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To Whom It May Concern:

John F. Kennedy once said, "A child miseducated is a child lost." In a year which has seemed lost to an entire nation, if not an entire world, we are now forced to ask ourselves what does it mean to educate our children?

We have followed protocols, mandates, best practices, and our own personal principles to help alleviate the growing crisis which now surrounds us: Do we allow our children to go to school? The question and the answer are undoubtedly more complicated than just a simple yes.

Article after article, pundit after pundit, will spew information and facts surrounding Covid-19 and what should or should not be done. And while I could present scientific data from the CDC or from Child Psychologists, another could and would present the anti-thesis's of said argument.

What I feel must be considered is our long term health of our children both physically and mentally. And instead of approach this problem from an all encompassing lens, I choose to look at a more narrow lens, one that effects my family and those around me. I choose a more localized approach to whether or not my child should or should not go to school full time.

The lack of a full time education has become detrimental to my child's psychological growth and health as well as her educational growth. One cannot sit near a child attempting to learn from online school and acknowledge that "true" learning is occurring. It can be said that review of past principles and lessons are learned, but NEW learning, NEW material is truly only learned in person. From time immemorial, higher learning, or learning has always occurred at an institution. A building, a destination for students to come and congregate, interact, and then to be instructed by one called upon to teach and open the minds of those seeking further light and knowledge.

For us to say distance learning, or the constructs of the internet allow a solid, yea, equal platform for learning and for teaching are misguided in ease and comfort to answer a most difficult question.

Children NEED to interact with teachers on a personal level. Children NEED to be around friends and classmates, to learn how to deal with conflict. How to appreciate success as well as failure, and then to take those lessons learned in person and grow and mature with each passing grade.

How do we weigh education? How do we weigh the future? I cannot predict nor do I intend to pontificate on the possible outcomes of the future by disallowing our children to learn and grow in a traditional educational setting. But as a student of history, one can argue and should argue the greatest growth in human history is when institutions of learning are readily available to all those who seek to learn. In our own short history of the United States, economic growth has grown exponentially when children receive a formal education. This education placed them on the path for greater success, and greater economic growth. In fact, one could argue our own economic growth is reliant upon our children attending school while the parents work, thus we prepare the next generation through education to enter the work force and take the place or create a new and exciting working future.

The choice placed before you is an impossible one! No matter which choice you as a board choose to make, you will be ridiculed and criticized for your decision. Perhaps your choice should lie in a localized setting, ignoring the background noise of those cities and states whose dictates and mandates make headlines and evening news. Your choice should be reliant on the children you educate, and the parents who rear those children and seek for their children to be well round and successful.

I then implore you to allow my child to attend school fulltime. Allow her to be successful, to be surrounded by friends and classmates who will help her grow and give her the experiences necessary to mature into adulthood. I ask of you to not damn her growth by fear of the moment and fear of the unknown. Is it a scary and fearful time? Indeed. But choose to confront that fear head on with the knowledge that our children will be better educated to fight the next pandemic, the next storm, and the knowledge and knowhow of how to combat and defeat whatever obstacle lay before them. Choose to allow them and their parents to have a choice in attending school full time, and to be able to learn!

Sincerely,

Richard and Kimberly Spaulding