

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

School Board Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2021

Scott Filipek, President of the Arlington Heights School District 25 Board of Education, called the meeting to order on September 2, 2021 to accept a motion to adjourn into closed session at 7:00 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); 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 7:58 p.m. on September 2, 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, Gina Faso, Scott Filipek, Rich Olejniczak, Anisha Ismail Patel, and Greg Scapillato

Board members excused: None

Others Present: Dr. Lori Bein, Superintendent; Stacey Mallek, Assistant Superintendent for Business/CSBO; Dr. Peg Lasiewicki, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Dr. Brian Kaye, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Planning; Chris Fahnoe, Director of Technology and Assessment; Ryan Schulz, Director of Facilities Management; Adam Harris, Head of Communications and Story Telling; Brad Katz, Information Technology Specialist; Lana O'Brien, Recording Secretary; staff; and community.

Recognitions and Presentations - None

Community Input

- Karen Radek addressed the Board regarding masking, Covid mitigations, and public health decision making.
- Karen Wolff addressed the Board regarding taking back local control of decisions.
- Christy Witherow addressed the Board regarding the vaccine mandate for teachers and staff.
- Tom Kopacz addressed the Board regarding looking at real world evidence.
- Tom Kopacz addressed the Board regarding that data shows that vaccines do not protect people from getting or spreading Covid.

Rick Olejniczak left the meeting at 8:12 p.m. and returned at 8:13 p.m.

Dr. Bein read several comments that were received electronically. All comments are given to the Board in full and posted on the website.

- Magdalena Martinez commented on curriculum nights and Covid.
- Maria Zeller Brauer commented on the vaccination mandate.
- Robyn Swanson commented on the vaccination mandate.
- Alexis Hammond commented on the vaccination mandate and Covid mitigations.
- Nathan Ulery commented on Board members' character.
- Nathan Ulery commented on vaccinations and testing.
- Kevin Michael commented on masking and the vaccination mandate.
- Jen Anderson commented on the Governor's vaccination mandate.
- Amira Zaben commented on the mask manding and vaccination and testing of staff.
- Jennifer Dunn commented on following the masking guidelines and masks.
- Laura Magnuson commented on the district relaunching the Covid dashboard.
- Jim and Cristina Small commented on the mask mandate.
- Doug Hammond commented on the vaccination and testing mandate.
- Nathan Ulery commented on the Governor's mask mandate.
- Kerri Hood commented on taking back the local control to make masks optional.
- Deborah Freudenberger commented on the Governor's mask mandate.

Consent Agenda

Motion: A. Patel moved and C. Conley 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) Invoices; (C) Regular and Closed Session Meeting minutes of August 12, 2021

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

Communications:

The following reports were given:

- NSSEO –Ms. Faso reported that Dr. Hackett continues to advocate for equitable and inclusive funding based on student need. NSSEO is pleased with the progress of the Timber Ridge gym, which is due to be completed by the end of the year. The ribbon cutting for the Miner playground was held on August 25. NSSEO is in the process of completing the grant for the ESSER-3 funds. Mr. Filipek noted that Dunkin Donuts and the police in Arlington Heights and Mount Prospect collected over \$10,000 for Special Olympics Illinois.
- IASB – Ms. Patel reported that IASB continues to provide excellent professional development for Board members. The Joint Annual Conference will be held in November. Dr. Bein noted that the North Cook Division Dinner will be held in-person with all precautions on Wednesday, September 22.
- ED-RED – Mr. Olejniczak reported that the ED-RED luncheon meeting will be held later this month. He spoke about a new bill allowing students to take five mental health days per year, which will become effective in January.
- Board Governance – Mr. Filipek read an excerpt from the Unity of Purpose in the Board Governance Framework. Mr. Filipek reminded the Board that the Governance framework is important, and that Board members act as a unified Board and provide positive direction and move forward with respect for each other. Ms. Faso apologized to the Board and the public regarding texting between meetings. Mr. Olejniczak apologized to the Board and the public regarding texting between meetings. Ms. Patel made a statement regarding the Board Governance Framework and effective Board governance.

The following reports were received:

- PTA –Ms. Barbieri reported that the Reflections program includes six areas, and this year’s theme is “I will change the world by...”, for PK – 8th grade students. Submissions are due shortly after Halloween, and entry forms can be obtained through each school’s local units. She thanked everyone that has joined the PTA, and encouraged families to do so if they have not.
- ABC25 –Ms. Faso reported that they are encouraging families to register for ABC25 and are recruiting for volunteer opportunities. The ABC25 grant submission is open for staff through October 15.
- ATA – Ms. Berg highlighted several moments that have been happening throughout the district. She thanked the PTA for the back-to-school socials as well as other events. Many schools have held their Parent information nights. Cross Country has started, and basketball tryouts will be starting.

Student Learning – No Report

Student Services – No Report

Business and Finance - No Report

Facilities Management – No Report

Personnel and Planning

Staffing Update

Dr. Kaye provided a 2021-2022 school year staffing update to the Board. He explained the process for the staffing plan which begins the previous school year. He highlighted the different employee categories throughout the district, and explained the filled, unfilled and on-hold categories. He noted there is a job shortage, and the district is competing with other industries. He reviewed the full-time equivalent comparison by building and employee category, and shared the unfilled positions by certified, non-certified positions, and guest teachers. He thanked the district departments, buildings and the Personnel department for their effort and support.

Board members asked questions and there was discussion regarding unfilled positions. Dr. Kaye was thanked for the information.

Enrollment Report

Dr. Kaye reviewed enrollment data from Thursday, August 26, 2021. The total enrollment from Early Childhood to 8th grade is 5,309, which is a decrease of 53 students from last year. The district, with support from the Board, has a strong focus on keeping class size numbers as low as possible at the elementary level to provide a stronger learning environment and continue to differentiate instruction, while still being fiscally responsible.

This year there were an additional 66 first graders that did not attend Kindergarten in District 25. Dr. Kaye reviewed enrollment at each school and noted that the largest increase is at Westgate, with four other schools showing an increase. Early Childhood enrollment is down slightly, but will increase steadily throughout the school year, as students age into the program.

Enrollment history for K-8 students which includes out of district placements was reviewed. The December 2018 Kasarda enrollment study showed that the district enrollment is leveling off, which we are seeing; and the pandemic has made enrollment difficult to predict. Dr. Kaye thanked Ms. Mallek for her fiscal assistance. The evidence-based funding formula was discussed, and Ms. Mallek explained it in more detail, noting that the change in enrollment is not going to have an impact on state funding. Dr. Kaye was thanked for the enrollment report.

Superintendent Report

Vaccinations and Testing

Dr. Bein stated that the district planned to begin Shield testing on September 8, but the medical partner needed to delay the start date. This will be communicated to families tomorrow. There are currently 1,200 students who are signed up for testing, and 400 students have submitted proof of vaccination.

Dr. Bein reviewed the Governor's Executive Order 87 regarding vaccination or weekly testing requirements for school personnel. Testing can be performed on-site or confirmation of negative result obtained elsewhere.

We don't expect many close contacts because of the reduction of six feet to three feet, but there may be close contacts on the bus or at lunch. The IDPH, definition of an outbreak is two cases that are epidemiologically linked and occurred within 14 days of each other, and could cause remote learning in a classroom. The district must confer with the health department first for a district to move a classroom into remote learning. More detailed information will go out to families and staff tomorrow.

Board members asked questions and there was discussion regarding the change in the definition of an outbreak; close contacts and quarantining; the Memorandum of Understanding with the ATA; the number of staff that are vaccinated; Shield testing; the governor's executive order; lunch; and the Board complying with the mandate, but writing a dissent. The Board attorney, Ms. Darcy Kriha, answered several questions from Board members including what gives the governor the power of law and the Board's authority on the mandate. The Board chose not to move forward with a motion.

Second Reading of Policies – Press 107

Dr. Bein stated that the following policies and exhibits are presented to the Board for a second reading. These policies and exhibits reflect modifications and additions as recommended by the Illinois Association of School Boards. Board members asked questions and there was discussion regarding various policies. A Board member requested a name change for two policies. Policies 5:10 and 6:160 were pulled from consideration for further review.

Press 107:

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
6:145	Migrant Students

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

Motion: A. Patel moved and G. Scapillato seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the policies as presented except for under review Policies 5:10 and 6:160.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

Second 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 second reading of five-year review, keeping material aligned with good governance principles and keeping the legal references current.

Press 107:

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

Motion: A. Patel moved and G. Scapillato seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the second reading of the policies presented by the Illinois Association of School Boards for a five-year review.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

Community Input

- Karen Radek addressed the Board regarding COVID mitigations not being the same as they were in January, and the Board not dissenting the governor's vaccine mandate.

Future Agenda Items

Topics with Dates to be Determined

A Board member requested to discuss the plan for Migrant Students.

Motion: R. Olejniczak moved and B. Cerniglia seconded that the Board of Education move into the Closed session at 10:41 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

Motion: R. Olejniczak moved and G. Faso seconded that the Board of Education adjourn closed session at 11:36 p.m.

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

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

Roll Call: B. Cerniglia, yes; C. Conley, yes; G. Faso, yes; S. Filipek, yes; R. Olejniczak, yes; A. Patel, yes; G. Scapillato, yes. Motion carried 7/0.

The Board adjourned the regular meeting at 11:38 p.m.

Submitted,

Lana M. O'Brien
Recording Secretary

Approved: September 23, 2021

President
Board of Education

Secretary
Board of Education

Date minutes available for public inspection: September 27, 2021

Date minutes posted on District website: September 27, 2021

Community Input Received Electronically

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Magdalena Martinez	<p>The District needs to hold all Curriculum Nights remotely or have half of a class of parents in at a time. These Curriculum Nights have the potential to be superspreader events. This is not the kind of public relations the District needs. Neighboring Districts are not having all of the parents in at one time. It is disturbing to read a message from the school that for these Curriculum Nights, up to 50 parents may be in one classroom, if both parents of each child attend! In addition, please continue to pursue tents and tables for the students who will be sitting outside for lunch. Tents and tables would provide sun protection and comfort. Tents would allow students to be outside in misty weather, thereby decreasing potential Covid exposure at lunch.</p>
Maria Zeller Brauer	<p>I am the parent of a D25 student and I am STRONGLY in support of D25 adhering to the Governor's mandate that K-12 teachers be vaccinated against COVID-19 (with regular testing options for those who have LEGITIMATE reasons they cannot be vaccinated). I have a child who is too young to be vaccinated. I want her to be in school as much as possible and I want her to be as safe as possible. I urge the district to continue to take a layered approach to mitigating COVID, which includes making sure that those who can be vaccinated are vaccinated.</p> <p>COVID-19 transmission in school can be sparked by adults, as research has shown. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/transmission_k_12_schools.html Since there is not currently a vaccine approved for use in children under 12, one of the best tools in our arsenal to protect these children is to make sure the adults around them don't infect them in the first place.</p> <p>I am grateful for our teachers and staff who have worked so hard for the past 18 months. I want them to be safe and healthy as well. Vaccines need to be mandated for teachers and staff so that we can protect those who are too young or medically fragile to get the vaccine. I expect D25 to follow the health guidance and the Governor's mandate. Thank you.</p>
Robyn Swanson	<p>Regarding the board meeting's "action" item on Governor Pritzker's mandate, I am assuming that is a formality to adopt the vaccine requirement for staff.</p> <p>I am writing to show my strong support in doing so. Anything else would open the door to action by ISBE. They have taken a very aggressive stance on non-compliance of the mask mandate. It would be in the best interest of our students on many levels to move forward with the vaccine mandate in our district.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Alexis Hammond	<p>Dear Dr. Bein and SD25 Board Members,</p> <p>As you know, The Governor's August 26th mandate continues the mask requirement and requires the vaccination of school personnel. As this is a mandate from the Governor, I fully expect that the School District will comply with this mandate and any future mandates. I continue to look to the Board and Administration for absolute vigilance and adherence to all county and state recommended public health guidance and mandates. I do not believe the Governor's mandate warrants any discussion or "Action" from the Board. I expect strict compliance. We expect SD25 to remain an accredited school district. As stated by ISBE Superintendent Dr. Carmen I. Ayala, "Local boards of education, schools and districts do not have the authority to deny the Governor's Executive Order requiring universal indoor masking in schools. Doing so not only puts students' health and safety at risk, but also opens the district to extraordinary legal liability - potentially without any insurance to cover damages." (https://patch.com/illinois/arlingtonheights/recognition-status-pulled-over-masks-arlington-heights-school)</p> <p>The Governor's August 26th mandate reports that the "Delta variant of the coronavirus is more aggressive and more transmissible than previously circulating strains, and poses significant new risks in the ongoing effort to stop and slow spread of the virus." Given this known public health crisis, and high transmission in the Arlington Heights zip codes of 60004 and 60005, I ask that the district adopt further mitigation strategies and be proactive in further protecting our children and community. "After nearly four months of declining numbers, Arlington Heights is continuing to trend in the wrong direction, with coronavirus cases on the rise for the eighth straight week (three-week average). The number of new cases in Arlington Heights increased by 47 percent over the last two weeks, according to the Cook County Department of Public Health." (https://patch.com/illinois/arlingtonheights/158-new-covid-19-cases-reported-last-7-days-arlington-heights?fbclid=IwAR3URHFCw-UxQSMOFXV2dBftPYqtulqLUjsfEpWqx-4_OBR3ySf7j7LDro).</p> <p>The following mitigation strategies were used last year to keep our kids safe while being able to provide in-person instruction. I ask that these be implemented again to prevent transmission at school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Turn desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.-Modify learning stations and activities so that there are fewer students per group and students can be spaced apart.-Mark walking paths or provide physical guides, such as colorful tape on floors and signs on walls, to ensure that students remain distanced. Consider making these paths one way for the students. (I ask the district to specifically look into distancing at the middle school level during locker visits and change of classes.)-If unable to maintain social distancing, install a physical barrier on the desk, such as a sneeze guard or partition. (I ask the district to evaluate any time a student takes off their mask for activities such as lunch or a morning snack break.)-Reduce the use of shared space and objects in the classroom. <p>The Governor's August 26th mandates also reads, "Illinoisans should also consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities that involve close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated." I ask that last year's outdoor mitigations be implemented again.</p> <p>-PE will be held, but masks will be required unless students are outside and 6-foot distanced.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
	<p>-Recess will be held, but masks will be required unless students are outside and 6-foot distancing can be maintained.</p> <p>-I ask that the district evaluate outdoor lunch distancing. I agree that eating outside is the best possible solution to having children eat during the day at school. However, the shoulder to shoulder huddles of kids that I observe at 7th period at TMS is not encouraging. I ask that a more organized approach to distancing be enforced by school personnel during this unmasked period. Given the lack of distancing at outdoor lunch, I will continue to pick my daughter up everyday at lunch until this can be remedied.</p> <p>The implementation of the above outdoor mitigation strategies are supported in the Document "ISBE IDPH Public Health Guidance Public Health School Guidance 210812".</p> <p>On page 10 it specifically lists...</p> <p>"Exceptions to universal consistent use of face masks include the following limited situations:"</p> <p>The last bullet point reads:</p> <p>"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." Given this statement, activities such as outdoor recess, outdoor school activities, outdoor athletics and outdoor band concerts etc., require masking.</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, given that our community is labeled as a high transmission area, how is the District changing its plans in regards to cafeterias, lines, morning snack in the classroom, libraries, restrooms and hallways?</p> <p>Sincerely, Alexis Hammond Parent of 7th Grade TMS Student and 2nd Grade Patton Home Program</p>
Nathan Ulery	<p>In a time where Dr. Bein is imploring parents to treat the Board and staff with civility and school staff are teaching students that character matters, it is disappointing that school board members Fasso and Olejniczak participate in text messages (identified in recent FOIA requests) with members of the public that are derogatory to other members of the board and spread false information about them. We expect better from our middle school students and here our elected members of the board demonstrate a lack a maturity and civility. I call upon President Filipek to publicly censure these two members and ask that the minutes reflect it.</p>
Nathan Ulery	<p>As the Board agenda currently calls for Action, but with no recommendation, it is unclear what the Board intends to propose on the topic of Vaccinations and Testing.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
	<p>Unfortunately, based upon the Board and the Superintendent's actions related to masking, I am concerned that this agenda topic is yet another attempt to find a loopholes. I want to reiterate what the board heard from the district's counsel last month when Mr. Olejniczak was looking for another loophole to ignore the mask mandate -- there is no legal option for the district to ignore the governor's executive orders. Since that meeting, it has been clearly demonstrated by ISBE's actions that there are swift and significant impacts to districts that ignore the mandates. No action is necessary by the board in this case. Unlike the mask mandate, there is no inconsistent policy on the books that needed to be overturned. The Governor's vaccine mandate or testing alternative does not conflict with an existing Board policy. No action is required. Follow the mandate.</p> <p>It is time to end these loophole games. This board is here to serve the entire community, not the loud minority of anti-mask and anti-vaccine individuals in our community. We want our Board focused on the education of our students. Too much time and effort is being spent investigating loopholes related to COVID protocols. Simply follow the health guidance from the CCDPH and ISBE and keep your attention on executing the strategic vision of the district.</p>
Kevin Michael	<p>I would like to once again express my strong approval and gratitude for Governor Pritzker's mask mandate in schools (and now all public spaces) in Illinois. Masking is a necessary, common-sense measure that is scientifically proven to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Despite the vocal opposition by a minority of parents, there is no health risk for students wearing masks, and there is a significant risk to the health and safety of all students and staff if masks are not worn.</p> <p>I am also thrilled as a parent, educator, and Illinoisan, that vaccines or weekly testing will be required for all teachers and school staff. Vaccines are safe and effective, and a combination of masking and high levels of vaccination are the only way out of this pandemic.</p> <p>I expect District 25's Board of Education and administrators to continue to adhere to the requirements of all state mandates regarding public health and safety. I also expect the district to continue to require masks as long as it is recommended by local, state, or federal authorities.</p>
Jen Anderson	<p>As I look at the rapid spread of COVID in states that are not using masking and other common sense mitigation efforts, I'm thankful for the leadership of our governor and for our local school board's compliance with those directives.</p> <p>I'm hopeful that same commitment is demonstrated in tonight's discussion about the newest mandate for staff vaccination or testing and that board members don't seek out or entertain loopholes for non-compliance. The vast majority of this community expects our district to adhere to public health policy and have respect for recommendations from experts in this field, both now and as we move through the school year.</p>
Amira Zaben	<p>I greatly appreciate Governor Pritzker's mask mandate and vaccination/testing requirements for school personnel. I expect the board to continue to follow the Governor's orders as well as the health guidance put forth by all major national and state agencies throughout the course of this pandemic. I'm looking forward to seeing the district implement Covid testing and establish a COVID-19 dashboard.</p>
Jennifer Dunn	<p>Thank you for following the masking guidelines/requirements from the governor, the CDC, and the American Association of Pediatrics. Please keep a mask requirement in place at least until children under 12 can be vaccinated. Masks. limit outbreaks, time out of school for kids, and, accordingly, keeps parents who work able to fulfill their professional obligations. Moreover, it helps keep others in the community safe when our kids are spreading the virus less than they would if masks were not used in schools.</p>
Laura Magnuson	<p>Please relaunch the Covid Dashboard as soon as possible and communicate when that can be expected.</p>

First and Last Name	Public Comment from the September 2, 2021 Regular Board Meeting
Jim and Cristina Small	<p>Dear Dr. Bein and D25 Board, Thank you for reversing your decision on optional masking and complying with the Governor's mandate. To the extent that you consider optional masking again, we expect that you explicitly inform the public in advance and take into account the community's concerns. We also expect that you continue to follow the spirit of the relevant health and education board guidance going forward. While wearing masks in school is an inconvenience, this is the least that can be done outside of the other prudent mitigation standards and testing implemented for the school year. The goal is to keep our children in the classroom safely. As we can see by other school districts with optional masking across the nation who have had significant quarantines or altogether have shut down, masking is an important mitigation tool to ensure safety of our children, teachers and staff, as well as ensure continuity of our children's education.</p>
Doug Hammond	<p>I am writing to you today, as quite candidly, I am flummoxed over the Board's intent to discuss and possibly vote to defy Governor Pritzker's mandate requiring masks to be mandatory for schools in Illinois and that all school personnel be vaccinated or submit to regular Covid testing. Given the overwhelming amount of data supporting the positive impact of masking in schools and vaccination, I find this entire debate irrelevant. School boards across the country who started as mask optional have been rushing to mandate masking due to outbreaks in their schools. Why? Because masking works.</p> <p>https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/12/health/covid-19-schools-openings-masks-wellness/index.html</p> <p>However, tonight the D25 Board will be discussing the merits of going against public health entities and Governor Pritzker. Given the guaranteed outcome of loss of accreditation in the event the Board defies the Governor (let alone the risk it will bring to the health of our children), it is careless for you to even consider this. District 25 is responsible for providing safe, effective and ACCREDITED public education to this community.</p> <p>I appreciate that the loudest voices you are hearing seem to be coming from those who want you to go against public health guidelines and defy the Governor. However, these voices seem more motivated by emotional backlash than principle. The "evidence" they cite comes from anonymous social medical sources. Meanwhile, I believe I represent a much larger majority (and pools back me up) when I urge you to follow the overwhelming consensus of doctors and public health experts.</p> <p>https://apnews.com/article/lifestyle-health-education-coronavirus-pandemic-only-on-ap-0440d83602da918c571d506a3de9f44b</p> <p>Masking is a proven effective mitigation strategy against Covid. Vaccination is the gold standard of preventing infection. You need to look no farther than the week 1 infection rates at TMS (4 between 8/27-8/30) and what is happening around the country in states where the school year started as mask optional (thousands).</p> <p>District 25 is responsible for delivering safe, effective and ACCREDITED public education to this community. To do any less is a dereliction of your duty. To act in defiance of the Governor's mandate and in the face of overwhelming public health data is a waste of everyone's time and puts the health of children at risk. If you feel you must debate and then vote on mandating masks and vaccination of school personnel for D25 schools, then I ask you vote in favor and then move on with the mission of ensuring our children's quality and safe education.</p>
Nathan Ulery	<p>Thank you for reversing your decision on optional masking and complying with the Governor's mandate. To the extent that you consider optional masking again, we expect that you explicitly inform the public in advance and take into account the community's concerns. We also expect that you continue to follow the spirit of the relevant health and education board guidance going forward. While wearing masks in school is an inconvenience, it is a critical component of the</p>

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	mitigation strategies being used in school . The goal is to keep our children in the classroom safely. As we can see by other school districts with optional masking across the nation who have had significant quarantines or have altogether shut down, masking is an important mitigation tool to ensure safety of our children, teachers and staff, as well as ensure continuity of our children's education.
Kerri Hood	PLEASE be inclusive and equitable when making decisions for our district. Not all children and families have the same needs. Choice is part of inclusion. Practice what you preach. It is sad to see the continued lack of looking at data in decision-making here. Too many are relying solely on the media instead of using CDC and IDPH published data. The local metrics have been hovering constant for the past month or so...under 4% positivity. Cases do not equate to deaths! A quick review of published death statistics shows that kids are still not in the risk group for covid. The highest risk group in any year is always the 65-84 year old population covid or not. Please take back your local control, and please stick with your strong and unanimous decision to make masks optional.
Deborah Freudenberger	Dear Dr. Bein and D25 Board, Thank you for reversing your decision on optional masking and complying with the Governor's mandate. Masking along with other mitigation strategies and testing implemented for the school year will allow students the greatest opportunity to stay in school in a safe environment. As we can see by other school districts with optional masking across the nation who have had significant quarantines or have altogether shut down, masking is an important mitigation tool to ensure the safety of our children, teachers and staff, as well as ensure continuity of our children's education.