

**From:** [Karah Smith](#)  
**To:** [SPCSA Public Comment](#)  
**Subject:** Public Meeting comment 7/30  
**Date:** Monday, July 26, 2021 8:05:28 PM

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Good evening,

I am writing to comment for the State Public Charter School Authority public meeting regarding Covid-19 policy and use of masks for children.

I was understanding of the mask policy when schools were under directions from local and state governments to enforce mandates and they put the schools at risk of being shut down completely. I was then willing to comply and reluctantly put a mask on my children for the sake of their education, even though their risk of harm and transmission was miniscule at best.

At this time, you are not under any state or local government mandates and are under no obligation to force children to wear a mask, even unvaccinated children. As a result, I am much less willing to comply without voicing concern.

I believe questions of policies are coming from fear of cases arising from both unvaccinated and vaccinated in the valley. As a pediatric nurse practitioner, it is my professional opinion that this fear is misguided. When the vaccines were created, the hope was that they prevent people from contracting Covid-19, but the design was that they *minimize* symptoms and they have proven to be very effective in this. The cases of hospitalizations in the valley of Covid-19 are almost exclusively of unvaccinated patients. Vaccinated patients have been shown repeatedly to have minimal symptoms similar to a cold if contracting it at all. In all likelihood, Covid-19 will never fully go away, even if the entire population gets vaccinated, because of continuing mutations. Very much like influenza. As a result, it is unwise to use case numbers of the virus to determine policy. They will never be at zero.

As for the masks, countless data has supported the insignificance of viral transmission and harm in children. Countless. There are zero longitudinal studies to provide the safety of mask use in children. Zero. There has simply not been enough time to get these true lengthy studies to be sure of safety and efficacy. I, however, have witnessed anecdotally many problems related to masks in pediatric and adult populations including countless skin infections, persistent styes requiring surgical removal, and overwhelming anxiety resulting in respiratory distress.

I speak as an advocate for these children as a pediatric care provider and a parent. I encourage you to not mandate these children wear masks and be an advocate for these children as well. It is not worth the risk. Encourage vaccination for staff and students old enough to receive it, and then move on.

See you in the fall without a mask!

Karah Smith