

## Mask choice

Brittany Marioni <brittmar89@gmail.com>

Thu 3/3/2022 3:39 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To whom it may concern:

I am a parent of a Hamden public school student. You just told me a couple of days ago that you have more say in my child's life than i do. I want to know why you think you can do that so easily.

Every town in CT made masks optional. The cities kept theirs in place. Let them. You need to take away this ban and let the parents choose. You have no right to decide for my daughter. You don't tuck her in at night or feed her. You don't buy her clothing or sneakers. You don't raise her to know right from wrong, but you can tell her that she has to wear a mask? She, and all these other children, make the town money by attending these awful schools. The education is terrible. The schools have very low ratings on almost all websites. As long as they have masks though, thats all that matters. You have kids failing, teachers passing students to the next grade WHO CANT EVEN READ, but screw all that...as long as they wear their masks right?

The town has no mandate anymore, but you keep the demographic with the lowest covid and covid death rates masked up??? Science doesn't matter to you guys all of a sudden. I can almost guarantee that the second you hit your offices, the mask comes off. Must be nice, huh? But thanks for making the decision for my child! Also, the teachers have no say in what my kids wears either. Theyre all vaccinated, they can wear masks and be protected. After all, they work so well right? 😬

REVOTE!!!! And do it correctly this time. The parents are tired of you telling us what to do and whats best for our children.

Sent from my iPhone

## Unmask our Hamden Students

bethany potenziani <potenziani.bethany@yahoo.com>

Thu 3/3/2022 11:50 AM

To: Asbery, David Lee <dasbery@hamden.org>; Carter-David, Siobhan <scarterdavid@hamden.org>; Cesare, Austin <acesare@hamden.org>; Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>; Khan, Mariam <mkhan@hamden.org>; Parks, Reuel <rparks@hamden.org>; Shea, Kevin <kshea@hamden.org>; Walsh, Gary <gwalsh@hamden.org>; lgarrett@hamden.com <lgarrett@hamden.com>; input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Hello. My name is Bethany Potenzialani. I am a mother of 3 and a lifelong resident of the town of Hamden. I currently have a 9 year old who is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Ridge Hill, a Pop Warner cheerleader and a Hamden youth lacrosse player. She has been superintendent student of the month as a kindergartener and has been awarded student of the month for her class 7 times in less than 5 full years as a Hamden public school student. Throughout her entire school career, she has always been above the average in reading and math, even with a full year of distance learning. I am fortunate and thankful that while a lot of students had a difficult transition from in person to distance, she was able to work hard to keep herself motivated and keep herself ahead of the pace. I am writing this email to you all on her behalf, because if I do not stand up for what I believe is right for my child, what sort of parent am I?

Earlier this month, as to be expected, word of the possibility of our children being able to return to school unmasked circulated through my daughters class. To see the light in her eyes and the smile on her face was disheartening. At the time, we were one of the very few towns left in the state with a town wide mask mandate still in place, so I knew the idea of unmasking children in school, when we were unable to grocery shop as unmasked adults, was a very unrealistic expectation. I explained to her as well as possible that this was the case, and that we should plan to continue to wear masks, but to also be optimistic for a change. Fast forwarding to just last week, when news broke of Mayor Garrett lifting the mask mandate, and seeing the positive Covid percentage in our town to be as low as it is, I began to think that what I first thought to be a long shot, became much more of a reality. Then watching as Board of Ed's throughout the state began voting to send their students back unmasked, my hopes were about as high as they could get, only to watch Monday night as they all came crashing down.

I am sending this email to all of you, the town elected board of education members, in hopes of you sitting back and thinking to yourself that the decision you made Monday is unjustified, as well as harmful to our children's emotional and mental well being. We are just one week away from the two year anniversary of the day that our childrens 'normal' came to a screeching and to them, very confusing halt. Little did they know, the morning of Thursday March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 would be the last morning for far too long that they would have a normal day of school. Little did they know, it would be the last day they would be able to see their friends and teachers faces and reactions, eat lunch next to their best friends, and to walk freely through their school, their safe space. Now looking back on it, we as adults also did not know that the "two week flattening of the curve" would now turn into two years of the most daunting and confusing time of our lives.

We have been told to hold on a little bit longer far too many times. To wait for Halloween to pass, then Thanksgiving, then the holidays, then the cold season. To now hear "what will spring break bring" and "were in the orange" and the "vaccination numbers are too low". With all due respect, what more can you expect from our children? The town is in the orange, meaning we have 10-14 cases per 100,000. In a town with less a population far less than 100,000, what more are you asking for? When do you all as parents and humans step back and think that it is time to allow parents to make decisions for their own children and families? To trust that parents have enough common sense to do what is best. To know that if numbers start rising, that parents will do what is right for themselves and others. Why can you not allow people the freedoms we have been denied for two years?

## Masks

Peter Chuchta <lilwndr32@yahoo.com>

Fri 3/4/2022 7:50 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Good Morning,

I am a parent of three students currently attending Hamden Schools. I have also had three other children graduate during these Covid years. I am very disappointed that Hamden voted to keep masks mandatory. The government ( state of the union) no longer wears masks. The NFL no longer wears masks. Many other school districts right here in CT have made them optional. The city of Hamden does not even have a mask policy anymore.

My son keeps getting eye infections. There is no need for the masks anymore.

Lets go, lets let the kids take their masks off

Make them optional.

Thank you,

Pete Chuchta

## My thoughts after 2/28

K Alexander <ksalexander@sbcglobal.net>

Sun 3/6/2022 8:16 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Hamden School Board Members:

I have been replaying in my mind parts of the last zoom meeting that I sat and watched wishing we could all be in one room so that you could see the reactions from those who elected you to your posts. It is very easy for everyone to sit in their respective homes with their written thoughts and present their opinions. It is something very different to be in one place and have an open discussion. It will be wonderful to someday get back to face to face meetings.

I have to say, I did not tune in expecting any different outcome to your "vote". The wording on the agenda let everyone know exactly how things were going to turn out. Unfortunately, when it comes to those in elected positions, decisions seem to be more about party lines than they are about anything else.

I was troubled by some of the questions members were asking about what is really happening in our schools. How many of you have actually visited to see what school looks like? It seems to me that having to ask what hand washing/sanitizing, mask wearing, and social distancing within the schools looks like proves that you are making decisions based on what you are told and not what you know first hand.

Watching and listening, I felt that the board was brought together simply to vote and sign off. There were many questions brought up that were either ignored or swept aside and never answered. This sends a flag up in my mind. When are these questions going to be answered, if ever? At the end of the meeting, one side was stating that this topic would be reassessed "in April" with no date attached, the other brought up that there is a regular meeting scheduled for March 8 and discussion could continue then. Which one is it?

I thank you all for doing what you do. It is not everyone who is willing to put themselves in the positions you are in. I hope that you will work to find answers to those questions that I have either mentioned or asked.

Karen Alexander  
75 Morgan Lane  
Hamden

## Opposition to Masks in School

bhamilton2508@sbcglobal.net <bhamilton2508@sbcglobal.net>

Mon 3/7/2022 10:11 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Board Members,

Thank you for your service to Hamden. I believe you have a very difficult job and have been put between the proverbial rock and hard place when it comes to making decisions that will please everyone. That being said, I'm very concerned about the Governor passing the masking responsibility to the local BOE's. Why school boards should have this responsibility is a mystery to me. Each district has to choose, I assume, based on parental input, how to proceed in this debate. By so doing, I see this policy as arbitrary and not a function of a true public health necessity.

Let's consider some thoughts. Mask manufacturers have stated on their packaging that masks do not protect one from infectious disease (i.e. Corona virus). Scientists and researchers have stated that viruses are extremely tiny and can permeate mask fibers which are larger than the virus. Dr. Harvey Risch, a renowned epidemiologist of Yale University, has stated that masks offer negligible protection and sees no value from long-term wear. Psychologists and other mental health professionals have seen an increase in suicides, depression and other issues among children of all ages as a result of forcing masks upon them. Furthermore, no public health agency, local, state or federal, has provided to the public peer reviewed studies proving the efficacy of mask wearing by anyone.

I understand that you are adhering to the CDC, etc. requirements. Consider this. Scientists who do not agree with the governmental narrative are silenced and smeared and opposing points of view never see the light of day. The federal government has significantly overreached its boundaries stepping on the Constitutional rights of the people whom they were elected to protect. I believe that it is your job to truly protect our Constitutional right to choose what's best for us in this politically charged argument.

Please give parents the right to decide what is best for their children. As a tax paying resident of the state of CT, I want all CT children to have a good experience and a good education. Masks should not be a requirement for any child. Please rescind all school mask mandates in Hamden.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Brenda Hamilton

## School Mask Decision

Ariana Mongillo <amongillo@directiveanalytics.com>

Mon 3/7/2022 5:40 PM

To: Board of Education <BoardofEducation@hamden.org>; input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; Goeler, Jody <jgoeler@hamden.org>; Melillo, Chris <cmelillo@hamden.org>

Cc: lgarrett@hamden.com <lgarrett@hamden.com>

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Hello again,

I write to you again in hopes that you will seriously reconsider last week's mask mandate decision.

I understand that at the time of that vote, maybe you did not have all the latest information and guidance from the CDC and other public health officials that may have made everyone more comfortable in joining the 85% of other school districts who voted to go mask optional. I understand that, at your core, you are likely trying to accommodate the comfort level of our most worried parents and teachers.

I am hoping, that now, with a week to consider all that has happened since last Monday, you will give yourselves the grace and permission to change your mind. Changing your mind does not mean you were wrong to start, it simply means you are considering new information. The best leaders know how important this is. . I think it is difficult to realize something you vehemently believed in and adhered to for 2 years may never have done much good, and holding on to it seems like the best way to keep it true, but it's time for people to accept the new truths about Covid. Science is not a religion. It is not something to be believed without question forever. It is something that is continually changing – we have to be able to accept these changes – even if when it means changing course on policy we really believed in at one time.

The public health officials are mostly in agreement at this time that the benefits of masking children are minimal at best and zero at worst. Again, I won't quote the stats, the studies, the negative impacts of continued masking. I know you have access to all of these.

I know that at the other end of this argument are scared parents and teachers. I try to empathize with parents and teachers who have been traumatized for the past two years and are not ready to emerge from Covid cocoons yet. My goal is not to rip their masks away. If they need these security blankets a bit longer for themselves, that is fine. But your goal, as the board of education, should **not** be to make policy based on comfort levels. Your policies should be based on fact and logic. When the facts and logic tell us that masks are hurting us more than they are helping us, then we can no longer wait until the most scared among us is ready to unmask. I would even argue that you are doing people a disservice by enabling irrational fears, by continuing mandates that are no longer based on fact. Panic policy which may have been justifiable in 2020 is not rational policy for 2022.

Aren't we under a moral obligation to model sane and rational thinking for our kids? It does not appear sane or rational to me to make children wear a mask for 6 hours in a classroom when they know that the minute they step out those doors, those same masks don't matter.

I will again remind people that we will never be at zero risk. And that while the idea of risking one person's life is, of course, horrifying, we take calculated risks every day with our children. We put them in the car (statistically one of the most dangerous things we all do every day), we put them on school buses with no seat belts, we let them jump on trampolines and ride bikes and go snowboarding. At this time, going to school without a mask is much less dangerous than any of these things.

## Unmask the kids

Liz Sommerkorn <liz.sommerkorn@gmail.com>

Mon 3/7/2022 10:41 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Please unmask our poor children! Please follow the science and the rest of the school districts in America.

Liz Sommerkorn

## Mask input

Sarah Dunn, Psy.D. <sbione@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 10:38 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Hi- please keep masks until the end of the year or when the medical consensus says it's safe. Thanks!  
Sarah Dunn 55 dessa Dr, Hamden, CT 06517



## Tuesday 3/8/22 BOE Meeting

Jennifer <jenstep0303@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 10:59 AM

To: Melillo, Chris <cmelillo@hamden.org>

Cc: Michael DeFelice <michael.defelice1124@gmail.com>; Cesare, Austin <acesare@hamden.org>; Walsh, Gary <gwalsh@hamden.org>; Goeler, Jody <jgoeler@hamden.org>; input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>; Asbery, David Lee <dasbery@hamden.org>; Carter-David, Siobhan <scarterdavid@hamden.org>; mkaplan6@yahoo.com <mkaplan6@yahoo.com>; Khan, Mariam <mkhan@hamden.org>; Parks, Reuel <rparks@hamden.org>; Shea, Kevin <kshea@hamden.org>

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Hi,

I first would like to say Thank you to those on the board who took the time to respond to the concerns we have had as parents regarding the reinstatement of the mask mandate. With that said, we have reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting and it does not list an item to revisit the mandate. I do see where the public will have an opportunity for comments, is this where the board can insert the opportunity for a vote after hearing from the parents? I know there will be many parents attending this meeting looking for this to be reviewed. I do hope the board will place the decision of masking our children into the hands of parents and not in yours. We all believe in the right to choose.

Thanks

Jennifer Stephen  
Bear Path School

On Tue, Mar 1, 2022 at 4:23 PM Melillo, Chris <[cmelillo@hamden.org](mailto:cmelillo@hamden.org)> wrote:

Hello,

Thank you for your comments. I do understand and respect your decision. Unfortunately, we are tasked by the Board of Education to follow BOE policy. We are unable to pick and choose what policies to enforce. The Board of Education has instituted a Mask Mandate and unfortunately educators are now placed in a no win situation to follow it. I know you are disappointed in my response, but I hope you understand the position we are all having to endure at this time as we must institute a policy that some families see as invasive or detrimental to their children, while others view it as necessary safety measures.

Sincerely,

Chris

## March 8 Board of Education Meeting - public input

Barbara Partyka <barbara.partyka@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 11:21 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Good morning,

I am writing to make public comments for the March 8th Board of Education meeting, which I am unsure whether I can physically attend.

My name is Barbara Adu and I am a parent and resident of Hamden. I would like the 8 members of the Board of Education to reconsider the mask mandate for Hamden public school children. I previously sent an email to each member on March 1 after hearing the vote results of Feb 28. Since then:

- The CDC has released a COVID-19 Community Level transmission map, and all 8 counties in Connecticut are in the "green zone," or low levels of community transmission.
- 85% of Connecticut public schools are currently mask-optional, including almost all of Hamden's neighboring towns (except New Haven). New Haven recently lifted the mask mandate for indoor spaces (as of March 7).
- Waterbury public schools recently lifted their mask mandate (as of March 7).
- UConn is currently recommending masks in most settings, rather than mandating them.
- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood gave daycares and preschools the okay to move to mask-optional. **Note this is for the age group who cannot get vaccinated.**

Lastly, I would like you to consider the Hamden public school children who *have been* vaccinated, and/or recently infected by covid - both of which scenarios provide immunity/antibodies. In the case of my child, who was vaccinated yet still caught the Omicron variant in January, they have twice the immunity yet have to wear a mask "for show." The other three members in my family attend work and daycare settings which have already lifted the mask mandate. Thus, who is my child protecting by wearing a mask, exactly?

Thank you,

Barbara Adu

1142 W. Woods Rd, Hamden CT

## March 8, Board of Education Meeting

Jennifer Ceniccola <jencen24@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 11:42 AM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Tell me how HAMDEN is on a mandated list along with Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven & Waterbury?! Notice what those towns all have in common that Hamden doesn't?! HOSPITALS!! How is going to a grocery store is 'safe' without a mask, but going to school where students are in cohorts is not?! Tell me the logic here... What about the kids that have had omicron recently that now have natural antibodies (on top of possibly also being vaccinated) for the next 3-6 months!? If parents have the option of vaccinating their kids or not, they should have the OPTION of masking them as well! Instead of looking at this with fearful eyes, why not with a scientific, sound mind?!

Taking away the mandate does not claim "removing the mask" like some claim. People can AND will still be able to choose to wear a mask if they want to, AKA "optional"!

Thank you, Jennifer Ceniccola

## Public Comment for 3/8 Board of Ed meeting - remove the mask mandate

Tim Pavlis <tepavlis@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 12:08 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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### The time has come to end the school mask mandate in Hamden.

The CDC finds the risk of community transmission to be low. Look what the CDC website says for this risk level: "people may choose to mask at any time."



#### COVID-19 County Check

Find community levels and prevention steps by county.

Select a Location (all fields required)

Connecticut



New Haven County



Go

< Start Over

#### ● Low

In New Haven County, Connecticut, community level is Low.

- [Stay up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines
- [Get tested](#) if you have symptoms

People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.

If you are immunocompromised, learn more about [how to protect yourself](#).

March 5, 2022

This is the most fact-based measure you will ever get, and it says Hamden can safely remove the mandate. This is not 2020, or even 2021. Vaccines are safe and available, transmission is low, and the science is on the side of removing this mandate now.

85% of other CT districts have gone optional. Bridgeport and Hartford have set dates (3/31 and 4/1). Hamden and New Haven alone have neither articulated criteria nor set a timeline. What is different about Hamden? Why do our kids deserve a dismissive and high-handed approach from the Board?

The Board has a duty to represent all the citizens of Hamden. With your online meetings and patchy public input you seem not to have heard the large segment of families who believe the time has come for choice. Please listen to this input today with an open mind. The Board has a duty to attend to the education of our children. Please ponder how you can profess to attend to our children's needs while maintaining this mandate. Anything less than eliminating this mandate now is a dereliction of your duty.

Best,

Tim Pavlis

88 Blake Road, Hamden

## Public comment for 3/8 meeting

Peter York <pyork76@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 12:41 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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My public comment for the 3/8 meeting is as follows:

"Every day that goes by with the mask mandate in place in Hamden schools is an embarrassment to the community. Every day that goes by, it becomes harder to believe that the Board is not driven by zealotry, or worse, madness. To not even provide a clear timeline for ending the mandate is, frankly, brazen and unsupportable. It is the central issue of the moment for much of the community, and thus it demands the attention of the Board. I urge you to use today's meeting to reconsider and end the mask mandate in Hamden schools."

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Peter York

## Rescind mask mandate

Nancy <nda0725@sbcglobal.net>

Tue 3/8/2022 12:43 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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I am reaching out again to encourage the Board to revisit the mask mandate. In light of new guidance from the CDC along with the recent actions of almost every other town in CT; masks in Hamden schools should be OPTIONAL! You did not even present a definitive plan or date to revisit this issue! Poor organization! It should be the choice of the parents not a decision made by 8 people. Are any of you in the medical field; that you know better than the CDC? As an educator in a neighboring town it is wonderful to see my students' smiling faces again! Our Hamden kids are losing out! Have you ever tried to teach letters and sounds wearing a mask or tried to remediate speech articulation errors with a mask? Let's not let these kids fall farther behind! **MAKE MASKS OPTIONAL IN HAMDEN SCHOOLS!!!**  
Thank you,  
Nancy Anderson

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Sent from my iPhone

## tonight's agenda

Makaela Kingsley <mjkingsley@wesleyan.edu>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:18 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Board of Education members,

I am writing to ask that you carve out time during tonight's meeting to discuss the HPS mask mandate, to hear public input on this matter, to consider a timeline for making masks optional, and – ideally – to call for a vote by the Board.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Makaela Kingsley  
Harmon Street, Hamden

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Makaela Kingsley  
Director, Patricelli Center  
Adjunct Instructor, Allbritton CSPL  
Wesleyan University

## Drop mask mandate!

Erica Camacho <ecam722@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:22 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Good afternoon,

I am writing again to ask the BOE to please drop the mask mandates in Hamden.

I am a resident at 17 Red Rock Terrace and have 3 kids in Hamden schools.

Make masks optional! The kids no longer want to wear them, the mandates have been dropped across the state and it does not make sense to continue to enforce them in schools. We have the right as parents to make that decision, especially with the change in CDC guidelines, and not be forced by the district.

Thank you,

Erica Camacho

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**3/8/2022**

Tameeka Parks <tparks27@icloud.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:34 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Thank you to the Hamden BOE for making the difficult decision regarding the mask mandate for our children- Most of us realize this was not an easy decision but a necessary decision . Most of us condemn harassment; this not reflective of all Hamden public school parents. Your diligence and hard work are greatly appreciated.

Signed,,

A Hamden Parent

Sent from my iPhone

## Thank you!

Laura Perkins Davidson <lauracperkins1@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:37 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear Hamden BOE,

Thank you so much for your decision to extend the mask mandate and Hamden Public Schools. I know that was a difficult decision. My family really appreciates that you are being cautious and taking time to assess how the pandemic situation develops and determine appropriate for parameters before pulling mandated masking.

I'm dismayed to hear of the negative response your members have received. Thank you for standing strong!

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Sincerely,

Laura Perkins Davidson

53 Santa Fe Ave, Hamden, CT 06517

## Thank you

Diedre Murch <diedre\_murch@hotmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:37 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Thank you for extending the mask mandate.

Diedre Murch  
Hamden parent

Sent from my iPhone

## Thank you for maintaining the mask mandate

Melissa Whitson <melissawhitson@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:40 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the issues and your decision to keep the mask mandate in our public schools. There are too many unvaccinated children, and many more children who have vulnerable family members at home. The priority should be in-person schooling, as remote school is much more detrimental to mental health than masks. So if masks help keep kids in school, then that is the best approach - and my 2nd grader would completely agree with me: if given the choice between masks and in-person school, she would take the latter in a heartbeat.

Melissa Whitson  
135 Ardmore St.

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## Thank you

Mara Balk <marabalk@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:41 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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To whom it may concern:

Thank you for upholding the mask mandate in schools for our children. Our youngest child is too young to be vaccinated and we rest assured that he remains protected at school thanks to this mandate.

I know the decisions are difficult amidst a sea of differing opinions and I deeply appreciate your keeping our children safe.

Many thanks,

Mara Balk

277 Davis Street

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Sent from my iPhone

**BOE meeting 3/8/22**

megan goslin <megangoslin664@hotmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:43 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear members of the board of education,

Thank you for upholding the mask mandate in HPS for the time-being. Please continue to increase vaccine access to Hamden's students by hosting additional vaccination clinics at our schools. Although I fully support the right of members of our community to advocate for what they believe is best for our school community, I condemn the harassment by \* **some** \* anti-maskers towards our elected leaders. There is no place for harassment, threats, or racism in this debate. I hope that, moving forward, we will do better.

Thank you again for your leadership during this period of ongoing challenges and transitions.  
Best,

---

Megan Goslin, PhD  
Haverford St

**THANK YOU** for the continued masking policy!!

Ethan Balk <balke@wcsu.edu>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:51 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Just a note of thanks for your work in continuing to keep Hamden's children safe with the ongoing masking policy.

On a personal note, my wife and I have a 4-year-old son who is yet to be vaccinated. This type of policy helps to decrease unnecessary spread to all types of families.

We're incredibly grateful for your work amid inappropriate attacks from some in the community.

Please keep me in mind if there is any need for help from parents/community members.

Sincerely,

---

**Ethan K. Balk, PhD, RD**

Associate Professor & Clinical Dietitian  
Health Promotion and Exercise Science  
*Western Connecticut State University*

**thank you!**

Andrea Gloria <andreags06@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:56 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

Cc: Melissa Kaplan <makaplan6@yahoo.com>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear members of the BOE,

I just want to thank you for your decision on keeping the mask mandate in place in our elementary schools. I know this was a hard decision to make, especially knowing that the situation seems to be improving around us. As a parent, I really appreciate it and feel safe sending my kid to school. I have also heard and noticed the relief from other friends and families, as well as staff attending our school. They also continue to feel safe thanks to your vote.

I believe that having more time to learn from what will happen in the community and other schools that have already lift indoor mandates will help you to take a better informed decision on when would be the best time to make masks optional. If the situation continues to improve.

Thank you again for your time and effort and for keeping our children safety a priority.

Andrea Gloria-Soria  
Church St. Hamden



## Public Comment for 3/8 BOE Meeting

Jack Davidson <jack@springglenchurch.org>

Tue 3/8/2022 1:59 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Board of Education and School Administration,

Thank you for your difficult but important decision to continue masking in schools. Until there has been more time to assess how the new CDC guidelines apply to schools, and until there is approval for 2-5 year olds to get vaccinated, and until the vaccination rates of children in our town improve, and until there are significant changes to the OEC, AAP, and QVHD guidelines, we need to continue erring on the side of caution.

Emotionally, we are all ready to be done with Covid. But scientifically, Covid is not done with us. There are still plenty of cases of family infections spread through children in the household. There are still pre-school & pre-K classrooms getting shutdown because of Covid exposures. There are still immunocompromised families who are required to attend school, so "mask choice" doesn't leave them with much of a choice.

While I believe we are headed towards a new normal where Covid is more seasonal like the flu, we need to heed the most cautious interpretations of the guidance from experts in the public health community and not take unnecessary risks. And for any students struggling with social, emotional, mental, or academic hurdles exacerbated by the pandemic, we should make sure to invest in the IEP support systems they need to succeed.

Blessings,

### **Rev Jack Perkins Davidson**

Senior Pastor, he/him/his

Spring Glen Church

Hamden, CT

[SpringGlenChurch.org](http://SpringGlenChurch.org)

203-903-8044

## Mask Mandate

Abigail Friedman <abbyfriedman@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 2:02 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Dear BOE,

I'm writing to thank you for sticking with mask mandates in the public schools. This protects the teachers, unvaccinated students, and their family members who are immunocompromised or too young to be vaccinated. Really, it reduces the risk for our whole community, and offers the kids an important lesson in responsibility to our community as a whole. I'll be thrilled when everyone can vaccinate and we only need to use masks as a back up when rates get high, but for now, this is our best option.

Thank you for putting health first,  
Abby

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## Thank you for extending mask mandate

Scott D. Friedman <scott\_dicks@yahoo.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 2:08 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Thank you so much for extending the mask mandate in public schools. My daughter attends a daycare in hamden and this impacted their policy to continue masking. Considering the low rates of vaccination (none in the pre-k age group) and the fact that it's too cold to open windows, this is the right move.

Thanks and best,  
Scott Friedman

Sent from my iPhone

## email of encouragement

emumly <emumly@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 2:21 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

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Hello! I have heard awful rumors of the BOE receiving hate mail, and I just wanted to email SUPPORT, and THANKS, and APPRECIATION for the extremely difficult job you have been doing.

We have two Ridge Hill kiddos who have had ZERO problems with masks, and we have appreciated masking since the vaccination rate at school is so unfortunately low.

It is so sad how divided the issue of protecting each other has become.

Thank you for your efforts, and good luck.

- Emily Spikoski

## Mask Mandate and Thank you

Clorinda Velez <clorinda.velez@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 2:36 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Dear Hamden BOE members,

I am simply writing to thank you for your service on this important board during such challenging times - I cannot imagine what it must be like. I also would like to say that I am grateful for the decision to continue the mask mandate in Hamden schools for the time being. As the mother of elementary-aged children - where the vaccine rates are significantly lower than in other age groups - I am grateful for this added layer of protection. As the mother of another child who is too young to be vaccinated, I am especially grateful for the protection masking in schools offers him, even if he is not yet in Hamden Public Schools himself (but both of his brothers and even his father are, and therefore are at-risk of bringing home infection). Thank you.

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Clorinda Velez

## Thank you

Emily Abrams <emilyethacker@gmail.com>

Tue 3/8/2022 2:37 PM

To: input, public <publicinput@hamden.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

I just wanted to express my appreciation for the thoughtfulness and careful deliberation that went into the mask mandate decision. It's a very difficult decision to make and I truly appreciate the choice that was made to remain cautious. It has come to my attention that members of the board are receiving threats as a result of the decision and I wanted to say that I am so very sorry you are experiencing this and how unacceptable that behavior is. Thank you again for your work and efforts to keep the most people safe in a time of uncertainty.

Sincerely,  
Emily Abrams

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Sent from my iPhone