

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education and Agency of Education:

I recognize the Agency of Education (AOE) as well as superintendents and school boards are balancing a variety of perspectives when it comes to providing schools with guidance around COVID-19. I appreciate your efforts and diligence in hearing from a variety of stakeholders.

I am a parent of two teenage boys, one of whom has suffered extreme mental distress this past year and a half. At this juncture, given there is currently no “all-hazards” event justifying a State of Emergency, it would be prudent to take a conservative and measured approach with regard to COVID restrictions in order to minimize further harm to our children. Some points for the committee to consider include:

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- Throughout
- the pandemic, schools and children have not been shown to be drivers of infection. In fact, schools in some places have remained open throughout the pandemic without social distancing or masks and without detrimental impact.
  
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- The
- vast majority of students and staff in our schools are in groups that have a negligible, if non-existent risk from death or other adverse impacts of COVID-19. The infection survival rate among healthy individuals 0-19 years is 99.9973%. This group is at far
- greater risk of perishing in an automobile accident. Even for older individuals (60-69 years), the infection survival rate is still 99.41%. While many have been conditioned to believe COVID-19 is a death sentence for almost anyone, this is
- [far](#)
- [from the actual reality.](#)
  
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- Individuals
- who are at risk due to age and/or underlying health conditions were at risk prior to COVID-19 for any number of opportunistic infections (flu for instance), and yet we did not take extraordinary precautions to accommodate those individuals prior to 2020.
  
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- Masks
- are proven to cause physiological and psychological health consequences, which the AOE and schools are liable for when masks are mandated and there is no accommodation or choice.

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- Teaching
- students about consent is a critical part of growing up and understanding personal rights. Young adults are taught about consent in regard to hugging, kissing, touching, and sexual activities. Consent is incredibly relevant to COVID restrictions and students
- should be given a choice to refuse non-FDA approved medical interventions such as masks, COVID testing, and COVID vaccinations. Schools, of all public institutions, should be places where students learn about the importance of consent and are not being coerced
- to relinquish their bodily autonomy.

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- [21](#)
- [US Code, 360bbb-3](#)
- states that no emergency authorized medical product can be forced upon individuals, as they have “the option to accept or refuse administration of the product” (e 1 A ii III). This includes masks, COVID tests, and COVID vaccinations.

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- Please
- remember the CDC, who everyone seems obliged to follow although they are not elected officials and are only making recommendations, has a long shady past of wrongdoing and apologizing after it's too late. Just one example is the
- [Tuskegee](#)
- [Experiment](#).

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- Pressuring

- the Governor to declare a state of emergency for the purpose of reinstating mask mandates and other COVID restrictions is a blatant abuse of power in the absence of a true “all-hazards” event and caters to irrational fears not grounded in evidence or taking
- into account [relative](#)
- [risk assessment](#).

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Schools are not furthering their missions by catering to the fearful. Our children will undoubtedly have lasting scars from this pandemic and cooler heads must prevail. Please be our children’s advocate and have the courage to lead the K-12 community back to some semblance of order and sanity. The mental health and lives of our young people depend on you.

Regards,  
Aimee Stephenson, Ph.D.