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Subject: Staying in School
Date: September 12, 2021 at 9:11:00 PM AKDT
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I am writing to the board this evening in light of a third class and several staff members having been quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19.

The decision by the Board to adopt "Mask Choice" has led us to this juncture and I am requesting an immediate change of position regarding masking in the school.

Board Policy 9000, Powers and Duties, states, "The School Board's primary goal is to provide each student with an education of the highest quality in keeping with his/her capacity to learn. This goal shall be the basic factor motivating the Board's execution of its powers and duties."

The overarching public opinion expressed at the last meeting was that students should be in school. I agree. This is the means by which we can provide the highest quality education. We are currently experiencing the most covid cases locally since this pandemic started. Yet the district has closed optional mitigation strategies.

If keeping the students in school is the priority of the Board, then the Board must adopt policy that supports this. Universal masking is the easiest, least obtrusive means available. If our students had been masked, 4th and 6th grade students as well as staff would still be in attendance come Monday morning (excepting those who tested positive of course).

As a member of the School Board, you have sworn to protect the children and staff of this community. [Board Policy 9271, Code of Ethics](#) states, "In all actions as a school Board member, the member's first commitment is to the well-being of our youth. His/her primary responsibility is to every student in the district." I encourage you to review this policy in its whole. I have linked for your convenience.

Current policy is creating an atmosphere of reaction-based decisions which are not sustainable.

We don't need a sweeping mandate. A two-week mandatory masking would allow us to get a handle on the influx of cases on the island and keep the majority of our students and staff in class. At the end of that two-week period the policy can be reviewed and evaluated as to its effectiveness and continued need.

Exceptions can be made - no policy has to be all or nothing. If kindergartners absolutely cannot wear masks (a premise I question) then make an exception for that class while in their classroom. If there are elementary-aged special education students who cannot tolerate masks, make an exception for them. If 85%-95% of the school is masked, that will make the needed difference.

We have CARES act funding that we understand needs to be spent. Weekly testing for unvaccinated staff and optional testing for vaccinated staff could be implemented.

Craig City School District is no different than thousands of districts across this nation. In our state, we have seen mask choice implemented by districts quickly to be discarded for mandatory masking as students and staff become infected.

I would like to work with students in my classroom - not across zoom. If masking is the means by which this is made possible, then please immediately adopt policy immediately for universal masking.

The courtesy of a reply is requested.

Josh Andrews