

██████████ Board of Health

██████████ Avenue

██████████, MA 01027

Dear ██████████ Board of Health Members:

My Name is ██████████, I am a concerned parent here in ██████████ and primary care provider in our community.

This letter serves as my concerns over continued mask mandates in our town and schools.

In 1964, Neurobiologist Torsten Wiesel from Harvard Medical school ran research studying the visual cortex of the developing brain. In his experiments he used kittens as models for human children. The kittens eyes were forced shut for 3 months then the eyes were opened. How did the visual part of the brain respond to this forced covering? Well, it turns out the kittens stayed blind. Covering their eyes during this crucial part of development meant that their brains did not make up for it after the forced closure was removed. The developmental window of the brain learning to see was forever SHUT. What are we doing to our children by forcing the covering of their faces and the faces of the trusted adults around them through the critical periods of THEIR development. What developmental windows are being lost forever?

██████████ Board of health, it is time to stop all the mandates in our town and allow our children to unmask in school. We are all well aware we are not going to vaccinate our way to herd immunity. It is well established that the vaccine cannot totally prevent covid so that ought to be the last reason to keep our children muzzled. It is important to mention that the majority of us concerned parents are not anti-vaxers in fact many of us are vaccinated, but we are certainly against mandates of all kind in this matter. You do not know our risks and or benefits but we have a clear understanding of our children's risks and benefits when it comes to the coronavirus and how at such little risk they carry with this particular virus. It does not take a scientist, PhD or medical professional to understand research and statistics. Mandates in our children need to end now, it has gone on long enough. I am not the only parent or health care provider who feels this way in our community. Not everyone thinks they can speak out but they are starting to. These

are OUR kids and we are not going to co-parent with local elected and unelected official.

As COVID-19 policy's and recommendations differ from state to state and from town to town, a polarization continues. These polarizing mandates and recommendations settled into the most illogical pattern possible: The least vaccinated communities have some of the laxest restrictions, while highly vaccinated communities tend to have some of the most aggressive measures aimed at driving down cases. It's as if our local officials are running an uncontrolled experiment with every possible strategy all at once. It seems that the strategy is quite clear, to protect ones own self interest.

As Dr Celine Gounder an Infectious Disease physician from NYU says "We need to come to some sort of agreement as to what it is we're trying to prevent" In children, the CDC has said on multiple occasions they are NOT drivers of the contagion. They also have nearly zero percent death rates and very low if no hospitalizations. Different goals would require prioritizing different strategies.

So why in our community, with such high vaccination rates does the town of Easthampton and [REDACTED] schools have some of the strictest mandates?

How do we manage the transition to endemicity?

Why has the BOH or school committee not had any discussions with community parents on an agreement as to what you are trying to prevent?

Zero cases?

Prevent transmission?

Prevent Hospitalization or death in children?

Are the BOH and school committees driven by fear?

Is it Liability?

Are you all waiting to install a COVID vaccine mandate on our children?

If any of the above are true or align with your intended goals, do you scientifically believe that you will attain them by forcing these masks?

We certainly hope that the "goal" of keeping our children masked up in schools is not to morph that mandate into a vaccine mandate because that will only create parental and community resistance, further polarization and will ultimately segregate our young children. Given the statistics and extremely low likely hood of

hospitalization and death in children 0-18 years of age, masking ought to be a parental choice and any covid-19 vaccine in children should be optional and a family's choice.

Let's reiterate the numbers, approximately 6.2 million children in the US tested positive for COVID 19 in the last 21 months regardless of those who were symptomatic or asymptomatic, roughly 578 of them have died. We can all agree NO child should die. However its important to note that the leading cause of death in our country in ages 0-18 is accidental injuries. On average, there are nearly 3,000 deaths from accidental injuries. Gives us parents the benefit of the doubt in how to keep our children and community safe, masking is not one of them.

In the schools and towns in states with zero mask mandates the children are thriving socially, emotionally and academically. Why would you not want to allow our kids the same opportunities?

All schools and towns mandating the use of facemasks in children are not only willfully ignoring established science but are engaging in what amounts to a whole school clinical experimental trial.

This conclusion is reached by the fact that facemask use and COVID-19 incidence are being reported in scientific opinion pieces promoted by the CDC and others. The fact is, after reviewing ALL of the studies worldwide, the CDC found no reduction in viral transmission with the use of face masks. The data is clear, children rarely become severely ill, asymptomatic spreading is rare and contagiousness is quite low in the toddler and school age range. It is time to think about our children's best interest. No child should ever bear the burden of "protecting" an adult. It is our job to protect them. Anything short is child abuse and not following the science.