

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 25
1200 S. Dunton Ave.
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005

School Board Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2021

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order on August 12, 2021 to accept a motion to adjourn into closed session at 6:48 p.m. The meeting was held at the Dunton Administration Building, 1200 S. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The meeting was noticed for closed session to discuss: The appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees, specific individuals who serve as independent contractors, or specific volunteers of the District or legal counsel for the District, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee, a specific individual who serves as an independent contractor, or a volunteer of the District or against legal counsel for the District to determine its validity, 5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1); Discussion of minutes of meetings lawfully closed, whether for purposes of approval by the body of the minutes or semi-annual review of the minutes as mandated by Section 2.06. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21); Collective negotiating matters between the District and its employees or their representatives, or deliberations concerning salary schedules for one or more classes of employees. 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2); The placement of individual students in special education programs and other matters relating to individual students, 5 ILCS 120.2(c)(10); Litigation, when an action against, affecting or on behalf of the particular public body has been filed and is pending before a court or administrative tribunal, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11).



Regular Meeting

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order 7:36 p.m. on August 12, 2021. The meeting was held at the Dunton Administration Building, 1200 S. Dunton Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois. Roll call was noted and the Pledge of Allegiance said.

Board members present: Brian Cerniglia, Chad Conley, Scott Filipek, Rich Olejniczak, Anisha Ismail Patel, and Greg Scapillato

Board members excused: Gina Faso

Others Present: Dr. Lori Bein, Superintendent; Stacey Mallek, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Dr. Becky FitzPatrick, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning; Dr. Brian Kaye, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Planning; Chris Fahnoe, Director of Technology and Assessment; Ryan Schulz, Director of Facilities

Management; Coletta Hines-Newell, Director of Food Services; Adam Harris, Head of Communications and Story Telling; Brad Katz, Information Technology Specialist; Lana O'Brien, Recording Secretary; staff; and community.

Facilities Management

Resolution to Extend J. Adler Roofing Contract

Mr. Schulz noted that due to supply chain issues, the contractor for the Thomas roof is unable to procure a specialty fastener that is needed to properly secure a component of the roofing system to the existing roof deck. In consultation with the contractor, a roofing consultant, and in alignment with the roofing contract, we would like to grant a \$0 change order to the contract substantial completion until September 30, 2021. We are hoping to locate the fastener, so it may be able to be completed this fall. We are also requesting that the Board grant the Director of Facilities Management the authority to issue additional extensions to J. Adler roofing past the September 30 substantial completion date should the fasteners not become available.

A Board member asked for more specifics about the fastener, and Mr. Schulz explained that it is for gypsum-based deck that requires a specialty fastener.

Motion: A. Patel moved and B. Cerniglia seconded the motion that the Board of Education adopts the Resolution extending the contract of J. Adler Roofing beyond 30 days and delegating limited authority to the Director of Facilities Management to grant further extensions should supply chain delays continue.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Business and Finance

Crossing Guard Locations for 2021-22

Ms. Mallek reviewed the crossing guard locations for 2021-2022, and explained that this is an annual item given to the Board for approval. The district performed school crossing location counts which did not result in any other recommended changes to crossing guard locations. Four locations remain unstaffed, and there are an additional three locations that have become vacant in the past few weeks. We are actively looking for staffing. The district works with the village to post crossing guard positions.

A Board member asked about adding signage if we cannot have a crossing guard at the location, and Ms. Mallek noted the district does not have the ability to add signage because crossing guards are the responsibility of the village. Anyone interested in the position can apply on the district website, or they can reach out to Laura Comastro, the Transportation Specialist for the district.

Motion: A. Patel moved and C. Conley seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve crossing guard locations as presented for the 2021-22 school year. Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Serious Safety Hazard Resolution for 2021-22

Ms. Mallek stated that the School Code provides that districts annually review the conditions and certify to the State that the conditions remain unchanged. There are no changes from last year and the district has not received any requests for any new hazard locations.

Motion: A. Patel moved and C. Conley seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Resolution to Continue Serious Safety Hazard Busing for the 2021-22 school year.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Presentation of the 2021-22 Tentative Budget

Ms. Mallek presented information on the tentative budget for the 2021-2022 school year. She reviewed the budget assumptions, noting that revenue from property taxes is based on a 99% collection rate, and that the CPI was 2.3% in 2020 and is 1.4% in 2021. Interest income is 0.4%, which is down from 0.5%. There was an increase in the Evidence Based Funding from the state of \$129,892, and federal funds include the ESSER Emergency Relief Grant and the NSLP/Summer Food Service revenues. Building rentals revenue is being added back. The total revenue budget increase is \$4,761,047.

The expenditures were reviewed and Ms. Mallek explained that personnel costs are 79% of the budget, excluding debt and construction. Salaries are based on the current collective bargaining agreements and tied to CPI, and health insurance costs increased six percent. The budget includes \$ 1.3 million to support the Technology Plan, and no additional funds will be used for COVID. There will be an increase in Special Education tuition; an increase in food service food and supplies; an increase in the bus transportation contract; and an anticipated increase in the insurance premium. Contingency funds include five certified staff, six non-certified staff, \$100,000 non-staff in the Education Fund, and \$50,000 in the Capital Projects Fund.

Chad Conley left the meeting at 8:01 p.m. and returned at 8:02 p.m.

The fund balance is projected to drop below the 60% mark this year, and we will bring this to the board for discussion at a later date. We will continue to finalize and make changes to the budget, and the Board will vote on it at the September 23 meeting. The tentative budget will be posted on the district website and the notice for the public will be posted. Ms. Mallek shared the budget timeline in accordance with legal requirements.

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| Dec. 10, 2020 | Adopt tax levy |
| Jan. – March 2021 | Build budget assumptions |
| Feb. – June 2021 | Build budget (building allocations, departments, staffing, enrollment) |
| May 20, 2021 | Personnel Plan approved by Board |

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| August 12, 2021 | Presentation of Tentative budget |
| Aug. – Sept. 2021 | Continue Budget Updating for Changes |
| September 23, 2020 | Public Hearing and Final Budget Adoption |

Board members asked questions and there was discussion regarding life safety, and a decrease in the fund balance. Ms. Mallek noted that she will review the fund balance when she presents the five-year forecast. Keeping the fund balance at 60% was important when the property tax revenue was received late, and the district had bond payments. Within the past five to six years, the payments have been more on time, so the level is not needed. Ms. Mallek feels we could go lower, but it depends on where the Board would like it to be. Ms. Mallek was thanked for her presentation.

Recognitions and Presentations

Dr. Bein read a letter from Emilie Molidor from the American Heart Association, who thanked Dr. Bein, several principals, Physical Education teachers, the staff and families in the community who participated in the program.

Community Input

- Robyn Swanson addressed the Board regarding following health department guidelines
- Megan Kalweit addressed the Board regarding that all Board decisions follow health guidelines set by the CDC, AAP, IDPH.
- Jen Anderson addressed the Board regarding following public health guidance.
- Megan Lierman addressed the Board regarding special education students with no immune system needing the mask mandate.
- Karen Radek addressed the Board regarding following public health guidance.
- Ann Vogel addressed the Board regarding supporting the mask mandate, and keeping it in place for the school even if the Governor's mandate expires.
- Kevin Michael addressed the Board regarding the mask mandates being necessary and remaining in place until all students have been vaccinated.
- Pam Bartusek addressed the Board regarding the mask policy.
- Marianne Corcoran addressed the Board regarding the mask policy.
- Maryann Zaleski addressed the Board regarding teachers and mask discipline.
- Tom Kopacz addressed the Board regarding wearing masks being harmful to children.
- Katherine May addressed the Board regarding enforcing the masking requirement.
- Angelika Babich addressed the Board regarding masks being optional.
- Karen Wolff addressed the Board regarding removing masking and other mitigations based on the available science.
- Amanda Madsen addressed the Board regarding mask and vaccine policies.

Public comments were also received electronically. All comments are given to the Board in full and posted on the website.

Brian Cerniglia left the meeting at 8:33 p.m. and returned at 8:43 p.m.

Consent Agenda

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve those items on the Consent Agenda as follows: (A) Personnel Report and Addendum to Personnel Report; (B) Treasurer's Report; (C) Invoices; (D) Regular and Closed Session Meeting minutes of July 15, 2021; (E) Superintendent Professional Organizations and Professional Development Leave
Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Communications:

The following reports were given:

- NSSEO – Dr. Bein reported on behalf of Ms. Faso. Condolences were sent to the family of an 8th grade Miner School student who passed away unexpectedly. Timber Ridge gym construction continues and is moving along on schedule and on budget, and they are excited to welcome a new Assistant Principal to Miner School. Mr. Filipek also noted that there is an upcoming Special Olympics fundraiser with Dunkin Donuts and the police department.
- IASB – Ms. Patel reported that IASB offers online workshops; the Joint Annual Conference is coming up in November; and the Board may have the resolutions for the delegate assembly by next month.
- ED-RED –Mr. Olejniczak noted that the kickoff luncheon will be held on September 24, and talked about the town hall meeting that Senator Gillespie and Representative Walker held recently.
- Board Governance – Mr. Filipek read an excerpt from the Behavioral Expectations regarding sincere listening and seeking to understand the viewpoints of others.

The following reports were received:

- PTA – Ms. Patel read a statement from Ms. Barbieri. Each school's PTA has been at work preparing for the upcoming school year. They have held two council meetings, attended a virtual back to school event with other PTA leaders within the region, and have attended officer training courses. Throughout the school year, the PTA provides all children with meaningful experiences and programs, and the PTA shows their appreciation for staff in various ways. Please consider joining your school's PTA if you have not already done so.
- ABC25 – Dr. Bein reported on behalf of Ms. Faso. ABC25 will be opening grant applications next week and look forward to seeing all of the creative ideas that the staff will bring forward for consideration. ABC25 hopes that many families

had the opportunity to join the foundation during school registration but if not, to please consider joining.

- ATA – Ms. Berg reported that the luncheon that was held this afternoon with the new teachers, ATA, Ms. Patel, Mr. Cerniglia, and administrators was very positive. The ATA completed the MOU and was pleased to work with the representatives of the Board and administration, and noted that it was a collaborative effort with open and meaningful dialogue. The ATA is looking forward to collaborating this year. The teachers are thrilled to be starting the year in- person. She thanked the Board for their efforts.

Anisha Patel left the meeting at 9:14 p.m. and returned at 9:16 p.m.
Scott Filipek left the meeting at 9:15 p.m. and returned at 9:16 p.m.

Student Learning – No Report

Student Services – No Report

Superintendent Report
2021-2022 School Year Update

Dr. Bein provided a report to the Board for the 2021-2022 school year. The district received a letter yesterday from the ISBE Superintendent regarding the new school year and the executive order, and noted that once an executive order is issued, it has the effect of law, and that non-compliance is not an option. School districts continue to get updated guidance. Executive order 2021-18 was explained. It requires the use of face coverings by those over the age of two, and the implementation of other layered prevention strategies to the greatest extent possible.

Close contact definitions as of August 2 were reviewed and included classroom exposure, indoor exposure, outdoor exposure, and vaccinated individuals. There are four quarantine options in schools: 14 days if non-vaccinated; 10 days if no symptoms present; if a negative PCR test taken on Day 6 or after their exposure, they could reduce the quarantine to 7 days; and the test to stay program. She explained the test to stay program in detail, and noted that to participate in the program, there are steps that must be followed.

Dr. Bein's recommendation to the Board includes opening school for full time instruction, aligning with all items in the current executive order, and communicating that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes. Tomorrow a detailed Q&A booklet will go out to families and staff, which goes into more detail. The district will continue to update the document as we get new information.

Board members asked questions and there was detailed discussion regarding the governor's executive order; distancing; close contacts; lunch and recess; mask breaks; daily health screening; Shield testing; and vaccination clinics for students. The Board attorney, Ms. Sarah Boucek, answered several questions from Board members

including what gives the governor the power of law; the implications on the Board; insurance policies and liabilities; and future conversations if the mandate is lifted.

Board members thanked the Food Services Department for the incredible amount of work that they have done since March 2020 by providing food to the community each week in the cold, heat and weather. They served 994,000 meals. Dr. Bein was thanked for continuing to provide the Board all of the information to be able to understand all perspectives and make good decisions.

There was discussion on the motion and what happens when the governor's executive order is no longer mandated. The Board attorney recommended to proceed with the motion, which will give the Superintendent a clear path of what to do.

Motion: G. Scapillato moved and A. Patel seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, no; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, no; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 4/2.

Approve the COVID-19 Testing Support Agreement with The Board of Trustee of the University of Illinois

Ms. Mallek noted that Shield testing is now free for all K-12 school districts. It is a screening tool for the COVID-19 virus in symptomatic, pre-symptomatic, and asymptomatic individuals. The agreement would allow us to move forward to set up the testing. They will come into our schools to do the testing. It will be an opt-in program, and families will need to complete a consent form. Testing would occur during the school day, and the results will be available in up to 24-hours, but typically less. Students that participate would not be subject to quarantine if they became a close contact. It helps reduce the possibility of students having to be out of school to quarantine.

Board members asked questions regarding testing and quarantining. This test has a 98.6% efficacy rate, and will give the district good data to see what is happening in our schools. The testing helps us keep students in school, which is the goal that we all have. The Board would like to get a status of how many students are participating.

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the COVID-19 Testing Support Agreement with the Board of Trustee of the University of Illinois as submitted.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

First Reading of Policies – Press 107

Dr. Bein stated that the following policies and exhibits are presented to the Board for a first reading. These policies and exhibits reflect modifications and additions as

recommended by the Illinois Association of School Boards. These will be brought back at a future meeting for a second reading and approval.

Press 107:

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| 2:10 | School District Governance |
| 2:30 | School District Elections |
| 2:120-E1 | Guidelines for Serving as a Mentor to a New School Board Member |
| 2:120-E2 | Website Listing of Development and Training Completed by Board Members |
| 2:125-E3 | Resolution to Regulate Expense Reimbursements |
| 2:130 | Board-Superintendent Relationship |
| 2:220-E7 | Access to Closed meeting Minutes and Verbatim Recordings |
| 2:240 | Board Policy Development |
| 2:240-E1 | PRESS Issue Updates |
| 2:240-E2 | Developing Local Policy |
| 5:10 | Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment |
| 6:145 | Migrant Students |
| 6:160 | English Learners |
| 6:235 | Access to Electronic Networks |
| 6:255 | Assemblies and Ceremonies |
| 6:260 | Complaints About Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Programs |
| 7:280 | Communicable and Chronic Infectious Disease |
| 8:90 | Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs |

First Reading of Policies – Five Year Review – Press 107

Dr. Bein stated that the following policies are presented by the Illinois Association of School Boards for a five-year review, keeping material aligned with good governance principles and keeping the legal references current. These will be brought back at a future meeting for a second reading and approval.

Press 107:

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| 1:10 | School District Legal Status |
| 1:20 | District Organization, Operations, and Cooperative Agreements |
| 1:30 | School District Philosophy |
| 2:220-E4 | Open Meeting Minutes |
| 3:30 | Chain of Command |
| 6:100 | Using Animals in the Educational Program |
| 6:170 | Title I Programs |
| 7:220 | Bus Conduct |
| 7:230 | Misconduct by Students with Disabilities |

Personnel and Planning

Approve the ESP, TCARN, Food & Nutrition Services, and Guest Teacher Employee Handbooks

Dr. Kaye noted that the four different handbooks include different groups of employees that are not in a union, or do not have a collective bargaining agreement. Annually the different employee group handbooks need revision based on changes that took place in the previous year including impacts on the working conditions, updates in the laws, and the compensation for the employee groups. He highlighted several changes in each of the handbooks.

A Board member asked a clarifying a question about the ESP handbook.

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Educational Support Personnel Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year as submitted.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

A Board member asked a clarifying question regarding compensation time, which was explained by Dr. Kaye.

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Teaching Assistant, Clerical Assistant, and Registered Nurse Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year as submitted.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Food & Nutrition Services Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year as submitted.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Motion: A. Patel moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Guest Teacher Handbook for the 2021-2022 school year as submitted. The motion was amended to include Substitute Teaching Assistant, and Substitute Registered Nurse.

The Board paused the meeting at 10:47 p.m.

The Board meeting resumed at 10:54 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Approve the ATA-D25 Memorandum of Understanding, "Implementation of Transitional Model of Reopening"

Dr. Kaye stated that as we plan for the opening of the 2021 - 2022 school year we engaged in bargaining the working conditions impacted by the pandemic. Representatives of the Board and the ATA met to negotiate the impact and this memorandum memorializes the agreements reached by the parties on those items discussed. He highlighted the six sections in the MOU, and thanked the members of the committee. A Board member thanked the members of the committee.

Motion: B. Cerniglia moved and R. Olejniczak seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the ATA-D25 Memorandum of Understanding, "Implementation of Transitional Model of Reopening" as presented.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Community Input

- Sam Pappas addressed the Board regarding if a child is required to wear a mask under the Governor's Executive Order if they cannot medically tolerate it.
- Karen Wolff addressed the Board regarding vaccinated and unvaccinated students, quarantine rules, testing, and handling mitigations.

Future Agenda Items

Topics with Dates to Be Determined

A Board member asked when the Full Day Kindergarten would occur. Dr. Bein noted that there will be a Committee of the Whole meeting 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. before the September 2 Board meeting. Dr. Bein stated that Future Agenda Item topics are included in the Board minutes for each meeting, but a running log can be created

New Topics - None

Motion: R. Olejniczak moved and C. Conley seconded that the Board of Education move into the Closed session at 11:08 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

Motion: B. Cerniglia moved and C. Conley seconded that the Board of Education adjourn closed session at 11:15 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 5/0.

Motion: B. Cerniglia moved and C. Conley seconded that the Board of Education adjourn the regular meeting.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 6/0.

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 11:15 p.m.

Submitted,

Lana M. O'Brien
Recording Secretary

Approved: September 2, 2021

President
Board of Education

Secretary
Board of Education

Date minutes available for public inspection: September 8, 2021

Date minutes posted on District website: September 8, 2021

Community Input Received Electronically

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Theresa Funk | <p>The note from Dr. Bein -- and the decision of the school board -- is confusing. Why are you referencing the CDC guidelines but also disregarding them? Was the decision made to intentionally ignore the CDC decision because of better data from a more reputable source? This week the American Academy for Pediatrics also issued guidance that strongly urged the use of masks for both teachers and students until a vaccine is available for children. Given that the large population of students in attendance do not qualify for a vaccine yet, will the Board reconsider their decision?</p> <p>I'm just seeking to understand what scientific information or data this decision was based on, given that it seems to ignore the official guidance from the CDC.</p> |
| steven andrews | <p>My children attend a D25 elementary school. Masks need to be mandated in schools, especially elementary schools with populations that are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Guidance from CDC, IDPH, and AAP clearly support this.</p> <p>CDC - Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated.</p> <p>IDPH - Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated.</p> <p>AAP - All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).</p> <p>The District's decision to ignore this guidance and make masking optional is absurd. We continue to see growth in covid-19 infections driven by the more contagious delta variant. Masking helps combat the virus and reduces the risk of infection among our student population, most of whom are not vaccinated and do not yet have the choice to be vaccinated. The pandemic isn't over. Please revise your recently adopted masking policy for the 2021-2022 school year to comply with CDC, IDPH, and AAP's mask guidance. Thank you. Steven Andrews</p> |
| Kellee Janus | Thank you for agreeing that parent-choice regarding masks is the right thing to do. |
| Dawn Katcher | Please keep masks optional for all students and staff. |
| David Katcher | Please keep masks optional for all staff and students. |
| Leigh Strauss | <p>Face masks are effective in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Masks do not protect the individual wearing the mask from the virus; Masks stop an individual with COVID-19 from spreading the virus throughout a community. Per guidance from AAP and CDC, masks should be required for in-school learning for unvaccinated individuals while indoors, anyone under 12 years of age. Please require mask wearing in elementary schools. With limited social distancing inside a building, we need all that we can to ensure there is limited disruption in learning, should the disease spread in a classroom. Masks will help control this disruption.</p> |
| Cindy Vander Klay | Please rethink the optional mask policy & require unvaccinated staff/students/visitors to wear masks or better yet, require all to wear masks. Given how quickly the Delta variant is now spreading & new CDC indoor mask guidance for schools, we should be doing all we can to protect our children & reduce quarantines at the start of the school year. |
| Kim & Scott Dunning | Please follow updated CDC guidelines and make masks mandatory (indoors) for all unvaccinated children in D25. This gives us the best chance of having an uninterrupted start to the school year. |
| Tracey | Our children under 12 are not able to receive the vaccine and require your protection. Please follow CDC guidance and require masks for unvaccinated individuals in SD25. |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Colleen Sellars | Thank-You for the opportunity to express my opinion to District 25 on student mask wearing.I am a proud GrandMother of a first grader.I support the decision the school board made regarding mask.Im sure you have followed the data in regards to children under 18 and their very low risk of getting covid.Thank-you for allowing parents to choose.Its time to stop the panic and use common sense! Thank-you again!!! |
| Holly Schafer | Please reconsider the decision made for Mask optional for the 2021-2022 school year to change to Mask required. In light of the Delta variant, updated information and recommendations from the AAP, CDC, IDPH and ISBE in order to provide a safe environment for all, please require masks for vaccinated and non-vaccinated staff, students and community members while indoors in the district. Thank You |
| Christine Organ | <p>I respectfully request that masks be required for ALL students and staff until vaccines are available to children ages 5-12, regardless of case numbers in the area. This is the only option that allows for true parent choice since vaccines aren't yet available and masks are the only way we can protect this age group.</p> <p>The board should require masks until vaccines are available for children under 12 for the following reasons:</p> <p>(1) The CDC updated its recommendations to indicate that all students and staff should wear masks in school, regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>(2) The AAP recommends universal masking for all children.</p> <p>(3) Public health experts recommend mask mandates in school. (https://www.businessinsider.com/school-mask-mandates-nih-best-thing-right-now-2021-8)</p> <p>(4) Without masks, there will undoubtedly be more infections and close contact quarantines. The burden of quarantines for close contacts, or even worse COVID-19 infections, will impact working parents most. With masks, however, we can proactively minimize the number of cases and close contacts.</p> <p>(5) We are a mere months away from parents having true choice with the ability to vaccinate their children. To abandon mitigation effort that we know work -- namely masking policies -- would make the past efforts for naught.</p> <p>(6) Children can and do get ill with COVID-19. With masks, we can provide the benefits of in-person learning, while minimizing the very real risks of illness.</p> <p>For these reasons, I respectfully and strongly urge the school board to reconsider it's decision and require masking until the vaccine is available to children ages 5-12.</p> |
| Katie Sondergaard | I fully support the mask mandate, and hope that the district continues to follow the IDPH & CDC guidelines as we navigate through these complicated surges. |
| Jen Anderson | At this point, I have very little faith the board will put their personal egos aside and follow health department guidelines in the future. Not only will this leave our children exposed to unnecessary health risks, it will also leave our district exposed to legal and financial risks by pushing the boundaries of insurance coverage and opening the district up to future lawsuits. We all should have the same goal to attract the best educators to provide our kids with a top notch education in a setting that has the programming, curriculum and tools they need to be prepared for the future. Any unnecessary financial hardship and wasted resources will run counter to the goal of providing the best possible education for our community's kids. Please consider your obligation to be good financial stewards for our tax payers and community when making decisions throughout this school year. |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Jara Kern | Regarding the change on required masking, we expect that the Board will following CDC, AAP, ISBA, IDPH, and CCDPH guidelines going forward - following public health guidance and using unambiguous language for required masking to keep our students, D25 staff, and community safe. |
| Jara Kern | We are asking for greater transparency in future regarding votes on decisions of community significance, especially with regards to COVID-19, masking, mitigation and safety protocols, to protect health of students, staff, and the community. |
| Kathy Dieringer | Please vote again for mask choice as soon as possible. |
| Kerri Hood | <p>At what point will these mitigations end? Even once the vaccine is approved for kids, not everyone will be able to receive it (and there are many of us who rightfully will wait until it's FULLY approved before giving it to our kids.) There will always be risk for some people as there has been for decades. I have asked the question to these families and have not received an answer - what did you do to protect yourself or your children from the many viruses prior to covid? I have never seen a child or adult masked at school before. Again, there are plenty of people who have been traveling, visiting friends and family, going to concerts, restaurants, bars, etc mask-free, so why are they suddenly "afraid" of school mask-free? It is the most controlled environment their kids attend! Why are we still talking about these cloth masks? We know medical masks will protect the wearer, so why can't we allow CHOICE for parents and advise those who want to wear a mask to upgrade to a medical one? These are now available to all unlike last year when shortages forced everyone outside healthcare to use cloth masks.</p> <p>Also, if everyone is masked, then WHY are we still talking about quarantine procedures and contact tracing?? Those should go away! If we keep them, then we're saying that MASKS DO NOT WORK. We seem to actually be moving backwards from last year, when the board pushed to reopen school even prior to a vaccine being available to anyone (which was clearly the absolute correct decision.) All teachers and staff who wanted the vaccine got it before my elderly parents were even able to get it. Now, we're still talking about more mitigations?!? Those who screamed last year that all must be remote because school is unsafe even though everyone was wearing cloth masks are now the ones saying these cloth masks are the ONLY thing that will keep everyone safe. These people were wrong in their predictions last year...</p> <p>What will this school year look like? My children have had so much taken away from them, and I'm tired of hearing that it's no big deal. My older son missed his first field trips. My younger son has never experienced a field day, or a music show, or movie night at school. These may seem like small unimportant things to those who lack empathy, but it's because those parents' children already got to experience these things. They have the memories. They have the photos in their albums. We have none. Will parties still be remote only? Will room parents be able to host in person? Will Halloween be taken away again? What about fun fairs and book fairs and movie nights? Field trips? This is my son's last year in grade school - will he just never have one?? We even had field day canceled last year and that was OUTSIDE. Will this be another gigantic year of disappointment for our kids, or will these magical masks allow ALL of these events to take place? Again, if these masks work, then there should be ZERO excuse not to have everything else exactly as it used to be. ...and if you say we can't have these things, then you are admitting that masks don't work, so take them away completely. Will you PLEASE finally put yourself in the kids' shoes and think about THEM for once?</p> |
| Kellee Janus | Please allow parents to decide whether to mask their children or not. My children will be in the school building for almost 9 hours each day and it's completely unnatural and unjust to expect them to wear masks the entire time. Parent choice needs to be brought back. |
| Nicole Pignato | "I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families." |

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| Beata Bukranova | <p>I oppose the mask mandate. I kindly urge you to reject the mask mandate and have masks optional. I have two children, one in SD 25 and one in SD 214. I have witnessed my children struggle last year with diminished cognitive ability, constant headaches and fatigue due to masks. Masks do not protect our children, they harm them. Gov. Pritzker's mandate is illegal and unenforceable. First, the state of Illinois is not facing a disaster, defined by the Illinois Emergency Management Act as the " threat of widespread or severe damage, injury or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or technological cause..." Further, Section 7 of the Act does not provide our governor with the right to mandate masks and create new laws. It is the exclusive right of our legislative branch, not the executive branch. I ask you to be courageous and do what is right for our children. Please use common sense and look at solid data, not the main stream media reports. I would be happy to share links to reputable research findings on the effects of children wearing masks.</p> |
| Nathan Ulery | <p>On behalf of the more than 1,200 signers of our petition (with the vast majority from D25 residents), we expect the District 25 School Board and Administration to always follow the Cook County Health Department guidelines and with regard to masking, for all students and staff for the 2021-2022 school year. No deviation from these guidelines and recommendations should be considered because keeping our kids in school should be a top priority for this Board.</p> <p>These guidelines were developed by our health experts in order to keep our students in school. The policy previously passed by this board would have led to increased numbers of quarantines since fully masked students are not considered close contacts as easily as unmasked students. As we see news reports from around the country of school districts quarantining hundreds of students in the first few weeks, we are seeing the end result of poor decisions like what this Board previously passed. If Governor Pritzker had not stepped in, Arlington Heights could have been one of those stories later this month.</p> <p>While thankful that masks will be required to start the school year, it was disappointing and embarrassing for our community that Governor Pritzker had to intervene to reverse the Board's poor judgement in creating a mask optional policy. At some point the mask mandate will be removed and we expect the Board to follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future, without intervention from Governor Pritzker. We expect board leadership that can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as we respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning our children's education.</p> <p>The Board did not provide the community sufficient notice that an important decision/vote would be taking place. We expect the board to follow through with its many broken promises to be transparent with and represent our community. In keeping with that sentiment, we expect the administration and board to supply complete, detailed information and transparency in regards to Covid policies and procedures. For example, what additional safety precautions are being put in place for lunch this year? How is information like vaccination records going to be used by the district? How will masking be enforced on unvaccinated individuals once health guidelines return to allow? How will the district respond to parents and students who refuse to wear their mask?</p> <p>We are concerned that if the board were to deviate from health department guidelines in the future, it will leave our school district exposed. The district's insurance policy does not cover virus related claims. The tort immunity under Illinois law will be tested and taking the opposite side of every credible public health expert would put District 25 at risk. This unnecessary risk could cause financial hardship to the district and distract district leadership -- both a waste resources that should be used educating our students.</p> <p>This Board and Superintendent allowed political expediency to rule the day last month as it</p> |

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| | <p>sought to look for wording loopholes instead of focusing on the clear intent and spirit of the recommendations -- and did so in a way that hid its intentions from key stakeholders when the Superintendent left the agenda item broad even as she told individual parents in personal emails that the masking topic would be discussed in the meeting. As residents, taxpayers, and parents, we expect better.</p> <p>As we move forward remember that regardless of viewpoints on masking -- we all share one interest -- our children learning at in-person school. Following the health guidance and being transparent about the decisions being made is the best way to ensure that goal is met.</p> |
| Michelle Casillas | Please maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the RIGHT to make decisions for their own families. |
| Agnes Piersa | Unmask our children! |
| Zenon Piersa | Unmask our children! |
| Kate Jigalov | Please allow parents to make the decision regarding masks for kids at school ! |

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| <p>Alexis & Doug Hammond</p> | <p>Dear D25 Board and Administration, We expect the administration and board to supply complete, detailed information and transparency in regards to Covid policies and procedures. We have had to follow up multiple times with requests for further clarification and explanation of summer programs and new policies for the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, the Board did not provide the community sufficient notice that an important decision/vote would be taking place for the July 2021 meeting. We expect the board to follow through with complete transparency and represent our community. We think that further information is warranted and should be communicated in writing to parents via mail and/or email regarding school lunch, recess, extracurriculars, quarantine procedures, and quarantine remote learning. Parents should have complete information so that they may choose to make the best decisions for their families.</p> <p>Specifically: Definition of Close Contact: The definition of "close contact" has changed for the 2021/2022 school year. Can parents request to be notified regardless of the universal masking policy, if their child was within 3 feet of a positive or probable case? What is the process in which they may do this? If a parent chooses to quarantine their child, will the child be able to access the remote option? Vaccination Records: So that all parents may understand, if they choose to submit their child's vaccination status, their children will no longer be a part of contact tracing. Are there any other implications? How else will the District use this information? Do parents have the option to opt-in to contact tracing for their child? What is the process in which they may do this? If a parent chooses to quarantine their child, will the child be able to access the remote option? Lunch: What safety precautions are being put in place for lunch this year? What distance will there be between students by school? Will students have the choice to eat outside, weather permitting? If parents choose to pick their children up for lunch each day, how can children be signed out? (I would think this information needs to be provided by school if the processes are different.) SHIELD: Will children enrolled in this program be eligible for contact tracing or is this similar to being vaccinated? Do parents have the option to opt-in to contact tracing for their child? What is the process in which they may do this? If a parent chooses to quarantine their child, will the child be able to access the remote option? "The Greatest Extent Possible": Distancing to the greatest extent possible, does not inspire confidence, and is subjective. As I understand, the greatest concern would be at the middle school levels in which classroom distancing could be as little as 1.5 feet. This needs to be clearly defined by school and by classroom. This also needs to be defined for extra curriculars. For example, the Summer and Concert will be held outdoors on August 12th. It was communicated via email that "spacing should be done to the greatest extent possible." What does this mean? 3 feet? 6 feet? The outdoors are large. Clear communication to parents is necessary as "the greatest extent possible" is not clear. Thank you for your time and attention to detail in regards to all Covid-19 processes and procedures and their clear and thorough communication to District parents. We expect all Covid-19 processes and procedures to follow the public health recommendations (and recent mandate) by the ISBE, IDPH, CCDPH & CDC.</p> |

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| Samantha K Riggi | <p>Dear D25 Board of Education,</p> <p>While I am very pleased with the state's decision to require masks for all persons, I have concerns that should the state requirement end, the board will revert to their original vote of making masks optional.</p> <p>Our families have the right to a safe, public education. Masks are the only way to keep our unvaccinated kids safe from Covid-19 and IN school. If masks are worn correctly (ie: not mesh, not below the nose, not on the chin), and students maintain 3 feet of distance, quarantines will not be necessary. Isn't the goal to keep our kids in school full time this year?</p> <p>While some voices may be loud and in favor of optional masking, there are far more people in the community who feel like I do. Your role is to represent the community, and that needs to be taken into account should another vote be necessary.</p> <p>I hope that you will consider this perspective and vote to keep masks ON our unvaccinated students. Let's keep them safe and in school this year. They've lost enough learning already. I'll leave you with these questions to ponder. Would you be able to sleep at night knowing a vote for optional masking will cause many families to become ill? Would you be able to sleep at night knowing it would contribute to burdening our health care system? Would you be able to sleep at night knowing that you'll be making the lives of teachers even more difficult and stressful? I really hope you said no to all those questions. Thank you!</p> |
| Maggie Kubiszewski | <p>Please maintain your position on keeping masks optional for our kids. Parents should have the right to make decisions for their children. Thank you for understanding</p> |
| Maria Brauer | <p>Dear Dr. Bein and Members of the D25 Board,</p> <p>My name is Maria Brauer and I am the parent of an incoming first grader at Ivy Hill Elementary School. I am writing to express how disappointed I was in the district's initial policy to allow masks in the elementary schools to be optional, going against the guidance of the CDC, AAP, IDPH, ISBE, and CCDPH. As a parent, I expect you to follow the guidance of our medical and public health professionals to keep my child, and our community, safe. Thankfully, Governor Pritzker's mandate on masks for all in K – 12 schools will help to keep schools open and children (and our teachers) safe. I expect that the district will fully adhere to the mandate.</p> <p>The CDC has recently reported that the number of children diagnosed with COVID-19 has increased more than 500% This will only get worse if kids return to school without required masking and other mitigation strategies in place. Masks are highly effective in preventing transmission of SARS-CoV-2. Many schools have proven that in-person instruction can safely remain, even during periods of very high community transmission, with strict use of layered risk mitigations strategies. We must do everything we can to keep transmission low and to keep our schools open.</p> <p>My daughter has attended full-time daycare and full-day Kindergarten since June 2020, in a mask, without complaint. Her teachers have also worn masks and got vaccinated when it was made available. Her school has had ZERO positive COVID cases. Masks work. At her young age, she knows that she wears a mask not only to keep herself healthy, but to keep those around her from getting sick. Isn't that we want to teach our children, that sometimes we do things that are hard or make us uncomfortable because it is the right thing to do?</p> <p>I am asking you to listen to the experts, follow the science, and continue to follow the recommendations all school year, regardless of whether there is a mandate in place.</p> <p>Sincerely, Maria Brauer</p> |

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| Allison Vercimak | Being that the goal is to keep as many students doing in person learning as possible, we expect the board to follow CDC, ISBE, IDPH and AAP guidelines regarding masks regardless of a mask mandate. Let's keep our kids safe and in person! |
| Jim Small | <p>Dear District 25 Board of Education and Administration:</p> <p>I expect D25 to adhere to and follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future and I also support masking of students in schools who do not have the ability to be vaccinated (e.g. K-6). I and many within the community were surprised and disappointed that the Board voted to deviate from this guidance particularly when transmission rates were significantly increasing. In addition, no notice was given that such a vote on this significant matter would take place. Had notice been provided, I am certain the community input would have been much different.</p> <p>While thankful that masks will be required to start the school year, it was disappointing and embarrassing for our schools that Governor Pritzker had to intervene to reverse the Board's nonsensical decision. It is common sense that the benefits of a minor inconvenience of masking far outweigh the risks of community spread, quarantining and having children to go back to learning remotely in the case of another outbreak, the goal being not to jeopardize in-school learning. One's inconvenience should not take priority over the very real health and safety risks of our kids, family, and our community (especially the immunocompromised). In addition, you open yourself and the taxpayers of our community to the risk of lawsuits, damages, and loss of district resources by playing out of bounds and disregarding the health departments' guidance.</p> <p>I hope that going forward, you will follow through on many broken promises to be transparent and represent the community.</p> <p>Regards, Jim Small</p> |
| Amira Zaben | After Governor Pritzker's school mask mandate expires, I expect D25 to adhere to medical guidance from the following agencies: CDC, AAP, IDPH and CCDPH (without exception). It is embarrassing that D25 is one of the IL school districts that chose to ignore medical guidance thus forcing the Governor to issue a mandate. Until the D25 board is full of epidemiologists, virologists and medical experts, I expect Dr. Bein to make proposals to The Board that adhere to medical guidelines and I expect all Board members to vote in accordance with medical guidance at all times. This is a global pandemic and I expect D25 to protect all students and staff at all times and by whatever means necessary. |
| Eileen Ryan | Mask or no mask should be a parents choice |
| Stacey Tobin | <p>I was shocked to learn that the D25 Superintendent proposed a mask optional policy at the July board meeting and horrified that the board voted unanimously in favor of it. It is deeply embarrassing that our school board was among those that decided on their own interpretation of the guidelines in order to favor comfort over safety, despite the case increase in Arlington Heights and national warnings about the delta variant.</p> <p>I am thankful that Governor Pritzker stepped in to ensure as safe an environment as possible for our kids, and I fully expect D25 not only adhere to the mask mandate, but to follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH, and CCDPH guidance in the future.</p> |

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| Eva Dabrowski | Please reconsider your decision about mandatory masks in schools. It should be optional. Last year my son had constant headaches related to wearing masks. He can't be on pain medication constantly. This affected his learning and his behavior tremendously. Over the summer his headaches disappeared. He doesn't want to go to school if masks are required. This policy is very harmful to young kids! |
| Erin Kalaway | I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families. |
| Monika Porebski | <p>Please allow the parents to make a decision whether or not to mask their children. Do not take that right away from us just to follow an illegal mandate from the governor.</p> <p>As educators, you have the obligation to do what is best for our kids. At this moment, you are choosing to continue to hurt them and destroy another year of their lives. It is time for you to stand up and do what is right! Stop protecting your own employees and start thinking about your students. Our kids spent a year at home, in front of a computer screen because teachers were fighting for the right to get vaccinated. They all had an opportunity to get their shots, and it is only fair that now they get back to work. As a healthcare employee myself, I assure you, it is safe to go back to "normal". This virus is not going to disappear, just like many other viruses- it will live with us for a long time. Can we just let our kids grow up without fear and isolation?</p> <p>There is absolutely no scientific evidence that this mask mandate is necessary. As a matter of fact, a growing body of evidence suggests that schools can be opened safely.</p> <p>It has been proven over and over that school aged kids are the one age group that has been barely affected by this virus.</p> <p>The restrictions and "regulations" that you are pushing on our kids, do nothing else but harm them. School looks more like concentration camp than a place of learning. Specific zones for recess, lunch served in the classroom with a plastic divider around each child....It sure looks like and feels like punishment for our kids. You are instilling fear and separation among students.</p> <p>I understand that not following this mandate comes with many "complications" for the district. Loss of funding, etc.... But what about our tax money? why doesn't our voice count?</p> <p>Again, as educators, people that are supposed to help to raise our children, how can you possibly do this to our children?</p> <p>If you do decide to follow this mandate, are you willing to take responsibility for possible harm caused by mask wearing? Are you going to provide help for those who will suffer from anxiety, and other disorders?</p> |
| Dominic Franchi | This has gone on for far too long. Do not reverse course and put masks back on the children. I ask you to maintain our current position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families. |

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| Robyn Swanson | <p>As a parent, I expect that our District 25 School Board and Administration will always follow the CCDPH, IDPH and CDC guidelines with regard to masking and no less. As a taxpayer that funds these organizations, it is reasonable for me to expect to look to these federal, state and local officials to give guidance to protect our community for communicable disease during a pandemic.</p> <p>I am thankful to Governor Pritzker for stepping in and mandating masks be required to start the school year, as our school board demonstrated a lack of good judgement, willfully ignoring public health policy and knowingly putting our children's health at risk. It is disappointing and embarrassing for our community that the Governor had to intervene as our Administration and Board exploited a loophole to create a mask optional policy, clearly flouting the intentions of our public health experts.</p> <p>At some point the mask mandate will be removed and I expect the Board to follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines without intervention. I expect reasonable board leadership that can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as I respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning my children's education.</p> |
| Elizabeth Noguera | <p>No Masks! Science shows how ineffective masks are. The particles of an airborne virus cannot be contained because of a mask. Practice washing hands, keeping hands away from face. This is not going away soon and we need to stop repeating a cycle that does not work. The effects of masks are worse than not having them. Come on!!!</p> |
| Michelle Arvanitis | <p>I am writing to ask for your support in removing the mask mandate and that you keep your position of mask optional for our district. It is our right as parents to decide what is best for the health and well being of our children.</p> |
| Elizabeth Green | <p>I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families.</p> |
| Deborah Freudenberger | <p>Dear District 25 Board of Education and Administration:</p> <p>I expect D25 to adhere to and follow CDC, AAP, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future and I also support masking of students in schools. I and many within the community were surprised and dismayed that the Board voted to deviate from this guidance. In addition, no notice was given that such a vote on this significant matter would take place. Had notice been provided, I am certain the community input would have been much different.</p> <p>While thankful that masks will be required to start the school year, it was disappointing that AHSD25 was not aligned with the CDC and CCDPH at the start and we had to rely on intervention at the state level. Masking helps contain community spread, quarantining and prevents having children go back to learning remotely due to outbreaks. One's inconvenience of masking should not take priority over the very real health and safety risks of our kids, family, and our community (especially the immunocompromised). In addition, you open yourself and the taxpayers of our community to the risk of lawsuits, damages, and loss of district resources by disregarding the health departments' guidance.</p> <p>I hope that going forward, you will follow the guidance of the CDC, IDPH, CCDPH, and AAP and represent the community.</p> |

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| Jen Anderson | Regardless of Dr. Bein's claims to the contrary, she and the board did not provide our community with appropriate notice that an important decision/vote would be taking place at last month's meeting. The approach was underhanded and completely out of the pattern of communication established with parents last year. Trust has been lost and I expect the board to follow through with its many broken promises to be transparent and represent our community. Moving forward, we deserve consistent, complete and detailed information about the Covid policies and procedures in our schools. How will masking be enforced? How does vaccination status affect notification of exposure and how else will those records be used? And how will lunch be handled at each school? This is all information parents need to know now to prepare their kids and make plans for the upcoming year. |
| Natalie White | Please allow parents to make decisions for their children regarding masks. Masks should be parental choice as was unanimously voted on July 15, 2021 by this board. Also, as discussed last summer, any decisions made should be tied to metrics, timelines and objectives. |
| Megan Kalweit | What safety measures will be taken during lunches? Will there be rotations like last year so that the cafeterias are not at full capacity? |
| Jennifer Durkin | Please allow vaccinated students to attend school without masks. |
| Shelby Menely | I have but one request of the board and especially Dr. Bein for this school year. Rather than focusing on what will be taken away from our kids, please focus on what you can GIVE BACK to them wherever and whenever possible. That's all, just one simple request. |
| Heidi Steinike | Please offer CHOICE and make masks OPTIONAL for ALL. Let schools concentrate on teaching and let parents make parenting and medical decisions for their own children. |
| Anne Trueg | I am in support of the governor's mask decision. I am grateful the superintendent has chosen to follow the state requirements. |
| Tracy Falconer | Please allow parents to make the best choices for their children when it comes to masks and keep the masks optional. |
| Amira Zaben | As a taxpaying resident and parent of D25 students, I expect our Board and Superintendent to protect the health and safety of ALL students and staff by ALL MEANS necessary throughout this ENTIRE pandemic. The Board should not be voting to approve Superintendent-proposed plans that directly conflict with medical guidance from the CDC, IDPH and the AAP. After Governor Pritzker's school mask mandate ends, I will expect to see our Board vote on proposals that are in accordance with the CDC, IDPH and the AAP medical guidance. |

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| Michele Hilgart | <p>Dear District 25 Board of Education and Administration:</p> <p>While I certainly breathed a sigh of relief following Governor Pritzker’s mask mandate for P-12 students this fall, I realize that at some point, this mandate will expire and I want to be very clear that I expect D25 to adhere to and follow CDC, AAP, ISBA, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future, and once again ask you to keep this mask mandate in place until all AHSD25 students become eligible for vaccination. I and many within the community were surprised and disappointed that the Board voted to deviate from this guidance particularly when transmission rates were significantly increasing.</p> <p>In addition, I would like to ask the Board and Dr. Bein to please provide clarification as soon as possible as to the additional layered mitigation strategies being implemented this fall, including plans for minimizing transmission during snack and meal times when students will be unmasked. All the information currently available to us points to a higher risk of school transmission this fall than at any point in the pandemic, and that masking is the most effective mitigation tool currently available for students under 12:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IL Region 10 is currently designated as an area of substantial transmission for COVID-19 and the CCDPH estimates that more than 80% of cases in the last two weeks are attributed to the Delta Variant, which the CDC has indicated to be much more contagious, more likely to break through protections afforded by the vaccines and may cause more severe disease than all other known versions of the virus. • States where the Delta variant has been circulating for some weeks continue to report increased—even record—hospitalizations among children. Concerns about the increasing impact to children have been raised by the American Academy of Pediatrics. https://www.forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2021/07/29/hospitals-in-southern-us-reporting-record-numbers-of-children-hospitalized-amid-delta-surge-though-deaths-still-extremely-rare/?sh=28d997435f1e https://downloads.aap.org/DOFA/AAP%20Letter%20to%20FDA%20on%20Timeline%20for%20A%20uthorization%20of%20COVID-19%20Vaccine%20for%20Children_08_05_21.pdf • Proper masking is the most effective mitigation strategy to prevent secondary transmission in schools when COVID-19 is circulating and when vaccination is unavailable, or there is insufficient uptake: https://abcsciencecollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ABCs-Final-Report-June-2021.06-esig-DB-KZ-6-29-21.pdf <p>Having detailed information now on the additional mitigation strategies would go a long way to helping those of us with vulnerable students and family members make appropriate plans for the start of school.</p> <p>Thank you, as always, for your service.</p> |
| Adam Michael Johnson | <p>I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families</p> |

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| Nathan Ulery | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |
| Alina Laurie | <p>Please maintain "masks optional" for our kids in Arlington Heights. Hospital rates due to COVID are still very low. Our at-risk population in our area, and our general population, has high levels of vaccination. And the vaccine is proven to keep the positive case as a light case. For young kids: even though they aren't vaccinated they have a greater chance of dying in a car accident. Or dying of a gun shot (Cook County).</p> |
| Robyn Swanson | <p>Thank you for posting the draft agenda for tomorrow night's board meeting. There is no mention of the district adhering to the spirit and intent of CCDPH and CDC guidance.</p> <p>My fear is that once the mask mandate is lifted, the board will again look for loopholes to quickly move to mask optional. I am not encouraged by the note "communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes". It signals a lack of commitment by the board to respect the agencies in our community charged with setting public health policy.</p> <p>It is reasonable to expect the board and administration to follow the guidance of our public health experts to keep our schools a safe place to learn for ALL our kids. The goal of the school board must be to keep all kids in school without risk of missed days due to quarantine or illness.</p> <p>Nothing but a full throated endorsement by the board and adherence to CCDOH, IDPH and CDC guidelines accomplishes that objective.</p> |
| Jara Kern | <p>Please continue to follow science and public health guidance even after the mask mandate is lifted to keep our children safe in school.</p> |
| Jen Anderson | <p>Despite the district's change of policy to require masks for all students at the direction of the Governor, their initial policy was highly publicized and an embarrassment to our community. When this mandate is relaxed or removed, I expect the Board and administration will follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines. Arlington Heights families deserve a Board that respects the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy.</p> |

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| April Berry | <p>I am thankful for the mask mandate ensuring all students and staff wear masks, regardless of vaccination status while in the school building. I hope flexibility is provided for students with disabilities, and exceptions are made for those individuals who aren't medically able to wear a mask. Ensuring everyone else is masked, keeps our most vulnerable students protected.</p> <p>Masks are proven to reduce transmission of Covid 19 and other Respiratory illnesses. I ask the board follow the recommendations of the CDC, IDPH, AAP, and ISBE even after the Governor's mandate expires. I have faith in the School Board to do what is right moving forward to keep our kids and their teachers and school staff safe. Returning to a mask optional policy before the experts recommend would not be a positive move forward for our community.</p> <p>Thank you for our service to the community.</p> |
| Beth Deiter | <p>Medicine, research, and science are complex fields requiring many years of study and practice by physicians prior to starting their careers and reciting their oath. In addition to "doing no harm," this oath acknowledges their responsibility to "oppose policies in breach of human rights, strive to change laws that are contrary to (their) profession's ethics, and recognize the limits of (their) knowledge and seek to maintain and increase (their) understanding and skills throughout (their) professional life."</p> <p>-US National Library of Medicine; National Institutes of Health https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1121898/</p> <p>When it comes to keeping our children healthy and creating public health policies, it is not a role for anyone other than those in these fields to debate. We don't know the science the way these professionals do, and while they can/will/should discuss different studies/research/scenarios, we need to recognize the limits of OUR knowledge. It is appalling to me that our district and our board members feel they know more than all of the organizations we trust to keep our children's health in mind, including the CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH, and CCDPH. Many community members are putting extreme weight on a similar governmental agency, the FDA, to approve a vaccine before allowing themselves/their child to get vaccinated. We respect these institutions and understand their importance for the benefit of our national public health.</p> <p>We need to remember who the experts are and trust that when they make recommendations, they have done so as professionals who are charged with interpreting all available information and making ethical decisions, as also is written in their oath. Even more so, when an agency or an entire group of agencies makes recommendations that all consistently indicate a specific course of action, we should pause in our interpretation of the information we've informally gathered and respect their authority and expertise.</p> <p>While thankful that masks will be required to start the school year, it was disappointing and embarrassing for our community that Governor Pritzker had to intervene to reverse the Board's poor judgement in creating a mask optional policy. At some point the mask mandate will be removed and we expect the Board to follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future, without intervention from Governor Pritzker. We expect board leadership that can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as we respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning our children's education.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Amanda Bhansali | <p>I am glad that the current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes". I appreciate that our district is going to follow current guidance from the governor.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>I hope that going forward, our district will discard the "mask optional" policy, no matter what the governor's office indicates. Please keep our children masked and protected until they all have the opportunity to be vaccinated.</p> |
| Megan Kalweit | <p>Will being "flexible" follow CDC, IDPH, AAP guidance? Or once the mask mandate is lifted the board will go back to not following the scientific guidelines like the 7/15 vote? Making the excuse you were following guidance is not true. All guidance stated unvaccinated people must wear a mask and the board decided not to follow that.</p> |
| Megan Kalweit | <p>Did the district's insurance carrier cover the 7/15 decision to not require masks? As a tax payer I would like to know what the board's "flexibility" will cost me if guidances are decided to not be followed again.</p> |
| Theresa Funk | <p>I'm thankful that Governor Pritzker has mandated masks in school; however, at some point the mask mandate will be removed. I fully expect the Board to follow CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines in the future without intervention from Governor Pritzker.</p> <p>Surely the board can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as we respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning our children's education. Stop politicizing mask wearing and just follow the guidance of the experts.</p> |
| Sara Nelson | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Marcy Meyer | As a parent of three students in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health. To be honest it's shocking and embarrassing that this is even something that needs to be stated. |
| Nicole Miller | While I am relieved that our students and staff will be able to safely learn in person starting next week, thanks to the mask mandate put into place by Governor Pritzker, I am disheartened by the AHSD25 board policy language suggesting the mask requirement will be dropped as soon as legally possible. I appreciate how frustrating it is that the public health information changes as we learn about these new variants - variants that are emerging because not enough people are following health guidelines - but it has become clear that requiring all individuals to wear masks keeps everyone safer. I encourage our elected officials on the school board to align with the CDC and local health guidelines at it pertains to keeping our students and our community safe, even after the governor's orders expire. |
| Kevin Michael | <p>I stand with the majority of District 25 parents when I insist that the District continues to mandate and enforce mask-wearing for all staff, students, and community members while in District 25 schools during the 2021-22 school year. The CDC, the Illinois Dept. of Public Health, and ISBE have made clear that all people in K-12 schools, vaccinated or not, need to be masked. While I am thankful that Governor Pritzker has mandated mask-wearing in Illinois schools, I also expect the administration and the school board to adhere to CDC and public health guidelines for mask wearing when and if the mandate expires. It should not have taken an executive order for this common sense policy to be implemented in District 25. There are numerous scientific studies indicating that masks are one effective deterrent in the spread of COVID. There is no credible medical or scientific evidence that masks are harmful to students who wear them. Not only should masks be required for all people in schools until public health experts say otherwise, they must also continue to be required by all who have not been vaccinated--including children too young to be eligible--until the pandemic is truly over.</p> <p>In the first week of August 2021, children comprised 15% of all COVID cases reported in the U.S. The total number of cases in children that week was 94,000, a significant increase from the week prior (72,000), and more than double the week before that (39,000). The Delta variant is infecting children faster and more frequently than the original virus. (SOURCE: https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/08/10/1026375608/nearly-94-000-kids-got-covid-19-last-week-they-were-15-of-all-new-infections)</p> <p>One of the many responsibilities of schools is to help create scientifically literate citizens. When the science is clear that masks work, and the adults in our community and those responsible for our District's operation ignore science, what message are we sending to the students in our schools about scientific literacy?</p> <p>It is also our responsibility as parents, educators, and adults to model ethical and sensible behavior to the children in our community. Masking is the very least we can do as a community to stop the spread of the virus. If we model to our children that it's OK to choose not to make a minor sacrifice (the inconvenience of wearing a mask) in order to significantly protect the health and safety of others, what kind of lesson are we teaching them about empathy and community responsibility?</p> |

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| Danielle Schindlbeck | While I appreciate the need to be flexible with mitigation strategies as the pandemic continues to evolve, I would request that the board continue to follow recommendations from public health agencies such as the AAP, CDC, and CCDPH. These agencies have the medical expertise that we should rely on to keep our children's health and safety a top priority. |
| Annie Anderson | The District 25 school board and administration should always follow the Cook County Department of Public Health guidelines with regard to masking for the 2021-2022 school year. The board needs to respect the expertise and authority of the CDC, AAP, IDPH, and CCDPH and adhere to their guidelines when it comes to the health and safety of our kids. Until a vaccine is available for children under 12, universal masking is the best way to keep kids in school and avoid quarantines. |
| Virginia McDonnell | Thank you for your work on our school board, with that being said I do hope that you will vote to make decisions based on CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH, CCPH recommendations/guidelines. They are trained and have the true knowledge to make recommendations to protect us, but mostly to protect our communities children. Please keep in mind in the future the safety of our community and not wait for someone higher to have to mandate it for you. D25 is a loved and sought after district and I would hate for your votes to not worry about our kids safety to be a reason that parents no longer want to move here for the schools. I also ask the board to be more open with votes that are coming and what all will be implemented for the year. |
| Jenica Polifka | While I am glad that the district is following Governor Pritzker's executive order for mask wearing it should not have taken this to get there. The CDC, the Illinois Dept. of Public Health, and ISBE have made clear that all people in K-12 schools, vaccinated or not, need to be masked. I expect the administration and the school board to adhere to CDC and public health guidelines for mask wearing when and if the mandate expires. The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I find that in person schooling should be our #1 priority and the safest way to do this, without constant switching back and forth from in-person to remote schooling (putting unnecessary stress on our children), is to continue masking until all ages are eligible for vaccines. |
| Kelsey Anstandig | You must commit to following all expert recommendations regarding COVID mitigation strategies for the duration of the pandemic. Mask wearing must be REQUIRED for all unvaccinated individuals at the very least for age groups which are vaccine eligible, and for all in the building for younger students. This must continue for as long as recommended by the CDC and should not be subject to change based on arbitrary guidelines you as a school board establish with no scientific basis. |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Amanda Loch | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |
| Leah Ross | <p>Thank you for your vote overwhelmingly in favor of mask choice for our coming school year. I'm disappointed in the recent mandate from our governor and the hard position that it puts our district and community in. We are torn apart yet again. Last year everyone had choice to stay home despite eventual open schools and the compromise of hybrid. This year, the controversy of masks is the issue but choice and compromise has now been removed from the scenario. Even before Covid we wanted to protect our children and keep them healthy and safe while potentially harmful viruses (and worse) have always lurked all around us. All of our worries are valid. We are parents. We all love our children. We all want to protect them and our worries and individual circumstances vary. Choice to navigate this challenging time the way we as parents feel is best for our children is the only way to proceed given the rollercoaster of constantly conflicting and changing information. There is no one right way other than to evaluate what is healthiest mentally and physically for a family's own children and for us all to do our best.</p> <p>As our school board, please plan to uphold the prior vote on mask choice as soon as you are able.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Jennifer Amling | <p>As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |
| Amira Zaben | <p>The Board will not be representing my interests as a D25 parent if it votes to approve "flexibility" after Governor Pritzker's school mask mandate is revoked. I expect the Board to reject Dr. Bein's proposal for said "flexibility" and instead agree to adhere to all medical guidance put forth from the CDC, IDPH, AAP, CCDPH and ISBE throughout the entirety of this pandemic.</p> |
| Jason Stutzman | <p>The Board will not be representing my interests as a D25 parent if it votes to approve "flexibility" after Governor Pritzker's school mask mandate is revoked. I expect the Board to reject Dr. Bein's proposal for said "flexibility" and instead agree to adhere to all medical guidance put forth from the CDC, IDPH, AAP, CCDPH and ISBE throughout the entirety of this pandemic.</p> |
| Angela Roberts | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Kevin Mehaffey | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |
| Maureen Stukenberg | <p>My son, a 5th grader at Windsor this year, has severe Asthma. Since he was 3 years old, he has been on multiple, daily medications, to help him breathe. Outside of masking, and social distancing, what steps will the board put in place to keep him safe in school, during the current respiratory pandemic?</p> <p>We choose to keep all of our kids (12,10,4,3) home last year to e-learn, for our asthmatic child's benefit. Moving forward, I would like to have some confidence that the board is taking into consideration the well-being of the immune compromised individuals, like my son, within the school system. His lungs on a good day, already struggle to breathe.</p> <p>When mandatory masking restrictions lift, what's the plan? If he's not yet eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine but still in a classroom of peers, what's the plan to keep him, and kids like him safe?</p> <p>Mo Stukenberg</p> |

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| Cristina Small | <p>Dear District 25 Board and Administration:</p> <p>Thank you for adhering to the Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois requiring indoor use of face masks in all schools, regardless of vaccination status. I fully support the use of face masks in school, as recommended by the CCDPH, CDC and AAP. It was disappointing and embarrassing for our district that Governor Pritzker had to intervene to reverse the Board's irresponsible decision (to make face masks optional).</p> <p>Per review of the 8/12/21 board agenda from the Superintendent, the recommendation is "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes", which is inadequate.</p> <p>This proposed recommendation puts at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of students in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the guidelines and intent of the CCDPH, CDC, and AAP which support the masking of students in schools, regardless of vaccination status.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the guidelines and intent of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the Board and Administration and to improve transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |

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| Kelly Ellsworth | <p>To say I was disappointed in the Boards' vote to start the school year with masks being optional would be a gross understatement. While I am thankful that our Governor has mandated mask-wearing in Illinois schools, I fully expect the administration and The School Board to adhere to CDC and public health guidelines for mask wearing if and when the mask mandate is lifted.</p> <p>If our goal is to have in-person instruction with minimal or zero interruptions due to illness or quarantining, then it is important to remain vigilant in what we do as a district to reach these goals. Adhering to public health guidelines, especially when it involves our children, should be the direction our district always takes. This should not be up for a vote by a group of non-medical professionals, and we most certainly should not have to be "forced" to do so by a mandate. This should be what our district does by choice.</p> <p>I urge the administration and the board to commit to adhering to the guidelines put out by the CDC, IDPH, APP and multiple other public health officials, and to not revert back to an optional mask policy until it is deemed to be safe to do so by these same public health officials, or at the very least, until families have the chance to vaccinate their younger children, when able, if they so choose.</p> <p>Nobody really likes wearing the mask, but it does remain the number one mitigation strategy for prolonged periods with others indoors.</p> |
| Laura Magnuson | <p>I respectfully request that the board comply with the mask mandate issued by Governor Pritzker on 8/4/21.</p> |
| Ethan Williams | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |

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| Karen Radek | <p>It is not appropriate for the Board to ignore clear public health guidance and vote their opinions on matters of public health and safety. Specifically, going forward the Board should follow the recommendations of CDC/IDPH/ISBE/CCPHD/AAP regarding universal mask-wearing rather than waiting for the decision to be mandated by the state of Illinois. The Superintendent and Board members are not public health experts and should not be acting as such when they are responsible for decisions that directly affect the health and safety of thousands of children and their families, as well as school teachers and staff. It is always expected that the Board would consult experts in the appropriate field when making decisions outside of their areas of expertise and then follow the guidance provided. Anything less is unacceptable.</p> |
| Jennifer Haefliger | <p>My family is extremely thankful that masks will be required to start the school year BUT it was disappointing AND embarrassing that it only happened because Governor Pritzker mandated it for the whole state. Prior to the mandate, the Board's decision to approve a mask optional policy was simply reckless. I fully expect that after the mandate is lifted, whenever that may be, that our Board will follow the CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines, without intervention from the Governor - they are the experts in public health. Listen to the experts.</p> |
| Kristen Ulery | <p>As an elementary school principal, I am bewildered and frustrated by Arlington Heights District 25's failure to follow the guidance of the Cook County Department of Public Health, the CDC, IDPH, and the American Academy of Pediatrics related to masking and COVID protocols in schools. The intent of the guidance was clear--masking is critical, and other measures like distancing should be implemented to the greatest extent possible with all students attending full-time, in-person school--yet District 25 chose to put the health and education of our children at risk by ignoring those guidelines.</p> <p>While the governor stepped in to mandate mask-wearing, that does not alleviate my concerns about District 25's failure to implement the CCDPH guidance because the district's responsibility to the health and education of children goes beyond that which is legally required. Not violating the law is not a high enough standard--due care is the standard District 25 should be using in making decisions about COVID protocols. Due care means honoring the spirit and intent of the recommendations, not just doing the minimum you can get away with. Due care is having kids wear masks because experts say it keeps kids from getting sick and provides continuity of instruction by reducing quarantines. Due care is walking into my cafeteria and deciding that while the spacing of seats meets the minimum recommended by health guidance, the standard is "to the greatest extent possible," and safety makes it worth the hassle and disruption of using two separate lunch locations. I want the superintendent and school board in my child's district to care as much about protecting my child as I do about protecting the kids in my school.</p> <p>Based on the decisions the superintendent and this board have already made regarding COVID mitigations, adopting a policy that says you will be "flexible" makes me think you will continue to look for loopholes in the language of recommendations and implement mandates to the minimum level possible. Conditions will change, and the expert guidance will change with it. I want to see the board adopt a policy that says the district is committed to following the spirit and intent of the CCDPH guidance as well as the letter of it.</p> |

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| <p>Alexis & Doug Hammond</p> | <p>Dear District 25 Board and Administration, I write to you out of deep concern for the D25 community and the Board's and Administration's ability to provide a safe learning environment for the teachers, staff, and students. Unlike the Decision of the July 15th Board Meeting in which Public Health guidelines of were ignored in favor of reduced mitigations, I fully expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health, ISBE, IDPH, and CDC. The Board and Administration have a role to play in the public health of this community. I ask that the Board put aside all personal assumptions, beliefs and prejudices in regards to health and safety, and rely only on the direction of the public health experts. Prioritizing the health of the D25 students and their families, should never have had to come from a Governor mandate. We take such pride in moving our family to Arlington Heights in April 2020, and the wonderful public education that our children have received. Nevertheless, we will never prioritize their in-person education at the expense of their health. District 25 policy must follow public health policy at the county and state levels. Let the Board proceed forward and not argue semantics in regards to the words such as "should" and "recommend" in public health guidance. Current county and state public health guidance is the only thing standing in the way of outbreaks at our school and in our community.</p> <p>Covid-19, the Delta variant, and other variants to come pose a health risk for District 25 teachers, staff, and students both vaccinated and unvaccinated. "In a study of more than 50,000 patients in the Mayo Clinic Health System, researchers found the effectiveness of Moderna's vaccine against infection had dropped to 76% in July - when the Delta variant was predominant - from 86% in early 2021. Over the same period, the effectiveness of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine had fallen to 42% from 76%, researchers said. While both vaccines remain effective at preventing COVID hospitalization, a Moderna booster shot may be necessary soon for anyone who got the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines earlier this year, said Dr. Venky Soundararajan of Massachusetts data analytics company nference, who led the Mayo study." Source (https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/moderna-may-be-superior-pfizer-against-delta-breakthrough-odds-rise-with-time-2021-08-09/). Our District needs to move forward as if Covid and the physical threat to the community is the new normal instead of yearning for pre pandemic days. The vaccinated teachers, staff, and students remain at risk for breakthrough infection. In favor of public health and the community, it is the District's job to continue to protect them.</p> <p>I have additional concerns in how the School District is interpreting public health guidance. In the Document "ISBE IDPH Public Health Guidance Public Health School Guidance 210812" page 10 specifically lists... "Exceptions to universal consistent use of face masks include the following limited situations:" The last bullet point reads: "For staff and students when they are outdoors. However, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission, staff and students who are not fully vaccinated should wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated." Now that Cook County is labeled as a high transmission area, how is the District changing its plans in regards to recess and outdoor school activities such as athletics and the 8/12/2021 Summer Band concert?</p> <p>The same ISBE IDPH document goes on to say, "Staff and students who remove their face mask in these limited situations should be monitored and should maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent possible given the space in their facilities, with at least 3 feet recommended, but not required, between students and at least 6 feet recommended, but not required, between adults or between students and adults."</p> |

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| | <p>In what instances is the District providing for 6 feet of recommended physical distancing between adults or between students and adults? I understand that “not required” stems out of a school’s ability to hold in person learning. However, the term “to the greatest extent possible,” which the District has adopted, leaves much to the imagination. I ask that the District provide complete transparency by school, classroom, and period as to the distances being provided.</p> <p>On page 13 of the same document it states, “Schools should provide for the maximum space possible between students and between students and staff, within the school facilities’ physical capabilities. Districts and schools may wish to post visual reminders throughout school buildings and lay down tape or other indicators of safe distances in areas where students may remove masks, congregate, or line up (e.g., arrival and departure, lunchroom lines, hallways, recess lines, libraries, cafeterias). When face masks are removed in limited situations (e.g., lunchrooms), it is especially important that school staff facilitate physical distancing to the greatest extent possible within the school facilities’ physical capabilities. Districts and schools may consider increasing physical distancing measures when community transmission levels are substantial or high.”</p> <p>Again, now that Cook County is labeled as a high transmission area, how is the District changing its plans in regards to cafeterias, libraries, restrooms and hallways? Will the District be providing students with the ability to eat outdoors? The ISBE and IDPH recommends using additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating which can help facilitate distancing.</p> <p>I look to the Board and Administration for absolute vigilance and adherence to all county and state recommended public health guidance. I ask the Board to be proactive in protecting the students, families and community of D25. This will give families across the District restored confidence in our District and our ability to safely provide in-person learning.</p> |
| Kristina Heaton | Our family is in favor of making face masks optional for all k-8 students. |
| Nick Rubel | <p>The current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that was looking for language loopholes and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a parent of a student in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols and with the community in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Nick Rubel | <p>Any removal of a mask requirement for unvaccinated individuals prior to vaccines being offer to children 5 and up is unsafe. Please keep the mask mandate in place until all children in school have the option to bring vaccinated.</p> |
| Christy Walsh | <p>I am writing to request that the board and Dr. Bein keep the students safe with masking. My children cannot be vaccinated yet, and it greatly concerns me that the board unanimously voted to allow unmasked children around my own children who have not had the chance to be vaccinated yet.</p> <p>As a teacher, I work in a mask with masked children, and the masks help keep us safe and healthy and in the classroom.</p> <p>I urge the board to put child safety first and continue masking. I expect the district 25 School Board and Administration to always follow the Cook County Health Department guidelines with regard to masking, for all students and staff for the 2021-2022 school year and no less. If masks are recommended, masks must be worn.</p> |
| Mia Wery | <p>I am thrilled that Governor Pritzker stepped in to mandate masks when this Board and the Administration failed to use common sense. However, I recognize that the Governor's mandate will not last forever. Going forward, I expect the Board and Administration to implement public health guidelines in our schools so that all children can attend classes. This means following CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines, without the need for Governor Pritzker to have to intervene.</p> <p>I expect Board leadership that can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as we respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning our children's education.</p> <p>I am utterly disappointed in the manner in which the Board went about voting to make masks optional. The Board did not provide the community sufficient notice that an important decision/vote would be taking place. I expect the Board to follow through with its many broken promises to be transparent and represent EVERYONE in the community, not just those who funded their campaign. To that end, I expect the Administration and Board to supply complete, detailed information and transparency in regards to Covid policies and procedures, particularly with school starting in just one week.</p> <p>As a member of the Illinois bar, I am gravely concerned that if the Board were to deviate from health department guidelines in the future, it will leave our school district exposed, outside the boundaries of insurance coverage and possibly at risk from lawsuits. We all want SD25 to remain a vibrant school district, providing a top tier education for our children, in well maintained schools with access to technology and programming that will prepare them for the future. This unnecessary risk could cause financial hardship to the district and waste resources that should be used educating our students.</p> <p>As always, thank you for your time and engagement.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Stephen Zurek | <p>Good Morning, I am writing you today with a Question regarding masks. If this was about Safety every state would be doing it. We have Heard for the last eighteen minutes about Following the science. The science doesn't Support these masks. Covid is not going away. Will masks have to be around forever? My wife And I are all about choice but our choice has Been taken away for choosing to send our boys To school without a mask. Please follow your Initial recommendation and allow parents to Make a choice for what is best for there kids. Mandates under emergency order are not laws.</p> |
| Mia Wery | <p>I am thrilled that Governor Pritzker stepped in to mandate masks when this Board and the Administration failed to use common sense. However, I recognize that the Governor's mandate will not last forever. Going forward, I expect the Board and Administration to implement public health guidelines in our schools so that all children can attend classes. This means following CDC, AAP, ISBE, IDPH and CCDPH guidelines, without the need for Governor Pritzker to have to intervene.</p> <p>I expect Board leadership that can respect the authority and expertise of the agencies charged with setting public health policy, as we respect the board's guidance and support in matters concerning our children's education.</p> <p>I am utterly disappointed in the manner in which the Board went about voting to make masks optional. The Board did not provide the community sufficient notice that an important decision/vote would be taking place. I expect the Board to follow through with its many broken promises to be transparent and represent EVERYONE in the community, not just those who funded their campaign. To that end, I expect the Administration and Board to supply complete, detailed information and transparency in regards to Covid policies and procedures, particularly with school starting in just one week.</p> <p>As a member of the Illinois bar, I am gravely concerned that if the Board were to deviate from health department guidelines in the future, it will leave our school district exposed, outside the boundaries of insurance coverage and possibly at risk from lawsuits. We all want SD25 to remain a vibrant school district, providing a top tier education for our children, in well maintained schools with access to technology and programming that will prepare them for the future. This unnecessary risk could cause financial hardship to the district and waste resources that should be used educating our students.</p> <p>As always, thank you for your time and engagement.</p> |

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| Jennifer Dunn | <p>Masks are a layer of protection that work to reduce the spread of COVID among unvaccinated people, which now includes all children under the age of 12. We saw their effectiveness last school year and this summer because they were used as a layer of protection. Students under 12 are the school board's responsibility to protect and masks are a responsible way to care for the entire community, including students with impaired immune systems or other conditions that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID, in a manner consistent with the values D25 teaches its students. It's personal that we protect each other and anticipate the day all children can be vaccinated. I urge the school board to follow the CCDPH requirements to the letter and, even if those should end, to keep masking in place until vaccines are available for all D25 students. Furthermore, I urge D25 to do all it can to increase ventilation in classrooms and consider outdoor instruction/lunches while we have weather that allows that.</p> |
| Carrie Tillman | <p>Until vaccines are available for all ages and our population has reached a safe vaccine threshold where variants are no longer spreading unchecked, I respectfully request you adopt a formal mask policy for the 2021-2022 school year. The word "flexibility" in regards to approaching public health and community spread during a pandemic leads to interpretation and uncertainty whereas sound science has proven masking and distancing work and protect all kids so they can stay in school. Our community needs leadership they can trust to put the needs of all our kids above the complaints of discomfort in order to protect lives and ensure full educational access for all. Thank you for your service to our school district. Let's work together to do better with, and without, the order of our Governor.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Karen Wolff | <p>The mitigations need to end. You may mistakenly believe they serve a purpose, but I'm going to provide some cold, hard facts below. Verifiable, proven facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Testing<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tests return up to 90% false positives due to the way the samples are cycled.- The inventor of PCR testing himself said the tests aren't intended to diagnose specific viruses.-The CDC and FDA released a statement to stop using the tests by December because the tests can't distinguish between flu viruses, the coronavirus that causes covid-19, and the coronavirus that causes the common cold.2. Treatments/Preventions<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Natural immunity from having contracted coronavirus is stronger than immunity from the vaccines. So, why are only vaccinated students not considered close contacts?-People can transmit and contract viruses whether or not they are vaccinated. So, why are we treating vaccinated students like they're immune?-There are treatments that weren't available last year that are just as, if not more effective than, the vaccines. So, why are we acting as though we have to try to stop anyone from ever contracting coronavirus? Just like the flu, we'll deal with it every year, and we'll use the available treatments when needed.-The vaccines are experimental with no long-term safety or efficacy studies. So, why are you trying to coerce families with the promise that their children can have preferential treatment in school (i.e. not be considered a close contact)?3. Other Mitigations:<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Masks don't stop viruses. Masks are germ-filled bacterial infections waiting to happen. Masks tell children to be afraid of themselves, each other, and everything around them. Masks greatly hamper learning. Masks are detrimental in too many ways to count without verifiable benefits (They might make some people "feel" safe, but how someone feels about masks doesn't change the facts).-The quarantine process was a disaster last year that caused educational interruption and psychological upheaval for 100s of students. It overwhelmingly kept healthy students out of school.- Schools that required masks and those that didn't last school year have nearly identical data when it comes transmission, cases, etc. (and both were extremely low numbers). <p>Finally, I ask how long will this go on? Are you going to implement these measures every flu season as well? Because the flu is more dangerous than covid to those under 18. Treating children as a threat and irrationally fearing for their safety from something that has a 1 in 1.2 million chance of hurting them needs to end. Or, will the focus now forever be on trying to stop viruses that for most of the population our immune systems naturally fight? You need to stop focusing on following counter-factual mandates and guidance. If there is no rhyme or reason, no logic to these measures, then why are you following them? We can only guess your own personal motives. Why are you ignoring 18 months of knowledge and data that overwhelmingly show it's time to get on with education as normal. You have the information now. Parents and community members have done the research for you. It's now up to you to make decisions based on facts, not on feelings.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Ann Vogel | As the wife of a Lieutenant Firefighter/Paramedic with 3 children and 1 new kindergartener starting D25 this year, I was deeply disturbed to see the district 's plan to ignore public health guidelines set by the CDC to allow a parent choice/flexibility plan on masks for children in the district. I am grateful for Governor's Pritzker's leadership on this issue. If the district is truly "following public health guidelines" there is simply zero choice on this matter. Flexibility is not a thing in public health if one parent's choice imperils another child. The district's prior choice to allow flexibility on masking while planning for only a 3' social distance rejects the CDC's medical advice and puts our entire community at risk. I implore you to follow the public health guidelines and formally reject a plan for so-called flexibility on masking if and when Governor Pritzker's mandate expires. Masks are a simple and effective mitigation strategy recommended by the healthcare community. The only reason to oppose them is political. |
| Magdalena Martinez | Please do not seat students in the band and music rooms for lunch at the Middle School level. Studies indicate that a great deal of respiratory particles are released during singing and the playing of instruments which require blowing. Eating lunch in these rooms leads to a potentially high risk situation, when students are removing their masks to eat. Please communicate to parents what the plan at lunch will be, in terms of what the maximum number of students in a room will be. Social distancing at lunch is imperative. Parents would like to know what mitigations will be in place for this time. In addition, the District should be lobbying Springfield for metrics as to what data is needed in order for the mask mandate to be eventually lifted. |
| CHRISTOPHER TILLMAN | As evidence mounts that the Delta variant is not only significantly more transmissible, but transmissible by vaccinated persons, the need for universal masking in our schools is more important than ever. I am incredibly grateful for Governor Pritzker's executive order, but the fact that it was needed at all makes me embarrassed and ashamed for our community. Until all school-aged children are eligible for vaccination it is inconceivable that any reasonable person would suggest masks are no longer necessary. This is not about politics - this is about public health and protecting our families. I urge all board members to apply the basic critical thinking skills your students learn in elementary school and do the right thing - vote to institute universal masking in District 25. |
| Marianne Corcoran | Please fight against the governor's mandate and get a second opinion from an attorney about its status as a law with real consequences, not simply threats. The governor has very specific things he can do with his emergency order and mandating masks is not one of those. These fear tactics are working on this district and we need to fight back. Our children cannot suffer while we are sitting around waiting for the governor to lift the mandate. Please stick with your original unanimous vote and let us CHOOSE to mask our children. |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Katie Rausch | <p>I have some questions that I would like written responses for if we are moving forward with mandatory masks for our kids. Last year every school and teacher seemed to do their own thing with regards to mask breaks. This is wrong and you need to make decisions that are consistent throughout the district. Thomas Middle School was more willing to give outside breaks etc while my children at Ivy Hill were not. Some teachers didn't even allow water bottles in the classroom during the last few weeks of school when temperatures were extremely high. How will you handle masks the first few months of school and make sure our children are okay? It needs to be an administrator's decision. Do not leave it up to individual teachers to decide. Please focus on the health of children.</p> <p>As far as mental health, this district needs to do more. Summer was fun and free of masks. Now they're back indoors and masked up, how will you make sure they're okay? What will you do to make sure mental health is a priority so kids can learn to their fullest potential?</p> <p>As far as masks go, what's the end game? We have our community over 75% vaccinated and you just asked parents to turn in their child's vaccination cards. What's the data on the number of vaccinated kids at our middle schools? It's good to know moving forward with optional masking down the road. Also, will you mandate teacher vaccinations? Many teachers are vaccinated which helps our numbers as well! Please use local data to make decisions. Vaccines are effective, not masks.</p> <p>I have always fought for in-person learning because that is what's best for our children. I believe in choice and support optional masks however if masking everyone temporarily is needed to start and continue in person learning then okay. I encourage you to keep pushing for optional masks, since you all voted unanimously on it last month. We can't keep these kids masked all day for another school year!!!</p> |
| Amira Zaben | <p>In order to keep our D25 children and staff members safe during this pandemic, I'm requesting that the Board only approve of a proposed school plan that states that D25 will follow medical experts' guidance (CDC/AAP/IDPH/CCDPH) after Pritzker's school masking mandate is revoked.</p> |
| Jason Stutzman | <p>In order to keep our D25 children and staff members safe during this pandemic, I'm requesting that the Board only approve of a proposed school plan that states that D25 will follow medical experts' guidance (CDC/AAP/IDPH/CCDPH) after Pritzker's school masking mandate is revoked.</p> |
| Julie Anne Talbot | <p>I strongly ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents and only parents have the right to make health decisions for their families.</p> |
| K Wolff | <p>I have two children in District 25 and have grown increasingly frustrated by counter-factual decisions made to force masks and other mitigations. So, I started a website called studentrightsinarlingtonheights.com (Student Rights in Arlington Heights). My hope is that parents, families, and community members who have voiced similar concerns can connect and work together. So many have posted in comments, spoken at board meetings, and signed petitions, and my intention with the site is to bring people together to share resources, ideas, etc. Some of you might know the innerworkings of the school board; others might understand the legality of various measures; or maybe some people have helpful contacts or resources. If your goal is to get students back to school without all the unnecessary burdens, please consider visiting the site and joining in. Again, it is studentrightsinarlingtonheights.com. Thank you to everyone who is standing up and speaking out to restore the education that the children of D25 deserve.</p> |
| Jake White | <p>Please maintain your unanimous decision to keep masks optional and parental choice for our students. Also, do not make a rash decision to mandate an experimental, non approved vaccine for our children, children. It is not OK to make tax paying residents feel their only choice is between an in person education with no rights for health choices or to pay for a caregiver to homeschool.</p> |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Thomas Loch | <p>I am disappointed that I even need to write this comment: The priority of AHSD25 should be to provide a safe and healthy environment for its students, employees and their families. The district should do its part to stop the spread of Covid-19 and its variants—and taking unnecessary health risks in a pandemic is not acceptable.</p> <p>By ignoring the majority of public health professionals, the AHSD25 Superintendent and Board wanted to make masks optional in a pandemic during a variant surge while most students are still ineligible for vaccination—taking an unnecessary, perhaps even reckless, risk for no significant benefit. Thank goodness the governor stepped in to make the safer and better decision about masking for all Pre K–12 schools in the state.</p> <p>For the record, I support the opening of full-time, in-person instruction in schools, but the schools should be opened with safe procedures in place—which includes vaccination or testing of the unvaccinated among those currently eligible for vaccination, and the masking of everyone in the school and on a school bus. Better to be safe with our children now than sorry later.</p> <p>Based on previous AHSD25 Board decisions on masking, the current recommendation on the agenda from the Superintendent "that the Board of Education approve opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate that flexibility continues to be important as health department guidance changes" is wholly insufficient.</p> <p>The previous policy adopted by this Board was written in a way that allows for language loopholes, and this behavior put at risk the health of our children and their ability to remain in full-time, in-person instruction. As a grandparent of current students in AHSD25, I expect a commitment from the Board that it is clearly directing the Superintendent to fully follow the spirit and intent of the Cook County Department of Health.</p> <p>The motion should be changed to: "the Board of Education approves opening school for full-time instruction, align with all items in the current Executive Order from the Governor of Illinois, and communicate its full commitment to follow the letter, intent, and spirit of all recommendations coming from the Cook County Department of Health from this point forward while acknowledging the role AHSD25 has in managing public health."</p> <p>Further, the Board should acknowledge the failure in communications and planning by the administration, and immediately direct the Superintendent to improve her transparency with parents regarding the policies and procedures related to COVID protocols, and with the community, in regards to the agenda of the Board.</p> |
| Ann Baker | I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families. |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Natalie Michael | <p>As a student in district 25, I was thoroughly disappointed in the board's choice to make masks for vaccinated and unvaccinated students optional.</p> <p>While I am glad that Governor Pritzker has created a required mask mandate, I am still worried that if or when this mandate ends, the same choice will be made. The students in district 25, largely the unvaccinated ones, will be put at a higher risk, disregarding their safety, and the safety of friends and family members around them. Those who are vaccinated, while their chances of contracting COVID are lower, are also at risk due to the delta variant, which is easily spread, and can infect even people who have had the vaccine.</p> <p>Children at the elementary schools will be put at high risk, because all students there are ineligible to get vaccinated. My younger sister is among those kids, and it worries me that she could get sick. I worry for everyone, because no one should have to worry about themselves or someone they love getting sick. And it shocks me that I seem to care more about their safety than some full-grown adults.</p> <p>I hope that if this mask mandate lifts, you continue to require masks until it is safe for everyone. Thank you for taking the time to read this.</p> |
| Carol Loch | <p>The AHSD School Board is expecting teachers, staff, parents, and students to trust that they are making the correct decisions for the health and welfare of all. I would hope the Board is looking to those in the medical field for the answers. Remember, doctors were once students, as well, and they know what this virus can do to all ages.</p> <p>How many on the Board have discussed mask wearing with the medical professionals that are currently dealing with Covid infections?</p> <p>The point is to get the students into the schools in the safest way for all, and that is to wear masks. Until the medical professionals feel we can unmask inside, we should continue to wear masks.</p> <p>Do not override a mask mandate unless you feel you have the medical degree to know better than the doctors and nurses dealing with Covid.</p> |
| Tricia Fuglestad | <p>Please exercise caution and create policies that protect children from a COVID infection. Illinois is experiencing a higher rate of covid cases while our schools are providing less mitigations than this time last year. We are only months away from being able to shield our youngest students from harm through vaccinations. Please also consider that vaccinated adults can become infected and transmit the virus to others. Please avoid large gatherings in person like open house, curriculum night, and assemblies. Please reconsider a robust remote academy for those that want to avoid infection and/or protect their medically fragile family members.</p> |
| Liz Osterhues | <p>Dear Dr Bein and elected School Board members,</p> <p>I am writing to express my disappointment that your initial return to school plan included allowing masks to be optional. I am thankful, but saddened, that it took the Governor's intervention to force you to do what is right, what is safe and what is responsible. I ask that when the mask mandate expires, you continue to require masking until the health experts and organizations advise otherwise (CDC, WHO, AAP, etc) and our "under 12" population has the opportunity to be fully vaccinated. None of you are doctors, epidemiologists, infection disease specialists or health experts. Because of this absence of knowledge and expertise, you are very much out of line and recklessly turning a deaf ear and a blind eye to the medical experts and health organizations advising mask use in schools. Please continue the masking mandate until those who know best advise us otherwise.</p> |
| <p>The following comments were received after the submission deadline and not included in the August 12, 2021 Board meeting.</p> | |

| First and Last Name | Public Comment from the July 15, 2021 Board Meeting |
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| Jaime ginsberg | Masks should be optional! |
| Jaime Yeh | Please maintain your position on masks continuing to be optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families. If masks are currently mandated, when will they not be mandated anymore? What data is the state and our district using to determine that masks should be mandated in schools? |
| Maureen Schmidt | I ask you to maintain your position on mask optional for our district. Parents have the right to make decisions for their own families. |