

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County | September 1, 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 22, 2021
6:00 pm

Policy Committee

Tuesday, October 4, 2021
3:00 pm
Virtual

Budget Committee

Tuesday, September 21, 2021
3:00 pm
Virtual

Equity Committee

Tuesday, September 14, 2021
11:30 am
Virtual

10:00 am 1. Motion to Enter Executive 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 TAAAC Welcome to the School Year

2.06 Recognitions

2.07 Educator of the Month

2.08 Employee of the Month

2.09 Volunteer of the Month

12:30 pm 3. Public Comments

The Board will hear 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 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

4.02 Policy Committee Update

4.03 Budget Committee Update

4.04 Equity Committee Update

4.05 PTA Report

1:30 pm 5. Presentations/Discussions (I/A)

5.01 Superintendent's Recommended FY2023 Capital Budget and Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan

5.02 Board Budget Priorities for FY2023

5.03 Board Discussion of School Reopening Protocols

2:30 pm 6. Action Items (A)

6.01 Administrative Personnel Appointments

6.02 Personnel

Third Reading – Policy Revision

6.03 Home Schooling – Code IFQ

Other Action Items

6.04 Crofton MS Addition – Educational Specifications

3:00 pm 7. Consent Items – Award of Contracts (A)

7.01 SAT and PSAT

7.02 Staffing Services

3:10 pm 8. Review Items (R)

8.01 Award of Contracts

9. Motion to Enter Executive Closed Session (as needed)

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 September 1, 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. Masking children must be a parent’s choice. We know what is best for our children and we dedicate our lives to ensuring their health and safety. Masks are known to be detrimental to children in various ways, and the statistics and science do not support their effectiveness against illness. More children are affected by flu and RSV each year than have been affected by COVID, so why mask now? Recent studies show that masking children results in declined oxygen levels leading to fatigue, headaches, rapid CO2 buildup, decreased concentration, and decreased cognitive reaction times, all of which impact our children’s ability to learn. They’ve already missed out on 3 semesters of quality education; they shouldn’t have to miss anymore. Masks can also result in fear and anxiety, problems that can last a lifetime. My daughter already suffers from terrible anxiety; AACPS doesn’t have the right to make this struggle worse for my child. Masks are unsanitary, especially for young children and teens who use them improperly. Children are granted excused absences based on the religious beliefs of their families. Masking goes against the beliefs of so many families; these beliefs should not be treated any differently. The AACPS Policy on Educational Equity states that “AACPS procedures and practices will provide for educational equity and ensure that there are no obstacles to accessing educational opportunities for any student.” Masks are a huge obstacle. Our children will be affected negatively if masks are required.

Jennifer DiNenna
Tracy’s Landing

2. Hi, I just want to know if there is going to be remote or blended. We, Parents should be able to have that option still. Safety concerns, 30 to 20 kids is a lot in a class. No breathing space whatsoever.

Vilma Irizarry
Glen Burnie

3. Dear Board members Omisore, Schallheim, Silkworth, and Tobin,

My name is Marianela Williams. I am a teacher at AMS.

Thank you for standing with the science around safety protocols for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Educators have been calling for increased mitigation strategies, including mask wearing, to keep our entire AACPS community safe. We are grateful for your support of health and safety directives.

Moving forward, I hope educators will have a seat at the table when decisions are being made about the health and safety of our students, school staff, and all visitors in our buildings. We hope that you will prioritize incoming federal funding to help bolster our ability to continue in-person learning by updating HVAC systems and school building

infrastructure, prioritizing a plan for testing, monitoring, reporting, and tracking cases of COVID-19, and ensuring opportunities to socially distance whenever possible.

Our #1 priority as educators this semester is the health of our community. We cannot recover from the pandemic if we do not ensure our students and school communities have the resources and safety guidelines they need.

Thank you again for your support of educators, students, families, and our community.

Marianela Williams Carr
Newark

4. COVID exists. I had it in February 2020 and it was awful. I've known others who've had it. I also support people wearing masks and getting vaccinated to protect themselves if they are vulnerable or concerned about getting COVID.

With that said, the below is an excerpt from the CDC website dated July 21, 2021 regarding ending the use of the current PCR tests for COVID testing:

"In preparation for this change, CDC recommends clinical laboratories and testing sites that have been using the CDC 2019-nCoV RT-PCR assay select and begin their transition to another FDA-authorized COVID-19 test. CDC encourages laboratories to consider adoption of a multiplexed method that can facilitate detection and differentiation of SARS-CoV-2 and influenza viruses."

https://www.cdc.gov/csels/dls/locs/2021/07-21-2021-lab-alert-Changes_CDC_RT-PCR_SARS-CoV-2_Testing_1.html

So, a test that cannot differentiate between COVID and the flu (according to the CDC) has been the basis for the lockdowns, masking, loss of jobs, and the rush to vaccinate. This means the multitude of news stories focused on possibly inaccurate case numbers may have caused unnecessary fear and panic. Given the CDC's decision to eliminate the test by the end of the year, isn't it possible COVID's impact has been overstated, or at least conflated with other respiratory viruses?

Having had COVID I understand the concerns, but if you believe masks and vaccines work to protect your family, then those who make different choices should not cause you harm. Let families decide what protections their children need. Let masks be optional at school.

Linda Sienkiewicz
Severna Park

5. As a special educator, I implore you to support Dr. Arlotto's recommended safety guidelines to ensure that ALL individuals in school buildings wear masks. We must follow the scientific data as this virus continues to evolve. I believe it is our duty to ensure the collective care of others.

Grace Sharp
Annapolis

6. If you want to keep our schools open requiring everybody to wear masks in the schools is imperative. All we have to do is look to the south to see the negative fallout of not wearing masks. I can also tell you firsthand that masks do work in preventing the spread of Covid. In my son's daycare class last year one student had Covid and none of the other children tested positive. The teacher also had Covid and none of the children tested positive. This is because the teacher and the students wear masks and have worn them since June of last year. Just recently in the news there's been two cases of a teacher spreading Covid to the majority of their classes because they weren't wearing masks.

Jennifer Maurer
Hanover

7. Taking unnecessary risks, when we know proven ways to mitigate illness and death, is setting the stage for manslaughter. Asking teachers to uphold and teach the importance of content named in the National Science Standards, while not following that same science in the classroom, is a conflict of interest that will destroy trust and the relationships between teachers and students. Teachers will be seen by students as hypocrites, and rightfully so. ELEVATING ALL STUDENTS...ELIMINATING ALL GAPS, the mission of the school board you were elected to serve on, requires protecting all students and the staff who elevate and educate them! At this time, many of our students do not have access to vaccines. Others are not allowed access because of parent choice. Some choose not to get vaccinated. Whatever the reasons ALL are not vaccinated, the responsibility to Elevate and Educate them does not go away. Effective progress toward reaching this goal will not be made if teachers and students are constantly rotating in and out of isolation, sick, or dead. Asking county employees to lie to students by assuring them we are safe, is unethical. Our after-Labor Day start date for students has allowed us to see what happens in schools without masks. It is irresponsible to believe that results will be any different in our county. Please vote in favor of masks if you value human lives. Then hug your loved ones and hope those who have the power, are making the best choices to protect them.

Robert Noble
Glen Burnie

8. Over the summer, the residents of our county have returned to normal. Our children have attended summer camps, daycares, sleepovers, parties, family gatherings, vacations, beaches, sports, restaurants, and numerous other places and activities without masks. Forcing them to put masks back on their faces now does not make any sense and is a step backwards. Masks do not provide health. Healthy lifestyle choices provide health. I have yet

to hear any talk of mandating fruits/vegetables, vitamins, exercise, or any other protocol that would promote a healthy immune system. It is common knowledge that a strong immune system is the best defense against illness. NOT MASKING. Coronavirus particles are small enough to fit through fabric, so what purpose exactly do these masks serve? They are a disruption to my children's education, they are dirty and disgusting, and they restrict breathing. If parents do not wish to have their children's mouths and noses covered for 7+ hours a day, they deserve the right to opt out and still have access to the public school system. I understand that some parents and teachers are afraid. It is hard not to be with all the fear propaganda being shoved down our throats. But common sense must prevail at some point. Let's lead the way in promoting real health, instead of senseless mandates and restrictions. It is time for us to move on from the fear of Covid and focus on making up for the time lost over the last school year.

Jaime Blackwood
Annapolis

9. Dear Board Members and Dr. Arlotto,

Why is our neighboring county PG County taking better care of their kids under 12 than we are?

Last week, they announced a broadening of virtual school options for any kid in Kindergarten through 6th grade until vaccines are available for them.

Many of us parents are very apprehensive of sending our kids back full time in person. We want our children vaccinated first. But you haven't provided a viable option. The virtual academy was limited to certain grades and for certain reasons.

Given how contagious the Delta variant is, how much worse our cases are right now than they were when the fall hybrid plan was postponed last year, and the lack of distancing planned for lunch which makes all kids vulnerable, please consider doing something similar to protect our kids. This will make parents like me happy to have a virtual option and also help make the kids going in person safer as the buildings will have less students in them.

Additionally, more should be done to make lunchtime safer for children. Money should be used to create outdoor eating options at every school. The current plan is insufficient.

Please take this request seriously. We cannot and should not sacrifice our youngest learners when they have not been afforded the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Thank you,

Diane Milleville
Odenton, MD

10. The high rate of outbreaks and quarantines in school districts around the country is proof that inadequate safety protocols put students at risk. AACPS should be watching, learning, and taking action.

A recent analysis model estimates that with a mask mandate but no comprehensive testing program, 49% of elementary school students will be infected with COVID-19 in the first three months.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/08/28/delta-variant-unvaccinated-children-elementary-schools/>

That is an unacceptably high number. The model also shows that mitigation efforts, such as masks and testing, can reduce risk. AACPS needs to immediately implement:

- Mandatory vaccines for all AACPS staff
- Weekly pooled PCR testing for all students and staff
- A virtual option for ALL K-6 students until a vaccine is available for this age group
- Alternative lunch plans, in particular providing schools with resources to enable eating outdoors
- A comprehensive plan - beyond some asynchronous assignments on Brightspace - to prevent learning loss during the inevitable forced absences for illness and quarantines

With just months to go until our youngest learners can be vaccinated, and rates higher now than they were at the start of last school year, now is not the time to compromise safety.

Elizabeth Matson
Crofton

11. I strongly support wearing masks in school for both teachers and students. The decrease in risk is well worth the minor inconvenience of simply wearing a mask. Thank you!

Christine Brimhall
Odenton

12. Hello Board Members and thank you for your time to listen to my thoughts about reopening our schools. I am devastated by Antwine's passing and my heart goes out to you who are still mourning. As a school teacher for AACPS who LOVES MY JOB and strives for equity, I first want to say that with our current mask mandate in place by the informed and knowledgeable Arlotto (who I say thank you to!!!)... it is incredibly offensive that some board members are creating a tone of non-compliance, that our very own students might engage in because of sitting board members decision to buck the system in our last meeting. Teachers and students need our elected board members to be on the same page about rules. PERIOD. My job as a teacher in the system is to prioritize safety every single day, even before the pandemic, people are trusting me with their children EVERYDAY. That is rule number one, above all else! The AUDACITY to not even consider the bare minimum of safety requirements by some board members, when I look at TABLE settings that have a class of 30 students shoulder to shoulder in my art room with SHARED MATERIALS. Our students need to be masked at the bare minimum. We teachers debate for hours the best way to keep our

students safe past that point. Parents, please stay vigilant in communication with your teachers about their safety protocols and know that the BULK of us want the very best for your children, we really do. Sometimes we put yours before our own....

Catie Russo
Arnold

13. Good evening! My name is Deanna Cook and I am a kindergarten teacher at Brock Bridge Elementary School. Let me begin by saying, I am thrilled about returning to in person instructions! I believe that our children, especially our young ones learn better in person. They need to see and be close to us! They need to be able to feel our genuine excitement about us being able to do what we can to help develop them into lifelong learners. Please understand that there is a certain level of anxiety because of COVID-19. Parents are already asking what safety measures we have in place to keep their precious jewels safe. They are taking some measure of comfort, knowing that everyone is required to wear a mask. Please continue to uphold that mandate. Thank you!

Deanna Cook
Odenton

14. All students and staff should wear masks inside school buildings. The number of children being hospitalized with COVID continues to rise. Not all staff can be vaccinated due to medical/health concerns. We must do the most we can to protect our students, their families, and our employees.

Elean Le
Sparrows Point

15. Masks must be mandated in all schools.
Simply look at what is occurring in school systems across the South. The science is pretty simple. Let's listen to it.

Michelle Zitofsky
Arnold

16. I strongly urge the board to support Superintendent Arlotto in requiring face coverings for all staff and students at AACPS facilities. We must continue to follow the science and leave politics out of these decisions. Our students and staff deserve nothing less. Other states and jurisdictions are showing the danger of going maskless in the classroom. The data is there. It is clear. Please do the right thing.

Erik Booker
Severna Park

17. Dear Board Members Corkadel, Ellis, and Frank,

This fall, I was hoping to return to classrooms fully in person for a "normal" school year. Instead, I am faced with uncertain safety guidelines that put my health and the health of my

loved ones at risk. I was shocked by the disregard for the measures that health officials are stating must be followed at last week's BOE meeting. As a member of the school board, I would hope that educators and students would be your top priority, OVER politics. Especially, with the rise of COVID cases, and what we've seen in states that are not mandating the mask policy. We must put politics aside and consider the dangers we are subjecting our community to.

Even while vaccinated, I ALWAYS wear my mask to keep my family safe, my students, and my fellow AACPS employees safe. Won't you accept the fact that the mask has saved us from COVID-19?

Mask wearing is one aspect of a wider system of improvement strategies that prevent the spread of COVID in our schools. Being in schools is not an errand run, where folks decide to go unmasked (which is no proof that they've been vaccinated).

I urge you to please support the safety guidelines put in place by Superintendent Dr. Arlotto, and I encourage your fellow board members to continue drafting a plan that protects us all.

Sincerely,

M Kordmafi
Glen Burnie

18. Thank you for reading this message. I live in Anne Arundel County and I am a high school teacher. I'm aware of the new regulations from the MSDE regarding masks and I think that was a great decision. There are numerous studies that show the value of masks in schools. There are real life examples of what happens to a school district that doesn't mandate masks. The evidence is clear. This is not a political decision, trust the experts. Thank you.

Seth Wolak
Annapolis

19. To date I have had no communication from Principals at either of my children's schools regarding COVID protocols (Air Filters in classrooms, spacing of desks, classes being held outside weather permitting, etc....) or safety measures being put in place to keep them safe (i.e., assigned seats at lunch, social distancing in cafeterias, staggering how many will be in hallways during transitions at the Middle School level, etc. ... to name a few). My sons are 9 and 11 and both were virtual all of 2020 - 2021. My 11-year-old is terrified of returning and being shoulder to shoulder with 400 6th Graders between classes. What is being done on our campuses to keep our children safe? What do we do if they have to quarantine? Why is there no virtual class on the table when they have to quarantine? We have the benefit of starting almost a month later than other Districts around the US and we seem to be doing nothing to help allay fears that our students are being sent in and will almost immediately be sent back home due to exposure to the Delta variant.

Jennifer Greeff
Severna Park

20. I was relieved to hear the State Board approved the mask mandate for ALL entering school property and await its approval after the 10 day wait unless the Governor waives that. I am writing as a parent, a voting constituent, and as someone that works with students in the school system as a contractor.

Both of my children NEED to be in school in person this year. My 14-year-old was virtual all last year and needs to return. She is vaccinated but I worry about her contracting a breakthrough case since masks work best when all wear them. We have a 10-year-old that is not vaccinated yet as she does not qualify. I am high risk with immune system issues and asthma and am thankful to be getting my booster on 9/3/21. My doctor has told me to mask around those not in my home both inside and out due to the current variants. Having the mask mandate helps alleviate SOME of the stress I feel about my kids, who need to be there, returning.

But masks are NOT enough. The CDC states "Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe." If we want to keep schools open, we need to do more!

Finally, what contingencies are in place if we spread more as that is not clear.

Rebecca Wrotny
Crofton

21. My wife and I are considering home schooling our child because it is simply not safe to return to full in-person schooling for children too young to be vaccinated. COVID infection rates in AA country are the same as they were in Feb. and March, when the school was in hybrid mode. While preparing for full in-person instruction made sense at the end of the school year last year, that was before the delta variant and when we thought people would be intelligent and get vaccinated. This new information should force rational people to reconsider their course and allow parents that can keep their children home and have them attend virtually to do so. Parents should be the ones deciding when the risk/reward is worth it for their children to return to in-person instruction. Moreover, those students attending virtually will reduce the in-school population as another layer of preventative measures. Please, for the sake of sanity, continue to offer the hybrid option.

Errol Summerlin
Crofton

22. I am disappointed that so much valuable time has been wasted on a temporary mask issue. Shame on you. The time should have been used to discuss ways to "make up" for learning lost last year and the healing process the schools will have to deal with. We must heed the recommendations of professionals at AACPS. Those like our superintendent, teachers, counselors, and other staff who work with our children, who

know the actual circumstances and deal with them daily. These professionals are dedicated, overworked, and burdened with decisions made at the BOE. They need to feel supported, valued, and that their voices are heard. They need to have environments they feel SAFE in as well as have the resources to do their jobs well and make accommodations as needed. This is what the BOE should be focused on, not a reasonable request to wear a mask!

With flu season upon us, new variants, no vaccine for under 12, and data from last winter, it is imperative to implement ALL mitigation strategies WITHIN OUR MEANS or our schools WILL CLOSE AGAIN! Our children have become the most vulnerable populations at risk to catch the Covid virus.

Our teachers and students deserve no distractions and a smooth start to the school year. Do what you promised, keep our schools open! I implore you to vote in FAVOR of CONTINUING THE CURRENT MASKING POLICY until vaccines are readily available and given for all school aged children.

Vote AGAINST PARENTAL CHOICE FOR MASKING.

Sharon Adams
Gambrills

23. Universal masking at our K-12 schools will keep students, faculty and staff safer from Covid 19. It will also help us keep our schools open for our students and families. Please keep masking universal for now!

Meredith McClure-Scott (parent of high school student and AACPS employee)

Meredith McClure-Scott
Severna Park

24. This is my 20th year teaching in AACPS. While I'm eager to see my students face-to-face, I'm anxious, knowing the Delta variant is running rampant. It's also disheartening that I even must write this testimony rather than focus solely on preparing for my students arriving next week. I should be able to have full confidence that each school board member is focused on protecting the health of our AACPS community. Unfortunately, that's not the case: rather than making decisions based on the best, most current science, some of you are making decisions based on politics or personal preferences. Thank you Ms. Omisore, Ms. Schallheim, Mr. Silkworth, and Ms. Tobin for your leadership: the four of you at least understand that we're in an ongoing and ever-changing public health crisis so decisions you're making either will mitigate the spread of the virus or will further exacerbate it.

At least, I can feel more at ease now that MSDE has stepped in to ensure that we'll continue our mask mandate. I now urge you to require all AACPS staff to get vaccinated and for staff with legitimate exemptions that they undergo regular COVID testing. We also must have regular testing of students to track the spread of the virus in our community. It's only when these and other mitigation efforts are put into place that we'll be able to once again slow the spread of COVID which is currently straining our healthcare system and putting the most vulnerable among us in danger.

Kristina Korona
Baltimore

25. Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Jessy Oterson and I am a school psychologist at Moss Adams Academy. This fall, I was hoping to return to my school fully in person for a “normal” school year. Instead, I am faced with uncertain safety guidelines that put my health and the health of my loved ones at risk. You see, I have a 6-month-old daughter and a 3-year-old son at home. Although myself and my husband are vaccinated, they are too young to have that option. So, for me to spend my workday with staff and/or students without masks and without vaccinations, it places me at high-risk for spreading COVID to my children.

As board members who took on your role to help improve education for all students, I would hope that the safety and wellbeing of students would continue to be your top priority. I hope that you listen and consider the information shared by our local health department and experts, as well as the national daily data happening within counties that have returned to school. Positivity rates are increasing, thousands of students are being quarantined, and children are being hospitalized for COVID at alarming rates.

Regardless of the decision made, I will continue to wear my mask to keep my family safe, the students safe, and my fellow AACPS employees safe. Won't you please join in supporting mask mandates for all?

Jessica Oterson
Edgewater

26. At my child's middle school there will be 300 students in the lunchroom to eat with their masks off, at the same time. Please don't have that many children in a room that are unvaccinated. Sixth graders and under cannot get vaccinated please protect them better. Or have the children 11 and under have the option for online school. Thank you.

Melissa Mc
Pasadena

27. Now that the State Board of Education has ruled to require masks for ALL in school buildings it is my hope that this Board can move past the political theater and their own agendas and actually think about the 80,000+ students that you represent.

I was thankful to see that AACPS shared the informational links guiding reopening this fall. However, there is much work to be done still. With universal masking in place this should significantly reduce the number of people that should have to quarantine when a positive case is identified. Use all the data that you have from last year when schools opened in a hybrid format and later for 4-day learning... everyone was masked and there was no evidence of school spread. There will be positive cases when school opens but please don't have a knee jerk reaction and unnecessarily quarantine healthy, asymptomatic students who were masked in school. A 10-day quarantine without synchronous learning from their teachers will be extremely disruptive to a student and just think how disastrous it will be if the same student is forced to quarantine on more than one occasion! Our students have already struggled through two very challenging and disruptive school years, and they cannot afford a third lost year.

Also, in the re-opening guidelines I read that grading adjustments will remain in place this

year. Why??? Making things easier for the students is not a good lesson in the end. They need to actually learn and gain skills necessary to be successful in life...

Cheryl Wolf
Severna Park

28. I am a scientist and typically testify using science (I testified against the cell towers near schools). Currently no one is listening to the science at all. On the COVID protocols, the same people who scream we need to follow the science are the ones not doing that. Our kids are being forced to follow non-sensical and non-scientific rules like breathing in their own CO2 for hours a day, just to make others “feel” safer. There’s no science there, no facts - just feelings. Also, the people that are screaming that we should be caring of others are the same people bullying and dictating to others who feel differently and who choose not to muzzle our kids.

Note this American Academy of Pediatrics report on Fatality Rates for Kids – A report entitled Children and COVID-19: State-Level Data Report, “the available data indicate that COVID-19-associated hospitalization and death is uncommon in children. At this time, it appears that severe illness due to COVID-19 is uncommon among children.” Please read this report and follow the science this Board claims to do.

Bottom line, parents should be able to choose whether their children should undergo or take part in any invasive medical procedures including vaccines and COVID testing or wear medical devices that restrict their intake of oxygen. It is not up to unelected school officials who do not know our children’s medical history.

Peggy Williams
Severna Park

29. I am a parent of a student at Severna Park HS, and I write in support of a requirement that all students, teachers, and staff be masked during the school day as part of our reopening protocols. The greatest responsibility of this Board is to keep our children safe. The small inconvenience is outweighed by the risk to health and life. To those who wrongly think such safety requirements are an infringement of freedom, a mask requirement is no more an infringement of liberty than requiring people to drive on the right hand side of the road or requiring students to follow a crossing guard's instructions at a road crossing. Moreover, our children and staff have a right to life and to be kept safe, as feasibly as possible, from the reckless behavior of others. I hope -and expect- that the Board uses good science, the best medical advice, and common sense to protect our children and staff. Thank you.

John Scott
Severna Park

30. In addition to requiring universal masking until children under 12 have the opportunity to be vaccinated AND COVID rates come down, please make plans to 1. improve ventilation in classrooms and cafeterias. 2. support schools to move as many kids outdoors for eating times as possible 3. prepare and share a viable plan for learning should children need to quarantine more than once. The current plan is insufficient.

Chelsea Treadwell
Annapolis

31. Dear Board of Education Members,

I am proud to be a school social worker in AACPS and strongly encourage the board to support Dr. Arlotto's mask mandate. Publicly supporting everyone wearing masks in schools sends a message to parents that our students' safety and the continuity of learning is a priority for AACPS. I don't enjoy wearing a mask, no one does, but I would rather wear one and have a complete in-person school year than not wear a mask and increase the risk of disruption caused by schools shutting down and students quarantining due to Covid-19 outbreaks. Elementary students are not eligible for a vaccine and would be especially vulnerable to getting Covid-19. Wearing a mask is a simple way to keep our students safe from Covid-19 and something I will do. I would also suggest mandating a vaccine for employees or have weekly testing to set a positive example for students to get the vaccine. The stakes are too high to ignore mandated vaccines. Requiring masking this school year would demonstrate the school districts commitment to do their part in managing the pandemic and reducing its harmful impacts on our students and staff. Hopefully, when vaccines are available to all and mandated for school attendance, we can get back to more normal school routines.

Dan Keyser
Baltimore