To whom is may concern:

I wanted to attach a letter that I sent to the MCPS Board of Education as well as to various members of our state senators, governor, and county executives. I received NO response, but perhaps you will read it and consider my words now.

In addition to the attached letter, I wanted to share the recent statistics from the CDC.

According to the CDC statistics, as of July 31, 2021, a total of 34,722,631 tested positive for Sars-Cov-2 and of those cases, 609,853 people have died with (not from) Sars-Cov-2. This means that 10.5% of the US Population has tested positive and only 1.8% of those who tested positive died (which comprises only 0.18% of the total US Population.¹

Of the 1.8% of people who died with Sars-Cov-2,

- 0.06% were under 18 years old (0.001% of total cases)
- 0.41% were 18-29 years old (0.007% of total cases)
- 1.18% were 30-39 years old (0.02% of total cases)
- 3.14% were 40-49 years old (0.06% of total cases)
- 16% were 50-64 years old (0.29% of total cases)
- 22% were 65-74 years old (0.40% of total cases)
- 27.3% were 74-84 years old (0.49% of total cases)
- 30% were over 85 years old (0.54% of total cases)

According to CDC statistics, people under the age of 50 only make up 4.7% of all deaths with Sars-Cov-2.

Additionally, as of July 23, 2021, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) shows 518,769 reported adverse events due to the COVID-19 vaccine. Of those adverse events, 11,940 people have died as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine. 12,808 people have been left permanently disabled.²

I understand that all COVID vaccines are still undergoing clinical trials. Furthermore, I understand that all COVID vaccines are under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) only and have not obtained full FDA approval.³

Given the current CDC statistics, the risk to the majority of the population is exceedingly low, but even if it wasn’t, our United States Constitution has NOT given any government authority over our God-given individual human rights and liberties. Along with individual liberty also comes the need for personal responsibility. Neither of which can be forced or coerced.

I would encourage all of you to go back and read our founding documents again. Any government that institutes a mask mandate is null and void for violating our original contract - the Constitution of the United States.

---

If we are forced, then we are not free. If you attempt to force free citizens to do anything, that will result in my and many others’ peaceful noncompliance.

Thank you for considering the individual freedom and liberty that so many of our ancestors bravely fought and gave their lives for. Please take a drive past the cemetery in Washington, D.C. and consider. So many brave men and women gave their lives so WE could be free - and not so that you could enslave us again with immoral and illegal mask mandates especially for a virus with a 99% recovery rate.

Thank you for continuing to uphold the Supreme Law of the Land and for honoring the freedom that makes this country great.

Sincerely,

Angela Harders
May 20, 2021

Dear Governor Larry Hogan,

CC:
Brian Frosh, Maryland State Attorney General
Benjamin Cardin, Maryland State Senior Senator
Chris Van Hollen, Maryland State Junior Senator
John Sarbanes, Maryland State Representative, 3rd Congressional District
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive
Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent
Dr. Monifa McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools
Brenda Wolff, President of the Montgomery County Board of Education

I am writing this letter in order to address some concerns that I am having regarding the changes to the mask mandate in Montgomery County. My main question to you is: “Are we following the science or not?” Schools are meant to be institutions of learning and education. We, more than anyone else, should be the ones to “follow the science,” however, the Governor’s updated executive order and Montgomery County Public Schools’ policy do the exact opposite.

I am a special education teacher for high school biology, and I am greatly concerned about the fact that we are forcing teachers and students to reject the science regarding masks and vaccines in favor of the political leanings of those who will never set foot inside of our classrooms.

On May 16, 2021, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) released an update regarding masks which states that “fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.”¹ This statement is inconsistent and misleading because either the vaccines work or they do not. If they work, then there should be no need to force vaccinated individuals to continue to wear a mask or physically distance themselves. If they do not work, then the CDC should not instruct individuals that it is safe to resume normal activities.

I understand that some may argue that children under the age of 12 are not able to get a vaccine; however, children under the age of 12 also pose virtually zero risk of contracting, much less dying, from SARS-CoV-2. In fact, children ages 0-19 have a 99.997% recovery rate from COVID according to the CDC. Additionally, for all children aged 5-17, there have been just 4 hospitalizations

per million.² It is therefore irrational and immoral to force or coerce all children of any age to get an experimental vaccine that has not been FDA approved or had safety studies conducted for their age group in any clinical trial. It is equally irrational and immoral to force or coerce all children to wear masks when the vast majority are not at risk of contracting, spreading, or dying from the virus.

The effectiveness of masks at preventing the transmission of viruses has been largely debated, but there is no debate about the harm that they cause - especially for our children. Currently, I work with students that have disabilities. Wearing a mask is difficult and oftentimes impossible for children that have autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, or are deaf and hard of hearing. Although I am not hearing-impaired, I often struggle to understand my students when they talk to me behind a mask. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be for them to understand their teachers who are giving instruction with a mask on. Students with ADHD are having greater difficulty focusing because they are not able to see their teacher’s face and lips which is an essential part of communication. Students with PTSD and panic disorders have also expressed to me that it is difficult for them to focus on the content when they are struggling to breathe and cope due to their disabilities. Requiring students with disabilities and teachers of students with disabilities to wear masks is a direct violation of Section 504 which “requires a school district to provide a ‘free appropriate public education’ (FAPE) to each qualified person with a disability who is in the school district’s jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person’s disability.”³

Previously, I worked as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher, and I, as well as others in my field, believe that it is unethical to wear a mask while instructing English language learners who depend on the ability to see their teacher’s face and their lips in order to understand what they are saying. Wearing a mask in front of English language learners is nothing less than discrimination against minority students by interfering with, and even prohibiting, their legal right to access a free and appropriate public education. They are not able to have an appropriate education if they are unable to communicate and/or receive communication effectively from their teachers.

Furthermore, continuing to force teachers and students to wear masks in school is causing psychological, mental, emotional, and physical harm to all children, regardless of their age, disability, language, or race. Masks inhibit a child’s ability to recognize facial expressions or to read human emotion which are essential components of their social-emotional development.⁴ Masks perpetuate an

irrational fear of death, which undermines our physical health. Fear is also “one of the most significant underlying elements that could lead to impairment of mental health conditions and wellbeing.”

We will not be able to fully identify or even grasp the damage that we have caused to our children for decades to come. Our children are being traumatized just by living through a pandemic. When coupled with irrational measures, such as forced masking, knowing full well that most children lack “the fine motor coordination to use a face mask appropriately and are unlikely to be able to show the level of compliance required” has created a system of abuse that has been inflicted upon our most innocent and vulnerable. Our children are relying on us to make evidence-based and science-backed decisions considering their best interests today and for the years to come. If we cannot trust our schools, the “pillars of science,” to make appropriate decisions based on science, then we cannot call ourselves an educated society. It is inhuman and abusive to make decisions that not only go against science, but also knowingly inflict harm - whether that harm is physical, psychological, emotional, or mental.

As a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, a proud public school teacher, and a human being who deeply loves and cares for children, I will not stand for the continued abuse of our children any longer, and I hope that you will not either. I cannot in good faith continue to perpetuate illogical fears that I know will cause harm to my students’ psychological, emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing, and I hope that you will not either. Therefore, I urge you: please follow the science and end the mask mandate in our schools immediately.

Sincerely,

Angela Harders

Angela Harders, M.Ed.
Special Education/ESOL Teacher
Montgomery County Public Schools

---