delta's transmission rates, a recent study expects that without masks, 70% of all students will be infected within 3 months, a figure completely beyond the resources of our healthcare system — with mask mandates, that figure drops to 40%, reducing transmission by nearly half and buying time for the vaccine to be approved for ages 5-11.

08/03/2021: After yesterday's meeting I watched a press conference by Dr. Mark Kline, Physician-in-Chief at Children's Hospital New Orleans. He dispelled the myth that only children with pre-existing conditions are getting sick, saying: "Half the children we are seeing [hospitalized] with COVID were perfectly healthy." He goes on to say "This delta variant is every infectious disease specialist's worst nightmare.. There was a myth.. that children were somehow immune... It has become very clear that children are heavily impacted." You know, during the best case/worst case exercise yesterday and today I heard a lot of worst case scenarios that boil down to "what if people get mad at us." You want to know my worst case scenario? My kid brings covid home to my newborn and either one of them is hospitalized, or gets long covid. Or the pediatric ICUs fill up and my kid gets appendicitis or my newborn gets RSV. Or we lose our apartment during a housing crisis due to covid medical bills or tons of missed work due to repeated covid exposures. The CDC reports that over 200,000 children have been hospitalized with covid, pre-delta variant. Rates of hospitalization and disability affect children's mental health, as does the fear of bringing covid home to at-risk family members. The British National Health Service says 7-8% of children experience long covid, and preliminary research suggests it's caused by long-term neurological damage.\* Yesterday some commenters referenced a study in Germany purporting to show elevated CO2 levels due to masks. I got curious and looked up the study, and found out that it has since been retracted. The equipment they used to measure the CO2 levels was used incorrectly. Pulse oximeter data while masking has consistently shown CO2 levels within acceptable limits. While some people do experience a sense of breathlessness while masking, it is psychological, not physiological. As someone who experienced an anxiety disorder myself as a teen, I have a lot of sympathy for that. But I also know from personal experience that we know how to treat anxiety in children and teens. We don't know how to treat long covid, or even if we will be able to. Last year we had three cases per 100k at the end of August, and we saw a giant wave within months. Today we saw we're at 18 per 100k and on the rise, and delta is as contagious as chicken pox. We need masks. Nobody should have the right to expose my kid to a disease that's only getting more dangerous for kids.

08/10/2021: Because we don't have school transmission data on the delta variant, and news out of other states indicates it impacts kids worse, please keep the mask mandate for the first 6-8 weeks while we gather local data. We can reassess once we have a better picture of what delta looks like in our community. A leaked CDC internal document says the battle has changed against covid as a result of delta, and we don't want to go in underprepared. Utah is hospitalizing a child under 12 every other day and expects the rate to increase. Louisiana and Arkansas pediatric hospitals are at capacity with children with tubes down their throats, half of whom had no pre-existing conditions. The Governor of Arkansas has been on the news regretting opposing masks and begging schools to implement mandates. Four Mississippi schools so far have already had to go online after only one or two weeks without masks. An intubated 11-month old couldn't find a hospital bed at the largest children's hospital in the nation in Houston and had to be airlifted 150 miles away. Child hospitalizations are at their highest rate in the whole pandemic. We're incredibly lucky to not be the first state hit with this variant, and we should learn the lessons of other states while we still can. A study in the Lancet suggests 1 in 22 kids experience long covid — that's one kid from every class acquiring a disability.

My family doesn't have the option to do online learning — we can't afford to have a parent lose work hours supervising that. We need our kid to be safe in school and not let cases build up to the point where we have to get back to phase 1 or 2. And let's not pretend recommending masks means all parents who want kids masked can keep them masked. My kindergartner isn't going to keep her mask on all day if her friends aren't because she's 5 and she isn't capable of long-term reasoning yet. Young children benefit from 100% consistency, not a hodgepodge of different rules for different families, and at that age I don't even have the choice to protect her via

vaccination. Masks are her only line of defense and she deserves a school experience that supports that. It's truly a difficult situation that no matter what the policy is, there's no solution here where individual choice occurs in a consequence-free vacuum. The founding fathers understood that in a healthy society, freedom is more complicated than doing whatever we want. Even George Washington mandated inoculation at Valley Forge and advised the Virginia legislature to mandate childhood inoculation,\* and some of the strongest local government measures in the revolutionary era were about preventing disease outbreaks. Public schools and public health is about the public good, and that's what the CDC and AAP guidelines are all about.

\*George Washington wrote in 1777: "If I was a Member of that [Virginia] Assembly I would rather move for a Law to compel the Masters of Families to inoculate every Child born within a certain limited time under severe Penalties."

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Forced Masking**

2 messages

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**Rena Wetherelt** <rena.wetherelt@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 5:30 AM

Forced masking is not without adverse effects. Serious physiological effects to the nervous system, brain, cardiovascular system and more occur when carbon dioxide levels in the blood are elevated. Studies have been conducted and published in the American Medical Association's Journal Pediatrics which measured levels of carbon dioxide in inhaled air of masked children over six times higher than a safe level within minutes of masking. The AMA published the report June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and retracted it within days. Why? is a question to be answered another time. Hard copies of the report along with many other reports of psychological, periodontal, dermatological and other adverse results from prolonged masking have been sent by mail to each of you. Imagine the distress caused to those with acne, hearing impairments, anxiety. What about children with glasses! You would be forcing behavior with adverse medical effects. Forcing children as young as four years old to wear a mask from the time they get on the bus until they return home hours later with only brief breathing breaks. If they balk, an adult will be nearby to FORCE them to comply.

Forced masking for long hours is sadistic child abuse, wrong on every level.

Montana law allows a cause of action against any party, including a school

district, who a parent deems as interfering with their rights. The prevailing party in an action filed pursuant to this action is entitled to reasonable attorney fees and costs. Not only will we not comply, we will seek legal remedy on behalf of our children.

If you vote to keep it voluntary, thank you.

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: rena.wetherelt@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 5:30 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Protect our children**

1 message

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**elaine meeks** <meekselaine@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 6:59 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us" &lt;publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us&gt;

MCPS Board of Trustees,

There is nothing more precious to me than my grandchildren. They attend school in your district and we have been extremely pleased with the education they have received thus far. My grandson is too young to be eligible for vaccination. Masks and distancing are his only protection from COVID-19 infection.

As a retired school administrator from the Polson School District, I believe that the well being of the children is of utmost importance. I applaud the efforts last school year by MCPS to protect our children and continue to deliver high quality education under extreme circumstances.

I urge you to adopt the recommendation of your administrators and require masks with a reasonable review process. I hope the loud and uninformed anti mask proponents will not sway you from making the right decision for the children of MCPS.

Thank you for considering my input as you make this important decision.

Elaine Meeks

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks at MCPS for Fall 2021**

1 message

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**Susan Mace** <susanmace113@outlook.com>

Mon, Aug 9, 2021 at 9:50 PM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Dear Superintendent Watson & MCPS Board of Trustees,

Thank you for your service to our community. Your work over the last 17 months has surely been more than you bargained for when you volunteered to be on the Board. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Throughout the entire pandemic, this Board has made tough decisions based on the most current data for the benefit of our students and everyone in our community with whom they come in contact. The Delta variant presents another such opportunity. Although it is difficult to revoke freedoms, we know that masks, social distancing, hand washing and staying home when you don't feel well are the basic actions we can all take when we are in public to minimize the spread of this strain of COVID. Those are the precautions that all of us took to reduce new infections prior to vaccines being available and we should implement those precautions again with the awareness that Delta is a more transmissible strain, even amongst those who are vaccinated. Both the CDC and our local health department are strongly recommending returning to masking.

The high schools are the only schools in our district where students are even eligible for vaccination, leaving most students in our district completely unprotected if there is not a mask requirement. Even when students are eligible for vaccination, many families have chosen for various reasons not to be vaccinated, and the message I have gotten from the principal of our school is that students will not be discriminated against based on vaccination status. Thus, masks, social distancing, and other precautions should be the standard for students, teachers and staff who spend their days in classrooms, intermingling with different groups of students, and eating in close proximity to others. Additionally, thought should be given to being ready to reimplement the alternate schedules of last year, requiring unmasked eating to occur outside, flexibility to expand online learning again, and various other precautions and protocols to protect our students and the larger community, while continuing to work towards the goal of educating children.

Thank you,

**Susan Mace**  
**406-531-2600**

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Policy**

2 messages

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**Nicole Whitescarver** <nmwhitescarver@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:14 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To Whom it May Concern,

I have been teaching for 17 years. This year will be my 7th at Sentinel High School.

Last year was miserable. The schedule and policies changed constantly and were a barrier to student and teacher success. Students were self isolating, they didn't participate in group discussion and were terrified of one another. When they did speak it was muffled and unintelligible.

I am writing with the hope that you can all understand that not all teachers want to wear masks in the classroom. We have had the chance to be vaccinated as have students and their families. Please allow families and teachers the choice in wearing a mask.

I would rather take a leave of absence than wear a mask all day for another year. I would rather quit than watch students suffer in silence, isolated by distance and fear.

Please make masks optional and lower class sizes for physical distancing. Use the federal and local funding to provide effective healthy supports for teachers and students.

Thank you,  
Nicole Whitescarver

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*N.M. Whitescarver*  
Art Educator  
Sentinel High School

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:15 AM

To: nmwhitescarver@mcpsmt.org

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Scientific information to review**

2 messages

**Sherri Howe** <sherrihowe22@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:21 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Please review this information before making a decision on mandating our children to wear masks. Please share this video with your board members.

Make an informed decision rather than a politically charged decision or a decision based on misinformation.

[https://youtu.be/\\_9KnhUu7Ba4](https://youtu.be/_9KnhUu7Ba4)

With respect,  
Sherri Howe

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Thank you,  
Sherri Howe

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Thank you,  
Sherri Howe

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:21 AM

To: sherrihowe22@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Face Covering Requirement**

2 messages

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**Luke Jackson** <jacksonluke801@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:38 AM

Hello Mr Watson and MCPS Board -

I am in favor of the proposed face covering for all students students, staff, volunteers and guests regardless of vaccination status while indoors or on buses. Please consider my support when making this decision.

Thank you!

Luke Jackson

406.546.6828

Parent to rising 6th Grader at Washington School

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: jacksonluke801@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:39 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

**VOTE YES on a MASK MANDATE**

2 messages

Carleen Hathaway &lt;chathaway@mcpsmt.org&gt;

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:58 AM

Good morning Dr. Watson and Members of the MCPS Board of Trustees,

I am writing this morning to request you once again require face masks be worn by students, staff and guests into MCPS facilities. Please do not allow your emotional buttons to be pushed in making this decision. This decision, like numerous others that were made and enacted, needs to be based on science, on evidence and on the absolute obligation to keep our students, staff and community as safe as possible.

I have watched in front offices of schools where students were not allowed to come to school unless their vaccination records were up-to-date. Vaccinations (MMR) that are required of kids to attend school. That's in place for the health and safety of students and staff in our schools.

A few years back, all staff members were required to provide proof of having been vaccinated against whooping cough. That was for the health and safety of students and staff.

There is no use of tobacco (smoking, chewing, vaping) on school grounds for the health and safety of students and staff.

Weapons of any kind are not allowed on campus because their use by a person poses a threat to the health and safety of others.

The consideration of all above instances were based not on emotion but on facts that those situations pose a potential threat to the health and safety of others. Individual families do not get to say whether or not they will follow those rules.

The COVID virus poses a proven threat to the health and safety of others. Mitigation procedures as carried out by our custodial/maintenance staff are necessary as well as appreciated. But the added use of wearing masks reduces those risks even more.

Children can and have gotten COVID. Whether it was a mild case or not should have no bearing on the issue. Why would anyone be ok with the possibility that their child *could* catch a potentially deadly virus? Makes no sense. And just because 'some kids' have had mild cases does not mean that others' bodies would react the same way. I am not willing to put my 5 year old granddaughter's life on the line to test that theory.

You have scientific fact-based evidence that masks greatly reduce the spread of this virus. That is what you need to base your decision to mask or not upon. The backlash, warned of by some, should you enact a mask mandate should be tolerable in place of the backlash of your staff using up the self funded insurance plan should they be hospitalized for COVID, the backlash of short staffed classrooms with a spread, the backlash of having to scramble again to create online learning for all, the backlash of again closing down doors to other establishments because of a spread, the backlash of overflowing hospital wards and not enough medical personnel to attend to patients, and certainly, the backlash of watching families witness the death of a loved one, who was vulnerable to COVID.

The District put in place a mask mandate last school year and we were successful in handling it emotionally and physically. That is not to say all were happy with that mandate. But with this new variant running through the world, I do not want my family, friends, co-workers or myself to become a COVID statistic, counted in the LOSS column.

It is a small and simple step to take to protect yourselves and others around you. People are not being asked to wear haz-mat suits and rubber gloves. It's a mask through which you can breathe.

Do you wear your seatbelt? Does it protect you 'just in case'? Do you follow the rules by not smoking on school grounds because it's a risk to yourself and others? Did you get polio last month? Last year? In your lifetime?

Please base your decision on facts, not on emotions. I don't envy your need to make this decision but I will be impacted by it. I am hoping that impact will come in the form of my family, friends, co-workers and me being able to remain COVID-free because my employer and my community recognized the need to mask-up!

Please don't let this COVID variant get a foothold in Missoula.

Thank you. I wish you all good health.

**Carleen L. Hathaway**  
MMCEO Secretary-Treasurer  
Porter Para Ed



**#MeandMyShadow**

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: chathaway@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 7:59 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Masks in school**

2 messages

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**Heather Holbrook** <heatherholbrook@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:08 AM

Board of Trustees,

I wanted to send in my support for Dr. Watson's draft proposal to begin the school year with universal masking. I know there are a lot of loud voices who are against masking. I know this will be a tough decision with a lot of controversy. I wanted to make sure my voice was heard, even if it's a quiet voice. I was hopeful mid-summer that we would not need masks in school this year, however with the resurgence of the virus in our area as well as the dire situations for those seeking medical care in the southern parts of our country right now, I think masking is a simple safeguard we can enact to protect our community more. Our elementary students do not have the opportunity to get the vaccine and as such do not have the same level of protection that the rest of us have access to. I know there are also other vulnerable populations within our schools that also need to be protected with a safe school environment. I and my children have no problem wearing a mask to protect those around us who need it. I feel masking in schools will allow our school year to be more normal with less disruptions for the students. My children are ready and excited to go back to school and do not feel like masks are harmful in anyway. The argument of parent choice in masking does not work, as we know that masking is only effective when all or at least the vast majority of individuals wear them. I appreciate the board's decision to enforce masking in our schools based on science as well as the recommendations of the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Thank you,

Heather Holbrook  
Parent to 4 in MCPS schools

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: heatherholbrook@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:08 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Universal Face Coverings--Is "mask" a controversial word now?**

2 messages

**Ronda Schiess** <rondaschiess@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:11 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Masks must be mandatory for all students and staff in every school this year for the following reasons:

1. To protect our unvaccinated, and thus very vulnerable children from this more dangerous, way more contagious Delta variant.
2. To protect our children's essential in-class education experiences. If unmasked students or teachers spread the disease, schools will have to quarantine large numbers of students and staff which may eventually lead to school shut-downs and a return to remote learning.
3. To reassure parents who might be reluctant to send their kids into a potentially dangerous situation, and to increase the chances that they will be able to go to work themselves instead of having to either care for a sick child, or homeschool their kids.
4. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ronda Schiess  
Retired 5th Grade Teacher

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:11 AM

To: rondaschiess@gmail.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask Recommendations**

2 messages

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**Kristi Steinberg** <krististeinberg18@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:40 AM

Hello,

I am the parent of an MCPS 6th grader and am writing to express my support for the proposed mask recommendations. I believe our students need to be back in classrooms with a regular schedule and that masking is the safest way to make that happen. I am getting tired of hearing the argument that you can't require masks. We make students wear shoes and clothes. They can wear masks.

Thank you.

Kristine Steinberg

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: krististeinberg18@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:40 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**No Mask Mandate**

2 messages

**Janice Fortney** <bnjfortney@comcast.net>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:49 AM

To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Please do not ignore the great harm done to our children caused by COVID hysteria. Any attempt by Missoula County Public Schools to continue to forcibly mask our children will only cause more depression and suicide attempts, a risk with far greater consequences than COVID. Please do NOT impose a mask mandate. Let parents make their own decisions regarding their children's health. It would be better to offer online learning for at-risk children than to mandate masking!

Janice Fortney  
A Concerned Missoula Citizen

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:50 AM

To: bnjfortney@comcast.net

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask mandate**

2 messages

**Willy Williams** <Willysauto@outlook.com>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:57 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

This is out of control. If there is a mandate to wear masks the only choice you leave me is to pull my child out of public school. I am

Beyond pissed about this. There is way more parents not wanting their kids masked up at school than parents that want their kids masked up at school. I believe the school board is over stepping their bounds at this point. My child will not be attending school this year. I will home school him.

Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 8:57 AM

To: Willysauto@outlook.com

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!



**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

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**Mask guidelines**

2 messages

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**Amish, Stephen** <Stephen.Amish@mso.umt.edu>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:13 AM

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

1. Masks save lives.
2. Masks are a safe and easy way to protect kids under 12 and vulnerable people from the spread of Covid.
3. Masks are not unsafe or dangerous for kids to wear.

Steve Amish  
Conservation Genomics Group  
Flathead Lake Biological Station  
Division of Biological Sciences  
University of Montana  
406.243.5285 office  
406.214.1701 cell  
stephen.amish@mso.umt.edu

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:13 AM

To: Stephen.Amish@mso.umt.edu

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Yes to masks in school**

1 message

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**Agatha Light Podrasky** <aslight42@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcps.k12.mt.us

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:31 AM

I am writing to express my support of requiring masks for all students, staff, volunteers and anyone in MCPS schools this fall. Children under 12 cannot yet be vaccinated and can contract, experience symptoms (including severe in some cases) and spread the prevalent delta variant of covid-19. Masks are a simple and effective way of decreasing airborne particles and droplets that spread the covid-19 virus.

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**Mandate COVID vaccinations in schools, not masks**

2 messages

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**Eva Dunn-Froebig** <evapdf@gmail.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:51 AM

Dear Missoula County Board of Trustees:

There is nothing we want more than our son to have a normal high school experience. We don't want him to wear a mask all day at school and we want him to be able to freely socialize with other kids and make new friends in the classroom and during extracurricular activities. We want spectators to attend his basketball games. We want to attend his band concerts and for him to see smiles in the audience. We want him to go to social events like the prom and Homecoming and to be able to see the expressions on his friends' faces.

We don't want him to wear a mask at school. No one wants their child to wear a mask at school. But it's going to be necessary due to more contagious variants-- unless we add COVID vaccines to the list of required vaccinations for students 12 and older and staff. Many of us have unvaccinated family members or high risk family members who are vaccinated and are still at risk, so we need to continue wearing masks for the time being. But, if we mandate that all Missoula County Public School staff and students 12 years old and older get the COVID vaccine, mask wearing may not be necessary at our high schools.

We understand that the Montana legislature has banned public school systems in Montana from requiring the COVID vaccine for eligible students. This is a morally repugnant directive and will likely end up being decided in the courts. In the meantime, we believe the Missoula County Public School system has a moral imperative to issue a COVID vaccine requirement in order to protect everyone in the community. Medical and religious exemptions for COVID vaccines will still be available to anyone who wants to make that argument, but with a requirement in place, the vast majority of students would be vaccinated and therefore provide substantial protection to the student body, and their friends and families. The scientific evidence is clear that face coverings offer significant protection when all are wearing them, but the vastly more contagious Delta variant of COVID has rendered them less effective. Vaccination provides much greater protection even against the Delta variant. It's clear that the only path forward is a vaccine requirement for all eligible students. By not requiring it this year, we are guaranteeing there will be more unnecessary and preventable disease and death in our community. It's inevitable despite the negligent actions of our state legislature, that a COVID vaccine will be required for public school students at some point.

Let's be ahead of that curve and do it now, in the interest of protecting our community. The highly effective vaccines that are readily available and free of charge have given us an opportunity to keep our students safe and have a normal school experience. Our hearts break thinking that our son may never have a normal high school experience.

Eva Dunn-Froebig  
Doug Hawes-Davis

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: evapdf@gmail.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:51 AM

Thank you for submitting your public comment. Just like comments made in person at a public board meeting, the comments you submit through email are public record and are available for any member of the Board and public to read. Please refrain from referring to confidential student or staff information, or making derogatory comments about students or staff members. If you do provide private confidential information, we will redact that information before placing it in any public document. Please refer to Board Policy 1441 for more information about public comments in general. Thank you!

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**Board Meeting Comment**

2 messages

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**Adrienne Hopkins** <ahopkins@missoulaagingservices.org>  
To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:55 AM

Hello,

I would like to add this comment:

"I thank the MCPS Board for making the hard choices to do what is best for the students. Foster Grandparent and RSVP Tutor volunteers are ready, willing and able to go back to helping kids one-on-one to make it to grade level. We're here to help!"

Adrienne Hopkins

**Adrienne Hopkins**

*Foster Grandparent and RSVP Tutor Coordinator*

T 406.728.7682 F 406.728.7687

337 Stephens Ave. Missoula, MT 59801

**MISSOULAAGINGSERVICES.ORG**

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: ahopkins@missoulaagingservices.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 9:55 AM

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS****Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Masks in schools**

2 messages

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**Ericka Schenck** <e.schenck@me.com>  
To: publiccomment@mcpsmt.org

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:22 AM

Hi. I'm a parent of an incoming freshman and senior at Hellgate. Both are vaccinated. But I still want them and everyone else around them masked indoors. We have lost a family member to covid, and another has been very sick this week with a breakthrough infection. Even among the vaccinated, the risk of long covid in my children who already suffer some neurological issues (ADHD and concussion-related memory loss) is terrifying to me, and putting them at risk when it's so easy to protect them by enforcing masking is simply careless.

(Please see this, from the New York Times last week: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/health/long-covid-kids.html>)

The easiest, most equitable solution is requiring everyone in every school building to wear a mask (with exceptions for kids with certain disabilities and sensory issues). Anything short of that is a risk we shouldn't take - not with our kids, nor with the broader community - and is too complicated for already overworked teachers to try to enforce. The science is on the side of masking, especially with widespread delta variant infection. Just follow it.

Thank you,  
Ericka Schenck  
Sent from my iPhone

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>  
To: e.schenck@me.com

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:22 AM

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**Back to School Plans**

2 messages

**Leah Rissien** <tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:34 AM

Reply-To: Leah Rissien &lt;tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net&gt;

To: "publiccomment@mcpsmt.org" &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Thank you so much for all the work you did to put together a draft plan for returning to school later this month. I think the plan is an excellent balance between making sure that all children, staff, and volunteers are using best health practices yet still allowing a measure of freedom when it is safe to do so.

Please do not listen to the small minority who are making a great deal of noise about wearing masks. There has been plenty of research to show that masks ARE effective. I 100% support mask wearing in school. My son is 9 years old and cannot be vaccinated. He and so many like him would not be safe at school unless there is a universal mask policy. Both the CDC and the AAP agree that masks should be part of all return to school plans.

I urge you to adopt the draft plan without modifications, unless they are toward more stringent mask requirements. Thank you!

Leah Rissien  
parent of a child at Franklin Elementary

**Leah Rissien, Norwex Sales Consultant**

P (614) 448-6576 | E [tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net)

[www.LeahRissien.norwex.biz](http://www.LeahRissien.norwex.biz)

[www.facebook.com/lmaGreenerCleaner/](https://www.facebook.com/lmaGreenerCleaner/)

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:35 AM

To: tinyturtle7@sbcglobal.net

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**Request for Teacher Vaccination Mandate**

2 messages

**Saldin, Erin** <Erin.Saldin@mso.umt.edu>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:43 AM

To: "Rwatson@mcpsmt.org" &lt;Rwatson@mcpsmt.org&gt;, Public Comment &lt;publiccomment@mcpsmt.org&gt;

Hello, Superintendent Watson,

First, thank you for your recommendation to the Board that masks be required of all in Missoula Public Schools. It is a much-needed and very basic safety measure at this point. Thank you.

Second, it is not the only safety measure that we need. As a parent, I am horrified that the teachers in the public schools aren't required to be vaccinated. In our home, we are doing everything we can to mitigate the danger of COVID for our children; it's shocking to me that the schools are not doing the same by making sure that the teachers are all vaccinated. Since COVID is increasingly a pandemic of the unvaccinated, those teachers who haven't had their shots will likely get the virus, and they will be in classrooms with our most precious children.

My partner and I have been active members of the school community at Paxson, where our two girls attend. We continue to step up whenever there is a need for resources. We are proud of our public schools in Missoula, and proud to have children in the public schools. But I would be lying if I said I hadn't called every school that is not in the public system to see if they are requiring vaccinations of teachers, and that--if any had been--we would have left the system and institution that we love because we can't rely on it to protect our children.

Third, when vaccines are available for children, please require the COVID vaccine in the same way that you require all other vaccines in order to attend school. That's the only way we get through this and our children start learning once again.

It is with a fearful and heavy heart that we send our children back to school this fall.

All best,  
Erin Saldin

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**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:43 AM

To: Erin.Saldin@mso.umt.edu

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**MISSOULA COUNTY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Public Comment** <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

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**Re: covid task meeting!**

2 messages

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**Kristy Tripp** <kristytripp4@gmail.com>

To: Public Comment <publiccomment@mcpsmt.org>

Tue, Aug 10, 2021 at 10:56 AM



#NoMask #NoSchool #NotTrue

📌 To parents sending your children back to public school. Do not beg the school boards for rights you already have. The state of emergency was ended by the Governor and school board rules cannot supersede the law!

📌 Government liability related to covid-19 policies was limited by HB 435 with the limitations on requirements in sub-section 6.

(1) If a federal or state statute, regulation, order, or public health guidance related to covid-19 recommends or requires the use of a face mask, a government entity is not required to ensure face masks are being used or a face mask is sufficient to stop the spread of covid-19 to meet the standard of care.

Read and download full law text here:

<https://leg.mt.gov/bills/2021/sesslaws/ch0516.pdf>

If a public school refuses to teach or admit a pupil, they are in violation of MT state constitution and various state laws, please seek legal counsel and sue these schools and boards.