



# Henderson County Public Schools Board of Education Digital Public Comment Submissions

10/12/2021 Meeting

60 Submission Records

Submission #1

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/04/21 9:48am

Subject: Keep masks

Submitted By: Anna Hoy - amshooy@gmmail.com

Good morning - Cases are coming down for this wave but we are not out of the woods yet. Community transmission is still high and our healthcare system is still feeling the impact. Let's give all students (including those under 12) the chance to get vaccinated before changing mask mandates. Masks overwhelmingly work in schools. Universal masking is a big reason we have had only a few confirmed school-linked transmissions here in Henderson county, unlike our mask-optional neighbors. Let's keep sticking it out a little while longer. Thank you, Anna Hoy

Submission #2

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/04/21 12:19pm

Subject: Thank you for continuing to require masks

Submitted By: Samantha Millhollen - sammillhollen@gmail.com

Thank you for continuing to have students wear masks! While case numbers are starting to go down (hooray!) we are not yet at a place where we can remove masks. We need to prevent clusters and mass quarantine. We are heading in the right direction, so please keep this up until case numbers are at a reasonable level in the community.

Submission #3

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/04/21 2:00pm

Subject: Please continue to mandate masks

Submitted By: Lauren Keplinger - lauren.keplinger@gmail.com

Hello,

I want to thank you again for all that you do. I would like to write today to continue to encourage you to mandate masks for elementary aged kids until the time comes that they can be fully vaccinated. Regardless of how any of us feel about masks, they have allowed these kids so far to have a continuous school year without the disruption of being constantly quarantined. As members of the school board, the priority for this year should be to keep these kids face to face, and making masks optional right now without an available vaccine for this age group makes it almost impossible to have continuity of education without disruption.

Thank you,  
Lauren Keplinger

Submission #4

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/05/21 7:30am

Subject: Masks in schools

Submitted By: ROBERT HERRMANN - bobherrmann59@gmail.com

Please continue to protect our precious children and grandchildren against Covid-19.  
Please keep the mask policy in place until we defeat this disease.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/06/21 2:32pm

Subject: Stacey Caskey

Submitted By: Krist Glaspy - kristiglaspy@gmail.com

I would like to address Mrs. Caskey's Facebook post. This is a day and time when everyone screams about bullying and that it never should be acceptable and I agree it shouldn't be accepted or tolerated and we have no business having that or a person who does that on our school board. I am ashamed and greatly disappointed in her actions and request that she resigns or is removed from the Henderson county school board immediately. She showed that it was ok to make fun and bully a handicapped human being and that is not someone I want my children to see trying to stop bullying in our schools. Completely hypocritical and uncalled for. Lead by example!!!!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/06/21 4:03pm

Subject: Mask Mandate

Submitted By: Julie Schlegel - jschleg223@gmail.com

Dear Board Members,

I want to express my support for having a mask mandate in schools currently. Masking is the only reason our children are able to have in person learning and we all know the value of being physically present in the classroom for both scholastic and emotional development. While none of us enjoy wearing a mask, the current case counts and the lack of available vaccine to protect those under 12 makes it a necessary measure to avoid illness, including potentially severe outcomes.

I don't envy your position of having to make these decisions and I thank you for your service. Please vote to continue the mask mandate for now, until disease is less prevalent and vaccine is available.

Thanks,

Julie

Submission #7

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/06/21 7:34pm

Subject: Continuing Mask Mandate

Submitted By: Elizabeth Baden - sebaden@yahoo.com

Thank you so much for implementing a mask mandate in an effort to keep our students healthy and IN their school buildings. I can imagine how difficult these decisions have been and I appreciate your tireless work. I'm asking that you continue the mask mandate, so that my children, who are too young to be vaccinated, can have some medium of protection and continue with in-person learning. Thank you for all you do!



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/06/21 8:46pm

Subject: October 12 Public Input

Submitted By: Mary Ellen Kustin - maryellenkustin@gmail.com

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments for the October 12, 2021 HCPS school board meeting. My name is Mary Ellen Kustin, and my address is 1618 Orleans Ave in Hendersonville, 28791.

I want to thank the board for voting at the meeting on September 13, 2021 to make masks mandatory.

I'm a mother of two young children who are not old enough to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at this time. According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (<https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard/vaccinations>), as of October 6, 2021 just over half of the population of Hendersonville County is fully vaccinated. Thank you for protecting children and other vulnerable populations in our community by requiring masks in our school system at this time.

Thank you and the staff who keep the HCPS online COVID-19 District Dashboard up-to-date. The low ratio of positive cases in our schools to those quarantined is encouraging.

As you may know, given the current covid situation, the American Academy of Pediatrics is continuing to call for universal masking in school as well as supporting the mental health of students, teachers, and staff:  
<https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

I urge this board to continue to protect our students, teachers, staff, and surrounding community by leaving the mask mandate in place for the time being.

Thank you.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/06/21 11:01pm

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Nancy Brown - NANCYSBROWN@GMAIL.COM

I commend the board for its decision to mandate masks in schools.

There are many things we do that cause a bit of inconvenience for ourselves but we do them for the benefit of others. Conscientious people stop at red lights even when they think the way is clear, they don't drive after they've had a few drinks even when they believe they are okay to drive.

We wear masks because we care about others more than ourselves. Hopefully we will soon be able to get back to normal but that time has not yet come. The more we adhere to precautions the sooner that will be.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 7:17am

Subject: Keep mask mandate in place please

Submitted By: Sarah Kowalak - sarahkowalak@gmail.com

Members of the Board,

Our mask mandate is working and succeeding in keeping case counts and school transmissions down. Thank you for listening to the medical advisors and imposing this and other common sense precautions. Studies are showing that our results are in line with others across the country - school systems with mask mandates are keeping case counts down! Please continue to keep the mask mandate in place as our numbers start to decrease and we begin to emerge from this wave. I appreciate your leadership and service.

## New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 12:07pm

Subject: Miscommunication between Blue Ridge Health and Apple Valley/COVID policies

Submitted By: Kathleen Elliott - wildkat9670@yahoo.com

Hello, my name is Kathleen Elliott and I have 2 students in HCPS. This letter is about the way my daughter was treated by BRH nurses and the miscommunication between them and Apple Valley Staff. I was told by a BRH nurse by phone Monday 10/4/21 that my daughter needed a COVID test and that if it was negative she could come back to school the next day. I took her to Advent Health Centre Care that afternoon and got her a rapid COVID test. It came back negative so I sent her to school the next day. I was called again after I dropped her off and was told that the rapid test wasn't the right test, even though I wasn't told specifically what test to get done the day before by another nurse. I was told to get a Dr note saying she could come back to school, but the nurse said it had to say what she was diagnosed with besides COVID. My daughter has sinus issues every year at this time and the Dr at Advent put her on Zyrtec. The Dr note said she could come back to school on Tuesday, but the BRH nurse, health department nurse and assistant principal wouldn't accept it. So they ended up giving my daughter the PCR send off test, which also came back negative. I was told I would get a call first thing this morning, 10/7/21, but I didn't. I ended up having to call them myself around 9:30 to find out her results. The nurse said they had the results for a while this morning, so I don't know why they didn't call me earlier. Another issue I have is that the BRH nurses denied my daughter lunch on 10/4/21 when she said she had to sit in the isolation room for 3 hours. She told the nurse she wanted lunch and the nurse said she didn't have time to get her anything to eat, but she was allowed to go to another building to get her things from her locker. And she was denied breakfast the next day by another nurse when I dropped her off at school with the negative COVID results from Advent. I had a talk with the assistant principal that morning and let her know about that and she said that shouldn't have never happened and she got my daughter some breakfast. Another issue I have is when I was checking my daughter out on Tuesday, the ladies in the main office were talking and said that the nurses aren't communicating to them about which kids are in the BRH office so when parents come to get their kids the ladies don't know if the kids are in their classrooms or at the BRH office. I feel like that could be a safety concern with not knowing exactly where kids are in the school.

Thank you,  
Kathleen Elliott

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 1:48pm

Subject: Please continue masking

Submitted By: Beth Stang - bethwstang@gmail.com

Board Members,

I am writing to encourage you to continue to require masking of students and staff in our County schools. Undoubtedly, masks have made an immeasurable difference in allowing our District to remain in person for school this year- which is an objective upon we can all agree. We are seeing progress toward vaccinations for more school aged children which signals light at the end of this long tunnel. Since we are so close to seeing some real change in circumstances for children, please don't let up precautions now.

Thank you so much for your hard work.

Beth Stang

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 2:21pm

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Pat Hart - hartpat741@yahoo.com

Dear Board,

Thank you so much for all that you do and for the often difficult role that you play in keeping our children in a safe learning environment.

I want to urge you to keep the mask mandate in place until our children can safely attend school without masks. Currently there are just too many illnesses in the community and sadly no one ever knows which child might become very ill and require hospitalization. Additionally we just don't know the long term effects of this illness. As the adults in their lives we have the responsibility to keep them safe.

I have grandchildren in Henderson County schools and they are so precious to me. As a resident, tax payer and voter I care very much about us doing all that we can and all that is advised by experts to keep our schools safe for our children.

Thank you,

Pat Hart  
Aka "Nana"

Submission #14

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 2:41pm

Subject: Face Masks

Submitted By: Connie Love fi - [connie.lotfi@hotmail.com](mailto:connie.lotfi@hotmail.com)

I believe we should continue to wear face masks in public areas and schools.

Submission #15

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 2:51pm

Subject: Masks in schools

Submitted By: Donna Ogrady - pdograde@sbcglobal.net

Please insist on masks in schools which help community spread of Covid and reduces the chance of mutation. We must insist on masks until all are vaccinated. Thank you.



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 3:04pm

Subject: Please continue requiring masks

Submitted By: Kari Byrd - karisbyrd@gmail.com

First, I want to say thank you to the school board for continuing to serve our community under such challenging circumstances. We appreciate you doing your best to keep our children safe! That being said I would like to ask that you please continue the mask mandate until kids are fully vaccinated. We are so close!

Submission #17

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 3:52pm

Subject: Face masks

Submitted By: Sari McCaffrey - sarimccaffrey@gmail.com

Face masks should be worn in school, in all public spaces, in all administrative buildings. By everyone. Includes guests, administrators, teachers, students.  
EVERYONE b

Submission #18

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 4:49pm

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Joe Hinchliffe - jandkhinchliffe1987@gmail.com

Please end the mask mandate. New data out of Florida reinforces previous data showing that masking kids does not reduce spread or infection rates. Thank you.

Submission #19

**New Digital Public Comment Submission** 10/07/21 5:39pm

**Subject:** Mandatory masks

**Submitted By:** V Noggle - vnoggle@gmail.com

Due to ongoing pandemic, please maintain the wearing of masks in schools

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 7:45pm

Subject: October 12th input

Submitted By: Jessica DeFord - j.deford16@gmail.com

Hello board members,

Firstly thank you for all you do, I could not even imagine been in the situation you are in. I would like to request that the current mask mandate stays in place, without it even more children and staff will be out of out of our buildings. We need our students in staff on campus and learning and engaging with one another. I have asked my child multi times how it's going with masks, he says it's fine mom! We just are learning a be having fun! I said do your friends seem to struggle with the masks? He said nope mom! Numbers are starting to trend down so why would we now unmask and then go backwards? Please keep the mask mandate in place!

Thank you for all you do!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 8:49pm

Subject: Public comment for October 12 board meeting

Submitted By: Amy Johnson - johnsonaamd@hotmail.com

To the Henderson County School Board Members,  
I want to thank you and commend you for maintaining the mask mandate for our schools. I know it has not been an easy stance to take, but thanks to you we have been able to keep our kids in person this school year. While we seem to have reached the peak of this COVID wave, we still have high community transmission and masks should be continued. I am sure you are still getting a lot of pressure to remove the mask mandate and also pressure to remove quarantine guidelines. Quarantining has been proven to reduce COVID cases in the community. In a research review of 32 COVID studies, the number of people infected with COVID is reduced by 44-96% when quarantining is used. We still need a multi-layered approach to keep our classrooms open and our school staff and children as safe and as healthy as possible. We should continue to make decisions based on science and proven strategies in moving forward with this school year. Thank you for your continued dedication to our children and community.

Sincerely,

Amy Johnson, MD

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 9:10pm

Subject: 10/12 Board Meeting Public Comment

Submitted By: Sara Smith - saraseta@gmail.com

Regarding masks- Thank you for keeping masks in school and making the hard decisions to keep our entire community as safe as possible while Delta engulfs some areas of our country. Thank you for your decisions for all of the 2020/21 and 21/22 school years that kept positive cases low. Thank you for hearing and taking into consideration every voice on every side. Our county looks amazing compared to neighboring counties and states where masks are not mandatory. We are proud of your strength and resilience during this very trying time. We see you and we are proud to call you our Board of Education. Please know there are many parents and other residents cheering ALL of you on and wishing your families safety and peace.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 9:45pm

Subject: Information to consider while deciding on masks.

Submitted By: Sean Morrissey - seanj1018@gmail.com

Please consider the local hospitals and their capacity of patients. Our decisions in regards to this pandemic directly effect the local hospitals and their ability to care for all patients.

Unfortunately I believe what is going on in the hospitals is grossly under reported. Perhaps the school board members could be allowed to take a tour of the local hospitals or get inside reports, before making a decision on masking.

Thank you for everything you do,

Sean



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/07/21 9:50pm

Subject: Unmask Our Kids

Submitted By: Cortney McCall - cortneymccall@ymail.com

Because you don't count the number of emails you receive about unmasking our kids, then here is my public comment. UNMASK OUR KIDS!

I also would like to add how disappointed I am in our board and the lack of response to the public about board member Stacey Caskey and her derogatory remarks made on social media. It shows that she can say whatever she wants with no consequence. I don't think the board knows just how much trust has been lost in our community over this issue. Just add it to the hypocrisy shown over and over by members of the board. Wear masks at school (but we don't at the country club or on vacation or around town), we need to teach empathy and tolerance (but we're going to degrade and make fun of you if you think differently than us). Don't be a bully; (but we're going to call and try to threaten your job for emailing the board your opinion.) We expected better when we elected you; it's time to step up and truly represent the community and not your own agenda.

Thank you to Amy Lynn for being an advocate for CHOICE and allowing ALL parents to decide what is best for their own child.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 6:21am

Subject: Oct 12. Meeting

Submitted By: Sarah Cosgrove - sarahtherose11@gmail.com

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,

Thank you so much for your tireless efforts and dedication to the safe, high quality education of children in Henderson County.

By making masks mandatory in schools, our county is succeeding at keeping transmission lower, and quarantines fewer than neighboring states and counties who made masks optional.

Please vote to keep masks mandatory for schools to keep the most vulnerable (unvaccinated) safer until options for vaccines are available; and to provide and maintain a safe learning space for all students, including those who do not have the health option to unmask or to homeschool.

Thank you!

Submission #26

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 7:01am

Subject: October 12 Public Comments Masking

Submitted By: Deborah Barwick - djbarwick@gmail.com

With the winter months approaching and Covid numbers declining now is not the time to relax and let our guard down. Please continue to require mandatory masking in our schools to continue to keep kids safe and in person learning.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 8:25am

Subject: Please keep our kids safe

Submitted By: Aaron Byrd - aabyrd@gmail.com

Please vote to continue the mandatory use of masks in schools for the time being. I have two reasons for this request:

1) We are so close to getting vaccines for 5-11 year olds. We've got the ball and are running toward the end zone. I'd hate to see us fumble when we're so close to scoring. Please just let us get safely to the time when our kids can be vaccinated.

2) There aren't enough teachers willing to support the virtual classrooms that would need to happen for families like mine who are not comfortable sending our unvaccinated kids to a school where most people are unmasked. My understanding is this is what happened in early August: too many families applied for virtual learning, but there were not enough teachers willing to do it. I have to believe a similar situation would occur if masks suddenly became optional next week.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 9:19am

Subject: Support for Continued Mask Mandates as Needed

Submitted By: Sharon Burlingame - sburlingame401@gmail.com

As a retired HCPS teacher, I am writing to support the School Board's use of the mask mandate as long as needed to keep our students and teachers safe. Lower infection in our public spaces will in turn decrease COVID spread throughout the community, so you all are modeling the way for community wellness.

Thank you so much for your service to our students,

Sharon Burlingame  
Retired Excep. Childrens' Teacher & PreK CoCoordinator

Submission #29

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 10:01am

Subject: October 12th meeting

Submitted By: Steve Cosgrove - scogrove3@gmail.com

Hello HCPS Board,

Thanks for your service. I hope you continue keeping our children and staff as safe as possible by maintaining the mask mandates until vaccines are available for our kid's.

Thanks for your time.

Steve

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 10:21am

Subject: Thank you and hold the course

Submitted By: Susanne Andrews - susanneandrews@bellsouth.net

Dear Mr. Craven, Mrs. Holt, Mr. Bridges, Ms. Case, Mrs. Caskey, Mr. Egolf, Dr. Revis and Mr. Bryant-Superintendent:

On behalf of many concerned families, we thank you all for your continued efforts to keep our children and families safe during this extremely difficult time. It is a challenge everyday to understand both sides. But, not only do I agree with science, I agree that God would support us taking part in life saving and preventative care for everyone.

From the science point of view, it has been proven that masks do work. When someone coughs or sneezes, the droplets can travel up to and more than 6 feet. By having some kind of barrier like a mask, it helps reduce the amount of droplets a person can breathe in. Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend universal mask wearing in schools to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Since the delta variant is more aggressive, more Americans have died of COVID this year 2021 than all of 2020. And now, children are dying even in our mountains of WNC. Until more adults and children are vaccinated, we need to have some safe guards in place to help reduce the spread especially to the vulnerable children in our schools and their family members. If no masks, then a virtual option should be offered to the vulnerable children whom have not been able to get vaccinated yet.

God gave us the ability to think, invent, discover which we have done with the vaccine. We are all Jesus's children and he would want to take care of all of us.

So, I plead with you all to think about the whole picture in making the decision again until more children and adults are vaccinated. We must keep masks in place or go virtual. I do see a light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully by January 2022, we all will be on a more even playing field to do so otherwise.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration and your hard work during this difficult time.

Susanne Andrews

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 11:46am

Subject: COVID precautions

Submitted By: Jodi Capps - jodiwcapps@gmail.com

Thank you, school board members, for continuing to serve in this oddly turbulent time. As a parent of a medically at-risk child who chose to keep his sister home this year instead of keeping her at Clear Creek, I am encouraged that the board has been following the NC Toolkit recommendations. I'm hopeful that Serenity will be able to return to public school in January!

I ask that you continue to follow the recommendations of masks and social distancing so that my child can join her friends and teachers at school. We are but one family of many in the county who are counting on your decision to be for safety, not popularity or politics. We will continue to do our part - please continue to do yours.

Thank you,

Jodi Capps



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 12:12pm

Subject: Mask Mandate

Submitted By: Rachel Poller - mwindila@hotmail.com

Dear Henderson County School Board Members,

I am writing this as a Henderson County resident, retired public school teacher and district administrator with a lifelong commitment to public school education, students, and teachers, and mother of a NC (Davie County) high school teacher with congestive heart failure. I want to thank you for the measures you have put in place to protect students, staff, teachers, and our community.

I am 100% certain that wearing masks so far this year has allowed for many more of our students and teachers to be present in school—getting and giving the face-to-face instruction that is so vital for learning. While there is momentarily and thankfully a decrease in Covid cases, it is not worth the risk now, as we head into winter, to relax the mask mandate. I know that you're under continuing pressure from a vocal, passionate, well-meaning but ill-informed group to drop the mandate. My request is that, in spite of this pressure, you continue to use your good judgment based on the scientific evidence. Please keep the mask mandate and other health and safety protocols in place so that our public schools and district may continue to provide the first-rate education that you do.

Thank you so very much.

Rachel Poller

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 1:58pm

Subject: COVID protocols

Submitted By: Jill Lydic - Jillnatwick@yahoo.com

Thank you for keeping the members of the community safe by continuing to require masks in schools. My neighbor is a teacher and I wouldn't feel safe being around her or her daughter if I knew they were unmasked in a crowded classroom all day. Masks are an easy and proven way to stop the spread of COVID and I am glad that the board recognizes that.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 2:33pm

Subject: Mask Policy

Submitted By: Mark Buzzell - mgbuzzell@hcpsnc.org

I teach almost 100 students on a daily basis. Relatively speaking, very few of my students are out sick. I'm not noticing any coughing, sneezing, or other indications that there are viruses running through my classroom. Vaccinations will be available to young children by the time the next board meeting is held or shortly thereafter. At this point in time, I feel like we should go to masks optional and things should return to normal.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 3:52pm

Subject: Thank You

Submitted By: Carlee Smith - ccsmith@hcpsnc.org

I just wanted to thank you for volunteering your time on our School Board. I know this year has not been easy, and you did not sign up for this much drama! As a teacher, I appreciate your professionalism when it comes to our children. I think the students should be in class as much as possible. The masks help us keep them from being quarantined and at home. Thank you for continuing to listen to our Health Department and our superintendant. We appreciate you!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 4:10pm

Subject: masks in schools

Submitted By: james cole - jimcolenole@gmail.com

I want to thank the Henderson County School Board for requiring masks while attending school. My daughter and granddaughter attend HC schools. And we are elderly, so we feel more comfortable being around them, as they are more protected. Again thanks for thinking of others.

Submission #37

**New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 6:11pm**

**Subject: Mask Mandate**

**Submitted By: Stacy Schermerhorn - stacyschermerhorn@gmail.com**

**Please continue the mask mandate in Henderson County Schools to protect our children.**

Submission #38

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/08/21 6:14pm

Subject: Mask Mandates

Submitted By: Robert Alexander - robert.alexander@msn.com

Please continue the mask mandate in Henderson County Schools to protect our children.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/09/21 8:02am

Subject: Masks for all public schools including all staff

Submitted By: emilie cole - kathykoenigcole@gmail.com

Thank you so much for requiring masks for all students and staff. I have a granddaughter and a daughter in the public school system. I feel much safer when I see them knowing they have be wearing masks every day at school. I am so glad the school board is taking this pandemic seriously. Thank you for your support in this matter.  
Emilie Cole



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/09/21 8:02am

Subject: Unmask our students

Submitted By: Heather Sowry - sowrayconstruction@gmail.com

How did this blue surgical mask and cloth mask come to dominate our daily lives?

Well, indeed, the surgical masks and white cloth (often homemade) masks have become the most contentious and quarrelsome symbol and reminder of our battle with SARS-CoV-2 and the disease it causes, Covid-19. The mask has become so politicized that it prevents rational consideration of the evidence (even across political lines) and drives levels of acrimony, invidious actions, disdain, and villainy among wearers to each other who feel threatened by the individual who will not or cannot wear a mask.

Concerns are being raised regarding psychological damage and why a mask is not 'just a mask.' There is tremendous psychological damage to children, with catastrophic impacts on the cognitive development of children. This is even more critical in relation to children with special needs or those within the autism spectrum who need to be able to recognize facial expressions as part of their ongoing development. The accumulating evidence also suggests that prolonged mask use in children or adults can cause harms, so much so that Dr. Blaylock states "the bottom line is that if you are not sick, you should not wear a mask."

The evidence on mask mandates is also clear in that they are ineffective and do not work to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like SARS-CoV-2.

References:

1. <https://thefederalist.com/2020/10/29/these-12-graphs-show-mask-mandates-do-nothing-to-stop-covid/>
2. [https://www.theepochtimes.com/face-mask-mandates-seem-to-make-ccp-virus-infection-rates-climb-says-study\\_3629627.html?utm\\_source=morningbrief&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=mb-2020-12-23&fbclid=IwAR1OlnCsLOdYRg-vt2afCphIGj3z6Cufc3G-U9\\_EEjQi-MXId5IzwZRBw](https://www.theepochtimes.com/face-mask-mandates-seem-to-make-ccp-virus-infection-rates-climb-says-study_3629627.html?utm_source=morningbrief&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mb-2020-12-23&fbclid=IwAR1OlnCsLOdYRg-vt2afCphIGj3z6Cufc3G-U9_EEjQi-MXId5IzwZRBw)
3. <https://www.conservativereview.com/horowitz-comprehensive-analysis-of-50-states-shows-greater-spread-with-mask-mandates-2649589520.html>
4. <https://www.aier.org/article/the-cdcs-mask-mandate-study-debunked/>

But how dangerous is this virus? Based on studies done by Professor John PA Ioannidis of Stanford University, we know that we are dealing with a virus that has an infection fatality rate (of 0.05 in persons 70 years old and under (range: 0.00% to 0.57% with a median of 0.05% across the different global locations; with a corrected median of 0.04%). This compares quite well to the IFR of most influenza viruses (and even lower), and yet the massive reactions to SARS- CoV-2 have never been

employed during influenza season.

We just saw the bizarre and troubling change by the CDC that social distancing for kids no longer required 6 feet and now can be 3 feet but not when in the company of teachers. Outrageous is the fact that the 6-foot rule was arbitrary and based on no underpinning science in the first place. It's as if the virus floats around and makes these distance adjustments.

It is all nonsensical, illogical, specious, and patently absurd some of what these agencies and experts spew to us all day long. Many of it is just plain wrong. I urge you to think this through carefully. Any available evidence must be considered when the health of the citizenry is at stake. Minor risks can turn into major disasters, like cracks in a dam.

I just would like to caution you on the safety of these face masks especially since the science also has revealed the ineffectiveness of mask mandates and the masks themselves, as currently used. As a parent and citizen alike, I only seek to inform, share, prognosticate. You must be informed fully for informed decision-making. We also cannot discount the possible harms on our immune systems and general health from such constant and prolonged use of masks, given that we have never done this before.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/09/21 7:41pm

Subject: Support for Board Member Stacey Caskey

Submitted By: Kathleen Abraham - kathleen28791@gmail.com

Dear Henderson County School Board, School Administration, and all other interested parties.

The signatures and comments on following petition represent the feelings of the true "Silent Majority" in Henderson County; people who value rational thoughts and actions during this unprecedented time.

I am pasting the information to the petition below, but I am also providing the direct link.

[https://www.petitions.net/support\\_henderson\\_county\\_school\\_board\\_member\\_stacey\\_caskey](https://www.petitions.net/support_henderson_county_school_board_member_stacey_caskey)

"Support Henderson County School Board Member Stacey Caskey

As a Henderson County School Board Member, Stacey Caskey has worked tirelessly to advocate for the safest and most effective learning environment for all of our public school students. She has continued this important work, despite threats to herself and her business from people

who oppose the implementation of safety measures that protect our students. Most recently, she stood her ground against a member of congress who is using our local school board meetings as an opportunity to sow divisive rhetoric that undermines our students' health and safety.

We, the undersigned, support Stacey Caskey. Through her vast experience as an educator and a business owner, she understands both the business and the craft of education. We look forward to her continued presence as a thoughtful and collaborative member of the board."

Kathleen Abraham

1Kathleen Abraham

Stacey Caskey has important work to do for the school board, and needs our public support 2021-09-29

2Nicole Parris 2021-09-29

3Jennifer Taylor

We must listen to our public health experts to keep our students healthy and at school, in person. Mrs. Caskey has devoted decades of her life to public education, both inside and outside of the classroom. Her guidance and experience are invaluable.

2021-09-29

4Adriane Barlow 2021-09-29

5Dawn S Stacey Caskey is a valuable voice on the Henderson County School Board. She listens to constituents and community advisors and leads with compassion, taking into consideration the impact that decisions have on students, staff, families, and the community.2021-09-29

6Casey Austin 2021-09-29

7Julie S. I'm so thankful to the school board for protecting our children by mandating masks during the surge of Delta cases. People trying to remove board members who voted for protection is unacceptable.2021-09-29

8 Sarah Cosgrove Support for Stacey Caskey who has the kids' health and best interest in mind.  
2021-09-29

9 Sarah Hamlin I support Stacey and applaud her work to protect our children and school staff.  
2021-09-29

10 Kate Perrotta I support a school board that represents our community and works to keep students and staff safe.  
2021-09-29

11 Sara Smith  
2021-09-29

12 Brandi DeLancey  
2021-09-29

13 Misti Phillips Stacy Caskey has always had the best interest of our kids at heart.  
2021-09-29

14 Sara Morgan  
2021-09-29

15 Anna-Nicole Leckie  
2021-09-29

16 Elizabeth Jennings Threats against school board members and other public servants cannot be tolerated if we want a civil society for our children. We need school board members who will follow science and keep our children safe.  
2021-09-29

17 MeLani Campos  
2021-09-29

18 Claire Nichols Mrs. Caskey has showed over and over that she is on the board to represent and stand for teachers and their students. She truly cares.  
2021-09-29

19 Jeffrey Jennings  
2021-09-29

20 Julie Austin She truly cares about our children and stands up for their safety and health!  
2021-09-29

21 Melissa Osteen We need to listen to the recommendations and vote masks required. If not more and more kids would be missing school to be quarantined. If we want to keep the kids in school, masks should be required and Ms. Caskey is doing a great job helping keep our kids safe.  
2021-09-29

22 Dennis LaBarge Stacey Caskey is a dedicated educator, committed to the students of Henderson County. She needs all of our support.  
2021-09-29

23 Anna Hoy  
2021-09-29

24 Elizabeth Green  
2021-09-29

25 Maria LaBarge  
2021-09-29

26 Sukey Pratt I know and believe in Stacey  
2021-09-29

27 Meredith Horton  
2021-09-29

28 Mark Kruse Stacey is a much needed voice in an era in which some folks equate intelligent, rational thought as being undesirable.  
2021-09-29

29 Kristin Kelly My grandfather was a beloved member and chairman of Harnett County Schools in North Carolina, and his campaign slogan was "Children first in Safety and Education." I have known Stacey for a while, and I know firsthand that she embodies these principles and ideals. To put it simply, Stacey "gets it" and is willing to work across the aisle for the safety of our students and educators. We need someone who is a critical thinker on our school board, like Stacey.  
2021-09-29

30 Stefanie Wolf  
2021-09-29

31 Lucy Butler Stacey is a veteran educator who cares deeply for the welfare of our children. She is an intelligent, dedicated public servant and HCPS is fortunate to have her on the Board.  
2021-09-29

32 Gerald Hunnicutt  
2021-09-29

33 Betsy Feathergill Thank you Stacey for staying true to your voice on behalf of the students and staff of Henderson County. We appreciate you!  
2021-09-29

34Kathryn Raevuori-Wilson 2021-09-29

35Suzanne McAbee 2021-09-29

36Carmen Gentry I value Ms.Caskey's dedication to seeking information, valuing scientific and medical information, and her commitment to follow guidelines necessary to keep our children safe. She, nor should any board member, face harassment for doing the job you do.2021-09-29

37Barbara McInerney 2021-09-29

38Ellen Brazauskas 2021-09-29

39Jennifer Pittillo 2021-09-29

40Jennifer Kirby Signing because Stacey is a great educator and representative on the school board!2021-09-29

41Sarah Barton 2021-09-29

42Landen Gailey We need school board members who listen to the science as well as concerns of the community in making decisions to keep our school children safe during a period when Covid-19 numbers continue to trend upward in our community.2021-09-29

43Victoria M Shantz We need Stacey on the Board for all the reasons cited, sign the petition.

2021-09-29

44Laura Bannister 2021-09-29

45Susan Hall 2021-09-29

46Kathleen Trice 2021-09-29

47Patricia Taylor I speciation and support Stacey Caskey standing firm with facts, not rhetoric or political ambitions, to keep our children and ALL school staff safe.

2021-09-29

48Lee Stevens I'm signing because Stacey is a voice and force of reason and determining what is best for children2021-09-29

49Grace Loftis I am grateful for Ms. Caskey's voice on our school board, and for doing her best to keep our children safe.2021-09-29

50Michelle Pernell 2021-09-29

51Lindsey Frampton 2021-09-29

52Betty Hunnicutt 2021-09-29

53Phillip Carlin 2021-09-29

54Simon S Can we please stop the crazy and come together as a community.2021-09-29

55Patricia Hart 2021-09-29

56Patricia Sells 2021-09-29

57Adrienne Giddens 2021-09-29

58Courtney Lotfi 2021-09-29

59Angela Bailey Stacey Caskey is an important voice on our school board. She brings a valuable perspective as a former educator and she ran on really important principles like equity in education and universal pre-k. She has proven to be a thoughtful member of the board who works well with others and has the best interest of our students at heart.2021-09-29

60Marilyn Broadbent 2021-09-29

61Jean Shelley I believe mask work and are keeping all 3 of my kids at school.2021-09-29

62Andrea Detwiler 2021-09-29

63Janet Johnson

I appreciate how Ms. Caskey makes decisions based on data and information from medical professionals. She continuously puts the health and safety of students and teachers first so that we can remain in the classroom. I am saddened she receives threats from members of our community.2021-09-29

64Tiffany Council 2021-09-29

65Cari Pruitt 2021-09-29

66Alison Stout I'm signing this because I appreciate the school board members that are looking out for the safety and wellbeing of the students as well as staff like myself. She is performing the duty she was elected to perform and following the experts advice and recommendations.

2021-09-29

67Mindy Campos 2021-09-29

68Katie Winkler 2021-09-29

69Helen Bell Stacey Caskey truly cares about our students - both about them having the best opportunities we can provide for them to learn AND about keeping them as healthy as possible and attending in-person schooling this year rather than being home on quarantine due to COVID exposure. We should all be celebrating her efforts.2021-09-29

70 Brian Henry 2021-09-30

71Diane Jacober 2021-09-30

72Cindy Campos Thank you Stacey Caskey for your commitment to keep our children safe. We appreciate you! 2021-09-30

73Susanne Andrews Support safety for our students and their families2021-09-30

74Leslie Carey 2021-09-30

75Aaron Fishler It's important now that we continue to have mask mandates for children in school. Covid numbers are no longer increasing in Henderson County, but it's still a danger. Stacey Caskey understands this.2021-09-30

76David H 2021-09-30

77Sharon Pearson 2021-09-30

78Sharon Broussard 2021-09-30

79Jo B. Fischbach Fischbach 2021-09-30

80Corinne Machado 2021-09-30

81Christy Bowman I'm grateful for Ms. Caskey's thoughtfulness, determination, and desire to do what's best for our kids.2021-09-30

82Nancy Pellegrini 2021-09-30

83Tom Boeger I'm signing this because I'm in awe of what I'm reading. I'm a home-owner in Mills River currently living in Germany, yet returning back to the USA within the academic school year.

My children have attended both the German school (grundschule) and the Department of Defense school, both of which have mandated masks the entire time during this pandemic. Before working here, I worked at the School of medicine for the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, directly for Division of Occupational and Environmental Health at the University of Utah. I directly supported and interacted with medical doctors, occupational doctors, our division of public health, our physician assistant school, epidemiologists, faculty for our Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree, and the list continues. Since leaving that position, even though I no longer work in the field of healthcare or academia, I have continued to stay in touch, informed, and I have read the published research produced from my former co-workers. Their research points toward the advocacy of both wearing masks and obtaining vaccinations to not only stop the spread, but to keep both children and workers safe.

After living in a nation (Germany) where the public health of children is the utmost importance, after experienced the education provided to my children through the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), and considering that I plan on moving my family to Mills River where my children will be part of the Hendersonville School District, I am in shock that Stacey Caskey isn't honored and celebrated for her

advocacy. She sets the standard.

I write this letter not coming from a political foundation or a political background, but as parent who has had the opportunity to live and work in places where science and public health, and the safety of all children are prioritized. I praise God for Stacey Caskey and an evangelical follower of Jesus, as a person with a Master of Divinity, regardless of Caskey's religious background, I see the love for all people created in God's image, a love for neighbor, embedded in her advocacy for all children. Praise Jesus for Stacey Caskey. May we seek to honor and celebrate her behavior, advocacy, and leadership as she and people like her, strive to provide the freedom for our children to learn in a safe environment.2021-09-30

84Lauren Carlin I'm signing because Stacey Caskey is an important voice on the board. She is reasonable and willing to take time to look at all information when making a decision on how to vote. When I emailed board members, she was the only one willing to answer two emails and engage in conversation about the issue. We were not in complete agreement but she definitely gained my respect by willing to take the time to talk about it!2021-09-30

85Amy HertzThank you for your service to our schools and for putting health and safety first!

2021-09-30

86Stacia Zabel 2021-09-30

87 Bonnie Mayronne

Ms. Caskey is a valued school board member. She cares about the students and also the staff.

2021-09-30

88Mary Ellen Kustin I'm signing because I value Stacey Caskey's commitment to respectful civil discourse on our school board.2021-09-30

89 Virginia Tegel 2021-09-30

90 Raphael Morales Stacey Caskey is a critical voice for this moment and her advocacy for reason and truth is an example. She shows tremendous leadership and we should feel blessed to have leaders like her in our community. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all you do.

2021-09-30

91Kari Byrd 2021-09-30

92Karsten Masinick Ms. Caskey has repeatedly emphasized the importance of health in safety both in our schools as well as our communities. She is a strong voice of reason, and is doing a great job. Thank you Ms. Caskey! 2021-09-30

93Nathaniel Taylor 2021-09-30

94 Mary Campbell 2021-09-30

95 Elizabeth Alger Stacey Caskey is an important voice speaking out in favor of following health department recommendations to keep our children safe in school.

2021-09-30

96 Brock Davidson Stacey Caskey has been the subject of relentless persecution by a very small and vocal minority in our community. She has been fearless in the face of this intimidation, and it is clear that her only concern is the safety of our children, as well as the encouragement of best educational practices even during a serious public health emergency. This very small group in Henderson County lacks empathy for anyone else, they are defiant of any and all government authority, they have difficulty following basic rules of human decency, they view violence in a positive way, and most importantly, they are all — every last one of them — cowards unless they are surrounded by people with the same belief system. They need a crowd to operate in, and that's why they have this need to be heard at every school board meeting. They believe in chaos and conflict, and that is why they are targeting Mrs. Caskey. I stand

behind her and the rest of the School Board, and the low numbers of cases in Henderson County show that they have been right all along. Let them do their work!  
2021-10-01

97 Sarah Kowalak 2021-10-01

98 Gayle L Kemp We need to follow science and protect our children without fear for our civil servants and their families 2021-10-01

99 Lori Bradley 2021-10-01

100 Amy Geddes Protecting each other should be our top priority! 2021-10-01

101 Mitzi Biney I am beyond grateful to our school board for protecting our children. Thank you for having the courage to make hard decisions. Mrs. Caskey you are an inspiration and you have my support.

102 2021- 10-01 Erika Walker

103 2021- 10-02 Oussa Bun I'm signing this because people lack the education to understand the safety of future generation of this country. While Stacey Caskey, an educator, who understands the value of a safe environment for the children while providing a good education to preserve the future generation of this country. A simple act such as wearing a mask or getting vaccinated can help protect the children and put an end to this pandemic.

104 2021- 10-02 Gregory Williams

105 2021- 10-02 Linda Thompson I believe there should be a mask mandate in the schools.

106 2021- 10-03 Angela Roberts

107 2021- 10-03 Kelly Cooper

108 2021- 10-03 Lynn Savage

109 2021- 10-04 Natasha Hounshell Thank you for standing up for common sense and the safety of our children!

110 2021- 10-06 Dee Dee Chambliss Stacey has my absolute full support as she is consistently acting in the best interests of our HCPS students, staff and our community as a whole.

111 2021- 10-07 Natalie Aalto I totally support the compassionate and brilliant Stacy Caskey. Mr. Cawthorn was absolutely breaking the law when he stupidly brought large hunting knives to a school board meeting. What type of person routinely carries such a weapon anyway?! Mrs. Caskey speaks for me and other rational citizens of Henderson County when she speaks out against abhorrent behavior



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/10/21 10:36pm

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Brenda Nelson - breezebee@gmail.com

Dear School Board Members,

I am writing to show support for your decision to keep masks mandatory. I am so thankful that you all work so hard for our kids and try your best to make the best decisions you can for the students in Henderson County. I and so many others are so grateful for all of the time you put in to serve our community.

I would like to request that you keep the mandatory mask policy in place for our students, staff and visitors regardless of vaccination status. As you are well aware, reports continue to reveal that the vaccine wears off after a little while and we are still experiencing community spread because delta is so transmissible. Our youngest students (under 12) are still not able to receive the vaccine at this time. I think masking and social distancing are the best ways to slow the spread. Please continue to require masks as we know that social distancing is not really an option in our schools.

Thank you again for your hard work and love for the students of Henderson County.  
Brenda Nelson

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 6:59am

Subject: Continuation of Mask Mandate

Submitted By: Bonnie Monsalve - bonniea1964@yahoo.com

?To: Henderson County School Board

I am the grandparent of a 6 year old and am happy to report that she has had a wonderful experience as a first grader this year. The Henderson County School Board's vote requiring masks has allowed children like my granddaughter to remain in school and experience some normalcy after an extremely challenging 2020 school year. I want to thank you for your wisdom and courage in voting for the mask mandate earlier this year.

While masks remain a highly volatile and political debate, peer reviewed and legitimate data regarding masks is not debatable. Simply put, masks work!

I do not enjoy wearing a mask and can safely say that we all look forward to a time when we no longer need to do so. That time is not yet here.

COVID cases and hospitalizations are declining in many communities across the US, but we must learn from our past mistakes and remain vigilant. For now, that means continuing to require masks in school. Doing our part will hopefully contribute to a continued decline in cases and end to this historic pandemic.

One day, historians will look back in disbelief on how divisive the simple act of wearing a mask became. We will be judged on how we treated our most vulnerable citizens, our children, during this time. I applaud you for implementing the mask mandate at the beginning of the school year and doing what is best for our kids. In the face of a hostile, vocal group of people who politicized this serious public health issue, you listened to the medical professionals and the facts. I respectfully request that you continue to keep the mask mandate in place until these same professionals determine masks are no longer necessary. We need patience and strength at this time as we are starting to see cases decline. Removing the mask mandate too soon could jeopardize this latest downward trend and jeopardize our children as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration,  
Bonnie Monsalve

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 9:04am

Subject: Unmask our kids

Submitted By: Caitlyn Nicole - caitlyn\_gordon1@hotmail.com

Dear HCPS school board. I am writing you this message as a mother of three children in the public school system in Henderson county. I am I unable to attend the school meetings due to my work schedule but I feel very strongly about the topics at hand. These mask are uncalled for and are harming our children. My children come home every day with a headache! It's a fight every morning to make them put them on, it's causing fights that are not needed. These kids do not wear mask ANYWHERE but in school. Football stadiums are packed to the brim with people with no mask, concerts are the same but yet your making our children suffer while they are supposed to be focused on learning. I have a picture of Mr. Craven himself in a packed football game with no mask in site but yet he's forcing these on our children. Y'all are hypocrites and it's time to actually do what is best for our children like you were elected to do. If parents want to send their children to school with mask that is fine but let us as parents make the best choice for our children!!!! We are the parents, not you and not the government!!!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 9:42am

Subject: October 12 Public Comment

Submitted By: Melissa Reddick - reddickm1983@yahoo.com

Melissa Reddick  
50 Old Possum Holler Rd  
Hendersonville, NC 28739

As a mother to 4, I am advocating for the elimination of any mandates that would take the choice of children and parents from them. I am not anti-mask. I am anti mandate. I am not anti vax. I am anti mandate.

Parents who have raised their children day in and day out; fed, sheltered, and clothed their children; rocked their children to sleep; and who have dried their tears and nursed them to health when sick..... We are the ones who know what is best for our children, period.

Not you.

You are elected by the people of this county. Our taxes pay for public schooling. To utterly ignore parents pleading with you to simply respect their freedom of choice is not only tyrannical but it is also taxation without representation. Your personal opinions do not belong in that seat.

Despite the claim of the media, parents like myself are not uneducated conspiracy theorist. We have made educated decisions based on research. For example, this peer reviewed article from the US Library of Medicine; National Center for Biotechnology completed in 2020 on the downside to masking children in schools.

This study which cites the support of 76 other scholarly articles, states that masking children

- Impairs verbal and nonverbal communication skills development
- Blocks emotional signaling between teacher and learner
- Can cause dermatitis and bacterial infections due to saliva, sweat, and moist vapor between mask and skin.
- Causes exhaled air to go up into the eyes, prompting the wearer to touch his or her eyes with potentially contaminated hands.
- Impairs mainly positive social interactions and the ability to understand and empathize with one another.

In another article from the University of California, it states that

- Covid is less of a threat to children than accidents or the common flu
- Survival rate of confirmed cases among children is 99.99% and more recent studies are returning a higher survivability rate.
- The often-quoted study by the CDC that determined that masks in schools result in 20% reduction of covid cases were also found that by scientific standards, the 20% reduction is not statistically significant, meaning it is statistically indistinguishable from

zero.

- Positive emotions such as smiling become less recognizable thereby amplifying negative emotions.
- It is likely that masking exacerbates the chances that a child will experience anxiety and depression which are already at pandemic levels.

In Sweden, where schools were not closed and children not masked, teachers were shown to be at lower risk for covid 19 than the rest of the population. Could it be that fresh air is better for the immune system?

I will leave you with this. You are supposed to make decisions based on what will best support the ability of school children to learn. It is NOT your place to push your neuroticism and fears about covid onto the shoulders of our innocent children. It is NOT THEIR RESPONSIBILITY to protect the adults around them by wearing a face muzzle. If you and the teachers believe in the vaccine, then you should already have had one and the children should be released from this unjust burden.

Lastly, If speaking out for my rights as a parent and the rights of my children labels me a domestic terrorist to the FBI, then so be it.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 12:26pm

Subject: Public comment for 10/12/21

Submitted By: Gloria Kimzey - foxfire25@gmail.com

Good day BOE and Steve Smith,

It has been announced in the local news by Steve Smith that the number of Covid cases in Henderson County has dropped quite a bit. So much so, that the monoclonal antibody infusions are being offered to patients who don't have to meet such strict criteria. Local blood donation centers are no longer needing Covid antibody plasma. Great news!!

That being said, I would like to know how many of the healthy children who are sent home because they may or may not have been exposed to a child who may or may not have Covid or even have symptoms (all of these kids are wearing masks I should add) have actually tested positive and become sick from another child at school? They're NOT wearing masks outside of school, in fact, Mr. Craven and Mrs. Revis, you both have been spotted attending local crowded children's sporting events maskless and not social distancing, correct? So, if you leaders who are forcing masks on our kids aren't leading by example and being spotted in the community being hypocrites, as well as putting yourselves at risk to catch or spread Covid within the community, what is that saying? Same with our children and staff, no masks outside of school. If they're not wearing masks anywhere else but school, they could be catching and spreading Covid anywhere. In fact, both of my girls have had colds already. Should I then be able to blame school for them catching a cold since other kids and teachers at school have had colds, even though they could've caught it anywhere and were wearing masks at school? Can we call it an epidemiological cold cluster??

Enough with the virtue signaling masks that aren't preventing colds or Covid and are only being worn incorrectly by both staff and students at school. Children are NOT suffering horrible symptoms with Covid when they do test positive, they either have no symptoms or kick it like they do a cold, also earning their natural immunity. Not a single child or staff member has been hospitalized because of Covid and it's not because they're only wearing masks improperly at school. Enough with the insane quarantining of healthy children. Enough with forcing kids to sit with the same group at lunch. Enough making our kids exercise in face diapers. Enough punishing the kids. They've put up with this nonsense for 3 school years now. Enough is enough. Let them get back to normal. Most of the students and staff have either had Covid, had a vaccine, or have been exposed. How much longer are you willing to drag this insanity out? You can easily access this information through the health department.....who's tested positive and have natural antibodies and who have been vaccinated.....that alone should show you that the school systems have reached herd immunity.

If parents want their kids to wear a mask, no one is stopping them. If teachers want to wear a mask, no one is stopping them. Both of my girls have been forced to quarantine, perfectly healthy, and missed vital class time, while wearing their mask, and never tested positive. How is this fair? How is this even common sense? How is

this following the science? STOP IT!

In case you missed it, I'm anti quarantine, anti mask, anti hypocrisy, anti fake science. Make sure you put that in your email count who don't agree with the BOE or the Health Department.

Gloria Kimzey

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 1:33pm

Subject: Thank you and please keep masks in school

Submitted By: Amy Hertz - aehertz@gmail.com

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for all you do for our schools. It's so wonderful to have our children in school learning this year.

I'm writing to ask that you keep masks mandatory for Henderson County Schools. Science has shown us that they help to limit the spread of Covid-19 and protect our students and staff. Masks also allow for less quarantine and allows students to remain in school more.

Please continue to uphold your mission and provide a safe environment for our students and staff.

Kind regards,  
Amy Hertz



New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 2:40pm

Subject: School Bus Driver Pay

Submitted By: Eva Ritchey - info@thetrolleycompany.com

Members of the Board, A window of opportunity has opened to address a lack of adequate pay for school bus drivers in our county. The failure to pay commensurate with the responsibilities and abilities needed to perform this job is no doubt a major reason for the lack of available school bus drivers. The discussion of a living wage here and across the country is opening an opportunity to address this.

During my 7 years working inside the HCPS system I observed a lack of appreciation and appropriate pay for bus drivers which led to a shortage. Driving 12 ton vehicles requires maturity, skills beyond the steering wheel, and a rigorous procedure for licensing. Yet, they were underpaid, denied benefits unless they met full time employee status, and given less respect than other school employees. As a result new teachers and others who needed their planning time were pressed into service since older teachers could say "no."

The lack of respect for these professional drivers is surprising considering we entrust the lives of our children to them, expect them to safeguard the taxpayer's investment of \$87,227.00, and be on call for early dismissals. On cold, dark, rainy mornings when many of us turn off the alarm and hit ten more minutes, they are already driving.

Presently, the starting salary for these drivers is \$12.60/hr. A substitute driver assigned a PM route for an entire month is paid \$94.50/wk. Embarrassing. I hope our School Board will lobby strenuously for an increase.

As the owner of a passenger transportation company employing CDL Drivers I know that professional drivers are every bit a professional. I hope you agree that we should start paying them as such.

Respectfully,

Eva Ritchey

Submission #49

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 8:26pm

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Lori Prude - loriprude@prptonmail.com

Please do the right thing. We are counting on you to be strong and do what's best. Everything I've read says the same thing.... masks cause more harm than good. Thank you!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/11/21 10:23pm

Subject: October 12th Public Input

Submitted By: Tiffany Councill - tiffanycouncill@gmail.com

Dear Henderson County Board of Education Members,  
My name is Tiffany Councill and I have a 4th grader that attends Glenn Marlow Elementary. He is 9 years old and currently not eligible for vaccination. I am a board certified nurse practitioner with over a decade of experience working in a host of medical disciplines including general surgery, gastroenterology, neurology, hospice, and elderly care. I thank you for your continued support for mask mandates in Henderson County Public Schools. My previous statements regarding continuing the mask mandate has not changed and the science in support of masks for our unvaccinated children is irrefutable (I have cited articles in JAMA and Science as well as recommendations by the CDC and the AAP in support of masks for unvaccinated children). Our continued perseverance to protect our children from Covid-19 is part of our responsibility as citizens and caretakers. An approved vaccine is on the horizon for 5-11 year old children, which will cover all public school aged children. I implore you to continue with the mask mandate until the vaccine is available to our children and adequate time has passed for them to be fully vaccinated. Even though we are currently seeing a downward trend of the delta variant of Covid-19, the CDC has identified a host of other variants that may grow in prevalence in the United States in the coming months. As we enter the holiday season and cooler weather (indoor gathering typically become more frequent), it is important to remain vigilant.

Thank you for your time,  
Tiffany Councill, ACNP-BC, MSN, RN, MS, BS  
385 Bradford Hill Rd, Mills River, NC 28759

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 5:50am

Subject: No Masks

Submitted By: Keisha Gilbert - keisha.reece@gmail.com

Mask mandates are clearly not effective. I get 2 calls from my kids school every day because some kid took their mask down to take a drink of water and now 8 kids have to go home. It's insane the amount of school kids are missing to just sit at home. When will enough be enough? Control what you can control...disinfect surfaces, improve air quality in schools, keep distance rules in place when possible, and frequent hand washing. Kids wearing masks at school and nowhere else does absolutely no good and is kind of silly that you all (minus Amy) keep thinking it does. "Follow the science" cases are down, and deaths are down. If you keep these mandates in place you're gonna keep losing staff and students to private entities that don't politicize our children's health. Do your job.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 6:15am

Subject: Oct 12th Public Input

Submitted By: Jennifer Moore - jen2dm@aol.com

Henderson County Board Members,

Thank you for keeping masks in the schools. Based on current data, many parents see that the masks are helping keep the kids in school. We cannot let up now going into flu season. We definitely do not want Covid to get worse by making them optional. Please keep the masks in schools to keep kids in school safely. The data supports this. Thank you for doing your best to help the children of Henderson County.

Sincerely,

J. Moore  
Fletcher, NC

Submission #53

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 6:44am

Subject: October 12 Public Input

Submitted By: Heather Reed - hgregg22@yahoo.com

Dear Board of Education,

My sincere thanks for the difficult work you are doing to keep our children and educators healthy and safe. It's working. We continue to keep more students in schools than the counties and states around us who do not require masks. I request that we continue to require mask wearing inside school properties until COVID case numbers are lower and vaccines are available for all students.

Respectfully,  
Heather Reed

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 7:56am

Subject: Please continue requiring mask wearing

Submitted By: Brenda Williams - brendamusic83@gmail.com

I am the grandmother of 2 children who are too young to be vaccinated. My 5 year old granddaughter has been wearing a mask in her preschool and has no problem with keeping it on. She never complains that she cannot breathe. My 2 year old grandson is learning to wear a mask. He has no complaints either. Neither of them has been exposed to Covid-19 due to the safety measures in place at their preschool. There is more than enough evidence to prove that mask wearing prevents spread of Covid-19. Please do not allow the health of our children to be political. I am grateful that you have required mask wearing in the classroom. Please continue this policy until all children are vaccinated against Covid-19.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 7:57am

Subject: Support for Continuing Mask Requirement

Submitted By: Greg Williams - gwilliams@gracehendersonville.com

Board Members:

Thank you for your public service in our local education system. You are at the helm of shaping lives for productive futures and the accomplishment of dreams that dance in the minds of our children.

As Senior Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, we closely monitor local and CDC safety recommendations in order to keep our staff, children, and their families as safe as possible from COVID-19 infection. We appreciate and follow your pattern for follow-up whenever there is a report from a family about a possible close contact with an infected person. Thank you for publishing those procedures.

We require masks for all children and staff - indoors and outdoors (because young children interact closely when they play). So far this year: I have received no complaints from parents. The children are visibly happy and consistently wear their masks. We have had no reported infection of COVID-19.

I implore you to stay the course that you have set - a course of safety based on science and the wisdom of public health officials. Please continue the mask, testing, and other safety protocols that you currently have in place. They are working.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Greg Williams,  
Senior Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church



Submission #56

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 8:24am

Subject: Support of continued mask mandate

Submitted By: Bridget Hansel - bridgethansel@icloud.com

As a pediatric healthcare provider in the community I continue to see the impact of Covid on children who have severe enough illness to be hospitalized. I respectfully ask that the mask mandate be continued until our youngest school age children can be vaccinated and community cases of Covid are low. Thank you for making our children's safety a priority.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 8:36am

Subject: Please consider masks until Christmas Break!

Submitted By: Dawn Steed - dawn.e.steed@gmail.com

HCPS Board of Education Members,

With recent news that Pfizer has requested Emergency Use Authorization for a 1/3 dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for ages 5-11, and the FDA's scheduled meetings to consider this approval on October 25-26 and November 2-3, I ask you to consider keeping the mask mandate with HCPS through December 2021. This gives parents who wish to vaccinate time to get our children protected with more than just masks, with 2 doses plus 2 weeks after the 2nd dose. If EUA is granted for the vaccine in those early November days, and if a family vaccinates as early as possible, then full protection would be optimized just as school ends for the Christmas/New Year break. Then, if they return in January with optional masks, we know they are more protected against illness regardless of whether their neighbor is masked or not.

I urge you to remember that before the vaccine, masks are the only protection children have in public schools since distancing and other mitigation efforts to protect against COVID-19 are not practical or possible.

We have seen a surge in communities of other surface-transmissible diseases like strep throat and cold viruses lately, but we know that COVID-19 transmits through the air particles, meaning masks are the most effective protection besides vaccination.

Please continue to encourage safe practices in our schools by keeping masks mandatory until other choices for individual protection can be implemented.

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 8:46am

Subject: Meeting 10/12

Submitted By: Lauren Carlin - laurenlongcarlin@gmail.com

Thank you for all of your tough decisions that have kept our kids in school! Despite all of the covid cases at my kids' school, they have not missed a day due to quarantine or illness and I am grateful for that. Please keep up the mask mandate at least through the next month. Hopefully by then we will see cases going down and kids eligible for vaccination. Thank you again for all that you are doing to keep our kids in school!

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 8:50am

Subject: Masks

Submitted By: Melissa Osteen - nekki74@gmail.com

Hi! I'm writing to you again today in hopes you will keep the mask mandate in schools. I feel like they are definitely doing their job. I think the numbers went down slightly but are on the rise again this past week. We've been able to keep schools open because kids are masked. I personally wasn't sure they worked until my daughter went to church camp this summer. We've followed the rules because my older daughter is very medically fragile. My younger daughter attended church camp in July and everyone, even her roommate ended up with Covid once they were back but she wore her mask the entire time except for sleeping and she was the only one out of like 20 of her friends that didn't get it. The Dr even said it would be a miracle if she didn't get it but she said she had worn her mask to all activities and functions and she was tested 4 times over her quarantine period but was never positive. That's when I knew for sure that mask wearing helps. Thank you for your time and for helping keep our kids safe and healthy.

Submission #60

New Digital Public Comment Submission 10/12/21 8:57am

Subject: Thank you

Submitted By: Phillip Carlin - phillipdcarlin@gmail.com

Thank you for continuing to make keeping our children in person safely a priority. The choices you have made, in spite of intense opposition fueled by misinformation, have led to a successful start to our school year and helped us move ever closer to moving beyond the pandemic.