

**VENURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Declining Enrollment Committee
February 10, 2022
Minutes**

Call to Order

Ventura Unified School District held a teleconference meeting of the Declining Enrollment Committee on February 10, 2022. The meeting was called to order by VUSD Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice at 5:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Velma Lomax, Rosi Wilcox, Carol Peek, Dan Nelson, Laura Nicholls, Claudia Caudill, Mayra Vega-Manriquez, James Forsythe, Lori Campbell, Matt Almaraz, Heather Lacayo, Rebekah Acker, Jesus Vega, Cary Glenn, Mike Johnson, Mike Lazarus, Michael Owens, and Danielle Reyes.

Absent: Carolyn Grimm, Kassi Harris, Cassie Lawhead, Allison McKay, Maria Melo, Stephanie Ortiz, Martha Payne, and Steve Strong.

VUSD Support Staff Present: Dr. Roger Rice, Dr. Rebecca Chandler, Carlos Cohen, Dr. Antonio Castro, Gina Wolowicz, Anthony Ramos, Carolyn VangWalker, Anna Campbell, Nick Vlahos, and Sabrena Rodriguez.

Dr. Rice welcomed the group and asked committee members to introduce themselves on screen, and also showed the audience and committee where they could locate the meeting materials, including the agenda and a PowerPoint presentation. Support staff introduced themselves and explained their roles in the district. Committee members introduced themselves, and included information about their connection to the district and interest in the issue/committee.

Dr. Rice reviewed the purpose of the committee and likened it to the recent work done by the 7-11 Committee, which evaluated district surplus property. District Legal Counsel Anthony Ramos informed committee members that the committee's work was subject to California's open meeting law, The Brown Act. He then reviewed the main provisions of the Brown Act and warned against serial meetings, including through social media.

Dr. Rice began a presentation demonstrating the reasons declining enrollment should be addressed, enrollment trend data by state and local levels, and district budget facts on how VUSD spends its money. Committee members asked for further data which Dr. Rice pledged to have ready for the next meeting.

Committee members asked if exit surveys were being done, and they could be implemented. Committee members also requested additional information for the next meeting, including for private school enrollment.

This agenda item was pre-empted by input gathered in the prior item. Dr. Rice asked if there were any further requests or questions, there were none.

Public Comments

- Ellen Henderson, parent with two children in the district. Spoke out against Covid measures for children in schools, read Notice of Demand sent to district in November 2021 to end measures including mask mandate, testing, and vaccination requirements.
- Devon Singmaster, parent with two children in the district. Continued where the previous speaker left off, reading Notice of Demand
- Randi, parent with child formerly in the district but now in private school. Concerned with what she feels is a progressive agenda in public schools, felt public school education was lacking and her son's reading level suffered as a result.
- Ben Kohn, parent with one current and one former student enrolled in the district. Concern with curriculum being taught in VUSD and what he feels is a threat to remove standardized testing and letter grades for students.
- Heather May, parent of former students. Comments were interrupted by another speaker who was muted and removed from the meeting. Agreed with other speakers that Covid safety measures were unnecessary, must no longer be in place, and are the reason for declining enrollment.
- Jessica V, parent with child in the district. Agreed with other speakers who are against the Covid safety measures in place, as well as expressing frustration with distance-learning.
- Roy Morris, former Ventura student with one child in VUSD. Feels parents aren't listened to as much as they had been in the past. Feels some aspects of the mask mandate are too strict, and must be addressed. Mentioned need for broadband improvement in Ventura, acknowledged that this was an issue for a separate meeting.
- Jennifer Taylor, shares sentiments of other speakers regarding Covid mandates. Would like to have more information about the number of children who left the district, and would like more specific information about statistics for individual schools in the district. Felt one of her sons was treated too harshly by a teacher regarding mask use in the classroom. Mentioned that a committee member (Velma Lomax) responded to a comment she made in another meeting, which she feels violated the Brown Act and informed the committee she would be filing a complaint.

- Colby Nelson, local business owner with one child currently in VUSD. Opined that enrollment has declined because of mask mandates. Expressed concern that his daughter had trouble distinguishing F and V sounds, and masks exacerbate the issue.
- Kelly Crawford, mentioned speaking at Board meeting on January 25, 2022. Feels declining enrollment began before Covid mandates because of curriculum issues, specifically mentioning Common Core math and introduction of themes and terms regarding gender identity. Believes that Covid measures added to frustration with the district and have led to further declining enrollment.
- Michelle, agrees with other speakers about mask mandates being the reason for declining enrollment. Continued reading the Notice of Demand previous speakers had read.
- Monica Lee, parent of former VUSD students. Believes declining enrollment is due to Covid measures and the lack of educational opportunities that line up with the values of parents. Mentioned that in addition to the Notice of Demand served on VUSD there was also a Cease and Desist served. This speaker's sound was interrupted because of others speaking out of turn. There was a slight disruption, with some speakers accusing Dr. Castro of muting the public speakers. Mr. Almaraz spoke up and asked for the public speaker to be given an additional minute of time to continue.
- Jamie Morrison, parent of child in VUSD. Does not believe masks are effective, agrees with others who have spoken on the issue. Believes if Covid measures continue, enrollment will continue to decline.
- Anna Sehati, parent with child in VSUD. Read Notice of Demand other public speakers have been reading.
- Heidi Trevisan, employee at VSUD elementary school. Spoke about her experience on campus, and her observations of students. Expressed gratitude for committee and supports their efforts.
- Marisa Stuteville, parent with one child in VUSD and one in a private school. Feels son in private school, where mask mandates are not in effect and in-person classes remained in effect has thrived while son in VUSD has suffered because of the Covid mandates and distance-learning, gaining weight and declining in academics.
- Mande, mentioned Notice of Order served on VUSD and criticized the board for their adoption of Covid measures. Warned the board that there would be further financial repercussions if the Covid mandates were not lifted.
- Ashley & Jason Stutzman, acknowledged the work of the board in organizing and moderating the meeting. Feels declining enrollment began before Covid. Feels getting alternative programs (trades, auto/wood shop, etc.) would help with declining enrollment.
- Missy, Phil, and Callan Eigenhuis, parents and son, Callan is a student at Ventura High School. Commented that when in public recently, he was not masked and no one seemed concerned. He also commented that he sees other students sitting in cars with doors and windows closed,

masked. He wanted to make a comment to others that he feels no one should put a mask on until they've reached the door and are ready to enter. His mother expressed frustration that other states have lifted Covid measures, and she is concerned that the measures will not be lifted.

- Meghan Highland, parent with two children in VUSD. Concerned about one son who is in speech therapy, continuing to receive therapy while mask mandates are in place. Also concerned about her second son's seasonal allergies being mistaken for Covid symptoms and having to quarantine him. Ms. Highland seemed upset that the board was not responding to her concerns, Dr. Castro paused her time and explained that the board was there to listen to public comments, and appreciated the participation, but was not able to respond.
- Jake Hull, parent with two children. He repeated concerns about Covid measures and declared that he would be removing his children from VUSD if the measures continued. He stated that he accepts the masks, but is greatly concerned about vaccinations.
- One of the previous members of the public attempted to make another comment, but was muted by Dr. Castro, Dr. Rice stepped in and asked to continue with the remaining speakers lined up to make comments.
- Matt, parent. Expressed appreciation for the board, and shared that he does not wear masks, and advises his family against wearing them as well. He also stated that he has no plans to get vaccinated, and does not intend to have his family vaccinated. He concluded by continuing to read the Notice of Demand other speakers had begun.
- Tony K, parent of two children enrolled in VSUD. Agrees with other speakers regarding Covid mandates. Went on to discuss concerns other concerns, specifically what he described as the sexualization of students. Does not feel younger children need to be introduced to topics of gender/sexual identity. He also brought up the topic of bullying in school, giving an account of an issue his son had at Will Rogers Elementary School. He feels not enough was done to address the issue, and his son's ability to learn and emotional well-being was affected negatively. Lastly, he feels the math curriculum at Anacapa Middle School is lacking and his daughter was not allowed to skip ahead to a more advanced math level.
- Sarah P., parent of two children enrolled in the district. Feels district has done a good job of protecting children, and does not agree with the others who have voiced adverse opinions. Acknowledges that the system is not perfect, but feels parents must advocate for their children and be a part of the process. Is impressed with the board's communication with families, and does not plan to remove children from the district.
- Morgan Barickman, has three children who will be entering the VUSD. Is hesitant to allow children to enroll in VUSD, would like a timeline of when the district plans to lift mask mandates in schools. Stated that she would feel much more comfortable and likely to enroll children in VUSD if there was a date set to lift the mask mandate.
- Amber Vick, Ventura resident and former VUSD student with a child currently enrolled. Son began kindergarten with distance-learning, and made the statement that he wanted to kill

himself. She stated that her son tolerates wearing a mask now, but is happier without it. Her son has been diagnosed with asthma within the last couple of months, and she feels the mask exacerbates his asthma symptoms. Stated that she will not vaccinate her children due to pre-existing medical conditions.

- Two previous speakers attempted to make additional statements, Dr. Castro muted each and removed them from the meeting room.

Next Meeting

Dr. Rice pledged to have his assistant create a process for scheduling the next meeting. No date was set.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m. by Dr. Rice.

[REDACTED]

From: Lori.mcclaskey <lori.mcclaskey@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 3:53 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining enrollment comment

Dear school board,

Although I support the fact that you created a committee to look into declining enrollment, that is admirable that you care enough to do this, I am quite surprised that you haven't figured out why enrollment is declining?

Could it be that the mandates that you are enforcing at your school regarding masking, is creating an exodus from public school? Could it be that if further mandates, which I already being talked about, come about, that there could be even more of an exodus from public school?

I am sure that you are much more educated than I am about how our schools work, but I think it's quite easy to figure out why your enrollment is declining.

Hoping you take steps to ensure that no student has to wear a mask and cover their face, as a condition of in person education, and also that no student, who has a less than 0% chance of dying from Covid, has to take an experimental vaccine, whose side effects we have only begun to learn about. They are more likely to die from a car accident or lightning, then from Covid. Let's work with the truth, not with fear! Let's not let money or unions control our behavior. We are accountable to act in truth.

Please do the right thing and support your children and families.

Sincerely,
Lori McClaskey, Esq.
Mother of three

[REDACTED]

From: Cari Clocherty <cariclocherty@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 2:39 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER-

Hello

I would like to submit a comment for the zoom meeting tonight.

If the vaccine and mask mandates don't stop I will be homeschooling my son.

I will not EVER put this experimental vaccine into my child and I will not be told that HPV vaccine is for my son. My son has been directly exposed and cannot catch it. This is government overreach and I know many of people changing careers to make sure this doesn't happen. So keep doing what you're doing and you won't have enough kids to keep the school going. I thought when we kept our kids home for a protest you would understand that you are going to lose.

Thank you
Cari

[REDACTED]

From: Kirstie Ball <kballkball@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 12:59 PM
To: CountyExecutiveOfficer@ventura.org; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please consider

Hello,

I am reaching out as a frustrated parent and citizen. Please consider ending this ridiculous practice of masking. There is DETAILED DATA... JOHN HOPKINS...stating lockdowns and masks had absolutely no benefit for deflecting the virus(s) Lets learn from the past create forward movement together!

Kirstie

[REDACTED]

From: jolyn saunders <jolynsaunders@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 11:11 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining enrollment

My opinion on why you have a decline in enrollment is because of how COVID-19 was handled. If the mask and vaccine mandates are upheld and continue there will be a even bigger decline. There will be a mass amount of families seeking other schooling options or moving out of the state.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lisa Rundle <ldrundle@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:52 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment regarding declining school numbers

Hello,

My name is Lisa Rundle and I am a mom of 4. I live here in Ventura and have 2 children who are attending Ventura schools.

My first concern, would be the fact that we need to have a meeting, of course zoom and not publicly attended, to address this issue. Board members are supposed to be in the community advocating for our children. However, this is not being done. Our kids have been wearing masks for almost 2 years, being tested in order to participate in sports and having learning and socialization be a low priority if at all. Our schools have become political agendas where we mask and test in order to receive federal funds. We know the amount of money involved and it is significant. Our children are being used as pawns in order to garner federal funds. It needs to stop.

You as board members were elected to advocate for our kids. And I emphasize OUR kids. These kids are ours to raise and decide what goes into their bodies whether it be a shot or a nasal swab. Both are medical procedures that they are being coerced to take. It doesn't even matter if they did take the shot as they still need to test.

It is time to stand for the children and not the money. If you stand for them then you will have the right to teach them again. Until that time, you will continue to see declining enrollment and subsequent school closers and job losses.

Sincerely,
A concerned parent

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[REDACTED]

From: Renata <renatajkovalski@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:40 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining Enrollment public comment

Hi,
I'm an Executive Director in Biopharma industry with 30 yrs of experience in drug development. Also, I'm a parent who's 2 children attended private parochial school K-8 and the moved to Foothill Tech after lottery won. If they didn't get into Foothill Tech, they would likely continue on at St. Bony.
Main reason is that as a parent I prefer a small school with easy access to teachers and principal so that I know exactly what the children are or are not being thought.
I also prefer parochial school because there is discipline. There is nothing worse than a few kids who disturb class when other students are trying g to learn.
Lastly, let this be VERY clear. Any experimental "gene therapy" platform COVID19 "vaccine" mandate will mean that I will immediately remove my children from public school. VUSD needs to stand up to the state and ensure there is freedom of choice especially since these "vaccines" DO NOT prevent transmission of disease, are NOT effective against Omricon variant at all, and are unsafe for young people (heart inflammation is a serious disease, clinical Safety data won't be available from Pfizer or Moderna until 3 yrs from now) Do your own research and look up FDA's approval letter for Pfeizers vaccine on FDA.gov.

Sincerely

Renata Kovalski
Mobile: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Elana Daley <elanadaley@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:30 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining enrollment

Dear VUSD Board-

Enrollment has been declining long before Covid. It is a complete waste of taxpayer funds to hire a consultant to "try to figure out " the cause.

I prefer you use the funds to help our children breathe fresh air, help the teachers by providing them more freedoms within their classrooms. Help them find more grants to allow new ways to teach through projects and experiences.

I homeschooled our son after the importance in elementary school was about class size over a proper education for my son. When I asked him to be moved to a different class the teacher and principal responded with "the class size would be uneven".

Get the priority straight. Stop spending frivolously on consultants to answer a question that has a glaring answer you refuse to see.

Families are leaving California for many reasons one of them includes that our schools are among the lowest in academic sophistication. Our schools occupy the lower portion of ranking not the higher. This directly affects our children.

This pandemic is on your conscience. You and the entire board of supervisors has sold the entire VUSD community down the river for money. You have created suffering children, increased risk of social issues, caused depression and suicide, contributed to a deterioration of education, and the list goes on. I hold every board member personally accountable for endangering our children unnecessarily and for accepting monies to do so.

Stop being intentionally ignorant. Stand up to the leaders of our County and stand with the families of the very children you are teaching and serving. You are paid by my tax dollar and you work for me. Stop telling me and start listening to me.

Thank you,
Elana Daley

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Lisa Carrera <olctavern@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:23 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Mask mandate/ possible vaccine mandates

Hello, I would like to submit my comment in regards to the declining enrollment in Ventura Unified School District. I have already pulled one child from your district due to the mask mandate and other mismanagement along with segregation with her not being vaccinated (already had covid and has current antibodies) and I'm looking to pull the other one if mask mandates do not get dropped. We are two years into this and the damage that has been done to these children is unrepairable at this point. I really hope you guys can stand up against whoever it is you need to stand up against and start standing up for our children instead.

Thank You,
Lisa Carrera

Sent from my iPhone

From: Lauren Cohen <lsmith0417@ [REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 9:46 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining enrollment

To whom it may concern,

I heard you were having a committee regarding declining enrollment and to be honest with you I am stunned that you don't know why the enrollment is down. I sent my son last year for Kindergarten and I was constantly disappointed. I watched as he came home sad, with rashes on his ears and face. He was told he had to wear it outside in 90° weather. It is just common sense that this is wrong.

Never once have you stood up for what is right for our children. We know that covid does not effect them as it does older people but yet our children are the ones suffering the most. So many states and counties have dropped the mask mandate. You have not. You wouldn't even open meetings to in person so we could actually talk to the board about it. If I knew you would actually stand up for our kids, even if it meant standing against public health and the governor, I would send my kid back in a heartbeat. Now, with the threat of a vaccine mandate to attend school, I don't trust that again you would put them first.

I've said it many times in many emails to you, it is unethical to risk harm to a child in order to protect an adult. Study after study are coming out regarding the harms of all these restrictions on our children.

I will not send my 7 year old back to your district and I will not send my 5 year old to Kindergarten until a lot of changes are made. Start listening to parents, open up the board meetings to in person, and put kids first.

Sincerely,

Lauren Cohen

From: Jeff Payne <jeff@ [REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 9:04 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining Enrollment Committee

Since moving to Ventura, several incidents and factors have led us to enroll our children in private schools. We feel that you should be aware of these circumstances. We moved to Ventura from Ontario, Canada in November 2016, and enrolled our kids in their respective boundary schools (Montalvo & Anacapa).

Regarding our younger child:

- * When our younger child began attending their classes at Montalvo (3rd grade), they were quickly met with teasing and unkind treatment by the other students. The contact we had from the teacher was supportive but not very helpful.
- * We didn't spend much time trying to resolve this first issue because around the third week in school, our child was assaulted on the bus - another student grabbed our child around the throat and pushed them up against the wall of the bus. The bus driver suggested having our child sit near the front of the bus as the solution.
- * On three separate occasions, I delayed going to work to come to the office at Montalvo school and found that the Principal was not present at the start of the school day. It was not the case that they were otherwise engaged and unable to meet with me - they had not yet arrived at the school, and even after a half hour or more wait, were still not at the school. On the day of the assault, I left a message to be contacted by the Principal, but I never was. We promptly withdrew our child and enrolled them in a local private school.
- * The following year we enrolled our student in the Open Classroom program. This was a much better fit, and were sad to learn that the middle school program was being suspended.
- * Our child was GATE identified and was achieving above grade level on standardized tests while at OC. We appreciated the individualized curriculum that does not seem to be the norm in the district schools.
- * In our child's 5th grade year, we learned that the program was being shut down completely with no immediate replacement.
- * While attending a school of choice night, a middle school principal stated flat out that there were essentially no differences between GATE classes and regular classes. The reason for this is that GATE identification covers a broad range of students and they need to cater to the least common denominator.
- * We were waitlisted for Cabrillo, so our child instead attended a private school until this year when they enrolled at Lemon Grove. While this year has been going well for our student, I'm not ready to call it a replacement for Open Classroom.

Regarding our older child:

- * While they had some culture shock with the rough language and behavior of students at Anacapa, he navigated it well and was immediately successful, maintaining a 4.0 GPA.
- * He was GATE identified and enrolled in GATE classes. Our feedback from him was that his classes were easy and he was bored.
- * In 7th grade we transferred him to DATA to hopefully give him a more challenging environment and technical opportunities. We soon learned that while he was in GATE classes, the classes that made DATA "special" were only offered in period 0 with no transportation. With two working parents being not at all uncommon, limited or no transportation to these types of programs can be as much a barrier as if the program cost money. In fact, parents providing transportation are have a very real monetary cost.

* In 8th grade he was treated disrespectfully, and was embarrassed publicly even while receiving student of the month honors by a teacher who insisted on calling him by his last name only. ("Payne". Not by his first name, not first and last name, not "Mr. Payne". Just "Payne"). She went on to express her disbelief at his success in spite of transferring from Anacapa.

* He applied to the lottery for Foothill Tech and was declined.

* He was accepted at and now attends the Cate School in Carpinteria.

* We quickly learned that he was a year behind his peers in math in spite of getting A's in GATE math at DATA. He took a dual-enrollment course to catch up.

* His writing skills were also identified as needing development, and his instructors have commented on how well he accepts instruction and how quickly his skills improved. Again, in spite of the fact that he was getting A's in GATE English at DATA.

* He is now taking honors and advanced courses in all the major subjects and is in the top 10 of his class. Our younger child will likely join him at Cate next year.

Another anecdote:

* A friend of the family recently graduated Ventura HS with better than a 4.0, high test scores and strong extracurriculars. He was accepted at none of the colleges where he applied. We're assured that he had "likely" and "safe" schools on his application list, but even if those were misclassified, it indicates some kind of oversight in the college counseling process.

I understand that educational equity is a priority in public schools, and is in fact state law. It is a worthy priority, but I fear that the educational bureaucracy confuses equity with equality, ensuring that everyone receives some median baseline education. The resulting message we've consistently received from VUSD is that the district and state do not place a high priority on serving the needs of their best and brightest. Now I read that the state intends to hold all students back, by mandating that 8th graders may not be taught Algebra. This will make it even more difficult for our most talented students to compete with their peers from other states when applying to top universities. So we go elsewhere, and are fortunate that we have the means to be able to do so. We are saddened for the brilliant students and their families who do not have this alternative.

Best Regards,
Jeff Payne

[REDACTED]

From: Cristyn Hathaway <crisyncabrido@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 8:57 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please be advised!

Please be advised, shall the district continue to mandate masks on my currently enrolled children and or require the vaccine my children will be pulled from VUSD furthering your decline in enrollment, mask mandates for everyone else ends 2/15, I surely hope you do what's right by our children and so the same, thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

From: Marisa Ferguson <fergusonmarisa@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 4:42 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Declining enrollment public comment

Greeting,

I am writing to submit a public comment regarding decline enrollment and would like to share my personal opinion and experience on the matter. I am a parent of a VUSD student enrolled in 4th grade and I have a student in 1st grade at a private elementary school who has never entered the VUSD system. I intentionally chose an alternate path for youngest son upon entering into kindergarten based on several reasons involving lack of support and services for all students, lack of a quality of education and disruption in education due to poor covid policies, lack of District student advocacy at the local and state level as it relates to masking, vaccine mandates and such.

Upon my oldest son entering VUSD, I had a horrendous experience with getting him the necessary supports and special education services that he needed through the district. As an educator myself, I had an extremely difficult time navigating and advocating for my oldest son's needs. At the age of 3, I requested support from the district and despite an overwhelming amount of evidence I was repeatedly denied. It took me hiring an advocate and me spending thousands of dollars on neuropsychological evaluations for the district to realize that my son was truly in need of an IEP but it took 3 years to get that support in place. This was three years lost in educational support that my oldest son will not get back. The Districts lack of student centered approach was not something I was going to subject my youngest son to. VUSD had failed my first child and I was not going to let that happen again.

As previously mentioned, I chose to not enroll my youngest son or re enroll my son in VUSD due to the lack of quality education, disruption in education due to covid and lack of student advocacy at the state and local level. I have to say, enrolling my kindergartener in private school for the 2020 21 school year was one of best decisions I ever made. I chose to register him in private school prior to the shut down and seeing/comparing my sons' education experiences with one in private and one in public was day and night. My youngest son had two weeks of "distance learning" and his school applied for an in person waiver and he basically attended his entire year in-person education. He thrived in kinder and his education was not disrupted in the least due to the fact that his private school fought HARD to get the students in person. The private school put the needs of the children first as it should be. VUSD did not fight for the needs of their students not even for their most disadvantaged groups who needed in person instruction such as my son with an IEP. While I watched one child happily attend school every day, I watched my older son regress in his learning and his IEP goals. My oldest son sat blindly at a computer screen day in and day out regressing before my eyes. It was the most heartbreaking experience.

Now that the vaccine mandates are on the heels of VUSD, I have little faith that VUSD will fight for the needs, will and choices of their parents. I firmly believe that parents should have a choice as it relates to the covid vaccine due to the lack of longitudinal data (5 10 years for example) to support it's safety and efficacy. The science today says that the vaccine does not prevent infection, transmission of Covid-19, and that the kids have a statistically insignificant chance of dying from covid. So why the mandate? We don't know the long-term consequences of the vaccine as it relates to autoimmune disorders, fertility and cancer. Until we have

that long term data, it should remain a parent's choice. I have expressed my opinions to district personnel and all I get is "address your concerns with the State." I am sorry but the District needs to advocate for parent's and children's needs because it WILL directly impact your enrollment. If SB 871 is passed, parents WILL continue to pull their students from your district and you will have a mass exodus of unenrollment. This is your problem, this is your fight, this directly impacts you. Stand up for your children, stand up for your parents. VUSD failed me once, please don't fail me or my child again.

Respectfully,
Marisa Stuteville