

August 16, 2021

**L. Sue Herman, President
President
Wooster City Board of Education
Wooster, OH 44691**

Dear Mrs. Herman,

I am respectfully submitting the present letter to address the masking and COVID guidelines voted and approved by the board on the July 27th regular meeting.

Before I go into the topic, I would like to thank you, the members of the school board as well Superintendent Tudor for the time you dedicate and the work you do to enhance the quality and environment of our city educational system.

As you are aware of, there is a substantial amount of discomfort in the community as we face the 2021-22 School Year and the prospects of another very trying and limiting educational experience for our children as a consequence of the unresolved COVID19 pandemic. The Masking Mandate recently released by the Wooster City Board Education is not helping with this situation.

Whereas we appreciate your work and the caution you exercise in protecting our children and community, I am very concerned that critical policies and guidelines are issued without the participation and opinion of parents and the community at large. We are ultimately who have elected our School Board Members, to best represent our interests and those of our children, and to make decisions on our behalf in the context of public

accountability and respect. Obviously this is a reflection of who we are as a country, a constitutional republic.

I would like to address few reasons why I believe the issuing of a Mask Mandate for Staff and Students is problematic, and why a CHOICE policy is more productive:

1. Constitutionality

- Based on the constitutional principles of freedom in this nation, people, and more specifically parents, have the right to choose what is best for themselves and their families.
 - This applies to regular families, single households as well as fostering parents.
- Mask-wearing is an infringement on our freedom.
 - Especially our Medical freedom of choice.
 - Vaccination as well as long-term wearing of a mask should be something families discuss internally and with their doctors. And not something left up to public opinion or administrative mandates.

2. Policy & Science

- At present time, neither CDC nor ODH have issued policy or mandates concerning the use of masks. However, we

acknowledge that both of them have released cautionary guidelines and recommendations.

- However, the Ohio State Congress is currently evaluating legislation to block any such mandates. HR248.
- In the absence of conclusive evidence and the many contradictions from CDC concerning the use of masks, there is no strong case as to mandate their use.
- This is why several neighboring and several other school districts across the state and country are opting for a CHOICE policy. Few examples in case are Green, Triway, Perry, Olentangy, River View, Summit and others.
- If there is something we have learned from this pandemic is that virus transmission occurs by direct surface contact or by airborne microscopic pathogens. There are technical solutions to both of them
 - The use of wet (chemical) surface disinfectants, including obviously plain and simple hand washing soaps
 - The use of enhanced air filtration and ultraviolet air disinfection systems in our HVAC (Heat Ventilation and Air Conditioning) infrastructure
- Masks are a very poor barrier to stop or filter micro-organisms, like COVID, whose size is considerably smaller than the average fabric and textiles used to make masks. Furthermore, mask users are forced to breathe recirculated bacteria, CO₂ and foul air.

3. Psychological and Social Impact

- Mental and emotional health is as pivotal as the protection against a virus.
- The use of masks contributes to the escalation in fear, anxiety and depression that have sky-rocketed among children and community in general.
- The use of masks has further decreased facial interaction between students and educators. Thus creating disconnects and lack of proper communication.

4. Respect and Cooperation

- We as parents and a concerned community agree that in the spirit of cooperation we must agree on basic health guidelines for hygiene (washing of hands, social distancing, etc.) and empathy (staying at home if someone is sick or not feeling well).
- In the spirit of respect, people should have the right to choose whether the use of masks or vaccination is in their best interest. Yet this should never be mandated, nor should people be discriminate for not complying.
 - If people feel the need to wear masks, they should
 - If people feel the need to vaccinate, they should

- We also agree that if health conditions in the county deteriorate extremely, other measures may be necessary. However, we are not there yet.

5. Financial and Long Term

- The lack of dialogue and imposition of health mandates may cause a stampede of students leaving the school system or resorting to ineffective online formats or lesser quality options. Not a winning proposition for the community.
- Mandates that erode personal liberty and freedom will likely trigger legal actions which will tarnish our school district and deplete our community finances.

I would like to request the reading of the present letter at the upcoming work meeting on Monday August 16th as well as the regular meeting on Tuesday August 24th. At that time I will be presenting this letter accompanied by a list of signatures. There is a strong group of around 1,000 community members in Facebook monitoring this event.

Respectfully,

Arturo Machado
929 Hamilton Ave
Wooster, OH 44691

PS: This letter is a revision of original document sent to the Members of the Board of Education and dated August 9th, 2021.