

From: "Rice, Peter (MD)" <PRice@peacehealth.org>
Subject: FW: Craig School District masking policy
Date: September 17, 2021 at 4:25:04 PM AKDT
To: "creitan@craigschools.com" <creitan@craigschools.com>

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing this letter as the medical director for the PeaceHealth Prince of Wales clinic to respectfully request you require mask wearing and social distancing across your school district.

As physicians, we make decisions throughout our entire career that are grounded on evidence-based guidelines developed by national scientific bodies including the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and many others.

The guidelines are available in the links below and uniformly recommend that children above 2 years old wear masks when indoors in school and social distance wherever possible, regardless of immunization status.

There is no strong evidence to support concerns about increased carbon dioxide exposure or delays in social development due to mask wearing in children and adolescents. In fact, these measures have enabled many districts to keep children in school during the pandemic allowing in-person social development to continue throughout the academic year.

Especially given the current COVID-19 situation in our state, preventing childhood infections will help reduce adult infections. Both of which will reduce the burden on our hospitals, many of which are currently rationing care due to being at or over capacity.

Finally, the delta variant is proving to be more aggressive than other variants in terms of degree of illness in children and adolescents, with many more cases of critical illness and death in this age group than seen in previous variants. The small and scientifically-recommended acts of mask wearing and distancing can have profound impacts of keeping our children in school and our communities safer.

I appreciate the hard work that you donate to your community, and

your attention to this issue .

Sincerely,

Peter Rice, MD

[Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools | CDC](#)
[Face Masks \(aap.org\)](#)
[Mask Mythbusters: Common Questions about Kids & Face Masks -
HealthyChildren.org](#)

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