

LYME-OLD LYME SCHOOLS

Regional School District #18

A Private School Experience



in a Public School Setting

Regular Board of Education Meeting

September 1, 2021

Board Present: Diane Linderman, Chair; Martha Shoemaker, Vice Chair; Jean Wilczynski, Treasurer; Steven Wilson, Secretary; Stacey Leonardo; Jennifer Miller; Mary Powell St. Louis

Absent by Previous Arrangement: Rick Goulding; Suzanne Thompson

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Cavalieri, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Kelly Enoch, Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; Ron Turner, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Others Present: Elise DeBernardo and Andrew Hedberg, High School Student Representatives; 27 Community Members from LOL

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairwoman Linderman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Dr. Powell-St. Louis made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of August 4, 2021 as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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III. Visitors

1. LOHS Girls Tennis Team

Members of the Girls Tennis Team, along with their coach Lauren Rahr, were present at the meeting and were duly recognized by the Board for their spring 2021 state championship season (20-0).

2. Report from Student Representatives

Elise DeBernardo and Andrew Hedberg reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:
At LOLHS: The high school had a successful opening of school. It started with the freshmen and newcomers picnic last Wednesday, followed by class meetings, Chromebook distribution and advisory. Fall sports are preparing for the opening of the 2021 season which begins next week. On September 14, the high school will hold the annual Back-to-School Night to give parents a chance to meet their child's teachers for brief course orientations. The Counseling Department will hold Freshmen Parent Night on September 21 and Junior Parent Night on September 23. The month will close with Financial Aid Night on September 28.

At LOLMS: The middle school is off to a great start. On August 25, the Middle School welcomed the 6th graders for orientation and tours, followed by ice cream provided by LYSB. Additionally, an evening meeting took place to welcome and inform the new parents about the middle school and its operation. The first day of school brought welcomed smiles and excitement from both students and staff. Chromebooks were issued this week and school-wide testing of the universal testing assessment is underway. The middle school would like to thank Ron Turner, Brian Howe, and the entire maintenance, summer, and painting crew for making the school look clean and refreshed. The gym floor was completely refinished and is now a mirror of the high school floor, and our courtyard was cleaned out and now is the home to an amazing covered outdoor classroom. The faculty and students are looking forward to a successful year.

At Lyme Consolidated School: The students were very excited to begin the new school year. The staff had their classrooms set up to welcome students into their new learning spaces. The custodial staff worked hard over the summer cleaning and waxing the entire building. A big shout out to the Lyme School custodians, Loyda, Jen and Tim, for doing such a great job. During the first two days of this school year, teachers discussed and reviewed their classroom routines and expectations for learning. The students quickly jumped back into school mode, attending their unified arts classes, going to recess, and having school lunch. The Lyme School staff would also like to thank all the parents for having their children ready to attend school. This helped us have a very smooth opening.

At Mile Creek School: The students at Mile Creek have had a wonderful start to their school year. The students and staff are grateful for the hard work the custodial and maintenance teams put into making the school look great for the first days of school. Students have engaged in community building and getting to know one another through activities. In each class during community meeting time, students are developing classroom agreements representing the positive actions and choices they will make together to reflect their commitment to the school-wide pledge to "Be Safe, Be Kind and Do My Best." We have welcomed six new teachers to our building as well.

In the Preschool Program: On August 26, we welcomed the Lyme-Old Lyme Class of 2034 to Center School. During the opening days of schools, students have been busy learning the routines of preschool – they are exploring the playground, participating in morning meeting, experiencing specials, and generally getting used to being students in our full-day preschool. This month, students are learning about the color red, and the shape of the month is the circle. Also, students are learning the AB pattern and they are working on their “All About Me” posters. The artist of the month is Henri Matisse, and students are reading *The Kissing Hand* and the *First Day of School*. On August 25, we welcomed new and returning families to Center School with teacher-led tours, and we are looking forward to back to school night, which is scheduled for September 22. Everyone at Center School is excited to be back.

3. Public Comment

Because there were many in attendance to speak to the student mask issue, Mrs. Linderman asked if there could be a spokesperson selected to speak for those supporting the students wearing masks in school and those who were opposed to it. She also noted that there was a sign-in sheet for those that wanted to show their support for the spokesperson. Mrs. Linderman stated that those with prepared statements could give them to the Board clerk who would include them in the minutes.

Sally Schwartz, a Lyme resident with two children at Lyme School, spoke on behalf of other parents in attendance (names are listed below). Mrs. Schwartz thanked the Board of Ed and Superintendent for their commitment to the education of the children of the district. She voiced concern over the dialing back of many of the safety measures that were in place last school year despite the children still not being vaccinated. Mrs. Schwartz advocated in favor of instituting these safety protocols again. Mrs. Schwartz also inquired about the guidelines, thresholds, and metrics that the Board and administration are using this year in their decision-making. She asked that questions that were posed to the Board in a letter previously sent to them be addressed so that the parents are aware of expectations and direction.

(Isabelle Barbar, Michelle Yates, Samuel Yates, Cat McDonald, Chris McDonald, Ruth Young, Karen Barker, Megan Litke, Meredith Kranz, Josh Thompson, Kimberly Thompson, Gavin Lodge, Mike Reiter, Katherine Mosborne, Anna Reiter, Marian Calvi-Rogers, Jason Kemp, Al Lowry, Mara Lowry).

Craig Taylor, Old Lyme resident, voiced support for continuing the mask mandate at the schools until the younger children could be vaccinated. He also supported the continuance of the safety practices from last school year and echoed the comments made by Mrs. Schwartz as he hoped the district could continue in-person learning this school year.

Brandy Campbell, a parent of two children attending Lyme School, voiced her support for not requiring the younger children to wear a mask in school citing various data from the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and various countries in Europe which are not requiring masks. She noted that the vaccination rate in the community is high and, along with natural immunity, make mask wearing unnecessary for the younger students.

Danielle Kuczkowski, a parent of children attending Mile Creek and Center School, voiced her appreciation of the work of the Board of Education. She advocated for more utilization of the outdoor classrooms and stated she would dress her children appropriately so that they could learn in the outside environment as long as possible.

Susan Arico, a parent of four students (two at the high school), thanked the Board for their efforts. She voiced her concern over comments made by teachers to students inquiring about their vaccination status. She also questioned teachers asking students their gender pronoun preference. She asked that the school policy on this subject be communicated to parents.

Chris Staab, Old Lyme resident and a parent of students at Mile Creek School, suggested they move in a direction that is best for students and teachers after September 30, possibly loosening the safety measures after this date.

Joe Carpentino, a parent of students at Mile Creek School and LOLMS, read the following statement: I echo the sentiments of many of the parents here tonight. The Board deserves credit and I would like to congratulate them on a job well done in this unprecedented situation. It was a spectacular effort and most successful 2020 to 2021 school year. I am stating for the record my support for the current mask and safety measures to extend past the current deadline of September 30 so I can have the opportunity to stand up here again next year and extend that accolade for the upcoming 2021 to 2022 school year.

Isabelle Barbar, an Old Lyme resident, noted that she has worked in the adolescent health field for 20 years. She asked that the Board and administration respond to what the data and science is saying regarding the pandemic and to follow the guidelines given to them regarding mask wearing. On another matter, she also voiced support for inclusivity in school as when teachers ask for students' pronouns, they are helping students that might feel socially isolated. Mrs. Barbara voiced support for the teachers that are stepping up and being inclusive of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and identity.

There are three additional statements that were submitted to the Board clerk which are attached to the minutes for informational purposes. They are from Mona Colwell, Christina Steiner and Chelsea Yester.

IV. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the September personnel report which reflected the hiring of numerous new staff. He also reviewed the vacancies still to be filled, the majority of which are due to last minute resignations.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the September enrollment report which reflected a total of 1,297 students in-house, 14 fewer students than reported in June 2021. There are slight population variations in all the schools from June to September with the exception of 20 less students in the preschool. This is normal at this time of the school year as preschool enrollments continue throughout the school year as children turn 3-years-old and become eligible for the program.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the many events/programs that occur at this time of the year. He reported on the new staff orientation which involve introductions, a bus tour of the entire district, and technology-focused instruction.

Mr. Neviasher reported on the annual staff convocation which was held outdoors this year due to the pandemic. Andrew Raucci, Instructional Technology Specialist, was named Teacher of the Year, and Patricia Aldrich, Technology Facilitator, was named Employee of the Year. They will be formally recognized at the October Board of Ed meeting.

Mr. Neviasher reported on EdCamp, a professional development opportunity for staff, which took place before the start of school. This involves LOL staff teaching other staff with instruction on subjects such as leadership and team building skills and various technology-centered opportunities.

Mr. Neviasher updated the Board on the strategic planning process. A letter was sent out to various groups (seniors, town leadership, union representatives, PTO chairs, Booster Club, Friends of Music, etc.) inviting them to be involved in this district-wide planning. The first community forum for strategic planning is scheduled for October 27 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the LOLMS auditorium.

Mr. Neviasher updated the Board on the PreK-8 Facilities Study (new title for this initiative). Meetings are and will take place with QA+M Architects, the administration and faculty. QA+M Architects have been very responsive and doing a thorough investigation of the facilities and are spearheading many energy initiatives.

Mr. Neviasher updated the Board on the new vaccination mandates for the district staff. Executive Order 13-D *Protection of public health and safety during COVID-19 pandemic – vaccinations required for state employees, school employees and childcare facility staff* requires the following (abbreviated version): On or before September 27, 2021, school boards shall, prior to extending an offer of employment to, or entering into a contract for the in-person services of, a covered worker or an entity that employs a covered worker (as defined in Executive Order 13D), require that any covered worker: (1) is fully vaccinated against COVID-19; (2) has received the first dose, and either has received a second dose or has an appointment for the second dose in a two-dose series vaccination, or has received a single-dose vaccine; or (3) is exempt from this requirement due to a medical or religious exemption.

After September 27, 2021, school boards, as defined above, shall not employ, or maintain a contract for the provision of in-person services of any covered worker or an entity that employs a covered worker, unless such covered worker is: (1) fully vaccinated against COVID-19; (2) has received the first dose, and has either received a second dose or has an appointment for the second dose in a two-dose series vaccination, or has received a single-dose vaccine; or (3) is exempt from this requirement due to a medical or religious exemption.

After September 27, 2021, no school board shall employ, or contract for the provision of services from, any covered worker or entity that employs a covered worker subject to the above and not exempt who has received the first dose of a two-dose vaccination, but fails to receive the second dose on the appropriate date as recommended by the CDC or at the scheduled appointment, without good cause.

Starting on September 27, 2021, covered workers who do not demonstrate proof of full vaccination must submit to weekly COVID-19 PCR testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated, and must provide adequate proof of the test results to the school board on a weekly basis.

Mr. Neviasser reported that this information has been communicated to all staff, substitutes and coaches.

Mr. Neviasser reported on mitigation strategies that the State of Connecticut has developed for PreK-12 schools with the following goals:

- Getting more students and staff vaccinated.
- Getting students/staff back into schools and on the athletic fields.
- Loosening some of the mask restrictions in schools.

Mr. Neviasser reported on some of the mitigation strategies no longer recommended by the State of Connecticut: excessive cleaning of surfaces (several times a day), one way hallways, and desk shields. Mr. Neviasser reported that the wearing of masks was found to be the most important factor in helping stop the spread of COVID-19. Mr. Neviasser noted that the district will reassess strategies as the year progresses.

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the new quarantine guidelines. He also reviewed the following strategies that have been modified or remain in effect throughout the district:

- Mask wearing mandated.
- Physical distancing of three feet minimum standard (not six feet).
- Cohorting hasn't changed at elementary level although no cohorting at recess.
- Ventilation – settings remain the same as last year.
- Sinks are in all cafeterias and students using routinely.
- Students and staff encouraged to stay home when sick.
- Contact tracing – not drastically different than last year.
- Cleaning – normal cleaning standards/practices in buildings.
- Buses – federal order that masks must be worn on buses.
- Art and music instruction has not changed from last year.
- Remote learning is not being done if student is quarantined with the exception of high school students Zooming into classes. Individualized how students are educated while quarantined (working with families based on students' needs).

FAQs will also be developed to help clarify many of these issues.

In answer to questions posed by the Board, Mr. Neviasser further reported that parent events such as back to school night, fall play, volleyball games (with limited attendance and spacing of attendees) etc., will take place this year in the buildings. Volunteers are allowed back in the classrooms but they must wear a mask. Custodians are back to their former schedules with some overlap for cleaning cafeterias, etc.

2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of August 31, 2021. Fluctuations of note: Year over year spending is down due to reductions in utility costs and heating oil, as well as savings in transportation due to reduced runs, actual versus budget. There will be an even greater transportation savings as another run was recently reduced.

Special Education spending is up year over year due to the timing of special ed therapy and evaluation encumbrances.

Mrs. McCalla reported on the nationwide bus driver shortage. She and the superintendent will be meeting with bus company representatives to mitigate this issue.

Year To Date Revenue Report

	2020-2021 Received	2021-2022 Received YTD
Town of Old Lyme	\$27,556,679	\$3,521,630
Town of Lyme	\$6,376,133	\$1,232,376

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report which reflected a balance of \$189,776. A total of \$4,224 was expended in August for labor and materials to replace the split system in the Center School server room.

V. Educational Presentation

Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum, gave a presentation on the state flexibilities in the Teacher Evaluation Program. A copy of her presentation is attached to these minutes for informational purposes.

Mrs. Miller asked how feedback is sought on this program, and Mrs. Dean reported that this is gathered through the School Climate Survey. Mrs. Miller would be interested in seeing these results.

Mrs. Linderman asked how the evaluation is different from the previous school year. Mrs. Dean reported that all teachers are getting a rating this year. Rating was off the table last year because of the unknowns related to the pandemic. She further noted that first year teachers did not get a rating last year but they still received a formal evaluation.

VI. Chairman & Committee Reports:

Mrs. Linderman stressed the importance of two important district initiatives this fall: strategic planning and the PreK-8 facilities study. The first community forum for strategic planning is scheduled for October 27 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the LOLMS auditorium. The first community forum for the PreK-8 Facilities Study is scheduled for September 30 at 6:00 p.m. in the LOLMS auditorium.

- a. Facilities.* No report.
- b. Finance.* No report.
- c. Communications.* The next edition of the *Focus on Education* newsletter will publicize information on the strategic planning initiative and PreK-8 facilities study. The fall edition will come out earlier than usual so as to get this information out before the forums take place.
- d. Policy.* No report.
- e. LEARN.* No report.
- f. LOL Prevention Coalition.* Mrs. Shoemaker reported that the Narcan training took place last week.

VII. New Business

1. Tuition Student Request for Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Mr. Neviasser reviewed a tuition student request for a 10th grade student at Lyme-Old Lyme High School which he recommended for admission.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to approve the tuition student request for Lyme-Old Lyme High School as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Review of Policy 6171 Special Education

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the change to this policy based on recommendations from CAGE (wording was eliminated as it was not in line with new interpretation of the law). Although this was a first read of the policy and did not require Board action, the Board decided to act on it.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Wilson, to waive the second reading of Policy 6171 Special Education.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve Policy 6171 Special Education.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. State Flexibilities in the Teacher Evaluation Program

Based on the report given earlier in the meeting under the educational presentation, Mr. Neviaser asked the Board to approve the flexibilities in the Teacher Evaluation Program.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to approve the flexibilities in the Teacher Evaluation Program as recommended by the Professional Development and Evaluation Committee.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VIII. Old Business

1. Goals for 2021-2022

Based on the discussion at the August Board meeting, Mr. Neviaser developed the following goals for the 2021-2022 school year:

Curriculum. Use multiple points of data to evaluate academic and social emotional progress over the last 18 months in order to inform instruction, supports, interventions, and, when necessary, development of supplemental programming.

Human Resources. Continue to provide ongoing support for staff to ensure existing and new employees have the resources necessary to perform the duties of their jobs at the highest level possible.

Community. Invite community involvement and feedback in preparation for upcoming renovations and strategic planning.

Facilities. Monitor and evaluate facility, safety, and technology plans to ensure appropriate use, improvements, and maintenance of buildings, grounds, and infrastructure.

Sustainability. Continue to explore and adopt processes and programs that support the district's vision and mission of sustainability.

Board of Education. Through professional development and training, transition new members into their roles and share processes and procedures that support the high standards and expectations of Lyme-Old Lyme.

The Board discussed the goals as submitted. There was a recommendation to increase communications to the community beyond the *Focus on Education* newsletter. Mr. Neviaser noted that this had been discussed at the Communications Committee level. He will wordsmith the community goal before the October meeting.

Dr. Powell-St. Louis suggested that more district-related information, such as Board minutes, be posted on the Town of Lyme and Old Lyme Facebook pages and websites. Mr. Neviaser stated that he would bring this up at the next Community Leadership meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Wilson made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Miller, to approve the Goals for 2021-2022 with the recommended changes to the Community goal.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Closing of LOLHS Project

The district is still waiting for the final change order from the State so there is no action required on this agenda item.

IX. Executive Session

There was no need for an executive session.

X. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:12 upon a motion by Mr. Wilson and a second by Mrs. Shoemaker.

Respectfully submitted,

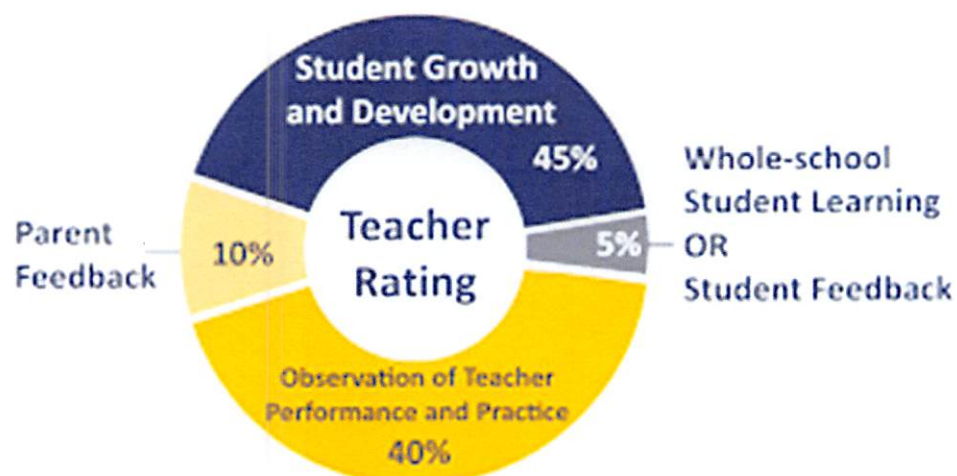
Steven Wilson, Secretary

Secondary Flexibilities in Evaluation 2021- 2022

Overview

The CTSBOE has approved flexibilities for educator evaluation for 2021-2022 recognizing the challenges for transition back to school.

Required Four Tier Holistic Evaluation



In Summary - SLOs, Stakeholder and Whole School Indicator Ratings:

- One SLO/IAGDs: Student engagement and achievement
- Stakeholder Rating: Family communication
- Whole School Indicator Rating: SEL (students/staff); equitable learning opportunities; teacher PD; PLCs.

In Summary-Observations:

-Formal and informal reviews of practice will be conducted per R18 evaluation cycles

-Educator evaluation will facilitate support, feedback, and growth in order to best meet the needs of students

- End of year ratings will be given to all staff regardless of their evaluation cycle

Evaluation Definitions

Formal Evaluation Cycle

-**At least 20** minutes with written or verbal feedback based on the CCT Rubric

-End of year meeting with teacher self-evaluation using CCT Rubric

Informal Observation Cycle

-**Less than 20 minutes** with written or verbal feedback based on the CCT Rubric

-End of year meeting with teacher self-evaluation using CCT Rubric

Evaluation Cycles per Flexibility

2+ Year Teaching in District

-Two formal or informal observations, end of year meeting

**provided previous proficient/exemplary rating/no notice of concern*

1st/2nd Year Teachers to District

-Two formal observations with a pre- conference, end of year meeting

- Teachers new to the district would use the pre observation paperwork.

**Includes educators with developing/below standard ratings*

Links to Flexibility Cheat-Sheet And Pre-conference Paperwork

[Flexibility Cheat-Sheet](#)

[CCT Rubric \(2017\)](#) (teaching)

[CCT Rubric](#) (related/support services)

[Pre-Obs. Paperwork](#)

We greatly appreciate that our school district went full time, all year this past school year, thank you. We also appreciate getting back into school again this year despite our state government issuing a highly disputed state of emergency through September.¹ It is extremely hard for people to discern the truth² about the ever evolving coronavirus that has taken over many people's lives both physically and mentally.

The mask debate goes either way: some say it is the best thing to remedy the virus, others wildly oppose. According to the box of disposable face masks, they "do not protect from harmful gases and vapors." Dr. Fauci himself has flip-flopped on this subject many times,³ and hundreds of studies go either way, it has become a political hot button.

But what if the masks are causing deep harm to everyone, especially our children?

Dr. Fauci wrote a paper on "Bacterial Pneumonia causing the most deaths in the Pandemic of 1918."⁴ According to Dr. Fauci, the flu was not what killed most people but instead they succumbed to secondary bacterial infections. How many gross bacteria are we exposing our children to from wearing dirty masks?

It is noteworthy from the article that many vaccines were created during the 1918 pandemic and the evidence is inconclusive if they had any impact on reducing the small overall percentage of deaths.⁵

The CDC released a report⁶ in July, 2021, with the data for our current pandemic which, similar to 1918, has a very low percentage of deaths. The report was based on over 4 million cases of COVID-19 from March 2020 to March 2021 and concluded that 94% of all COVID-19 related deaths occurred with people who had at least 1 or more comorbidities. The total number of children who died is less than 400. Interestingly, fear was listed as a top ten comorbidity which, in hindsight, is not that surprising because the predictions of low fatality (known as early as September of 2020) were never widely publicized.⁷

¹ "Republicans oppose Lamont extending COVID emergency powers" Ken Dixon, Sep. 1, 2020
<https://www.ctpost.com/news/coronavirus/article/Lamont-extends-COVID-emergency-powers-but-15532317.php>

² "Is the CT delta surge subsiding? New COVID numbers bring hope and debate" Julia Bergman, Aug. 30, 2021
<https://www.greenwichtime.com/news/article/In-CT-s-latest-COVID-numbers-hopeful-signs-the-16423507.php>

³ "Fauci Said Masks 'Not Really Effective in Keeping Out Virus,' Email Reveals," Newsweek, Darragh Roche, June 2, 2021
<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/fauci-said-masks-not-really-effective-in-keeping-out-virus-email-reveals/ar-AAKCZ0c>

⁴ "Bacterial Pneumonia Caused Most Deaths in 1918 Influenza Pandemic," August 19, 2008
<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/bacterial-pneumonia-caused-most-deaths-1918-influenza-pandemic>

⁵ "The 1918-19 Spanish Influenza Pandemic and Vaccine Development." Karie Youngdahl, September 26, 2018
<https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/blog/vaccine-development-spanish-flu>

⁶ "Underlying Medical Conditions and Severe Illness Among 540,667 Adults Hospitalized With COVID-19, March 2020–March 2021" ORIGINAL RESEARCH — Volume 18 — July 1, 2021
https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2021/21_0123.htm

⁷ "CDC: 94% of Covid-19 deaths had underlying medical conditions," Dave Bondy, WEYI September 1, 2020

According to the CDC data, over 99.7% of all people (higher under the age of 50) who contract COVID-19 will survive. Children are extremely resilient, will barely notice the virus and everyone will build healthy, long lasting immunity if exposed.⁸

Other data shows that children are highly unlikely to even transmit the virus.⁹ In addition, people are twice as likely to die from the flu as they are from COVID-19.¹⁰ We have never forced our kids to wear masks for the flu and yet the flu is twice as deadly - why are we masking now?

There has been a lot of talk about staying masked until kids under 12 can get the bio-medical injections. These injections from Pfizer and Moderna may reduce symptoms to the injected; they do not, according to the CDC and packaging inserts, reduce the spread of COVID-19.¹¹ If the kids can all still spread COVID, shot or not, why would people believe that getting the shot would lead to getting rid of masks? Again, the data reported that children are highly unlikely to transmit the virus.¹²

Does the hypothesis of kids needing a shot to be safe to remove masks seem logical and scientific?

This leads to the question of how political has COVID-19 become in our state? We do know our state profited greatly from COVID-19¹³ including from the inaccurate PCR testing.¹⁴ How is that affecting the decisions from the decision makers?

I would like to propose that all stop and think about a few things. If you choose to answer any of my questions, that's great, but I would rather just open healthy, non political, data driven conversations about the future of our town and our schools.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/cdc-94percent-of-covid-19-deaths-had-underlying-medical-conditions/ar-BB18wrA7>

⁸ "Study Finds Kids Develop Different Antibodies When They Get COVID-19" Shawn Radcliffe, November 11, 2020

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/study-finds-kids-develop-different-antibodies-when-they-get-covid-19#Distinct-immune-response-in-children-with-COVID-19>

⁹American Academy of Pediatrics Commentary, COVID-19 Transmission and Children: The Child Is Not to Blame, Benjamin Lee and William V. Raszka Pediatrics August 2020, 146 (2) e2020004879; DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-004879>

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/146/2/e2020004879>

¹⁰ "Is it time to stop obsessing over Covid figures? Statistics reveal virus is NOT the biggest killer - with heart disease, dementia and cancer each claiming four times as many lives in an average week last month" Ethan Ennals, August 28, 2021

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-9935663/Is-time-stop-obsessing-Covid-figures-Statistics-reveal-coronavirus-NOT-biggest-killer.html>

¹¹ Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Overview and Safety, Updated Aug. 19, 2021

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Moderna.html>

¹²American Academy of Pediatrics Commentary, COVID-19 Transmission and Children: The Child Is Not to Blame, Benjamin Lee and William V. Raszka Pediatrics August 2020, 146 (2) e2020004879; DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-004879>

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/146/2/e2020004879>

¹³ "Pandemic profits linked to Connecticut's first couple" Elci, Lee, March 10, 2021

<https://www.theday.com/article/20210310/OP04/210319958>

¹⁴ PCR Test To Be Withdrawn – Its Emergency Use Authorization Has Been REVOKED" WaySide, July 29, 2021

<https://truthinplainsight.com/pcr-test-to-be-withdrawn-its-emergency-use-authorization-has-been-revoked/>

If everyone can spread COVID-19, why are we practicing a quarantine policy based on whether they have had the injection or not? Is that medical related segregation? Is it based on the science and data? Does this wrongly isolate some based on their medical status?

According to recent data, natural antibodies are 7 or more times stronger than the bio-med induced antibodies from the injections.¹⁵ Is there a distinct quarantine policy for children with antibodies? If not, why isn't the school recognizing this population? Would recognizing this population create more or less medical discrimination?

Is it right to prevent a child from attending school and/or force a child to be quarantined when they are not sick and will not get sick? Or if their parents are not concerned about them getting sick?

Is encouraging our kids to get the shots to stop the spread accurate or are these emails from the school actually medical coercion? Or social pressure? Will this cause our children to have greater levels of anxiety? Is this anxiety justified based on science and data?

Is it legal for teachers to ask about personal medical information like COVID-19 jab status? Does it cause discrimination and social pressure for kids when asked these questions in class?

Are mandates laws or are they just suggestions? If they are just suggestions, are we financially obligated to follow them?

Are there ways that our school can make sure we are following sound policies that protect the rights of our children?

Are people on our Board of Education or in our Region 18 Administration examining information outside of state policies? Is anyone on the BOE or in the Administration questioning the policies for our students and teachers (like forced shots for our teachers) against the doctrines of the United States and in light of the scientific data of the survivability of COVID-19? Is anyone willing to stand up or stand against the possible link to tyranny of these policies? Is anyone willing to push back against the state?

In my own research, I have concluded that many of the decisions that are currently practiced in the state of CT and accepted by our schools are in conflict with the worldwide data available. I question the validity of these decisions against the science and wonder if we are being hypocritical in our policies in providing a healthy education environment.

Our children need oxygen, they need clean air for healthy brain development. They need to see faces, hear sounds properly. They need to feel safe and schools are very safe for kids. Some of the current policies may be even causing severe mental health damage to our children. When September 30th does arrive, I pray that you all can have the freedom to make decisions not based on state politics but on science that you discover through multiple sources filtered through common sense practices. We'll have coronaviruses forever, we've survived 1918 and 2020. We will most definitely be healthier and normal when we get rid of the confusion and debates, sometimes even hostility, over the science and data.

¹⁵ "Dr. Makary Says Natural Immunity Is More Effective Than Vaccine Immunity" Nicole Silverio, 8/5/2021 <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/dr-makary-says-natural-immunity-is-more-effective-then-vaccine-immunity/ar-AAMX3sM>

I wanted to make sure that everyone had an update based on some of the comments that I have made throughout the year. Ian has been incredibly helpful in addressing my concerns, and I really appreciate his willingness to respond to emails as it relates to these issues. We decided to withdraw my son from kindergarten until the Governor removes his emergency powers and we can all have a real discussion about the risks and benefits and make decisions that are best for our individual district and children as it relates to masks, vaccines, and everything else that the Governor and his powers are currently holding the ability to control right now.

I understand that you have been provided an opinion from Shipman & Goodwin re: your own liability forgoing against the Governor's mandates. And, I understand and will not ask for you to go against the legal guidance you were given. I really feel for the unfair predicament you all are in. With that being said, there are Board members across the country, and this state, still speaking out in disagreement, while respectfully understanding the current powers in place and that they can not overturn them. I think it would behoove the Board to consider writing a letter to the Governor and our state and local legislators, letting them know that this usurp of power is not healthy for our state, or our town.

For those of you who have not seen it, there is a phenomenal, unbiased article in NYMag that covers a lot of the points that I have continued to write about. While I understand the fear instilled in a lot of parents. The fear is really not rational, and we still don't have a set of metrics or numbers that we can utilize to determine when masks can come off of young children. [The Science of Masking Kids at School Remains Uncertain](https://nymag.com/article/science-of-masking-kids-at-school-remains-uncertain) (nymag.com)

In the meantime, I think there are significant concerns around masking that everyone should be aware of, as there are no true measures in place to ensure (even though I disagree with mask usage generally due to safety issues) that mask use in school is as okay as possible from both a medical and social/emotional perspective. I would urge you to consider the following:

- 1) How are masks being properly stored when not in use (e.g., during lunch)? Are they being neatly folded and placed in a plastic bag or some other sterile environment?
- 2) How often are masks being checked to ensure they are worn properly? Are masks being changed every hour or two to ensure they are clean and not causing the collection of harmful bacteria, food particles, etc.?
- 3) If a child is complaining that they are having trouble breathing, don't feel well in the mask, etc., how will that be handled?
- 4) What protocols are in place to determine if a child is having an allergic reaction that is not visible to staff (e.g., hives around the mouth)? Or, something like a bloody nose that wouldn't be clearly visible? Particularly in younger age groups where children may not necessarily identify as easily that is happening and ask for help?
- 5) What is the policy for mask breaks? How often will they take place and for what amount of time? The policy should also include why these mask breaks indoors are okay and "safe", and why having children sitting in a classroom setting if they are not engaging in activities near each other, "unsafe". The point being, if children can take masks off indoors for a break, why can't we accommodate less mask usage in the same type of setting that is safe in the circumstances of a mask break?
- 6) Is there ever a circumstance where mask breaks would be provided as a reward or taken away as a punishment?

I appreciate you all taking the time to read my email. And hopefully, my son can rejoin the public education that we pay taxes for in the short-term, rather than long-term future.

Christina Steiner

I feel as of late that too many of our personal and parental rights are being infringed upon. We need to have a choice as to what's best for our children and I assure you that tightening restrictions and continuing to mask our four-year-old all day at school is not what my husband and I choose. As a registered nurse I work behind the scenes with Covid cases and I'm comfortable sending my child without a mask and looser restrictions as both have shown me evidence of health and emotional consequences. I was not happy to start the year off greeting my sweat soaked and scared daughter after her one and a half hour bus ride/detour in 80 something degree heat on her first day of kindergarten. Let's be American and support our rights for freedom of choice in Old Lyme schools. Thank you for your time and I will continue to speak and advocate for my children and others until these kids receive the normal childhoods and school experiences they deserve.

Chelsea Yester