

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 11:35:55 AM  
**To:** J Lock <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Covid protocols - at minimum for staff

Hi, J. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** J Lock <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 9:58 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Covid protocols - at minimum for staff

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear WCS Board:

Just like everyone else, I was looking forward to starting the school year without the hassle of masks and other covid protocols.

I understand WCS guidelines are based on current hospitalization rates. However, CDC guidelines state:

COVID-19 prevention strategies remain critical to protect people, including students, teachers, and staff, who are not fully vaccinated, especially in areas of moderate-to-high community transmission levels.

With

- 1) Williamson County transmission levels at "high" per the CDC (<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>)
- 2) American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines recommending masks, especially for staff in order to protect children:  
"Adult Staff and Educators: Universal use of face masks is recommended, given that certain teachers must cross-over to

multiple classes, such as specials teachers, special educators, and secondary school teachers, and in consideration of new SARS-CoV-2 variants. At this time, this recommendation for use of face masks includes staff and educators who have been fully vaccinated, especially for teachers with students who are unvaccinated (including pre-K, kindergarten, and elementary schools). School staff working with students who are unable to wear a face mask or who are unable to manage secretions, who require high-touch (hand over hand) instruction, and who must be in close proximity to these students should consider wearing a surgical mask in combination with a face shield."

I understand the political nature of masking and the treats of punishment made by state politicians for districts that mandate masks, but in the least, staff working with students under 12 could be required to mask.

3) Our own local pulmonary and critical care physicians have openly begged our schools to require masks, at risk to their own jobs and, to my knowledge, very little to gain by speaking out.

[https://www.williamsonhomepage.com/spring\\_hill/pulmonary-critical-care-physicians-send-letter-to-wcs-board-members-asking-masks-be-mandated-at/article\\_c672dc92-f3c6-11eb-bfbf-b357ff1e398f.html](https://www.williamsonhomepage.com/spring_hill/pulmonary-critical-care-physicians-send-letter-to-wcs-board-members-asking-masks-be-mandated-at/article_c672dc92-f3c6-11eb-bfbf-b357ff1e398f.html)

4) Our own local hospital released a statement urging masking in all public spaces, no matter vaccination status in order to protect the vulnerable.

[https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wsmv.com/news/williamson\\_county/williamson-medical-center-sees-significant-increase-in-covid-19-cases/article\\_7a59fc00-f3d5-11eb-af77-6f897ef3ea7e.amp.html](https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.wsmv.com/news/williamson_county/williamson-medical-center-sees-significant-increase-in-covid-19-cases/article_7a59fc00-f3d5-11eb-af77-6f897ef3ea7e.amp.html)

I know there are many challenges facing you as we move forward. I urge you to consider not what the politicians are saying, but what the experts and medical professionals are telling us to do. Please require masks, for staff (in the least) and all in public spaces until children under 12 are eligible for vaccination.

John Lock  
Brentwood

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 3:49:29 PM  
**To:** Tatum Allsep <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: COVID-19 Protocols - Masks Please.

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Thanks, Tatum. As you may know by now, WCS will have Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss COVID-19 Guidelines.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Tatum Allsep <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 6:47 PM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Protocols - Masks Please.

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear WCS School Board,  
I am the mother of a [REDACTED] grader at Grassland Elementary. We are so happy to be back with in-person learning opportunities. However, the scientific data that we are learning about the Delta variant is very concerning, especially with no mask mandate for WCS elementary schools (our most vulnerable population due to this age groups inability to obtain vaccinations at this time).

According to Dr. Tom Talbot, Chief Epidemiologist at Vanderbilt Medical Center, in the last 4 days cases have doubled in our area. In the last 4 weeks there has been a 3 fold increase in COVID-19 children’s admissions to the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt and a 10 fold increase in hospitalizations at VUMC overall. Williamson Medical Center numbers are equally as high. This is not a drill! Our children’s health should be of paramount importance to you. Please review the FACTS. They are readily available and undeniable.

I do understand that politically you are sitting between a rock and a hard place, but a virus is not political. The Delta variant spreads as easily as the chicken pox virus. Without a mask mandate our schools will be back to virtual learning more quickly than with the Alpha variant last Fall and Spring. You have the power to effect positive change for our children. Please consider the scientific evidence and help protect our children. It’s just a mask. Just a mask can significantly reduce the spread of this virus.

Respectfully,  
Tatum Allsep  
WCS Parent

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 1:56:00 PM  
**To:** Kathryn Hahn <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Fall policies

Thanks, Katie. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kathryn Hahn <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 4, 2021 8:24 PM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Kevin M. Connolly <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Fall policies

<<<<< WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS  
>>>>>

Superintendent Golden,  
I have two children in the Williamson County School district who are under 12 and not yet eligible for vaccination. Last Spring you guaranteed (see attached email below) that you would follow CDC recommendation related to Covid safety protocols and specifically masks. CDC, AMA, APA, and even doctors and staff from the Williamson Medical center have expressed concerns and suggested required masks for the Fall. While Williamson county has the highest vaccination rate in the state, it still does not reach suggested herd immunity levels for the adult population. Covid rates are exponentially growing, hospital availability is shrinking, and kids are much more susceptible to the delta variant compared to the original strains. Your decision to continue the dropped mask mandate IS contrary to recommendations by the scientific community and puts our children and vulnerable family members at risk. This county needs leadership to keep our community safe and keep our businesses open. Please reconsider and follow through with your promises from last Spring regarding this Fall semester.

Concerned,  
Katie [REDACTED] (mother)

> On Mar 24, 2021, at 3:00 PM, Jason Golden <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
>  
> Katie,  
>  
> Thanks for your email. The expectation I have set is that I intend to follow CDC and State Health Department guidelines as much as we can to meet our goal of keeping students safely on campus. Right now, these authorities recommend that schools continue to require masks, and we are doing so. I know that much will change by this Fall, and I hate that family decisions have to be made in this pandemic with so many unknowns; we needed committed enrollment now so that we can set schedules, have the appropriately licensed teachers assigned, and be able to start school on time this Fall. That's one of the reasons why I stated at our meeting Monday night Board Meeting that I plan to continue to follow CDC and State Health Department guidelines as



much as we can to meet our goal of keeping students on campus. We will continue to communicate with families as health conditions change and our planning continues.

>  
> Jason Golden  
> Superintendent  
> Williamson County Schools

> [REDACTED]  
>  
> -----Original Message-----

> From: Kathryn Hahn <[REDACTED]>  
> Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 7:30 PM  
> To: Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell  
> <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick  
> Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland  
> <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>  
> Cc: Kevin M. Connolly <[REDACTED]>  
> Subject: Fall policies

> WARNING: THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS - Do NOT reply, click links, or open attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

> Board Members,

> I've just completed registration for my children for Fall 2021. I've completed this with the expectations that Williamson County Schools will be following the evidence based recommendations from the CDC regarding face masks and any additional Covid protocols that exist at that time. Non adherence to their expert guidance is dangerous for the health of our community and sends the wrong message to our children about safety and science. We will reconsider in person school if policies are inconsistent with science and the greater good.

> Thanks for your time,  
> Katie ([REDACTED] mother)

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 4:37:36 PM  
**To:** Lindsey Warden <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Mask Mandates for WCS

Hi, Lindsey. As you may know by now, WCS will have Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss COVID-19 Guidelines.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Lindsey Warden <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 3:55 PM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Mask Mandates for WCS

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you today to urge you to follow suit with Metro Nashville and implement a district-wide mask requirement in all of your Williamson County schools.

I am a graduate of Williamson County schools. My family and friends are all in Williamson County. I have a sister-in-law attending one of your high schools. I have an aunt working in one of your school buildings. My senior parents live here in the community, as well as my extremely vulnerable grandparents. I am begging you to do the right thing, follow the science, and keep my loved ones safe by requiring masks in ALL students district wide.

I understand that you have faced significant pushback from well organized and outspoken parents, many of whom would like to believe that they enjoy special privileges or special clout when it comes to what happens in our schools. As an educator myself, I can only imagine how difficult it is to face pressure from a handful of misinformed, miseducated community members who may believe they have children's best interests at heart, but in actuality, will cause untold illness, loss of life, and disaster in our Williamson County schools if you continue to cave to their dangerous demands.

I have been even more shocked and horrified to realize that in addition to failing to implement a mask requirement for your students, you are also allowing your own employees to work indoors without face coverings regardless of their vaccination status. This seems incredibly irresponsible. As a parent, I would have a big problem with knowing that my child's teacher will not cover her face to protect my child. Why should parents trust their children to your school employees when many of

your school employees (including school nurses) are choosing to not even do the bare minimum by covering their face during a pandemic? How do you think students whose parents are making the right choice and sending them to school in a mask feel when they are sitting in a classroom and their own teacher doesn't care enough about them to cover her face?

We all want to go back to normal, but what we want and what is most prudent are two different things. The fact of the matter is that Covid-19 numbers are rising rapidly, and hospitals in middle Tennessee are nearly to capacity. Many are estimating that they will not have any more room as early as next week. The AAP said Tuesday it recorded almost 72,000 new cases of Covid-19 among children from July 22-29, up from 39,000 the week prior and a sum that comprises 19% of all cases reported nationally over that period. No children under 12 have received a Covid-19 vaccination, and this Delta variant is appears both more virulent and more deadly, particularly in young and unvaccinated children.

Masks work to reduce the spread of Covid-19. Though I realize that you have community members who would like to debate this as if it's not already a fact, they are simply wrong. Multiple peer-reviewed studies affirm that masks reduce the spread of Covid-19, and that makes them one of your best defenses against allowing the disease to run rampant through your schools. Of course, we also know that both the American Association of Pediatrics and the Center for Disease Control are recommending universal masking for students older than two.

When a child is hospitalized, when Covid-19 ravages a child's body and leaves him or her with lifelong health issues, when a child passes away because they caught Covid-19 in your schools, I would not think you would want to be the party that has to explain why you decided not to comply with AAP and CDC guidelines. I'm no lawyer and I'm sure you have plenty of legal advice, but it just doesn't look very good. Pediatric deaths are happening. They are very real. And they are picking up speed. If you continue down this road you are on as a district, I fear it will be a question not of if, but of when, it will happen in one or more of your school communities.

- Arkansas confirms third pediatric death from COVID-19
- Two children died from COVID-19 over the weekend, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital says
- Virginia Dept. of Health confirms COVID-19 death of child age 10-19 in Eastern Region
- Children's Hospital reports spike in COVID hospitalizations, death of patient
- Health Officials: Mississippi Teen Dead From COVID-19
- Georgia family mourns 'most loving, joyous' 5-year-old boy who died from Covid-19

It is a shame that Covid-19 and its prevention have become highly politicized, but as decision makers and leaders, your job is to disengage from the noise, stick to the facts, and do whatever you can to keep students safe. You should implement a district-wide mask requirement until levels of community spread have dropped back to an acceptable level, and you must not accept exemption forms from these misinformed and grossly ignorant people unless they are verified by a doctor. Children who cannot wear a facial covering should be asked to enroll in your online school until such a time as facial coverings are no longer both necessary and prudent, both for their safety and for the safety of others.

As a mother, as a teacher, as someone with longtime ties to Williamson County and as someone whose vulnerable family members are affected by your decision-making, I urge you to be a strong voice for the vulnerable and to protect these students who did not ask for a pandemic and certainly are not asking to be hospitalized or to pass away because you did not do everything in your power to protect them.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Warden

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 2:00:39 PM  
**To:** Neeley, Roy C <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Mask Policy

Thanks, Roy. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Neeley, Roy C <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 12:04 AM  
**To:** Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Mask Policy

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear WCS Board Members, Superintendent and Director of Health and Safety,

I was reviewing the mask policies on your website and came across this.

***Will these guidelines be changed during the school year?***

- *WCS will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 in our community and will constantly review the data to see if any adjustments to protocols and guidelines are warranted during the school year.*

Honestly, and I know school hasn't started yet, but I think we're at the point where you need to adjust your policy. Williamson County Medical center has already put out an update that their hospitalizations are up 633% over the last month. If you believe some politicians, this virus doesn't do much harm to children. But, per a statement out of Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, they've had six children die from COVID, 2 in the last week. In my hospital, the number of people coming to the emergency department with COVID is skyrocketing. Our administrators are turning away calls from hospitals in our neighboring states asking for beds to accommodate their patients. States whose policies reflect those in Tennessee. Why are we to think our fate will be any different?

I see the word "encourage" all over the place when it comes to masks these days. As if that means anything. I work in an ICU and in the operating room. Over the last 10 years, I've taken care of thousands of the sickest patients. Most of them over the course of their lives where "encouraged" to live their lives differently. "Encouraged" not to smoke, not too drink heavily, and if you do, don't drive, not to do meth, not shoot each other, not to eat an entire pizza and wash it down with a 2L coke and then have ice cream, etc. They were "encouraged" to exercise, maybe eat a vegetable or two, wear a helmet, or a seatbelt, and take your prescribed medications. Their choices have greatly impacted their lives, and not for the better. But it was their choice, and it only affected them. In the case of masks, this individualistic mindset, and the choice not to wear a mask can affect hundreds to thousands. My wife attended a packed open house at our children's school today. Only she and approximately 15% of other attendees wore masks. 0% of the teachers and staff. If people were really worried about school closures and protecting in person learning, they'd all be wearing masks.

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 11:21:55 AM  
**To:** Kelly [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Masks needed to protect children and keep schools open as delta variant spreads

Thanks, Kelly. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kelly [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 2, 2021 6:13 PM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Masks needed to protect children and keep schools open as delta variant spreads

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Mr. Golden, Mr. Anderson, & Members of the Board,

I write to you as both a physician who has been on the front lines of this pandemic from the beginning and a mother of three children in WCS. Please reinstate the mask mandate for Williamson County Schools. It is the only way to keep our kids safe and learning this year. The number of COVID cases and hospitalizations in middle Tennessee and around the country continue to grow. This 4th wave of COVID caused by the delta variant is also affecting children more than the previous surges. Williamson County's vaccination rate is only ~50% community wide, far too low to confer herd immunity. More importantly, the vaccination rate at most of our schools is likely only in the single digits since children under 12 are not yet eligible. This leaves us with masks as our primary defense against COVID in our schools. The science on masks is well established...they work best when worn by everyone.

My oldest child is vaccinated, but his siblings are too young. My 11 year old [REDACTED] making him higher risk from COVID. We had planned to continue online school for him this semester. Unfortunately, when the entire program was changed AFTER the deadline had past; parents were given only days to decide whether to continue in a now completely undefined online program or switch back to in person. Since we could not get any answers to our concerns, we made the difficult choice to switch him back to in person. When making this decision, I was reassured that the district had been following CDC guidelines and that it was entirely reasonable to expect they would continue to do so. Instead, WCS released "health guidelines" for 21-22 that go against CDC recommendations, the district's own experience from last school year, and common sense. Do you realize that your current guidelines would allow an unvaccinated, unmasked child who's parent or sibling is actively infected with COVID to come to school? This ignores EVERYTHING we have learned this past year and

places my child and others at considerable risk.

The CDC & AAP both recommend that everyone inside schools should mask for the upcoming semester, regardless of vaccination status. Who is advising WCS to go against CDC and AAP recommendations? I have asked this question multiple times and just get vague "local health officials" as a response. I have to wonder, which local health officials you are referring to? I have seen letters and petitions from Williamson County Critical Care physicians, Pediatricians & an Immunologist urging this board to reinstate the mask mandate. Williamson Medical Center just sent out a release urging everyone to mask up indoors, regardless of vaccine status. I myself am an Anesthesiologist, one of the doctors called to intubate COVID patients and care for them when they are critically ill. So again, I ask you....who are these local health officials who know better than all the aforementioned groups?

The situation with the delta variant has changed dramatically since you likely decided on guidelines earlier this summer. Please don't wait until we've had an outbreak in our schools to do the right thing. All I ask as a physician and mother is that the district reverts to following CDC guidance, at least until all our students have the option to be fully vaccinated.

Sincerely,  
Kelly [REDACTED], MD

If I had just moved here from another planet, to find out that a virus was responsible for the deaths of approximately 4.2 million people worldwide, and 615,000 people in the U.S., and I was told by multiple organizations (filled with people who have worked hard to be the best at what they do in their field of medicine), whose only goal is to advocate for the health and safety for me and my family, "if you wear this tiny little mask over your face, you and your family's chances of getting really sick and maybe dying go way down." Why would we debate that?

I was always told to finish with a quote.

When JFK said "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country, " they were very unifying words that fired people up to do something, to do better. And today, I feel like this quote could easily apply to wearing a mask.

Thank you,

Roy Neeley, MD  
Associate Professor  
Anesthesia & Critical Care  
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

[http://www.williamsonherald.com/features/williamson-medical-center-issues-covid-19-update/article\\_0362f306-f40a-11eb-a034-6b097f80358e.html](http://www.williamsonherald.com/features/williamson-medical-center-issues-covid-19-update/article_0362f306-f40a-11eb-a034-6b097f80358e.html)

<https://www.wreg.com/news/coronavirus/number-of-kids-with-covid-has-been-rising-for-days-with-school-around-the-corner/>

<https://www.kait8.com/2021/08/04/childhood-covid-19-cases-deaths-rise-mid-south-lawmakers-take-mask-mandates/>

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 11:43:58 AM  
**To:** Kelly [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Masks needed to protect children and keep schools open as delta variant spreads

Thanks, Kelly. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kelly [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 2, 2021 6:13 PM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Masks needed to protect children and keep schools open as delta variant spreads

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Mr. Golden, Mr. Anderson, & Members of the Board,

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My oldest child is vaccinated, but his siblings are too young. My 11 year old [REDACTED] making him higher risk from COVID. We had planned to continue online school for him this semester. Unfortunately, when the entire program was changed AFTER the deadline had past; parents were given only days to decide whether to continue in a now completely undefined online program or switch back to in person. Since we could not get any answers to our concerns, we made the difficult choice to switch him back to in person. When making this decision, I was reassured that the district had been following CDC guidelines and that it was entirely reasonable to expect they would continue to do so. Instead, WCS released "health guidelines" for 21-22 that go against CDC recommendations, the district's own experience from last school year, and common sense. Do you realize that your current guidelines would allow an unvaccinated, unmasked child who's parent or sibling is actively infected with COVID to come to school? This ignores EVERYTHING we have learned this past year and



places my child and others at considerable risk.

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The situation with the delta variant has changed dramatically since you likely decided on guidelines earlier this summer. Please don't wait until we've had an outbreak in our schools to do the right thing. All I ask as a physician and mother is that the district reverts to following CDC guidance, at least until all our students have the option to be fully vaccinated.

Sincerely,  
Kelly [REDACTED] MD

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 4:08:05 PM  
**To:** ALYSSA VOLKER <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Plea for Mask Mandate

Hi, Alyssa. As you may know by now, WCS will have Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss COVID-19 Guidelines.

Nancy  
  
Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** ALYSSA Volker <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 3:56 PM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aperia <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Plea for Mask Mandate

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear Mr. Golden, Mr. Anderson, and the WCS School Board,

I am thrilled to read that you have called a special board meeting on August 10 to review Covid-19 protocols. I have followed the announcements from WCS, watched the conversation with Mr. Golden, and anxiously awaited communications from our schools' principals before the start of school today. I can only hope that your special meeting on the 10th is for the express purpose of allowing a mask mandate in schools.

I was hopeful that the district's "recommendation" of universal masking would be taken seriously by families, staff, and administrators in WCS. Unfortunately, communications from Grassland Middle School and Franklin High School barely mentioned masking. When my children returned to school today, they discovered that they (both vaccinated) were in the very small minority of students (or staff) wearing masks. Clearly, the "recommendation" is not being heeded.

I am at a loss to understand why something as simple as masking has met such resistance from members of our community. We know that masks do not offer perfect protection against Covid, its variants, or any other illness for that matter. But they are one simple tool we can all use in the fight against Covid, as it continues to mutate and spread, with the Delta variant now apparently infecting younger people and making them sicker than the alpha illness did. Pediatric deaths in Memphis this week remind us all that no one is immune from Covid. Testimonies from Doctors at Williamson Medical Center, like Pulmonologist Dr. Devin Sherman, remind us of the efforts of our medical leaders in fighting this disease, and the exasperation they are feeling as the disease rages on despite the hope provided by vaccines.

I am begging you - for my [REDACTED] who reported being the ONLY masked student in numerous classes today; for my [REDACTED] [REDACTED]; for me (I have MS and am on immunosuppressants and teach music students in my home who come straight from your school buildings where they are exposed to every germ possible); for every child in WCS who cannot get vaccinated yet due to their age or other health conditions; for the teachers who are afraid to go to work in a classroom of unvaccinated, unmasked students; and for you all - so that you may sleep with a clear conscience knowing that while you won't please everyone, you've done the

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 11:16:25 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Please consider a mask requirement in schools

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Hi, Dave. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 2, 2021 1:34 PM  
**To:** Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; CO Schoolboard Group <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Please consider a mask requirement in schools

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Hi Mr. Anderson,

Thank you for your response. Does your review of new information mean you are currently considering a change in the Health and Wellness Guidelines? If so, do you know when a decision may be reached?

In the past few days, we've seen state and local physicians ask for a mask mandate to prevent a surge of Delta infections within our schools and communities. Today the U.S. Education Secretary expressed his support for masks in schools, with mask-wearing and other mitigation strategies outlined in the newly released Department of Education's Return to School Roadmap. I've included links below for your convenience. I am certain that you have already seen this information, but wished to point it out as a growing consensus among both medical and education professionals that we should require masks in schools until all children have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

- [Williamson Medical Center Pulmonary and Critical Care Physicians push Williamson County Schools to reinstate mask requirement](#)
- [Tennessee doctors plead with Gov. Lee to issue mask mandate amid staffing concerns](#)
- [U.S. Education Secretary: Students Need To Be In Classrooms, With Masks, This Fall](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education Return to School Roadmap](#)

Thank you,

Dave Lane  
[REDACTED]

On Fri, Jul 30, 2021 at 5:30 PM Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Mr. Lane,

Superintendent Golden forwarded your email to me since I am the person responsible for COVID response communication for WCS. Thank you for writing. We are once again going to be reviewing all the new information being sent out by the CDC.

In response to your question about changing guidance here is what we have published about that possibility. Thanks again for writing.

***Will these guidelines be changed during the school year?***

- WCS will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 in our community and will constantly review the data to see if any adjustments to protocols and guidelines are warranted during the school year.*

**Gary Anderson**

Executive Director Health and Safety  
Williamson County Schools  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 29, 2021 6:13 PM

**To:** Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Fwd: Please consider a mask requirement in schools

Jason Golden  
Superintendent  
Williamson County Schools  
[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** July 29, 2021 at 1:58:16 PM CDT

**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>, Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>, Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>, Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>, Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>, Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>, Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>, Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>, Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>, KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>, Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>, Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>, Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Please consider a mask requirement in schools

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Hello Superintendent Golden and WCS Board of Education Members,

I'm the father of [REDACTED] a soon-to-be [REDACTED] grader at Trinity Elementary. After the past year of learning remotely, she is very excited to return to in-person learning and have more opportunities to socialize with her classmates.

However, I am concerned about the WCS Health and Wellness Guidelines for this school year not requiring masks for the unvaccinated. The American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control both now strongly advise that face masks be worn by every unvaccinated person physically returning to school. As you know, children under the age of 12 can not yet be vaccinated, so the behavior of everyone within a school can negatively impact the long-term health of our children regardless of their personal levels of responsibility. Even if an initial case of Covid-19 is considered mild, the long-term impacts on personal health can include a noticeable decline in IQ and a significant increase in likelihood of being diagnosed with a neurological or cognitive disorder. No child should have to experience the long-term health repercussions of our unwillingness to take reasonable and temporary safety precautions.

The Delta variant of Covid-19 is more easily transmissible than what we saw spreading in our community last year, when WCS rightfully required masks be worn in schools. This new variant has also been shown to be more dangerous for younger people, and the peak spread of this variant in the United States is projected to be sometime in September.

I fear that permitting students and staff to return to full-capacity schools without mask requirements and other precautions will result in widespread infection. Given the days-long pre-symptomatic period for Covid-19, infected individuals will certainly spread the disease within our schools before they even realize they are sick. This disease will harm children, teachers, and support staff. I urge you to consider updated health and wellness guidelines that require masks in indoor environments for the safety and wellbeing of our children.

Will you consider a mask requirement? If not, what data or metrics might compel you to reinstate a mask requirement as our local situation changes?

Thank you,  
Dave Lane  
[REDACTED]

right thing. I know you're hearing it from both sides, loudly and emotionally. But there is only one side that is backed by the medical community, the scientists, the people that have all the information. You need to follow their lead on this.

Thank you,  
Alyssa Volker  
Parent of [REDACTED]

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 4:29:39 PM  
**To:** Jennifer Ladd <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Please consider masking those ineligible for vaccines

Hi, Jennifer. As you may know by now, WCS will have Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss COVID-19 Guidelines.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jennifer Ladd <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 6:28 PM  
**To:** Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Please consider masking those ineligible for vaccines

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Please reconsider sending our kids back in masks! Please call an emergency board meeting! Please! MNPS just passed today that their kids have to be masked. Let's follow and be an example! Vanderbilt called off elective surgeries because they are out of beds! WilCo's pediatric covid cases are skyrocketing and school hasn't even started yet! My children aren't old enough to be vaccinated but will be when they can!

Please reconsider! Please keep our kids safe!

Thank you,  
Jennifer Ladd  
[REDACTED]

On Wed, Jul 28, 2021 at 8:18 AM Jennifer Ladd <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
The AAP and the CDC both are now recommending masks. Williamson County's numbers are at a "very high risk" right now and rising. Why are the kids not going back in masks?! Williamson County will soon be caught in a situation of closing again as we have to quarantine so many students. It's coming. Why wait until it's too late and so many of your student become ill? And not just our students, but parents and grandparents of these students.

Please reconsider masks.

My email to Jason Golden on July 13, 2021:

I'm a parent of 8 and 11 year old boys, both of which are not eligible to receive the vaccine yet. As the last school year ended, it sounded as if masks would be optional this school year. And while I agree that it probably a good idea for those able to get the vaccine, what about those that can't get it yet? I can send my kids to school with masks, but let's be honest- Noone else will be wearing them. And what will be the point then? Please consider requiring the younger students wear masks, at least until Pfizer approves the vaccine and they have the chance to get vaccinated.

This coming from a nurse that has worked through the pandemic at Williamson Medical Center and sub nurse for WCS.

Thank you,  
Jennifer Ladd BSN, RN

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 3:56:11 PM  
**To:** Jody O'Brien <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: PLEASE MANDATE UNIVERSAL MASKING IN K-12  
**Attachments:** [image003.jpg](#)

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Thanks, Jody.  
As you may know by now, WCS will have Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss COVID-19 Guidelines.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jody O'Brien <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 6, 2021 5:39 PM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aperia <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** PLEASE MANDATE UNIVERSAL MASKING IN K-12

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear Mr. Golden and School Board Members:

Thank you for calling a special meeting to reconsider WCS health and wellness guidelines in light of the spike of pediatric COVID-19 cases. **I unequivocally support and call upon you for an immediate mask mandate for all schools grades K-12 requiring universal masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status.** This is especially critical at the elementary level because every single child in elementary school is too young to have received a COVID-19 vaccination, and there is rapidly mounting evidence that the Delta variant is not only more transmissible but also causing more severe illness in children (contrary to the popular and stale refrain that children are unlikely to spread or have severe Covid-19 responses).

However, universal masking is important at every grade level and for fully vaccinated individuals as well because the data has proven that fully vaccinated people become ill with COVID-19 ("breakthrough cases") from the Delta variant. Fully vaccinated people carry and distribute the same viral load as someone who has Covid-19 and has not been vaccinated. Many breakthrough infections have been and continue to be diagnosed in Williamson County every day—and that is just the people who are symptomatic prompting them to get a Covid test. There are also others with asymptomatic infections, which is especially dangerous because the individual has no idea that he or she is sick and should be isolating.

Do not let the uninformed lowest common denominators amongst our community drive your decisions any longer. It is time to stand on the right side of history. It is time to allow ALL students to return to school as safely as can humanly be made possible. It is time to support our doctors and nurses. It is beyond time to protect the most vulnerable among us. It is beyond time to stop the selfishness and look out for the greater good. It is beyond time to stop allowing a health crisis be politicized. It is beyond time to follow the science. **It is time to rise to the occasion and do everything within your, and our, power to eradicate this plague that is COVID-19. Please listen to us. We are terrified for our children.** Our children deserve to have every adult with any role in or influence over their lives act responsibly and do everything in their power to protect each and every child.

The Lambda and Delta Plus variants are now circulating in the U.S. and may be even more resistant to the vaccine. By proceeding unmasked and letting the virus spread unchecked, you are allowing a fertile breeding ground for these and more dangerous and completely vaccine resistant variants to mutate.

It is grotesque that mask-wearing has been politicized, and shame on each and every one of you who have pushed, placated, or capitulated to the anti-mask agenda (thank you to those of you who have not, despite having

your hands tied by other Board members). Children's deaths will be on your heads if you do not immediately course correct. The deaths of children at what would not get emergency medical treatment or life-saving surgeries for heart attacks, car accidents, sepsis, and a whole host of non-COVID conditions because our hospitals are overburdened and are or shortly will be full to capacity, due in large part to spread amongst children and staff in schools, will be on your heads.

Because of anti-vaxxers and anti-maskers, and past capitulation to their agendas, we have lost tremendous ground in the fight against the novel coronavirus, and vaccination alone is no longer enough. There was a window where it might have been enough if all eligible universally vaccinated. They didn't, and now our children are paying the price. Severe pediatric cases of COVID-19 are spiking. **As of today, there are 27 children hospitalized in Tennessee for COVID-19 infections—10 of them in the ICU.** Our hospitals are already woefully understaffed and are filling up quickly. They are cancelling surgical procedures (both at Williamson Medical Center and Vanderbilt). Last night at Williamson Medical Center, there were at least two people forced to wait in ambulances in the parking lot because all of the ER beds were full. We are on the brink of a healthcare crisis the likes of which we have never seen in Tennessee before, not even in 2020. We watched similar crises unfold from afar in NYC and Italy. The only way those ever came into check was through a combination of mask mandates, immediate contact tracing, and quarantine lockdowns.

Jason Golden, you are an attorney by education and training if not in practice now. You especially know how hollow the claims of anti-maskers are when they cry "unconstitutional" and "unlawful." You know about the exceptions for public health and safety. You know that under the Constitution of the United States and the Tennessee State Constitution, governments and quasi-governmental agencies can implement measures that may impede on individual liberties in order to protect, preserve, and promote the health, safety, and general public welfare.

WCS needs to use every tool available to combat this increasingly severe and deadly disease in children and implement no less than the following:

- Vaccination for all eligible.
- Require universal masking for all students at every level, as well as all staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- In addition to masking, maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. (We have already seen from many photographs and classroom settings that this is not happening despite the lip service it has been given—children are sitting in desk clusters all pushed together again, they are congregating on the carpet areas in a scrum for morning meetings, etc.).
- You must mitigate opportunity for spread during mealtimes when masks have to be removed to eat—return to in classroom lunches/the pod approach.
- Additional ventilation such as open windows and air purifiers, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette should be employed.
- Testing and contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection must be resurrected and not abdicated to local health agencies. It is imperative that schools notify families and require quarantine and isolation every single time there is a known exposure.

In case your advisors have missed it, here are but some of the very alarming reports from recent days:

- **Tennessee's pediatric COVID-19 cases 'quickly on the rise,' state health official says. 27 children hospitalized, 10 in ICU.** <https://www.wkrn.com/news/tn-health-education-officials-covid-update-august-6/?fbclid=IwAR0gkctcB1zEzgBpfirvZBof2f8O53jTrzvF-PbUbH2juTRna4kqbD7n2VQQ>
- **Number of school-aged children in Tennessee recently testing positive for COVID rockets.** [https://fox17.com/news/local/number-of-school-aged-children-in-tennessee-recently-testing-positive-for-covid-rockets-delta-variant-coronavirus-news-davidson-county-williamson-county-sumner-county-shelby-county-news?fbclid=IwAR3w\\_cm3GPMZKqoKcjdFrlfvY7vMGCZf5FADB1b\\_N0XaBTIL17CEi1o8Pvk](https://fox17.com/news/local/number-of-school-aged-children-in-tennessee-recently-testing-positive-for-covid-rockets-delta-variant-coronavirus-news-davidson-county-williamson-county-sumner-county-shelby-county-news?fbclid=IwAR3w_cm3GPMZKqoKcjdFrlfvY7vMGCZf5FADB1b_N0XaBTIL17CEi1o8Pvk)
- **4 COVID-19 patients in pediatric intensive care at East Tennessee Children's Hospital.** <https://www.wate.com/news/local-news/4-covid-19-patients-in-pediatric-intensive-care-at-east-tennessee-childrens-hospital/>
- **Two children died from COVID-19 over the weekend, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital says.** <https://www.commercialappeal.com/story/news/health/2021/08/03/memphis-covid-19-children-le-bonheur-childrens-hospital/5476122001/>
- **Covid-19 cases among US children and teens jumped 84% in a week, pediatrician group says.** <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/03/us/covid-19-children-teens/index.html>
- **Not only are Delta infections among vaccinated contagious, but the Lambda variant, which is in the U.S. now, shows vaccine resistance in lab.** Senior researcher of the University of Tokyo believes 'Lambda can be a potential threat to the human society.'" [https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/delta-infections-among-vaccinated-likely-contagious-lambda-variant-shows-vaccine-2021-08-02/?fbclid=IwAR11VK\\_DQUp3KNAAGlew0GPp6hfCbs-WSTtQlyNZ28yjGANakjOffFWtcI](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/delta-infections-among-vaccinated-likely-contagious-lambda-variant-shows-vaccine-2021-08-02/?fbclid=IwAR11VK_DQUp3KNAAGlew0GPp6hfCbs-WSTtQlyNZ28yjGANakjOffFWtcI)
- **Fauci fears a COVID variant worse than Delta could be coming.** <https://www.axios.com/fauci-delta-variant-covid-d1c0d550-6624-417d-bde6-33c8f56deaba.html?fbclid=IwAR1jmsChfoQNGpSecuSfX7kIWcQO5W8ICZ2Dj8kD15xWohZjd-gllL-KRf0>
- Arkansas Children's hospitals report record high number of children hospitalized with Covid-19, as the illness continues to prey upon the state's unvaccinated population. The hospitals, located in Little Rock and Springdale, said **24 pediatric patients were hospitalized with Covid-19 a couple of weeks ago, a 50% increase over any previous peak** during the pandemic. **Of the 24 children, seven were in intensive care and two were on ventilators**, at the time this article was published. "We're seeing a real surge with the Delta variant that we did not see previously," Dr. Rick Barr, chief clinical officer at Arkansas Children's Hospital, told CNN. "This is the worst that we've seen it for kids, absolutely." <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/28/us/arkansas-covid-children/index.html>
- Southwest Missouri has seen an increase in COVID infections among children in the unvaccinated 0-11 age group, and has seen outbreaks in settings like day cares and camps. [https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/southwest-missouri-sees-increase-in-covid-infections-among-children/article\\_9ce3af06-43e1-508f-beb0-4324b9ab36fc.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/southwest-missouri-sees-increase-in-covid-infections-among-children/article_9ce3af06-43e1-508f-beb0-4324b9ab36fc.html)
- **The American Academy of Pediatrics said more than 16,000 children had been hospitalized nationwide with the coronavirus during July alone.** <https://www.wptv.com/coronavirus/increasing-number-of-children-hospitalized-with-covid-19-doctor-says>
- 20 children hospitalized across Jacksonville, FL, for COVID-19, a record number, at least five in the ICU as of July 28, 2021. <https://www.actionnewsjax.com/news/local/pediatrician-reports-record-number-children-hospitalized-covid-19-jacksonville/GOVS30XFQJJBZPLCEBC5WQ46724/>
- In Indonesia, more than 150 children died from Covid-19 during the week of July 12 alone, with half the recent deaths involving those younger than 5. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/25/world/asia/children-deaths-virus-indonesia.html>

Sincerely,

**Jody E. O'Brien**  
**O'Brien Law PLLC**

[Redacted]

[Redacted] Ph • [Redacted] Fax

[Redacted]

O'BRIEN

[www.jodyobrienlaw.com](http://www.jodyobrienlaw.com)

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**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 10:41:06 AM  
**To:** Devin P. Sherman, MD <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Statement from the Pulmonary and Critical Care Physicians of Williamson County

Hi, Devin: as you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Thanks for writing.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Devin P. Sherman, MD <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 9:28 AM  
**To:** Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Maria Griego <[REDACTED]>; Leigh Webb <[REDACTED]>; Juli Oyer <[REDACTED]>; Mandi Thompson <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Laura Hunt, MD <[REDACTED]>; Aaron P. Milstone <[REDACTED]>; Tufik R. Assad, MD <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Statement from the Pulmonary and Critical Care Physicians of Williamson County

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Dear members of Williamson County School Board:

We represent the Pulmonary and Critical Care Physicians in Williamson County, in practice at Williamson Medical Center. We are also parents to students in Williamson County, and in both capacities, we strongly request that WCS reassesses its current COVID-19 mitigation policies, and quickly enact recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics, including mandatory masking while indoors.

After a very difficult year, we were all hopeful earlier this summer that we had gained some control of the Pandemic, and that life could return to some sense of normalcy. Unfortunately, we have had this dream shattered over the last 3 weeks, as we have gone from basically no active disease in the community to now having 20 patients admitted to Williamson Medical Center with that number ever increasing. If we use Arkansas, Missouri and Louisiana as our crystal ball, our near-term future is bleak. Most distressing is the substantially increased number of children that are infected with the Delta strain and that are developing critical illness. The Delta strain, as you may know, is more contagious and aggressive, particularly for these unvaccinated populations.

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 2:25:44 PM  
**To:** Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Covid Guidelines

Hi, Alanna. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 1:50 PM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** WCS Covid Guidelines

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

I know this is my 3rd email since July 27 and I truly hate feeling the need to add to your already full inboxes. I also hate the predicament in which you find yourselves as you attempt to make the best decisions with regards to our children's health and education amidst a sea of intense pressure from both sides of the mask debate, as well as threats from local leaders. Unfortunately, since I wrote on July 27, our Williamson County active cases have increased from 591 to over a 1000. Our pediatric hospitals are projected to be completely full by the end of next week. I normally look forward to the start of the school year because I love our schools and our teachers. Tomorrow will be different as I send them into an environment that no longer feels safe. Yes my children will wear their masks, but that is simply not enough knowing how few actually will. Pictures from the Kenrose Back to School Bash (we didn't attend due to COVID concerns) and a quick swing through Woodland to get my child's locker assignment, confirmed for me that your recommendations to mask are simply not enough.

It is not too late to pivot. The AAP and CDC have been clear and our local data more than supports the need to require masks in our school. Please do the right thing to protect the health and safety of our students and to increase the likelihood that our students can remain in person and take advantage of all that WCS has to offer.

Thank you!  
Alanna Truss  
([REDACTED] Parent)

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, HSP*

Legally Privileged/Confidential information may be contained in this communication. It is intended for the use of the individual(s) named. If you are not an intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately and destroy/delete the communication. Any dissemination, distribution, or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited.

On Aug 1, 2021, at 1:09 PM, Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I have remained hopeful that there will be an announcement in advance of Friday with updated COVID guidance including requiring masks in schools. I am also very concerned about back to school events that will occur early this week (e.g, Kenrose Back to School Bash on Tuesday) and likely present an even bigger risk than daily school attendance given the majority of the school population plus parents gathering inside with no mask requirement.

Is there any plan to revisit the health and safety plan in advance of these events and school starting?

Thank you as always for the near impossible job that you do!  
Alanna

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, HSP*

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On Jul 27, 2021, at 4:18 PM, Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Mr. Golden, WCS Board Members, and Director of Health and Safety,

I am incredibly grateful for the extensive efforts and hard decisions you made last year to keep our children in school as much as possible while also prioritizing their health. I, like you, was hopeful that these efforts would not only protect our children last year but also put us in a better position this year such that you wouldn't have to make these hard decisions again.

Unfortunately, the latest data and trends from our state and county indicate that we are currently a substantial to high transmission area. That coupled with low vaccination rates in our 12-18 year olds and the fact that our students under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine yet, makes returning to school without masks a risky decision. Guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC is now clear on requiring masks in the school environment for those vaccinated and unvaccinated.

I recognize that the health and wellness guidelines released on July 21 were based on a snapshot in time including data on local virus spread, hospitalizations, and vaccination. Unfortunately the first two metrics are exponentially worsening and vaccination numbers are increasing at a slow rate (not to mention they are inadequate in our school age population).

Please reconsider your decision re: masks for the start of the school year in accordance with the

recommendations of our leading health agencies. This past year and a half has proven that encouraging and advising masks be worn is sadly not sufficient. We all want our kids healthy and in school and need to work together to make this a reality.

Thank you for your consideration  
Alanna Truss  
(Kenrose and Woodland parent)

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.*  
*Clinical Psychologist, HSP*



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We recognize this has been a turbulent year, and that making decisions for the school system during this rapidly changing landscape is challenging at best. However, we truly believe that there can be no greater charge for the leaders of WCS than ensuring the safety of our students and children. What happens if one of our students develops severe illness or worse, and there were options available to prevent this outcome that we did not take? Unlike last year, when we were blindly preparing for a school year in the setting of an expanding Pandemic without good information, we now have clear data collected over the past year: In-person school is safe when mask mandates are applied and enforced and coupled with other straightforward mitigation strategies such as distancing and hand hygiene. I am told that there are community medical consultants that are helping draft the WCS policies. As critical care physicians that have fought this pandemic tooth and nail on the frontlines in Williamson County for the past 18 months, let us offer our stance: there can be no equivocation on the right decision given the current state of things in our county. The recommendations given by experts are clear, apply to us and we simply must follow them to adequately protect our children.

I appreciate your consideration of these vitally important issues,

- Tufik Assad, MD
- Laura Hunt, MD
- Aaron Milstone, MD
- Devin Sherman, MD

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IMPORTANT: This communication and all attachments contain confidential information, some or all of which may be protected health information as defined by the federal Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. This transmission is intended for the exclusive use of the individual or entity to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is proprietary, privileged, confidential and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient (or an employee or agent responsible for delivering this facsimile transmission to the intended recipient), you are hereby notified that any disclosure, dissemination, distribution or copying of this information is strictly prohibited and may be subject to legal restriction or sanction. Please notify the Williamson Medical Center Privacy Officer at [REDACTED] to arrange for the return or destruction of the information and all copies.



**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 5:23:37 PM  
**To:** Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Covid Guidelines

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Alanna, counseling comes in handy during years like this one 🍀🍀🍀🍀

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 4:59 PM  
**To:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Covid Guidelines

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Thank you for your email. I am remaining optimistic about Tuesday's meeting, particularly given MNPS recent decision to require masks, as well as all of the Catholic Diocese schools in the area and several private schools. I hope we will follow suit and increase the likelihood of our kids staying healthy and in the classroom.

Thank you for all that you do! I know it's never easy and these past couple of years have been exceptionally difficult.

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, HSP*  
[REDACTED]

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On Aug 7, 2021, at 2:25 PM, Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi, Alanna. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 1:50 PM

**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** WCS Covid Guidelines

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

I know this is my 3rd email since July 27 and I truly hate feeling the need to add to your already full inboxes. I also hate the predicament in which you find yourselves as you attempt to make the best decisions with regards to our children's health and education amidst a sea of intense pressure from both sides of the mask debate, as well as threats from local leaders. Unfortunately, since I wrote on July 27, our Williamson County active cases have increased from 591 to over a 1000. Our pediatric hospitals are projected to be completely full by the end of next week. I normally look forward to the start of the school year because I love our schools and our teachers. Tomorrow will be different as I send them into an environment that no longer feels safe. Yes my children will wear their masks, but that is simply not enough knowing how few actually will. Pictures from the Kenrose Back to School Bash (we didn't attend due to COVID concerns) and a quick swing through Woodland to get my child's locker assignment, confirmed for me that your recommendations to mask are simply not enough.

It is not too late to pivot. The AAP and CDC have been clear and our local data more than supports the need to require masks in our school. Please do the right thing to protect the health and safety of our students and to increase the likelihood that our students can remain in person and take advantage of all that WCS has to offer.

Thank you!  
Alanna Truss  
(KES and WMS Parent)

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, HSP*

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On Aug 1, 2021, at 1:09 PM, Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]> wrote:

I have remained hopeful that there will be an announcement in advance of Friday with updated COVID guidance including requiring masks in schools. I am also very concerned about back to school events that will occur early this week (e.g. Kenrose Back to School Bash on Tuesday) and likely present an even bigger risk than daily school attendance given the majority of the school population plus parents gathering inside with no mask requirement.

Is there any plan to revisit the health and safety plan in advance of these events and school starting?

Thank you as always for the near impossible job that you do!  
Alanna

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.  
Clinical Psychologist, HSP*

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On Jul 27, 2021, at 4:18 PM, Alanna Truss, Ph.D. <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Mr. Golden, WCS Board Members, and Director of Health and Safety,

I am incredibly grateful for the extensive efforts and hard decisions you made last year to keep our children in school as much as possible while also prioritizing their health. I, like you, was hopeful that these efforts would not only protect our children last year but also put us in a better position this year such that you wouldn't have to make these hard decisions again.

Unfortunately, the latest data and trends from our state and county indicate that we are currently a substantial to high transmission area. That coupled with low vaccination rates in our 12-18 year olds and the fact that our students under 12 are not eligible for the vaccine yet, makes returning to school without masks a risky decision. Guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC is now clear on requiring masks in the school environment for those vaccinated and unvaccinated.

I recognize that the health and wellness guidelines released on July 21 were based on a snapshot in time including data on local virus spread, hospitalizations, and vaccination. Unfortunately the first two metrics are exponentially worsening and vaccination numbers are increasing at a slow rate (not to mention they are inadequate in our school age population).

Please reconsider your decision re: masks for the start of the school year in accordance with the recommendations of our leading health agencies. This past year and a half has proven that encouraging and advising masks be worn is sadly not sufficient. We all want our kids healthy and in school and need to work together to make this a reality.

Thank you for your consideration  
Alanna Truss  
(Kenrose and Woodland parent)

*Alanna Truss, Ph.D.*  
*Clinical Psychologist, HSP*



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**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 2:18:39 PM  
**To:** James Lee <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS COVID Policies - Info needed for impact to my children

Thanks, Lee family. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** James Lee <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 12:34 PM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Ashley Lee <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** WCS COVID Policies - Info needed for impact to my children

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Hello, WCS Board Members,

My two children, [REDACTED] are very excited for the start of school at Mill Creek Elementary School tomorrow. It has been a fun summer, but they are looking forward to being back with their friends at school.

With that in mind, my wife and I have watched with great interest the announcement of the school system's policies for COVID-related protections, and to be honest, we are very concerned with what we feel is an inadequate response. Our children attended in-person school last year because we felt like the district was doing its best to put in place protections for the kids with social distancing and mandatory mask policies. We signed our children up for the 2021-2022 in-person school year with the understanding that similar protections would be put in place, if the CDC and other similar health authorities recommended.

Now as we come in to the start of the year, we are in the midst of a rising COVID spike, and the CDC is recommending again that all schools institute mandatory mask policies, especially as there is no vaccine available for children under 12. While acknowledging this on one hand, the district has announced that masks will only be "recommended" - a policy that essentially defaults the schools to the protection level of those who take the fewest precautions. Even if my children take the "recommended" actions, others who do not feel these actions are necessary may be sitting 3 feet away, completely negating the effectiveness of any precautions that my children are taking.

I understand that the district is in a hard place and that there will be people displeased no matter what policies are

enacted. However, I would have expected the district to take the most conservative approach of following the health authorities, such as those at Williamson Medical Center, who have pleaded with the district to take additional measures. Can you clarify who the medical professionals are that you relied on to help come to the current decision? Why is their advice in such stark contrast to those who would seem to have the most qualified experience on the actual current impact of COVID on our community: the Emergency Room doctors? My children's long-time pediatrician also recommended to us that they wear mask. With current Williamson County vaccination rates at or below the national average, and active COVID cases at or higher than the national average, what is the justification that our school district should take more relaxed measures than the CDC recommends?

In any case, if the district is not intending to update its policies, That lead to several questions related to how it impacts my children, listed below:

1. If masks are "recommended", does that mean that school employees will be required to wear them?
2. If masks will not be required for all employees, is it allowable to ask if my students' specific teachers will be wearing masks or to know their vaccination status?
3. If my student's teacher had not planned to wear a mask, can I request my student's teacher to wear a mask?
4. If my students' teachers will not be wearing masks and/or are not vaccinated, can I request my student be moved to a different classroom, where the teacher will be taking such precautions?
5. Is it possible for my child to be placed in to a class where *all* students in the class have elected to wear a mask?
6. If none of these accommodations can be provided, is it possible for my children to be changed to the the WCS online school?

I reached out to the MCES principal, Julie Sparrow, to ask these questions and to see what these policies look like as they are directly applied. She told me that the answer to all these questions except #6 is "no". I have also reached out to Superintendent Golden and Executive Director of Health and Wellness Gary Anderson.

I hope you understand that it feels like the district's decision has taken away my options, rather than allowed "every parent to do what is best for their child." Can anyone explain why there are no options available for parents who take the warnings of the CDC, their pediatrician, and other health professionals *literally* when they are told that the best action outside vaccination is the combination of masking and 6 foot physical distancing, neither of which the district's decision realistically allows me to follow.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate you reading my letter and addressing my concerns in this busy time.

Sincerely,

James and Ashley Lee  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 3:11:51 PM  
**To:** James Lee <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS COVID Policies - Info needed for impact to my children

Thanks, James. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** James Lee <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 9:23 AM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Ashley Lee <[REDACTED]>; Julie Sparrow <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS COVID Policies - Info needed for impact to my children

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Hello Williamson County School Board leaders,

I have heard the announcement that a special board session will be held this Tuesday to further discuss the district's COVID policies. I am greatly encouraged that you are listening to the concerns of many WCS families about the surging COVID impact to our county and the appropriate response to keep our children as safe as possible.

I hope that you take the all recommendations of our local and national health authorities literally, and implement all CDC recommended mitigation strategies, **including mandatory masking**. I understand that many folks on the other side of the issue want to frame this issue as hinging on "parents' choice", but it seems evident to me that the school system feels comfortable with many other policies that restrict "choice" (food allergy restrictions, dress codes, no smoking, etc.) for the sake of the overall health and wellness of our children and staff. It should seem that the severity of this situation would warrant a more conservative approach than the currently instituted policies.

I know your team performs a thankless job, and it will be impossible to please everyone. However, I **beg** you to make the choice that best protects all those in your care. Thank you for your service to our community.

Sincerely,  
  
James Lee

On Aug 5, 2021, at 12:34 PM, James Lee <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hello, WCS Board Members,

My two children, [REDACTED], are very excited for the start of school at Mill Creek Elementary School tomorrow. It has been a fun summer, but they are looking forward to being back with their friends at school.

With that in mind, my wife and I have watched with great interest the announcement of the school system's policies for COVID-related protections, and to be honest, we are very concerned with what we feel is an inadequate response.

Our children attended in-person school last year because we felt like the district was doing its best to put in place protections for the kids with social distancing and mandatory mask policies. We signed our children up for the 2021-2022 in-person school year with the understanding that similar protections would be put in place, if the CDC and other similar health authorities recommended.

Now as we come in to the start of the year, we are in the midst of a rising COVID spike, and the CDC is recommending again that all schools institute mandatory mask policies, especially as there is no vaccine available for children under 12. While acknowledging this on one hand, the district has announced that masks will only be "recommended" - a policy that essentially defaults the schools to the protection level of those who take the fewest precautions. Even if my children take the "recommended" actions, others who do not feel these actions are necessary may be sitting 3 feet away, completely negating the effectiveness of any precautions that my children are taking.

I understand that the district is in a hard place and that there will be people displeased no matter what policies are enacted. However, I would have expected the district to take the most conservative approach of following the health authorities, such as those at Williamson Medical Center, who have pleaded with the district to take additional measures. Can you clarify who the medical professionals are that you relied on to help come to the current decision?

Why is their advice in such stark contrast to those who would seem to have the most qualified experience on the actual current impact of COVID on our community: the Emergency Room doctors? My children's long-time pediatrician also recommended to us that they wear mask. With current Williamson County vaccination rates at or below the national average, and active COVID cases at or higher than the national average, what is the justification that our school district should take more relaxed measures than the CDC recommends?

In any case, if the district is not intending to update its policies, That lead to several questions related to how it impacts my children, listed below:

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3. If my student's teacher had not planned to wear a mask, can I *request* my student's teacher to wear a mask?
4. If my students' teachers will not be wearing masks and/or are not vaccinated, can I request my student be moved to a different classroom, where the teacher will be taking such precautions?
5. Is it possible for my child to be placed in to a class where *all* students in the class have elected to wear a mask?
6. If none of these accommodations can be provided, is it possible for my children to be changed to the the WCS online school?

I reached out to the MCES principal, Julie Sparrow, to ask these questions and to see what these policies look like as they are directly applied. She told me that the answer to all these questions except #6 is "no". I have also reached out to Superintendent Golden and Executive Director of Health and Wellness Gary Anderson.

I hope you understand that it feels like the district's decision has taken away my options, rather than allowed "every parent to do what is best for their child." Can anyone explain why there are no options available for parents who take the warnings of the CDC, their pediatrician, and other health professionals *literally* when they are told that the best action outside vaccination is the combination of masking and 6 foot physical distancing, neither of which the district's decision realistically allows me to follow.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate you reading my letter and addressing my concerns in this busy time.

Sincerely,

James and Ashley Lee

[REDACTED]



**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 10:42:22 AM  
**To:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

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Hi, Jared: as you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 3:29 PM  
**To:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Thank you for reading it and responding. I hope you are doing well, and I don't envy all the emails I'm sure you've gotten for that last year and a half!

We miss running into yall in the back yard.

Take care,

Jared

On Sun, Aug 1, 2021, 2:16 PM Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
Thank you, Jared.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 2:13 PM

**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; Mandi Thompson <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>; Maria Griego <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Juli Oyer <[REDACTED]>; Brent Oakley <[REDACTED]>; Leigh Webb <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

August 1, 2021

Esteemed board members and administrators:

I first want to say thank you for being a part of making the Williamson County School System one of the best systems in the state and region. The excellence associated with our school district would not be possible without thoughtful and intelligent leadership, high quality teachers, and high level of student and parent involvement. These traits do not come together to make greatness by accident, but rather are the result of intentionality and consistency in pursuit of striving for excellence. Being great is hard work, and I thank you for making our district the envy of most parents in Tennessee.

I myself am a product of WCS, just as my parents, grandparents, and generations before my grandparents were. My opportunities in life have been in part due to the outstanding education I received in this county. I am thankful that my children have been able to continue the multigenerational privilege of attending Williamson County Schools. My education led me to the healthcare industry. I have been a practicing Physician Assistant for 13 years, with the last 10 of those being here in Franklin. I am honored to serve my family, friends, and neighbors both in our clinic and at Williamson Medical Center.

It is within this context that I write to you today regarding the recent announcement about Covid precautions for the upcoming school year. I was disappointed when the district announced that it would not require masks for the fall. I know that there has been significant pushback against the use of masks, and I realize that some of those against masking have been well organized, very vocal, and willing to attempt to use the legal system to fight against the use of masks. I know you must be exhausted from the burden of hearing the complaints from both sides, and from the burden of having the students', teachers', and staff's health in your hands.

In the email written to families to inform us of the Covid policy, dated July 21st, 2021, the district noted the recommendation of both the CDC and the AAP for unvaccinated people to wear masks in schools. The email also correctly cited that the CDC stated that individual districts may choose to implement less stringent standards based on the local conditions. I suspect that WCS's policy was crafted in the weeks prior to the email, which were among the best weeks in the last year for our Covid transmission levels in this county. The status of the virus in our county, however, has changed dramatically in the last couple of weeks, which now puts the WCS policy in direct contradiction with national guidelines and recommendations.

Per the CDC recommendations that were cited in the decision to forgo a mask requirement in the email, schools "should consider levels of community transmission as they assess the risk of transmission within their school. If community transmission is high and community vaccination level is low, students and staff are more likely to come to school while infectious, and introduce SARS-CoV-2 into the schools." While our county's vaccination rate is over 50% (the highest percentage county in the 8th least vaccinated state in the country), our vaccination rate in students under 12 years old is 0%. Per the CDC's "Indicators and thresholds for risk of introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in schools", Williamson County is currently in the "higher risk for transmission" and "highest risk of transmission" in schools in 4 of the 7 categories. This seems to be in direct opposition to WCS's thoughts that our community's incidence rate is low (albeit I recognize it is a rapidly moving metric). Your email also mentioned that our local hospitalization rate is low, which was true at Williamson Medical Center at the time your email was written. But we have seen a marked increase in hospitalist and ICU patients since July 21st. Just 2 days ago, the hospital once again announced they were stopping elective, overnight surgeries due to

needing staff and possibly beds for the significant increase in COVID patients. Even today as I write this, we are having trouble transferring one of our non-Covid surgical patients from another hospital's ICU to Williamson's ICU as we may not have adequate staffing or ICU beds at Williamson. We are already facing staffing shortages at the hospital in terms of nursing staff, and I am concerned another wave of Covid patients may overwhelm our ability to care for our community.

While healthy children (not all children in the WCS district are healthy) are generally not affected as severely by Covid as adults, there is some emerging evidence that the Delta variant (the primary variant in our community) may be more severe for children than previous variants. At the very least it is most certainly much more contagious than the original Covid virus. Studies released this past week show that while someone infected with the wild, original strain of Covid would infect 1-2 other people with the virus, someone with the Delta variant infects between 5-9 other people with the virus. This makes the Delta variant one of the most transmissible respiratory viruses we know of, similar in contagiousness to chickenpox. This means that the situation has changed since last year. We are currently in a place where we will likely have significantly more infection in our schools this coming year. I do not understand the impetus to decrease protection against the virus in this context. If anything, we should be increasing protective measures.

I implore you to reconsider the health policies at this time. We have a virus that is between 5 and 9 times more contagious than what we were dealing with last year. We have a majority of students who are eligible for vaccination who are still unvaccinated, and an entire cohort under the age of 12 that still does not have the option to be vaccinated. Widespread Covid in our schools is likely to interrupt more children at this time than it did last year, due to the increased contagiousness and the decreased use of mitigation measures such as masking and distancing. This has the potential to cause children who desperately need consistency in school this year to be more likely to be quarantined. While complications in children are relatively rare, they are not unheard of, and will likely increase along with the higher number of cases in younger children. Studies have shown that between 0.1% and 1.9% of pediatric Covid patients are hospitalized. With a significantly higher rate of infection, we will have more students infected and will have a commensurate increase in hospitalization. Our local hospital is filling more by the day. While just over 50% of our county is fully vaccinated, just under 50% is not, leaving approximately 100,000 of our residents (children and adults) at risk of considerable morbidity and mortality. It is well documented that students can contribute to the overall level of infection in households and communities, which puts unvaccinated older residents at increased risk. It is well documented in the scientific literature that universal masking reduces risk for everyone in the school as well as in the community. It is also well documented that wearing a mask does not cause other health problems as some have suggested. Cohorting our children in classrooms, preventing everyone from eating together, and attempting 3 feet of distance when feasible are also demonstrably helpful in preventing widespread infection in our school.

My 12 year old has been vaccinated, and when a safe vaccine is approved for my younger two WCS students, they will be vaccinated as well. Until then, and perhaps after then if dictated by the situation at that time, my children will be wearing masks in school and in any other building they go in. But it is very clear that the most protection comes from masks when everyone wears them.

As a native of Franklin, a Physician Assistant in the community, and most importantly as a parent, I ask you to please reinstate mask requirements, cohorting, and distancing when possible in addition to continuing the other measures that are in place. I do thank you for advising and recommending that unvaccinated students wear masks, but I think we can do more to protect our students and community. If effective vaccines become readily available for all school age children, or if the conditions change in terms of the amount of virus circulating (similar to the numbers we had just a few weeks ago), a change in the plan would be appropriate to not require masks. But the current guidance is against the recommendations of the CDC, AAP, medical professionals in our community, and common sense. My frustration with this policy has been a good reminder of how rarely I have had any problem or disagreement with the way our district educates our students. With that being said, thank you for your commitment to the health, wellbeing, and education of my children.

I have attached the links below to the CDC "Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools", the CDC's "Indicators and Thresholds for Risk of Introduction and Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools", the American Academy of Pediatrics "COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools", and the AAP's "Updated Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021", released 7/19/21. All of these were used in my research for this letter, along with the TN Department of Health's Covid Website and WCS Health and Wellness website.

I would be happy to speak with any of you regarding anything in this letter. My cell phone number is [REDACTED].

With humility, concern, and sincerity,

Jared Vaughn, MSM, PA-C

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/indicators-thresholds-table.pdf>

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/>

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 3:06:30 PM  
**To:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

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Jared, the meeting starts at 6 pm in the county auditorium at the county building. It will be packed, and many will likely be unmasked.

If you want to sign up for public comment, I recommend being there very early.

If you choose to watch the livestream, it will be posted on the WCS website.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 10:43 AM  
**To:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Thank you for reaching out. I did hear about it. What is the process for community participation in that meeting?

Jared

On Sat, Aug 7, 2021, 10:42 AM Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
Hi, Jared: as you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 3:29 PM  
**To:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Thank you for reading it and responding. I hope you are doing well, and I don't envy all the emails I'm sure you've gotten for that last year and a half!

We miss running into yall in the back yard.

Take care,

Jared

On Sun, Aug 1, 2021, 2:16 PM Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Thank you, Jared.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Jared Vaughn <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Sunday, August 1, 2021 2:13 PM

**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>; Mandi Thompson <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>; Maria Griego <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Juli Oyer <[REDACTED]>; Brent Oakley <[REDACTED]>; Leigh Webb <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** WCS Fall 2021 Covid Precautions

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

August 1, 2021

Esteemed board members and administrators:

I first want to say thank you for being a part of making the Williamson County School System one of the best systems in the state and region. The excellence associated with our school district would not be possible without thoughtful and intelligent leadership, high quality teachers, and high level of student and parent involvement. These traits do not come together to make greatness by accident, but rather are the result of intentionality and consistency in pursuit of striving for excellence. Being great is hard work, and I thank you for making our district the envy of most parents in Tennessee.

I myself am a product of WCS, just as my parents, grandparents, and generations before my grandparents were. My opportunities in life have been in part due to the outstanding education I received in this county. I am thankful that my children have been able to continue the multigenerational privilege of attending Williamson County Schools. My education led me to the healthcare industry. I have been a practicing Physician Assistant for 13 years, with the last 10 of those being here in Franklin. I am honored to serve my family, friends, and neighbors both in our clinic and at Williamson Medical Center.

It is within this context that I write to you today regarding the recent announcement about Covid precautions for the upcoming school year. I was disappointed when the district announced that it would not require masks for the fall. I know that there has been significant pushback against the use of masks, and I realize that some of those against masking have been well organized, very vocal, and willing to attempt to use the legal system to fight against the use of masks. I know you must be exhausted from the burden of hearing the complaints from both sides, and from the burden of having the students', teachers', and staff's health in your hands.

In the email written to families to inform us of the Covid policy, dated July 21st, 2021, the district noted the recommendation of both the CDC and the AAP for unvaccinated people to wear masks in schools. The email also correctly cited that the CDC stated that individual districts may choose to implement less stringent standards based on the local conditions. I suspect that WCS's policy was crafted in the weeks prior to the email, which were among the best weeks in the last year for our Covid transmission levels in this county. The status of the virus in our county, however, has changed dramatically in the last couple of weeks, which now puts the WCS policy in direct contradiction with national guidelines and recommendations.

Per the CDC recommendations that were cited in the decision to forgo a mask requirement in the email, schools "should consider levels of community transmission as they assess the risk of transmission within their school. If community transmission is high and community vaccination level is low, students and staff are more likely to come to school while infectious, and introduce SARS-CoV-2 into the schools." While our county's vaccination rate is over 50% (the highest percentage county in the 8th least vaccinated state in the country), our vaccination rate in students under 12 years old is 0%. Per the CDC's "Indicators and thresholds for risk of introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in schools", Williamson County is currently in the "higher risk for transmission" and "highest risk of transmission" in schools in 4 of the 7 categories. This seems to be in direct opposition to WCS's thoughts that our community's incidence rate is low (albeit I recognize it is a rapidly moving metric). Your email also mentioned that our local hospitalization rate is low, which was true at Williamson Medical Center at the time your email was written. But we have seen a marked increase in hospitalist and ICU patients since July 21st. Just 2 days ago, the hospital once again announced they were stopping elective, overnight surgeries due to needing staff and possibly beds for the significant increase in COVID patients. Even today as I write this, we are having trouble transferring one of our non-Covid surgical patients from another hospital's ICU to Williamson's ICU as we may not have adequate staffing or ICU beds at Williamson. We are already facing staffing shortages at the hospital in terms of nursing staff, and I am concerned another wave of Covid patients may overwhelm our ability to care for our community.

While healthy children (not all children in the WCS district are healthy) are generally not affected as severely by Covid as adults, there is some emerging evidence that the Delta variant (the primary variant in our community) may be more severe for children than previous variants. At the very least it is most certainly much more contagious than the original Covid virus. Studies released this past week show that while someone infected with the wild, original strain of Covid would infect 1-2 other people with the virus, someone with the Delta variant infects between 5-9 other people with the virus. This makes the Delta variant one of the most transmissible respiratory viruses we know of, similar in contagiousness to chickenpox. This means that the situation has changed since last year. We are currently in a place where we will likely have significantly more infection in our schools this coming year. I do not understand the impetus to decrease protection against the virus in this context. If anything, we should be increasing protective measures.

I implore you to reconsider the health policies at this time. We have a virus that is between 5 and 9 times more contagious than what we were dealing with last year. We have a majority of students who are eligible for vaccination who are still unvaccinated, and an entire cohort under the age of 12 that still does not have the option to be vaccinated. Widespread Covid in our schools is likely to interrupt more children at this time than it did last year, due to the increased contagiousness and the decreased use of mitigation measures such as masking and distancing. This has the potential to cause children who desperately need consistency in school this year to be more likely to be quarantined. While complications in children are relatively rare, they are not unheard of, and will likely increase along with the higher number of cases in younger children. Studies have shown that between 0.1% and 1.9% of pediatric Covid patients are hospitalized. With a significantly higher rate of infection, we will have more students infected and will have a commensurate increase in hospitalization. Our local hospital is filling more by the day. While just over 50% of our

county is fully vaccinated, just under 50% is not, leaving approximately 100,000 of our residents (children and adults) at risk of considerable morbidity and mortality. It is well documented that students can contribute to the overall level of infection in households and communities, which puts unvaccinated older residents at increased risk. It is well documented in the scientific literature that universal masking reduces risk for everyone in the school as well as in the community. It is also well documented that wearing a mask does not cause other health problems as some have suggested. Cohorting our children in classrooms, preventing everyone from eating together, and attempting 3 feet of distance when feasible are also demonstrably helpful in preventing widespread infection in our school.

My 12 year old has been vaccinated, and when a safe vaccine is approved for my younger two WCS students, they will be vaccinated as well. Until then, and perhaps after then if dictated by the situation at that time, my children will be wearing masks in school and in any other building they go in. But it is very clear that the most protection comes from masks when everyone wears them.

As a native of Franklin, a Physician Assistant in the community, and most importantly as a parent, I ask you to please reinstate mask requirements, cohorting, and distancing when possible in addition to continuing the other measures that are in place. I do thank you for advising and recommending that unvaccinated students wear masks, but I think we can do more to protect our students and community. If effective vaccines become readily available for all school age children, or if the conditions change in terms of the amount of virus circulating (similar to the numbers we had just a few weeks ago), a change in the plan would be appropriate to not require masks. But the current guidance is against the recommendations of the CDC, AAP, medical professionals in our community, and common sense. My frustration with this policy has been a good reminder of how rarely I have had any problem or disagreement with the way our district educates our students. With that being said, thank you for your commitment to the health, wellbeing, and education of my children.

I have attached the links below to the CDC "Guidance for Covid-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools", the CDC's "Indicators and Thresholds for Risk of Introduction and Transmission of COVID-19 in Schools", the American Academy of Pediatrics "COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools", and the AAP's "Updated Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021", released 7/19/21. All of these were used in my research for this letter, along with the TN Department of Health's Covid Website and WCS Health and Wellness website.

I would be happy to speak with any of you regarding anything in this letter. My cell phone number is [REDACTED].

With humility, concern, and sincerity,

Jared Vaughn, MSM, PA-C

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/indicators-thresholds-table.pdf>

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

<https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/>



**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 11:41:04 AM  
**To:** Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Why did the expectation change?

Hi, Nikki. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

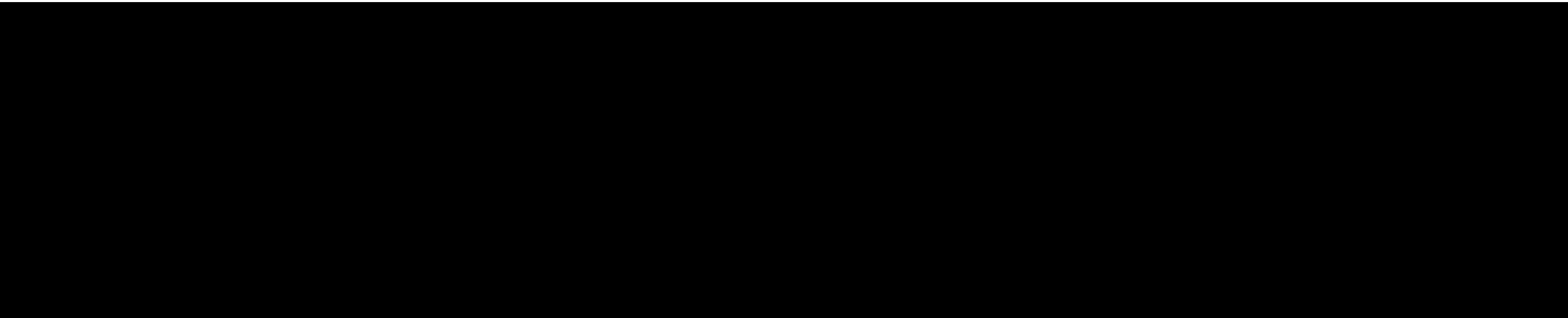
Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:37 AM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Why did the expectation change?

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Hi again,  
  
I wanted to follow up since there has been no update and only one acknowledgement of my email from last week, and since perhaps some more information about my family might help make our situation more real to you all.



If I would have known WCS was treating this year as a "normal" school year despite the repeated assurances of following the

protocols, we would be excited and not scared about the start of school, and my children would be in OLP again. While I genuinely appreciate the pull from parents in our community both ways on masking, I don't understand why the safety of students and staff isn't the top priority over everything else. Teachers can't teach children who are sick, hospitalized, or worse, and there are already a not insignificant amount of students who won't be able to attend the start of school because they have COVID. At least I hope they won't attend, but the current protocols make it very simple for them to do so and turn our community's schools into incubation chambers for this virus.

I've reached out to my building principal and was told they're having conversations about how to minimize exposure and keep our students safe, which I do appreciate. However, I must ask - **without the district offering support for principals, teachers, staff, and students, what can the principals actually do?** If there are conversations going on about the updated public health recommendations and how WCS policy will be updated ASAP to reflect those, thank you, and also, please let parents know that conversation is ongoing. If it's not, please, PLEASE start it now!

At the current rate (according to the [Williamson County Health Department](#)), by next Tuesday the community spread will have passed last year's standard for sending most traditional students to remote learning. **What is different now that means last year's plan didn't work? What do we know that we didn't then? We certainly know more now than we did in May when the mask requirement was lifted at WCS schools.** Vaccines aren't available for most of our elementary students and our community vaccination rate is well below that needed to acquire widespread immunity. Why is there not a public plan to send students home if the spread of this, according to experts (the [American Medical Association](#), [Yale Medicine](#), and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) to name a few) MORE CONTAGIOUS virus strain compared to last year's strain? Even our only county hospital is experiencing a [dramatic increase in patients and urging everyone to follow the CDC recommendations](#) and their pulmonary physicians, who are the county's lung specialists, have written [a letter to you](#), as they are WCS parents and physicians, to follow the recommendations. **Please help them care for the patients they have by preventing the spread of this virus where you can!**

With hope for safety, kindness, and consideration to prevail in our community,

Nikki Ringenberg  
Parent of two elementary students

On Wed, Jul 28, 2021 at 2:04 PM Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
Board members and Mr. Golden,

I'm very concerned about the start of school and the recent protocols, or rather lack thereof, communicated by Carol Birdsong to WCS families on July 21. **As COVID numbers in our county are again on the rise, why is WCS ignoring the recommendations of public health?**

**I'm very disappointed in this decision particularly after some of you assured me via email in March that it was the district's intention to follow CDC guidelines.** I'm extremely concerned at the lack of communication on why those public health recommendations are now being set aside in favor of "encouraging" masks for all and "advising" masks for students under the age of 12. **As the parent of two students under the age of 12, one who has elevated risk factors, I am very concerned about the rate of masking inside schools mirroring that in our community - which in my experience has been very minimal.**

After spending the last year as an OLP family, **we chose to send our students back in person because Jason Golden said publicly, and board members and others with WCS emailed me, that public health recommendations would be followed.** Now that is not the case and we have our hands tied because this group isn't following through on their word.

At the very least, you owe parents an explanation of why you are not following through on your public promises to families, along with the data that supports that decision. Ideally, you will do what you said you would, and follow the public health guidelines.

I do realize this is unfortunately a very political topic, but I also realize one of the biggest lessons we, as a community, can teach our young people is the importance of integrity. I hope you all can come together around demonstrating for our students the value of integrity, and the value of listening to experts, and the value of the health of our students.

On behalf of my children,

Nikki Ringenberg  
Parent of two students at [REDACTED] Elementary

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 2:56:58 PM  
**To:** Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Why did the expectation change?

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Nikki, you are welcome. Thanks for your kind words.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 12:17 PM  
**To:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Why did the expectation change?

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Thank you Nancy. I did hear about that yesterday and am hopeful for a return to following the public health recommendations following that meeting.

Also, thank you for being the only person who has taken the time to reply to any of my emails. I appreciate being heard and acknowledged.

Nikki

On Sat, Aug 7, 2021, 11:41 AM Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]> wrote:  
Hi, Nikki. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Nikki Ringenberg <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 3, 2021 11:37 AM  
**To:** Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath

<[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>

**Subject:** Re: Why did the expectation change?

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Hi again,

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On behalf of my children,

Nikki Ringenberg  
Parent of two students at [REDACTED] Elementary

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 1:51:59 PM  
**To:** Dena Ibrahim <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: 2021-2022 School Year

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Hi, Dena:  
As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Dena Ibrahim <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 4, 2021 7:45 PM  
**To:** Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** 2021-2022 School Year

<<<<<< WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS  
>>>>>>

Dear Mr. Golden and school board members,

When we moved to the Nashville area, we did not have a question in our mind about where we would purchase our home and send our children to school. We were so happy to enroll our daughter in kindergarten 2 years ago in the Williamson County school system - the "best" school system in the state.

Now, that same school system has failed us. We are being asked to send our 7 year old and 5 year old daughters into an unsafe environment because of other's demands. My children WILL be wearing masks, but their masks will not offer sufficient protection in a room full of unvaccinated children and possibly unvaccinated teachers, none of whom are wearing masks. I am a physician - a pediatrician that has dedicated her career to taking care of other people's children. Yet, I am being told that my medical opinion in this case is worthless, because other parents deserve to have a "choice." Why do they have the right to put my child at risk? No one likes masks. No one. But death or disability is worse.

Williamson Medical Center has had a 633% increase in COVID cases in the past 3 weeks. We are drowning in COVID in this state. As a parent, as a physician, I am begging you to reconsider the WCS mask policy.

Thank you,  
Dena Ibrahim  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/7/2021 3:16:51 PM  
**To:** alli finney <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Mark Samuels <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: School safety measures  
**Attachments:** [image0.jpeg](#), [image1.jpeg](#)

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Hi, Alli. As you may know, there is a Special Called Board Meeting on Tuesday night to discuss WCS COVID protocols.

I'm copying in facilities and Covid response staff so that they can see your questions about air filtration.

Nancy

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

---

**From:** alli finney <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 7, 2021 7:23 AM  
**To:** Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** School safety measures

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

Good Morning,

In preparation for the upcoming school board meeting, with a focus on COVID safety measures, I hope you'll come to the conclusion that masking for anyone entering the school building is necessary. The article below, with advice from a Virginia Tech virus expert, recommends [N95, KN95, or KF94 masks](#) to stop the spread of the Delta variant. These were once hard to come by, but are now readily available in stores and online. I would suggest schools keep these types of masks on hand, rather than the blue surgical masks, to distribute to students or visitors who've forgotten to bring a mask to school.

Also recommended are [portable HEPA air filters](#) where whole school air filtration isn't an option. Will air filtration be discussed on Tuesday? If these aren't in the budget for schools, is this something parents or PTOs can help with? I for one will be happy to purchase seven machines for my son's classes if WCS cannot (or will not).



Also, we were told some parts of FHS are closed to students for lunchtime that were once available, like upstairs. Is this a countywide decision, for all schools? If so, I'm an effort to create social distance, and to avoid a crowded lunchroom, can more areas be opened to students for lunch?

With the overall goal of keeping kids safe and in school all year, I hope you'll consider the safety measures above. It still isn't too late to do the right thing for our community.

As always, thanks for all you do for our schools,

Alli Finney  
FHS parent



**The New York Times**



## A Virus Expert's Advice for Safe Schools



Tara Parker-Pope

Reporting on the coronavirus

### Q: Should children wear masks in the classroom?

**A:** Yes, absolutely. A couple of months ago I was on the fence, but now that Delta has emerged, I am firmly on the side of masking.

Get your child a high-performance mask, something like an N95, KN95, or KF94 made to fit kids. Make sure the mask fits

made to fit kids. Make sure the mask fits well with no gaps around the nose, cheeks and chin. It should have metal around the nose bridge, so that you can shape the mask to your child's face.



**The New York Times**



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## **A Virus Expert's Advice for Safe Schools**



Tara Parker-Pope

Reporting on the coronavirus

**Q: What questions should parents be asking the school?**

**A:** Are masks required?

What have you done to improve ventilation?  
(Keep windows and doors open when possible.)

Have you added a portable HEPA air filtration unit to each classroom?

Are the staff members vaccinated?

How are you handling lunch? (An outdoor option is best.)

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/08/05/well/family/school-safety-coronavirus-delta-variant.html>

**From:** Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 8/8/2021 12:10:21 PM  
**To:** Bethany Carnes <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Masks SHOULD be required in schools

Thank you, Bethany. As you may know, our Board is holding a Special Called Meeting on this topic on Tuesday night.

Nancy Garrett  
District 12, Williamson County School Board  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bethany Carnes <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 8, 2021 12:09 PM  
**To:** Jennifer Aprea <[REDACTED]>; Jason Golden <[REDACTED]>; Jay Galbreath <[REDACTED]>; Daniel Cash <[REDACTED]>; Eliot Mitchell <[REDACTED]>; Candace Emerson <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>; Angela Durham <[REDACTED]>; Brad Fiscus <[REDACTED]>; Rick Wimberly <[REDACTED]>; Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Sheila Cleveland <[REDACTED]>; Michael Fletcher <[REDACTED]>; Mandi Thompson <[REDACTED]>; Gary Anderson <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Masks SHOULD be required in schools

**WARNING: EXTERNAL EMAIL - THIS EMAIL DID NOT ORIGINATE FROM WCS**

To whom it may concern,

I write to you as both a parent of two children in Williamson County Schools and as a Pediatrician in Middle TN.

As we start the 2021-22 school year, a large portion of students are not eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and a more contagious COVID variant is now causing the majority of cases in our community. Because of these circumstances and with the understanding that it is important to have all children in school, it is imperative that all students, teachers and staff start the year wearing masks while indoors at school. This has proven to be a safe and effective way to minimize the health risks to children, as well as faculty and staff. I am especially concerned about those children whose health conditions put them at high risk for serious disease and death from this virus and who do not have an option of remote learning this year.

The recent surge in cases has led to an increase in hospitalizations at our local hospitals, including Williamson Medical Center. Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital in Nashville that serves many of the sickest children in our area is also experiencing an increase in hospitalizations and

complications from COVID. I personally have seen a significant increase in positive cases at my office in the past month, with some requiring hospitalization.

At the school board meeting scheduled for this Tuesday, I implore you to do the right thing to protect ALL of our students, teachers, and staff. This is not a political issue, this is a public health issue.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Bethany W Carnes, MD, FAAP