

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County | August 18, 2021

Board Meetings are held in the Board Room of the Carol Sheffey Parham Building at 2644 Riva Road, Annapolis, MD 21401

Times for agenda items are intended as guidance only.

The Board may choose to change the order of agenda items to meet the needs of the Board. Unless changed by the Board, items occur in the order listed.

Board Members

Melissa Ellis
President

Dana Schallheim
Vice President

Vacant

Robert Silkworth
Corine Frank

Joanna Tobin

Michelle L. Corkadel

Bunmi Omisore

Upcoming Meetings

General Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 1, 2021
12:00 pm

Policy Committee

Tuesday, August 31, 2021
3:00 pm
Virtual

Budget Committee

Tuesday, September 21, 2021
3:30 pm
Virtual

Equity Committee

Tuesday, September 14, 2021
11:30 am
Virtual

10:00 am 1. Motion to Enter Closed Session

12:00 pm 2. Opening/Recognition

2.01 Invocation

2.02 Pledge of Allegiance

2.03 Approval of the Minutes

2.04 Establish Agenda Order

2.05 Board Members - Remembrance of Candace C.W. Antwine

2.06 Proposal for ROTC Scholarship to honor Ms. Antwine

12:30 pm 3. Public Comments

The Board will hear in-person and virtual public comment on agenda items during regularly scheduled meetings from up to a total of 10 speakers per agenda item of each meeting, prior to Board discussion of those items. Those wishing to provide live in-person or virtual public comment may register, space permitting, at

www.aacps.org/boardtestimony. All speakers will be allotted 2 minutes. Written

comments on agenda items can also be submitted through a form available at

www.aacps.org/boardtestimony. The process for submitting such comments and

comments on non-agenda items, which are only accepted in writing, can be found at

www.aacps.org/boardtestimony.

12:45 pm 4. Updates/Reports (I)

4.01 President's Update

4.03 CRASC Report

4.02 Budget Committee Update

4.04 PTA Report

1:15 pm 5. Presentations/Discussions (I)

5.01 Prismatic Services Bus Transportation Routing Cost Update

5.02 Readiness for Opening of Schools (to include information normally presented in monthly departmental reports)

5.03 Board Discussion of School Reopening Protocols

2:15 pm 6. Action Items (A)

6.01 Administrative Personnel Appointments

6.02 Personnel

6.03 Woodside ES – Public Stormwater Drainage Easement

Second Reading – Policy Revision

6.04 Home Schooling – Code IFQ

2:45 pm 7. Consent Items – Award of Contracts (A)

7.01 Adaptive and Physical Therapy Equipment

7.02 Adobe Software

7.03 Architectural, Engineering, Design, and Construction Administration Services – Windows

7.04 Behavioral Threat Assessment Software

7.05 Commissioning Services – Meade HS

7.06 Direct Digital Control HVAC

7.07 Google Voice

7.08 Grass Seed and Fertilizer

7.09 Lighting Upgrades

7.10 Project Search

7.11 Radio Equipment

7.12 Special Education Services

7.13 Vehicle Repair Parts

3:10 pm 8. Review Items (R)

8.01 Award of Contracts

Key: (I) Information (A) Action (R) Review

Information on agenda items can be obtained from the Board of Education Office (410-222-5311) or at www.aacps.org

The following testimony was submitted for the August 18, 2021, meeting of the Board of Education. The “...” designation indicates the cutoff of testimony due to it exceeding the word the limit. The full version of such testimony has been provided to the Board.

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 5.01 – Prismatic Services Bus Transportation Routing Cost Update

1. Please consider implementation of recommendations from Prismatic Services as soon as possible; INCLUDING mid-year 2021-2022.

We have learned that families, teachers, and school staff can be resilient and pivot quickly when needed. And while you might consider that pivoting for a pandemic is more critical to public health than transportation and school start times, I implore you to consider the mental health of our high schoolers. These kids face tremendous pressure every day and doing so with less sleep than developmentally appropriate is akin to taking away their best protection from harm. The data about teens and start times is consistent, and the mental health crisis in our community is growing constantly. We lost too many children at their own hand last year and we know that being well rested is one of the most important factors for physical and mental health. If you can spare a moment, I encourage you to watch this segment from CBS Sunday Morning. Research indicates that pressure to achieve is equal to poverty in terms of impact on mental health: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/helping-students-cope-with-the-pressure-to-succeed/?ftag=CNM-00-10aab6i&linkId=127740041&fbclid=IwAR1ibICl42vmjR2kpXKAsbroGoVJKUX2F7K5KYCjh3Z-cPfQJ4tUyLvCBpw>

We owe it to our children to put their health over inconvenience, entrenchment, and stubbornness. AACPS has demonstrated that it can change rapidly and is ready for change when it benefits our children - please do not drag your organizational feet any longer and act quickly.

You may just save a child's life!

Jessica Farrar
Severna Park

2. I understood that school times would be changed by January 2022 and am surprised that this is not yet accomplished. The ability to pivot to online learning shows that the school system can accomplish large changes quickly when necessary. Changing school times to give our high schoolers much needed sleep is not a nicety - it is a necessity. Studies consistently show that more and better sleep leads to better physical and mental health. Lack of sleep leads to declining mental health. The health of our students is paramount. I support and urge the Board to finalize its work and get school times changed this year, even if that means a change in the middle of the 2021-2022 school year. Our kids deserve it.

Sarah Biran
Severna Park

3. Last year's experience proved that you can act fast when you need. Mental Health is a crisis (like Covid was when they moved fast before). Sleep is a major factor in physical and mental health. I also cited the CBS article and the fact that too many kids in our own County died by their own hand last year and the time to act is NOW.

Michael Roth
Annapolis

4. Dr. Arlotto, Board of Education: For as long as I have had children in AACPS, I have been advocating to have school start times changed to more appropriate times at all levels, but particularly the high school level. It is unbelievable that, as my oldest son enters high school, he is still facing the absurdly early start times that, for over a decade, every major medical and educational organization has said are unhealthy, unsustainable, and, most importantly I suppose from your point of view, incredibly damaging to a child's education. The Board voted, 1/20/21, to have elementary schools start no earlier than 8 am/no later than 9 am, middle schools start no earlier than 8:30 am/no later than 9:15 am and regular high school start no earlier than 8:30 am, and that these changes take place by the beginning of the 21/22 second semester. This vote, and promise to parents, must be upheld. It will be a change, but change happens all the time and families and students adjust and move forward (clearly the last 18 months are testament to that), and they will with this as well. Board of Education, per your governing documents, "board members are expected to make decisions based upon a desire to serve the students in Anne Arundel County in the best way possible." Our children deserve the educational and health benefits that come with age-appropriate start times, and they, and we, expect you to move forward with them. Please do not let us down.

Jessica Pachler
Annapolis

The following testimony was submitted for the August 18, 2021, meeting of the Board of Education. The “...” designation indicates the cutoff of testimony due to it exceeding the word the limit. The full version of such testimony has been provided to the Board.

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED FOR ITEM 5.03 – Board Discussion of School Reopening Protocols

1. Greetings,

I would like to see AACPS require COVID vaccinations for all eligible faculty and staff. Districts around us are requiring vaccines for teachers or the option of regular testing. Not every person is eligible for the vaccine so of course this plan would allow for medical exemptions. As an elementary school teacher, the best way we can protect our students who cannot yet receive the vaccine is to be vaccinated and wear masks indoors. Please keep the universal masking in place for the start of the school year and reevaluate as needed.

Lauren Elfring, AACPS art teacher
Baltimore

2. Dear Board Members,

Our children need to be in school. To keep our schools open, you need to proactively enforce protective measures against COVID-19 in classrooms.

Facts that necessitate protective measures:

- Cases in Maryland are increasing daily and will continue to do so without intervention. This threatens our schools.

- Families have been traveling to places with higher case rates and lower vaccination rates. This threatens the opening of schools.

- Our youngest students, who do not have the option to be vaccinated, continue to be at high risk for catching the disease and spreading it to those most vulnerable in our community.

Please support the following proactive measures:

1) Enforce mask mandates in schools: While aerosolized particles are still a concern, masking with cloth masks still reduces the particles that make it into the air, reducing transmission.

Require weekly tests for staff or children with medical wavers not to mask.

2) Invest in air ventilation that increases outdoor air circulation and classroom filtration systems: This investment will support school health for years to come.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/vent.html>

3) Keep students in cohorts: To reduce the number of students that may have to quarantine, keep students in classroom cohorts, including eating lunch outside or in classrooms. Parents who had their kids at home last year may now be available to serve as classroom lunch monitors. Any option for limiting cafeteria capacity should be taken.

Thank you.

Jessica Wieder

Parent of incoming kindergarten and third-grade students
Gambrills

3. Please keep the protocols in place that Dr. Arlotto has already outlined for this school year regarding Universal Masking of our students and staff no matter what their current vaccination status is. These protocols were put in place following the guidance set forth by the CDC, The Anne Arundel County Health Department and the American Pediatric Association for the successful return to full in-person learning this year. Masking is a small thing to ask and can be done by all to protect our children and keep schools open.

Jennifer Greeff
Millersville

4. Elementary school students cannot get the vaccine. It's different for 7th grade and up who can get vaccinated, masks are great for that age range. But since elementary school students cannot get vaccinated, sending them back to school is a horrible and unsafe idea. Cloth masks only block up to 50-70% of fine particles, and since that will be what most parents send their children to school wearing, elementary school students are at risk being exposed to the Delta variant, and younger kids such as these are being hospitalized and dying at higher rates. There should be a virtual option for elementary school students. Anne Arundel County is substantial in terms of virus cases. I am appalled that the Board of Education would even consider sending children who cannot get the vaccine back into school into a petri dish. (because parents send their kids in school with sicknesses like the cold daily) Please think not of your reputation but think of the kids, and how many deaths you could cause by NOT providing a virtual option for students who cannot protect themselves. I have a little sister, and it breaks my heart to think she could catch COVID and potentially die, all because the schools want her to go back to school wearing a piece of cloth around her mouth with no vaccination, and hope for the best.

Nyah Johnson
Severn

5. As we look forward to reopening, I would like to request some consideration to having a plan for when the students and staff no longer need to wear masks. The people of AACPS would appreciate the option for a choice to mask or not. Perhaps a waiver could be offered to staff and families so that the people of AACPS can make a decision that is best for their family. It would also be helpful for verbiage such as "when possible" so our teachers can determine when they can and cannot effectively teach their students. Masking in all educational settings such as speech is not providing a learning environment for all students. The needs of all staff and students must be considered when thinking of how masking can and will impact a child's education.

Jennifer Farrelly
Pasadena

6. I implore you to consider parental choice and the freedom for parents to decide for their own children the best way forward regarding mask usage for the 2021/2022 school year. There are no scientific studies or data that prove masking children reduces the spread of COVID-19. Camps were open all summer without mask mandates, during a time when the delta variant was spreading, and yet there were no outbreaks, shutdowns of camps, or

deaths of children who attended these camps. To mask or not is the right of the individual, or parent, if the individual is a minor. Any argument to the contrary is based solely on emotion and not facts. Please base your decisions on facts and how COVID-19 affects (or doesn't affect) children.

Jennifer Fold
Linthicum

7. I feel that re-opening the schools during this resurgence of COVID-19 with the additional Delta Variant is extremely unwise. No school or public building is prepared for this more infectious strain. I have two children, ages 7 and 9, who cannot be vaccinated as of yet (My 13-year-old is vaccinated). There is talk of a vaccine being approved for those younger ages shortly. The best course of action would be to have all schools be completely virtual for the first quarter at least. The county already has the ability and the experience to do this. This would allow the time for all families who want their younger children to receive the vaccine before returning into what has the potential to be a catastrophic situation. The decision to re-open the schools seems very rushed and unsafe. We all want to return to a "Normal" life as soon as possible but this has the potential to set us back even further. Rushing the students back into schools before it is 100% safe could cost the lives of children. Not one single child's life should be put at risk. You cannot guarantee that these schools are free from COVID-19. You cannot guarantee the safety of the children going to these schools. You cannot re-open the schools.

Ross Thuillier
Crofton

8. Please allow parents to make the choice whether or not to mask their children. These health issues are for parents to decide for their children, not school boards to dictate. We want to remain in the public school system in this county but will go elsewhere if our rights as parents to care for our children continue to be stripped. An issue like masking a child for eight hours a day five days a week must be a parents' choice, there are many factors involved (including medical and psychological factors) to consider and forcing it on these children without individual consideration for each child is wrong. For many, this issue will impact if a child will stay in the school system. We hope you will trust the parents to do what is best. Let the parents be parents. Thank you for your time.

Jen Edwards
Davidsonville

9. I am excited that students are returning to school 5 days a week! Thank you for making this happen and pledging NOT to return to virtual instruction.

I urge you to consider optional masks for students and staff. There are zero studies that have proven that masks prevent transmission. Where is the data to support the mandate? One study on fluid dynamics shows that masks reduce droplet transmission in a lab with human models. What about actual children? Have you seen a child wear a mask in a classroom? I've been working 1:1 with students since May. I spend a great deal of time asking them to put their masks back on, picking masks up off the floor, putting them back

on. All with my hands that have touched my own face and mask, touched materials, touched my clothing which was exposed to several other children. As an AACPS SLP, I see the negative effects masks have on our children every day. They interfere with speech-language therapy, affect social emotional development and are uncomfortable for many of our students. The masking guidance doesn't make sense and seems to lack logic. Children have to wear masks while they are seated at their desks in the classroom, but can remove them for band, chorus, sports and in the cafeteria.

Please consider making masks optional for students. There are too many negative effects and not enough evidence to show that they work to require our children to wear them in school.

Jerilyn Deitch
Arnold

10. I will be a 7th grader at Magothy River Middle School. I do not want to wear a mask to school. I have been playing sports, traveling and playing with my friends all of this time without a mask. Why do I have to wear one to school now? Masks distract me in the classroom. It's on my face and itchy and hot. Kids play with them, use them as slingshots and throw them around. It's hard to hear my teachers when they have masks on their faces. You told us to get vaccinated so we could return to normal. I don't know what the point was. Masks aren't normal. Let us go to school without masks if we want to.

Jack Deitch
Arnold

11. The job of a parent is to protect their children. Each parent has their own philosophies, values, health challenges, morals and opinions on what is best for their children and their family. By requiring masks, we are taking away the fundamental right to parent our kids as we personally see fit. Parenting for most of us is our #1 priority in life. We should have the right to decide if our kids need to wear a mask in school or not. Some believe Covid is a larger threat. Some believe the masking is a larger threat. I listed links to all the unhealthy threats to children wearing masks all day in school such as too much carbon dioxide, psychological damage, fogging up glasses, creating acne from the sweat/moisture and more. Unfortunately, during a stressful time when our opinions vary more than ever, we're never going to please everyone. That's why everyone should be able to make their own decisions for their children and families.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/masks-children-parenting-schools-mandates-covid-19-coronavirus-pandemic-biden-administration-cdc-11628432716>

<https://www.aier.org/article/masking-children-tragic-unscientific-and-damaging/>

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/children-should-not-be-forced-to-wear-masks-due-to-co2-levels-new-study-suggests/ar-AALFKTk>

Melissa Fry
Davidsonville

12. Five days a week schooling with pre-COVID schedules and activities is our only option to repair the damage inflicted upon our children over the last two years. They have immensely suffered educationally, socially, physically and mentally with no real attempt or effort to get them back in the classroom in 2020. Keeping the kids in school with rational quarantine protocols should be a priority of the school board. Hybrid or virtual schooling should no longer be a part of our educational system - unless quarantined for a positive test result. Please focus your policies and procedures on our children's need to socialize with their peers and mentors. This includes common area lunches, as much time outside as possible, and allowing extracurricular activities to continue with minimal restrictions. Lastly, please have a flexible plan in place to continue a trend to pre-COVID normalcy when transmission levels decline.

Abby Glenn
Davidsonville

13. We live on the Broadneck peninsula and have a child entering second grade. As the COVID Delta threat increases, please consider going virtual again. When AACPS were virtual on 9/8/20, the 7-day avg. of new cases was 65, but the 7-day avg. new cases are even higher now (76+). Virtual Academy was set up when cases were low and our under 12 kids are still unvaccinated. Masks or not, it is irresponsible to demand all students return at this stage.

Chad Phillips
Arnold

14. We must employ whatever mitigation measures are necessary to keep our students in the classrooms engaged in learning and socializing rather than quarantined for two weeks. However, after seeing the Archdiocese of Baltimore's memo on masking, it is important that you discuss and release masking guidelines to AACPS parents based on CDC recommendations and numbers just like they did.

Principals and school staff need support in creating innovative plans to eat lunch in the cafeteria. Students should not be quarantined because adults cannot figure out how to execute lunchtime safely. And no, the plan should not include children getting checked out for lunch by privileged parents who may be able to stay home to get their children. This is inequitable. Figure out a plan and support your principals.

Finally, our middle and high schoolers have suffered greatly. Justin Spiro, LSCW, said it best when he tweeted we should start discussing teen mental health using COVID language. "How many cases of depression per 100k teens? How high is the positivity rate of anxiety..." These kids need access to staff at all times. Encourage our secondary schools to include outside time in their days. NEST and SOAR etc. must be included in each MS/HS schedule to

let students get the help they need and be consistent across our county. We need to be present for our kids, and you need to ensure these times are being allocated.

It is time to do the hard work and help our kids recover.

Elizabeth Fine
Gambrills

15. The number one goal for this school year needs to be keeping schools open and operating on a normal schedule. Our children cannot be subjected to a third straight disrupted school year. Are masks a perfect solution? No, BUT they are one of the easiest, least expensive and most beneficial mitigation strategies that we have to help reduce the spread. I fully support the mask mandate in elementary and middle schools at this time. Until students under the age of 12 are eligible and have the opportunity to be vaccinated our public schools should have a universal masking policy in place after all this is a matter of public health. If wearing a mask helps keep schools open and limits the number of people quarantined, then I feel it is the least we can do for our students. My kids loved returning to in-person learning late last year that they hardly even noticed their masks. Masking up is the best strategy for our not-yet-vaccine eligible students to attend school in the most normal way possible which needs to be the number one priority this year. Our students have already lost two partial years of school.

Cheryl wolf
Severna Park

16. With the Delta variant 4 times more contagious than COVID-19, a virtual option must be extended at least to all unvaccinated children, potentially even to all willing families. The #1 thing we learned, I hope, was that choices and flexibility are key. Why are we in such a haste to take them all away again? I do not want my unvaccinated child to be a guinea pig to pacify those who want to reopen everything with no consideration for the changing reality. Not changing the course no matter what is not commitment, it's recklessness.

Natalya Stepanova
Crofton

17. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider my concerns with Covid and schools reopening. I have serious concerns with my children attending in-person classes with the development of the Delta variant. I fully expected that my children would be in school this fall when school ended in the spring. I did not apply to any online schools because I did not anticipate the need for it. With the new Covid developments I now want my children to attend virtual school. I am requesting that the board re-open the virtual school option for all students regardless of medical conditions. Parents need to have a virtual option for their students. The only other option that parents will have if there is no virtual school will be to

home school. Please allow the parents of children in Anne Arundel County Schools the option to choose what is best for their child.

Sarah Galla
Crofton

18. My vibrant bright girl spent much of 8th grade in her room, in bed, stressed out. She attended AAMC Partial Day Program to help with depression and learn how to cope with virtual school. Excited to be a freshman, she still takes 2 medications to help offset anxiety. She NEEDS to be IN the classroom 5 days a week. Virtual learning is not an option for us. And we are reassuring her that the AACPS BoE members realize the harm many of our children and teens have suffered since March 2020. We thought nothing could be worse than the 20-21 school year. However, if our children are forced to participate in another year or partial year of online classes, they will suffer another blow to their emotional, academic and social wellbeing. Thank you for considering my request to allow my daughter to be present and learn.

Christine LaPorte
Crofton

19. As a parent of a 1st grader, nothing short of a full re-opening with NO mask mandate is acceptable at this time. The children have lost an entire year of education, and more importantly social interactions with their classmates.

Deciding on whether or not to wear a mask should be the decision of the INDIVIDUAL family NOT the board or the superintendent. You have NO authority to make health decisions for my children. I can assure you I care way more about my own child's health and safety than the board or the school system. My family has returned to normal life for months now, which includes no masking anywhere. As the data shows, children are remarkably resilient when/if infected with COVID. There are an estimated 75 million people in the united states under the age of 18 of which roughly 350 have passed away from COVID since the start. Compare that to over 800 who have passed from pneumonia in the same time period, and none of these restrictions or mandates make any sense.

Let our children go back to normal healthy and productive lives and leave them out of your fear mongering and political mandates. If a parent wants their kids to wear a mask that is totally fine and is their right to do so. Just like it is mine to allow my child to go mask less in school this year.

Chuck Henn
Edgewater

20. I understand there is an effort to try to persuade AACPS to “unmask” our kids in schools. I want to unequivocally share my complete opposition to that position and implore you to 1) Follow CDC Guidance at all times, 2) Do everything in your power to allow students to safely-as-possible attend in person school, 3) Hold aside politics and pressure to make the best decision for the children, teachers, and school communities.

You have all the data already. Guidance is clear – masking is a very important tool, especially for unvaccinated people, which students under 12 all must be at this time (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>). There is significant evidence that it reduces disease spread for everyone (vaccinated or not) and in schools (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html). There is evidence that the majority of families support mandatory mask policies (Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/press-release/most-parents-dont-want-their-schools-to-require-covid-19-vaccination-but-most-favor-requiring-masks-for-unvaccinated-children-and-staff/>). States surrounding Maryland have mandated K-12 masking.

Sadly, this issue has become a siren call for some. There is no advantage to unmasking the unvaccinated. Masking is consistent with current policies including dress codes and expected behaviors. And risks from Covid are truly unknown, with kids getting sicker and unprecedented levels of RSV in children in summertime. Simply: the risks are just too great to not require masks in schools.

Children must be in school in person, last year’s data are staggering (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/07/us/covid-kindergarten-enrollment.html>). Schools without masks are already closing in the US. The best choice is to open schools as safely as possible, and widespread masking is the best tool to achieve that goal.

Jessica Farrar
Severna Park

21. I strongly and unequivocally support universal masking regardless of vaccination status in school buildings this fall. This is consistent with updated CDC guidance and is the best way to keep the schools open for all, which should be the top priority for the school year. Masking is easy, affordable, and can be done for all school age children and staff. Requiring people to wear masks is not an infringement on freedom - it is a sensible, practical tool for keeping the public healthy. Please require universal masking for all students, teachers, staff and visitors to school buildings so that we can keep the schools open.

Sarah Biran
Severna Park

22. I understand that there is currently an effort being mounted to encourage the unmasking of children in our schools. While I understand that families are fed up with so many new and frustrating things that have transpired over the course of this pandemic, now is simply not the time to unmask our students, especially students under the age of 12 who are most vulnerable and are unable to be vaccinated. Schools across the country have attempted to make masking an option or have dropped mask mandates all together and are now facing outbreaks and closures. There is no advantage to unmasking the unvaccinated. It is simple, if our children have to be masked in order to attend in person classes, given the staggering data (<https://www.nytimes.com/.../covid-kindergarten-enrollment>) from the previous year, I implore the board to remain focused on the return to in person learning, 5 days a week without a virtual or cohort component for lunch, recess or electives/specials and masking students is the safest and most effective way to accomplish this terribly important goal. Thank you for your time.

Kristie Rolfes
Severna Park

23. I understand there is an effort to try to persuade AACPS to “unmask” our kids in schools. I want to unequivocally share my complete opposition to that position and implore you to 1) Follow CDC Guidance at all times, 2) Do everything in your power to allow students to safely-as-possible attend in person school, 3) Hold aside politics and pressure to make the best decision for the children, teachers, and school communities. You have all the data already. Guidance is clear – masking is a very important tool, especially for unvaccinated people, which students under 12 all must be at this time (<https://www.cdc.gov/.../schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>). There is significant evidence that it reduces disease spread for everyone (vaccinated or not) and in schools (https://www.cdc.gov/.../transmission_k_12_schools.html). There is evidence that the majority of families support mandatory mask policies (Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/.../most-parents-dont-want-their-.../>). States surrounding Maryland have mandated K-12 masking. Sadly, this issue has become a siren call for some. There is no advantage to unmasking the unvaccinated. Masking is consistent with current policies including dress codes and expected behaviors. And risks from Covid are truly unknown, with kids getting sicker and unprecedented levels of RSV in children in summertime. Simply: the risks are just too great to not require masks in schools. Children must be in school in person, last year’s data are staggering (<https://www.nytimes.com/.../covid-kindergarten-enrollment...>). Schools without masks are already closing in the US. The best choice is to open schools as safely as possible, and widespread masking is the best tool to achieve that goal.

Adrienne Roth
Annapolis

24. Thank you for reading my message. I live in Anne Arundel County and I work for AACPS. I am aware of the push to reverse the mask mandate set by Dr. Arlotto. I strongly encourage you leave this mandate in place. Many board members cited the American Association of Pediatricians last school year when they argued students should be in schools. I implore those same board members to listen to this organization again when they say there should be universal use of masks. We hope this won't be for too long, but we will only make the situation worse if we don't use masks right now. Please learn the lessons of districts in other states that don't have universal masking and they are already quarantining thousands of students. This is a health issue, not a political issue. This board has done a good job of listening to the health experts so far. This is not the time to stop doing that. Let's help our students remain in schools.

Seth Wolak
Annapolis

25. I have grave concerns about the lack of planning to return to school safely. We know that the newer variants of this virus are more contagious, and children are getting hit much harder. My son goes to a school of 1,200 kids, implying for lunch, there will be ~400 children in the cafeteria at one time largely unmasked. The school does have an overflow space, but this was created years ago just to allow for more space to reduce overcrowding and not as a solution to create social distancing. The students are being told that they can eat outside, but that is weather dependent, and the school really does not have the staff to support this idea. I feel like the plan is to send them back and pray for a miracle or wait for a catastrophe. In this case, I would have liked to have seen an extra lunch added in the schedule — not necessarily for everyone in middle school, but at least for the 6th graders who are unable to receive a vaccine at this time. In this way, they would be better able to safely social distance while eating and not wearing masks. We have seen in other areas in the country the consequences of returning without appropriate safety guidance in place. Because of the lack of planning and safety protocols in terms of returning to school, I am considering pulling my son out and homeschooling. I should not have to do this at this time.

Kathy Swain

26. What protocols are in place to ensure that there will be no cases of COVID-19 in schools. I have heard that the superintendent, actually said he believed there would be cases? Is that true? What protocols are set for parents to review? Are there protocols for classroom social distancing, hand sanitizing, school lunch service, classroom and building air quality? What are the protocols for students who have asthma or other underlying health issues? What protocols are in place to address how students transition from classes throughout the school day? What are the daily classroom and building cleaning and disinfecting protocols? Will this information be provided to parents before the start of the school year?

Chere Pressley
Hanover

27. As much as we'd all like it to be, the health risks posed by COVID19 are not over. We have a responsibility to keep our children safe until all age groups are eligible for vaccination. States that have rejected CDC recommendations where school has already begun are seeing alarming trends. We should be paying attention and planning accordingly.

In the past week, kids represented 18% of the weekly reported COVID19 cases in the United States, an exponential increase. Last Saturday, 1,902 kids were hospitalized for COVID19. The CDC has also made MIS-C data publicly available. The data clearly shows that COVID19 is a real threat for our children.

It is imperative that AACPS keep the mask mandate for all students and staff. That's actually the very least that can be done. Vaccines should be required for all school staff. There should be a full virtual option for elementary school students until their age group is eligible for vaccination. A better plan for lunchtime - to include eating outdoors or in classrooms, allowing parents to pick students up – needs to be implemented to prevent overcrowded cafeterias to become super-spreading events. And finally, there needs to be honesty, consistency, and science as a basis for the contact tracing and quarantine plans; and a plan for learning continuity for the inevitable quarantine closures.

We've made so many sacrifices the last 18 months, let's not put our children at undue risk when they are so close to being eligible for the vaccine.

Elizabeth Matson
Crofton

28. After watching the Board Workshop on August 5, it was obvious there were still some questions that have not been addressed prior to reopening. Can the superintendent expound on his statement that there will be COVID-19 cases this school year? Is that based on data from the CDC, or the Maryland Department of Health? Is that based on the lack of social distancing in classrooms or mask mandates, or on the number of staff that are vaccinated, or the number of students eligible for vaccination? What are the protocols currently in place to address PPE supplies, hand sanitizing for students throughout the school day, air quality (HVAC), general classroom and building cleaning and disinfecting, and overall COVID-19 physical plant operations? What is the protocol for alerting parents and the general public on positive cases of students, staff, and visitors in schools throughout the school year; will there be a COVID-19 dashboard on COVID-19 for the general public to review? Is there currently, or will there be prior to reopening of schools a list of protocols for the general public to review and provide public comment on prior to and during the school year as data and more information for the CDC and the Maryland Health Department is made available? What protocols will be in place to allow parents to share concerns or information to support the school system's COVID-19 response?

Darrell Pressley
Hanover

29. Board of Education, "you are expected to make decisions based upon a desire to serve the students in Anne Arundel County in the best way possible." We entrust our children to you and expect that you will educate them and keep them safe. We all hoped the pandemic would be a distant memory by now, but it is not. The Delta variant has changed things, especially for our unvaccinated children. Every day, breakthrough cases increase and more children contract Covid, MIS-C and long-haul effects. Child hospitalizations are the highest they've been during the pandemic and increasing. Covid is a top 10 cause of adolescent death in the US. This can largely be prevented through masking, social distancing, strict contact and quarantine guidelines, outdoor classes, and virtual access to classrooms. Per the CDC, AAP, and MSDE, your current plan does not allow for enough of any of these things to keep our children from getting exposed to Covid and must be amended to do so. You need to keep our children safe and make decisions for the common good, relying on science, facts, and education. Masks must be worn at all times possible indoors, by all people. The anti-maskers claims cannot have any equivalency with facts, statistics and recommendations of actual scientists, doctors and education professionals. You need to heed them, and ensure their recommendations are followed, or every instance of disease, disability and death from our schools is on your shoulders. Our children, their futures, are in your hands.

Jessica Pachler
Annapolis

30. You have a new LMS you intend to use for when you know—know—kids will get sick. This LMS can be and should be used for families choosing to homeschool our kids in the absences of a virtual option for those waiting for u12 vaccine eligibility. Shouldn't you want to make sure fewer kids are "left behind"?

Delta is targeting the unvaccinated, and kids 1-12 are now making up nearly a quarter of weekly cases, nationally, because no one in this age group is eligible for the vaccine. Yet, you don't have a virtual plan for those families waiting for our families to all be safely vaccinated with eligibility. This school system has played reactionary to data rather than comprehended and prepare for worst case scenarios. All pandemic. You have continued to make monotone decisions—no layers or nuances to promote outcome a by providing equity options. There is no politics in wanting our kids to be safe—that's just an inherent trait of a loving parent, a loving community.

Christopher Ankney
Annapolis

31. This is testimony on the topic of masking, COVID vaccines, and COVID testing of our children. Based on CDC's own data, the COVID survival rate of children aged 0-19 years is 99.997%. Additionally, there are treatments available that are curing people of COVID (ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, zinc and vitamin D sufficiency). None of these COVID measures in schools are necessary. Not to mention, it has a physical and psychologically damaging effect on our kids. Please do not mandate masking, COVID tests, and COVID

vaccinations for school attendance. And please do not isolate students or allow bullying based on students' vaccination status.

Please follow the science instead of listening to arbitrary protocols from Dr. Kalyanaraman and the incompetent CDC. Listen to Peter McCullough, MD testify with facts and science before the Texas Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAHi3IX3oGM>

Peggy Williams
Severna Park

32. I am in support of masking and a vaccine mandate for employees and students (of appropriate age). Although I am infuriated that my vaccinated daughter has to mask in high school because of irresponsible and/or gullible members of our society, I am far more concerned about the young people who do not as of yet have access to the vaccine. The least we can do for them is mask up. I believe Frank should be removed from her position based on her now hidden attempts to generate campaign funds with anti-masking rhetoric, which goes against AACPS policy and jeopardizes the safety of our students.

Michelle Gaudett Koul
Severna Park

33. Kids who are under the age of 12 are not able to get the vaccine. How is it ok to send them back to school when we have clearly seen all the cases in other states who have opened and get SO many students infected? It only takes 1 irresponsible parent to get every kid sick, and with no vaccines for the younger kids it's a HUGE risk to open back for them. I wish I had the option for virtual school for my 1st grader, but somehow the virtual academy that was created left them out of that option. Please, do not send the younger kids back yet, not until they are vaccinated. I am waiting until the last day to hear a change on that, otherwise we will homeschool until is safe.

Maria Sarceno
Annapolis

34. I believe a mask mandate is the only way to open safely. Our kids need to be in the building, and required masking is the best way to keep them there. We can already see from school districts who opened with optional masking that hundreds of kids were forced into quarantine within the first week. It isn't a "medical autonomy" issue any more than the dress code is. Thank you.

Michaela Stanton
Pasadena

35. Dr Arlotto and members of the BOE,

First, I'd like to express my deepest condolences in the loss of Ms. Antwine. She was a caring, empathetic member and will be greatly missed by the community.

As fall discussions are happening, please honor Dr Arlotto's mask mandate for our schools. Many have not been vaccinated and may not have an opportunity for a vaccine until 2022. The CDC and AAP updated their guidance with strongly urging students under 12 to wear masks.

Elementary students spend much of their day in the classroom with the same group of students. Since the CDC distancing guidelines were dismissed last Spring, we are putting the students that come this fall at a greater risk since many of our classrooms are overcrowded as it is.

Masks are a simple, cost effective strategy that can lessen the number of outbreaks we could see this school year.

Thank you

Kassie Haney
Pasadena