

Sue Abderholden, MPH
She/Her/Hers
Executive Director
NAMI Minnesota

NAMI Minnesota is concerned about the mental health of students and teachers. The pandemic has resulted in isolation and uncertainty along with a great deal of stress related to the coronavirus itself and economic instability. Parents who are essential workers have found it difficult to support their children in distance learning, and not every child had access to reliable internet or were able to engage in distance learning. Children are doing the best that can be expected during this time, but we must recognize the impact the pandemic and George Floyd's death has had on the mental health of our children. Bringing children back into the classroom will be welcomed but difficult. Children who have experienced trauma during this time may exhibit symptoms (behaviors) in the classroom that will need attention (not punishment), others may be fearful of catching the coronavirus and passing it on to family members and exhibit great anxiety, and others still may be reluctant to come back to school due to previous bullying, etc.

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Minnesota students is critically important. In addition to funding for PPE and increasing access to school-lined mental health services, NAMI Minnesota recommends the following:

Provide teachers and staff with training and resources on early identification of mental health needs for students:

- All school staff should review what they learned in the Early Warning Signs of Children's Mental Health training so they know what to watch for when providing distance or in-person learning. NAMI and MACMH are working on a free training for teachers and school staff to understand the impact of the pandemic and steps that can be taken. We are hoping to offer it in late January.
- Schools should implement formal or informal screening practices to identify students in need of mental health or SEL support.
- Schools should have a student support or mental health team that meets regularly (weekly or every other week) to help monitor the needs of students and families. Students who are exhibiting early indication of mental health needs should be connected to appropriate mental health or SEL supports, with active staff assistance to eliminate any barriers to service and support immediate access.

Leverage School-Linked Mental Health partners as key resources.

To fully access the mental health care and ancillary support that school-linked mental health professionals can bring to your school communities:

- help students maintain access to their mental health care by allowing them to keep their school-owned device throughout the COVID pandemic and allow school-owned devices to upload telehealth apps for students to be able to connect with their mental health professional via telehealth
- share the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is distributed to your school personnel with your co-located mental health professionals for consistency in use of protective equipment within the school
- invite school-linked mental health professionals on the multi-tier system of supports (MTSS, or similarly named) teams to help assure early intervention supports for students with mental health needs

- allow for flexibility in when mental health services may be offered, including the potential use of telehealth support for students who return to hybrid or regular classroom schedules to accommodate teaching and lower risk for cross-contamination within schools
- allow families to access school-linked mental health supports as they help their student address their mental health needs
- teachers and staff can receive support from school-linked mental health professionals, as they navigate their leadership roles in support of students and the wider school community.

Equip staff to understand the trauma impacts of the COVID pandemic.

Trauma training is critical for all professionals supporting students and families who are all experiencing the impact of the continued COVID pandemic. School-Linked and local community-based mental health partners can provide training support with relevant content in your local context, with ongoing resource for support.

Promote mental health resources.

Every school district can list the mental health resources available in their community on their websites and social media platforms (limit to Medicaid and free and reduced clinics), especially School-Linked mental health providers, so that families know where to go for help. Every school website should list the national suicide helpline and text line on their website along with the county mental health crisis team number.

Megan Albrecht

Early childhood Special Education Teacher

My name is Megan and I am a special education preschool teacher for one of Minnesota's largest public school districts. I teach low functioning autistic 3-5 year olds, and we are supposed to return all in person to school after MLK day. I will be wearing a mask and a shield as I run around trying to keep my students safe. My students will be running around WITHOUT masks. My students needs are so high that I need 2-3 additional staff in my classroom to teach these children, to keep them safe. Many of my students require 2 adults to complete basic skills at school like taking off their coat, washing hands, and appropriately using classroom materials.

I want so badly to be in school with my students, but not until it is SAFE. Returning mid January is NOT SAFE for my students or their families as my staff and I CAN'T stay even a foot away from them. It's not fair to them, we need to remain distance learning until teachers and staff can ensure safety for our states youngest learners.

Please help, these young learners are so vulnerable as it is, they do not wear masks nor can they practice safety and health procedures on their own. Distance learning is best for now, until we can protect students in schools.

Thank you

Erin Bartlett, LSW, MAT

I am writing in response to a Senate agenda item on January 4th about getting students back to school.

I am a Teacher and School Social Worker of 17 years. In that time, I have primarily worked in urban K-12 settings.

I want to say first that any meetings about getting students back to school that are held virtually are hypocritical. If you can't meet in person to discuss it, we aren't ready to be back in school.

My next point is that it will not be safe or fair to teachers, students and families for school to resume until all education staff have been fully vaccinated. If we go back at any point before that happens, you can be assured COVID will spread in schools and it will be far more detrimental to students than online learning.

Third, how many times can we be asked to reinvent school in a twelve month period? Virtual, hybrid, partial hybrid, in person - I can't keep up. Unless you are working in schools, you can't fully understand the amount of work that goes into launching each model and then changing again. We are in a groove now with virtual learning and you want us to change it again? That is the definition of insanity. Schools are not daycares. If families are suffering with kids being home, going back to school should not be the solution (before full vaccination). Employers need to step up and help families too. Grades should be changed to pass/fail and standardized testing should not be happening this year. I'm sick of schools being used to raise, educate, feed, provide medical care and clothe kids. We do it because we love them but our PURPOSE is to educate. If you want us to do all that other stuff, give us better funding and more staff. Please also do what makes sense right now - no grades, no standardized testing. Those things are not what define learning and education anyway. They are archaic.

Fourth, by the time we get up and going again, learning will not just magically start happening. We will have to reteach kids school. We will have to teach and practice the new safety procedures like mask wearing and social distancing. This all takes time. A lot of time. Why isn't our focus on the fall? We have several months if we start NOW, to plan for a safe, quality fall reopening. Throwing together yet another learning model in a few short weeks is NOT the best use of time.

Last, let's stop with the rhetoric that kids are falling behind and their mental health is suffering. EVERYBODY'S mental health is suffering right now because we are living through a pandemic. Schools cannot magically fix mental health - see my earlier point about our role being to EDUCATE. This pandemic is being dragged on because things like mask wearing have become political and we have had an incompetent President. Let's blame that for suffering mental health, not a lack of school. Kids may not be learning in the way we typically think, but they are experiencing history, learning new coping skills and utilizing technology in new ways. Our state standards are outdated and steeped in white privilege. Let's use this time between now and fall to examine schools and make them better. Let's stop trying force normal and comfortable into new circumstances. It will not work.

I plead with you - do not force opening schools until fall. LISTEN to the loud majority of educators who are seasoned, qualified experts on school. We know best. We do not want to open right now. We do not feel safe. This push to force us into unsafe circumstances is insulting and WRONG. Please do the right thing.

#VirtualUntilSafe

Christine Behnen
Reopen Minnesota Schools
Test Transparency Project

I am a parent of a 10th grader. Virtual education is not a substitute for in person education, and beyond that, it is harmful. Restricting the youth from in person school and life activities is not evidenced to offer the "safety" that is being used to justify it. The closure of in person schooling, and life, from young people amounts to a symbolic sacrifice of children, MY CHILD, for an end that it does not secure. Closing schools does not save us from the virus, and it is forcing our children to live lives that are being found to be not worth living. These children need YOU to open schools and stop the isolation.

Last year my son was an A student, with a history of having been nominated to be student of the year. He attends school by choice according to the value for education that he holds so highly. When schools moved to distance learning in the spring, he ended his year failing nearly all of his classes. When he started school in person in the fall he was once again getting A's and thriving. When school moved to distance learning in November, he ended the year failing about half of his classes. He has excellent teachers, who I believe offered an exceptional quality of distance education, but it is not enough to result in an education. School went from an experience of being competent, capable, and part of a community to one of being a "failure, stupid, and lazy" (his words) as well as being completely alone.

In the time that he has gone to distance learning, he has begun to think about suicide. After starting in person school in the fall, he told his therapist that he was happy to not be experiencing the suicidal thoughts that he had had in the spring. With school closing, and the world cut off from him, they are back. Not a day passes that he does not reference these thoughts, often trying to make suicide jokes to soften the hopelessness. He could write the suicide joke book. He says that he does not see that anything will change. He does not have expectations of a future. He lives in his room in his home, and only occasionally goes outside, as he would not want to hurt someone by going out. He has accepted the narrative that young people like him, even if they appear healthy, could cause the death of his grandmother or someone's family. He has accepted the narrative that says that it is not safe to go out, to have friends that you can see, to live and learn in a world that exists beyond a bedroom. He concludes that, since he has been told that this situation is necessary, his failure to thrive and succeed is due to his own shortcomings. Virtual schooling creates failure and hopelessness when students, who are used to being capable, find that they cannot do what is being asked of them. They are then not just in a difficult situation, but in a situation which actively defines them as failures, as stupid, as too lazy to meet the demands.

We need to stop pretending that virtual learning is comparable or a substitute for in school/in community learning. It is not. Schools are experiencing more and more unenrollments, as children fail to participate, and parents realize what computer school is doing to harm their children. As it is, our children do not have an education. It is not just about education, though. Schools also are the main community access for most children. It is where they have social relationships with mentors and friends which affirm their worth and value. When you remove

school from their lives, you are removing the entire structure of social health which allows their bodies and minds to continue living. Human beings cannot be healthy in isolation. Children are beginning to lose their goodwill towards school, in addition to their goodwill towards life. **It is not SAFE to assume that when schools finally open at some late future date that the students and families will be there. They cannot wait indefinitely, and many have not.**

Your failure to open schools, to open access to healthy (free breathing) access to sports, is directly damaging the health of our children, who, contrary to what the media says during COVID, are the most vulnerable amongst us. As our elected representatives, it is your role and responsibility to do the work of legislators to create law and policy that is good for those that you represent. **You MUST take back your authority from the governor and act to return access to life, community, and education to the young, who do not represent a danger to others, and are being gravely harmed by isolation. Do your duty.**

Please also do your due diligence. Make sure that the reasons for decisions are based on evidence. The reasoning for closing schools is unfounded and unevicenced. Schools have been observationally evidenced to not significantly contribute to spread. Children have been shown to spread the virus even less than adults, making schools actually safer for the adults there. Studies show that asymptomatic spread either does not exist or that it exists at a very small fraction of symptomatic spread. What we have relied upon for years, that you stay home when you feel sick, is just as valid now as it always has been. There is no compelling evidence for masking, and it just doesn't make sense to force an intervention that has shown little if any benefit.

Testing, especially routine testing without presence of symptoms, in schools is not an effective nor helpful way to control spread nor to reassure ourselves. The PCR test is being used in such a way as to produce high percentages of false positives. It is unethical to use positive PCR test (in absence of symptoms) as a sole criteria for exclusion from school, contact quarantine, nor to pretend evidence of an "outbreak". Internationally, quarantine based solely upon a PCR result has been found to be illegal and without evidence. Rapid antigen tests in studies focused on the routine testing of teachers have shown that they have an even higher rate of false positives, about 4 false positives for every true positive, as well as being ineffective in identifying presymptomatic COVID cases, even when used routinely every 48 hours. Any encouraged or mandated routine testing in absence of symptoms will yield many healthy positives who are not sick nor contagious, which will lead to quarantines, all-school quarantines, and even closures, in addition to giving an impression of spread at school where there is none.

My son's school experienced an all-school closure due to too many people out on quarantine. It turned out that NONE of the individuals tested nor quarantined at his school ever had any symptoms. They were never sick. Nevertheless, the entire school was quarantined. A few weeks after returning, the entire school went virtual, likely influenced by these events. I think it likely that many schools are experiencing the same issue of excessive quarantine and closure due to improperly used tests which create false positives, which remove teachers from the workforce and students from school, all without anyone being sick nor contagious. It is important that we are not wasting scarce COVID resources on those who are neither sick nor contagious. It is important that we protect our children from further harm by using testing responsibly and accurately.

This experience of excessive quarantine in schools can be avoided by only testing those with symptoms or a high likelihood of being infected with PCR tests, which are run at a proper range of cycles (below 35), as well as accompanied by a doctor's diagnosis.

Because of the seriousness of the damage and harm being done to our children, as well as the misuse of tests and resulting consequences, I have founded two endeavors. I have founded the group Reopen Minnesota Schools to advocate for the opening of schools without restrictions and the return of children to healthy life activities. We now have over 7700 members. I have also founded the Test Transparency Project to address the issue of misuse and inappropriate interpretation of tests, excessive and harmful quarantine, and transparency in the use of testing. I am happy to share my knowledge and efforts with any who are interested, in addition to welcoming collaboration and support. I may be reached at TestTransparencyProject@protonmail.com

Jerilynn Davis

I am the parent to a 7th grader, a kindergartener and a preschooler this year. I would like to express my concerns over the mandates and requirements to keep our kids in school full time. We have been very fortunate in our district as they have found ways, even with high numbers, to keep our prek-6th grade in the classroom full time. That ability came at the expense of our 7-12 students.

Our personal story looks like a success. I worked from home before the pandemic hit so we had one less transition to deal with than many. My 7th grader is a spec ed student. He is a smart kid receiving help with social skills and organization. It is damn near impossible for him to receive help with social situations when he isn't allowed to socialize. When we went to distance learning last spring in 2 weeks he managed to get 2 weeks behind in most classes. Without me constantly working with him he would have failed every class. I met with his case worker at the end of the year and was told I was the key to his success. They could see me in the background in every Google Meets class and meeting he was in. Many kids didn't have that support at home and did not succeed at distance learning.

My kindergartener was in preschool last spring. She was struggling with a lot of the things needed to be ready for kindergarten but when we met with her teacher in late February we still had plenty of time in the year to really master what she needed. When we moved to distance we had about a month of content from the school before they finally gave up and said distance was too hard for the younger kids and families couldn't put in the time needed to teach what they should learn at school. I missed work but we got her to a good place so she was ready to take on all kindergarten has to offer.

This year has had challenges. The school year started with full time for our k-6 and hybrid for 7-12. With my 7th graders IEP he was able to go every day. When we went to open house one of his teachers called him one of the lucky ones. Isn't that a fantastic and awful thing all wrapped

into one? He was lucky, but what about the rest of the students? I've talked to other parents that were part of the unlucky group, grades fell, assignments were missed, they were struggling. Even having our younger kids in the classroom came with challenges. My kindergartener, who waited through 2 years of preschool to play on the big playground gets to use it once a week. Kids can only play with the kids in their classroom. Sounds like an okay concept until all their friends are in a different room. Then they are faced with the same isolation as the kids at home only they were surrounded by people.

We went to full time distance learning in November for our 7-12 students. Again mine was lucky, I thought. He was in the school building 4 days a week. Two weeks in and my A student was failing classes. I now check his grades every few days, asks about assignments and demand (with help from me) that he stays on top of everything and has been successful through it all. He may be in the building but he is definitely not getting the same education or support. I had multiple coworkers quit this year because they couldn't handle the stress of work and the stress of taking care of their kids. Something had to give. We have a friend that was failing everything and had the cops show up because of concerns about a suicide attempt. Imagine what hell a 13 year old must be going through to send his friends an email saying he can't wait to die. That is what this is doing to our kids and our families. They are suffering and you have the ability to put a stop to that. We need our kids back in school. We need them socializing. We need to understand that the solution cannot be worse than the disease. Right now the solution is killing our kids. Covid isn't going away today or tomorrow and maybe not this year but 9 months in we have ways to treat it and more and more people are surviving. Other countries understand that school is the safest place for our kids, when will you place that same value on our youth?

Kristen Denzer

CEO & Founder/

Tierra Encantada

I know one of the big questions that reminds on teachers minds is the ability to achieve the social distancing guidelines within the setting and is one of the core reasons why schools aren't opening quicker. Like most schools, our classrooms are not built to maintain 6' - or even 4' solid distance between learners. But that should not be a reason to not return. At Tierra we can't accommodate that either, and haven't this entire time. Our K-2 students in our distance learning support program have continued sitting within few of each other - and been allowed to remove their mask when on zoom class calls (must put back on when not in class call).

Not maintaining the 6 (or 3') I'm sure you are wondering how many "outbreaks" we have had. Our K-2 students have been together from 7am - 5pm daily since the first week of September under this model. We have had zero outbreaks. And of the 5 teachers and 50 students we have only had 1 positive COVID-19 case - and that child did not infect any of her teachers or peers - even though she was sitting closely to peers in a classroom and allowed to take her mask off the eat, zoom calls, etc. My point isn't that it will never happen - it's that COVID-19 doesn't spread in schools. That's been abundantly clear and widely known now over the past few months. But, since Minnesota is one of the more hesitant states I feel my operational insight for this would be helpful to redirect the committee's focus on the #1 stakeholder - children.

Jessica Fu

I'm a teacher as well as the parent of a middle schooler and a 4th grader. I'll keep this brief as I'm sure you're getting a lot of input. I can't stress enough how detrimental this school closure is for children. Perhaps most upsetting though all of this is the lack of voice from teachers who WANT to come back, who put students first. We could have put an end to this in August, but we are stifled by union politics, fear-based media and a governor who won't stand up for kids if it means losing the support of unions.

My own children are doing ok - we've pulled them out of public school and placed them in private until their schools reopen. We've traveled, let them see their friends, let them participate in sports when possible, and kept their lives as "normal" as we can. We're also blessed to have kids who do well in school, and the ability and finances to maintain a focus on their education.

Many families don't have this, and to be honest the level of inequity is criminal. I don't say that in a hyperbolic sense. These children are being robbed of their futures as an equitable education is taken from them. Many who were set to graduate won't. Many who were on the path to college, getting close to mastering English as a second language, or finding friends they connect with will never see those goals achieved. They will remain lost, and we will all pay the price. Instead of success, they will find anxiety, depression, hopelessness and failure. Students who were a year or 2 behind are now 4 years behind - they will never catch up to their more privileged peers, many of whom have been in private school and had in person learning all year. So yes, what we've done to these kids is absolutely criminal. We are putting politics before children, pretending to care about the most disadvantaged then turning around and hurting them the most. It needs to stop. Not in a few months - now. Our kids are past the point of losing hope.

Rebecca Leonard

I am a parent of 3 kids in 8th, 10th and 12th grade. Virtual education is not a substitute for in person education, and beyond that, it is harmful.

Restricting the youth from in person school and life activities is not evidenced to offer the "safety" that is being used to justify it. Closing schools does not save us from the virus, and it is forcing our children to live lives that are being found to be not worth living. These children need YOU to open schools and stop the isolation.

Children are failing classes, not showing up online, and are lacking any motivation because even they see this as ridiculous. They are literally laying in their bedrooms and doing the bare minimum to get by. They have the option to go back to hybrid in a few weeks, but are saying there is no point. School is now like a prison, full of rules, constantly getting yelled at for being to close or for pulling up their mask, very little contact with friends there or even with the teachers (because most are so afraid to be there or decided to teach from home). It's a WASTE OF TIME! They don't feel good after wearing masks all day at school and now have to wear them at their sports every day. So I refuse to make them go back to this absurdity. This is NOT SCHOOL!

I heard from a nurse at Children's Hospital, that she has never seen so many admissions from suicide attempts by children!!!!!! Do you hear that? Of course that is hushed by the media. We had a serious mental health problem in terms even before Covid and now nobody at the government level is talking about it. SHAME ON THE MDH! This is criminal what they are doing.

I am also hearing that this hopelessness is just leading to more substance abuse by teens. Guess what they are doing when they don't have the accountability of the school classroom and sports???? It is out of control.

What about the increase in child obesity, starvation, abuse, etc? Again, not a word! Where is Jan Malcomb's charts on this? I'm sure some U of M student could do a study (insert eye roll).

Virtual schooling creates failure and hopelessness when students, who are used to being capable, find that they cannot do what is being asked of them. They are then not just in a difficult situation, but in a situation which actively defines them as failures, as stupid, as too lazy to meet the demands.

We need to stop pretending that virtual learning is comparable or a substitute for in school/in community learning. It is not. Schools are experiencing more and more unenrollments, as children fail to participate or thrive, and parents realize what computer school is doing to harm their children. As it is, our children do not have an education. It is not just about education, though. Schools also are the main community access for many children. This is where they have social relationships with mentors and friends which affirm their worth and value. When you remove school from their lives, you are removing the entire structure of social health which allows their bodies and minds to continue living and wanting to live. Human beings cannot be healthy in isolation. Children are beginning to lose their goodwill towards school, in addition to their goodwill towards life. It is not SAFE to assume that when schools finally open at some late future date that the students and families will be there. They cannot wait indefinitely, and many have not.

Your failure to open schools, to open access to healthy (free breathing) access to sports, is directly damaging the health of our children, who, contrary to what the media says during COVID, are the most vulnerable among us. As our elected representatives, it is your role and responsibility to do the work of legislators to create law and policy that is good for those that you represent. You MUST take back your authority from the governor and act to return access to life, community, and education to the young, who do not represent a danger to others, and are being gravely harmed by isolation. Do your duty.

There is research that shows the increase in carbon dioxide intake/reduced oxygen damages our neurological brain cells. Well duh! We all know this can't be healthy. It doesn't feel healthy. Stop being so tunnel visioned on just Covid. The scales have turned. There will be far more deaths due to the issues mentioned above.

Please also do your due diligence. Make sure that the reasons for decisions are based on evidence. The reasoning for closing schools is unfounded and unevidenced. Schools have been observationally evidenced to not significantly contribute to spread. Children have been shown to spread the virus even less than adults, making schools actually safer for the adults there. Studies show that asymptomatic spread either does not exist or that it exists at a very small fraction of symptomatic spread. What we have relied upon for years, that you stay home when you feel sick, is just as valid now as it always has been. There is no compelling evidence for masking, and it just doesn't make sense to force an intervention that has shown little if any benefit.

Testing, especially routine testing without presence of symptoms, in schools is not an effective nor helpful way to control spread nor to reassure ourselves. The PCR test is being used in such a way as to produce high percentages of false positives. It is unethical to use a positive PCR test (in absence of symptoms) as a sole criteria for exclusion from school, contact quarantine, nor to pretend evidence of an "outbreak". Internationally, quarantine based solely upon a PCR result has been found to be illegal and without evidence. Rapid antigen tests in studies focused on the routine testing of teachers have shown

that they have an even higher rate of false positives, about 4 false positives for every true positive, as well as being ineffective in identifying presymptomatic COVID cases, even when used routinely every 48 hours. Any encouraged or mandated routine testing in absence of symptoms will yield many healthy positives who are not sick nor contagious, which will lead to quarantines, all-school quarantines, and even closures, in addition to giving an impression of spread at school where there is none.

Schools were closing due to too many people out on quarantine. However, a large majority of individuals tested or quarantined at school never had any symptoms. They were never sick. They were never a danger to others. Nevertheless, the entire school was quarantined. A few weeks after returning, the entire school went virtual, likely influenced by these misinterpreted events. I think it likely that schools are endemically experiencing the same issue of excessive quarantine and closure due to improperly used tests which create false positives, which remove teachers from the workforce and students from school, all without anyone being sick nor contagious. It is important that we are not wasting scarce COVID resources on those who are neither sick nor contagious. It is important that we protect our children from further harm by using testing responsibly and accurately. It is important that my child not go through this when we knew that it was serving no helpful end and could be avoided.

This experience of excessive quarantine in schools can be avoided by only testing those with symptoms or a high likelihood of being infected with PCR tests, which are run at a proper range of cycles (below 35), as well as accompanied by a doctor's diagnosis.

Because of the seriousness of the damage and harm being done to our children, as well as the misuse of tests and resulting consequences, I have founded two endeavors. I have founded the group Reopen Minnesota Schools to advocate for the opening of schools without restrictions and the return of children to healthy life activities. We now have over 7700 members. I have also founded the Test Transparency Project to address the issue of misuse and inappropriate interpretation of tests, excessive and harmful quarantine, and transparency in the use of testing. I am happy to share my knowledge and efforts with any who are interested, in addition to welcoming collaboration and support. I may be reached at TestTransparencyProject@protonmail.com. If you can help us, we are grateful. If you do not help us, know that it will be people like us, parents with the unbreakable fidelity of love, who will hold you accountable for your active or impotent complicity.

Elizabeth Lind

For almost one year our children's lives have been interrupted by a pandemic that has little affect on their lives, as very few actually get ill. You are allowing our governor to ruin their lives. We must take back control and allow all children to go to school full time and do extracurricular activities and live life again. We have allowed Walz to take away their education and destroy their mental health in the process. You must help our children.

Lynn McLaughlin

I have two high school students, one a junior the other senior. This school distance learning and even hybrid is hurting my teens. Each district is doing this a little differently. Our district is not having all six classes at one time like they normally do. They have classes 1-3 for 4 weeks then go to 4-6 for another 4 weeks, and I myself don't even understand how that works, how this rotation works for how long. My children are not even learning do you know how much they retain in math not having it all the time. Nothing. My son is a senior he is on National Honor Society and now barely getting a D in math, he is hurting so much in AP calculus not an

easy class to try and grasp and not have every day, and not be in person to try and get it. He's a high honor student who has worked hard for college and this disruption in education is hurting him. Scholarships are on the line. These are our kids' futures being ruined and their confidence. Plus, other states are not treating their students this way. What if my senior decides to go out of state for college which he is thinking of doing. He is sooooo far behind, college is going to be a true transition for him, and not in a positive direction. The slogan was No child left behind, and that is all that's happening right now. Children are being left behind by our government. Get these students back in school, and not with a mask and a face shield. It should just be a mask, and better yet nothing. Do you remember your senior year? How would you like your senior year in high school to be flushed down the toilet? Last year's seniors at least had some part of their year normal. This year's seniors had the last part of their junior year ruined and now their senior. My junior is not faring much better. My junior took a job at a local hardware store because most of his friends work there, and he can at least see them there. It's hard for them to be motivated "to do" school, they are disconnected to their community. Which is the number one thing all guidance counselors would say get the kids connected to the school community. By doing so you're helping your child with self-esteem and feeling a part of a community that helps them engage in learning. What engagement????

Sarah Miller

I wanted to write you about my opinion on returning to school in person. I am a special Ed para and have been working in person this whole time. I contracted Covid in November and thankfully had a mild case. I suspect I got it at school. Our kids do not wear masks or social distance. We are hand to hand. Our 3 morning classrooms all had covid19 cases in November.

I do think that bringing students back to in person is best but not until all staff have been vaccinated!! Otherwise you are putting teachers at a huge risk to their health. At least hybrid was keeping the students a little distanced but back in person is crazy. Kids can get and spread covid19 very easily. If adults can not safely return to their offices without distancing I don't understand why you think teachers can be put in that same position!!

Julia Nemes

I am writing to check on when High School students may go back to in-person learning. I know there was an announcement for K-5 to return later in January. When can we expect Middle and High School students to return to the classroom?

My 9th grader asks me several times per week if they have said when high school students can go back to learning in school. He really wants to be back with his teachers and friends.

My kids have been in school in-person a total of **11 days** since March. Some teachers have told them they are learning only 50% of what they would learn if they were in-person full time. I'm not sure how this can be considered an adequate education. My 6 nieces and nephews, who attend private schools, have been in-person full time since September. They have not had issues with Covid. Please tell me how private schools are managing this and public schools cannot?

Here are some of the things associated with school and sports that my kids have missed since March. I hope you are not going to reply back with "kids are resilient". They are breaking down. The burden is too great on them. This is only a partial listing:

- In-person school for most of 7 months
- 8th grade graduation trip to Washington DC
- 8th grade graduation trip to Valley Fair
- entire Track season
- Journalism trip to Nashville
- entire summer soccer season canceled
- soccer tournament in KC
- soccer tournament in Chicago
- CC meet out of town with hotel stay for weekend
- CC annual overnight camping trip
- Normal CC meets which include carbo loads and fun activities
- 3 soccer tournaments in MN
- 3 hockey tournaments in MN
- 8 weeks of hockey games
- 6 weeks of hockey practice
- In person college visits

These things keep piling up. You can't expect kids to keep losing out on everything that means anything to them and hope that their mental well-being is OK.

The kids deserve better than what they are being given. Get the vaccine rolled out. Protect LTC facilities. Open schools for all students. Please also note that kids of all ages are attending school in-person in many countries and many States. Many public schools have been open since August in States throughout the U.S.

Sherry Nixon

My name is Sherry Nixon, my children are students in the 622 district, and the shut-down of in-person school has been life-altering for them, our family. Like many, we have struggled to adapt to distance learning, yet we put 120% into it to account for the best possible outcomes, nothing less. Working diligently to assure our children do not lose focus on the big picture, receiving a quality education regardless of the learning process.

With that, we have a few concerns:

Standardized Testing
 Teacher Accountability
 Communication

Kelsie Onyango St Paul, MN

I am writing today to implore the members of the MN Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee to make decisions regarding in-person schooling based on equity, safety, education and kids' best interests. Returning to in-person instruction at this point may sound good and it falls apart in the details for a number of reasons:

1. Timing

We know that a post-holiday spike is coming and many gatherings over the last few weeks. No returns to in-person instruction should occur until after we see the full impact of these gatherings.

2. Consistency

Schools across the state had to close in November because so many staff were sick or quarantined that buildings couldn't be staffed. There isn't any evidence as far as I know that would indicate that the same thing will not happen again with a return in Jan/Feb. In fact, there is mounting recognition of this significant barrier nationwide (<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/01/schools-staff-shortages/617465/>).

Consistency is critical for effective education to happen. Having students change teachers in January/February is not good for kids or learning. Instead of being able to focus on instruction with routines and relationships well-established, lots of instructional time would have to be spent establishing relationships, routines and classroom communities. This would negatively impact all students including those that stay virtual. And to be clear there are many families who NEED (not want) their students to remain virtual due to being at high risk for Covid complications.

Balancing parenting and working right now is difficult. And trying to figure out how to scramble for childcare to cover a 10-24 day quarantine, perhaps multiple times feels impossible for most families. Families will send kids sick/exposed because they won't have another viable option. With the FFCRA now expired, more and more families would be forced to make impossible choices between keeping sick kids home and losing their jobs and/or housing.

Constant learning model changes are bad for students, families and staff. They result in large sums of time, money and energy being put into the ever changing plans-energy, time and money that would be much better spent making more sustainable, targeted plans.

You can read about the impact of a single person coming to work sick in this article. School staff coming to work when sick and sick kids being sent to school are both endemic to education. The impacts of this norm have high stakes consequences in a pandemic.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/.../workplace-outbreak.../>

2. Safety

There is no safe distance when inside. Masks, distance and ventilation all matter a lot. Kids may be less likely to get Covid and perhaps more likely to be asymptomatic (

<https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/new-on-the-covid-19-front-lines-children-may-be-driving-the-pandemic-after-all-a-95e4c0e7-2ea0-479b-ac27-d17f07d147a5>), but nothing about schools makes it

so that the fundamental rules of virus transmission and risk reduction don't apply. (extensive F.A.Q. on aerosol transmission written by leading scientists

<https://docs.google.com/.../1fB5pysccOHvxphpTmCG.../edit#>)

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color. We don't have great data yet on Covid and young kids. But we know that kids can and do spread Covid and that when they do so, it is Black and Brown families that pay the highest costs.

Finally on safety-the emerging evidence of the new variant identified in England indicates that it is more infectious and kids may be impacted more.

3. Education.

In addition to the negative impacts of the lack of consistency, there are additional educational

shortcomings of in-person instruction at this time. To have one teacher in a full classroom wearing a mask and shield and remaining stationary at the front of the room-students would generally be on devices for huge amounts of the day and they would likely get less individual help. This would not be a return to in-person instruction as it was in Feb 2020 and earlier.

Reading instruction is one of my biggest professional passions. Hearing speech sounds clearly and seeing mouths is critical when teaching foundational reading skills. Kids need to be able to hear and see the difference between sounds like /f/ and /th/ and /m/ and /n/. You can't safely provide that instruction in person at the moment. You could show them a video of sounds and it's an inferior option to the kind of instruction that can be provided via distance learning.

Are all kids doing well right now, absolutely not. Pandemics are hard. Pandemics that are this mis-managed at all levels of government are exceedingly difficult and that impacts kids. We also had lots of kids that weren't doing well and that didn't attend consistently pre-pandemic. Schools had big problems and were systemically failing to do right by many students pre-pandemic. Anyone who claims that schools were fabulous before the pandemic or that returning to in-person instruction is a panacea is either naive or lying.

4. Equity.

In my opinion, a true commitment to equity must be reflected in our actions and words, especially when doing so is difficult. In my opinion equity in this moment would require prioritizing the needs and safety of students, families and staff of color. Data has been clear since the summer that the majority of families of color, particularly Black families, want distance learning (<https://hechingerreport.org/why-black-families-are.../> and <https://www.cbsnews.com/.../distance-remote-learning.../> and <https://mercuryllc.app.box.com/.../yna7jcoukt04ymz8jq2yk5...> are a few of the many articles on this).

Data is also clear that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted. (A few sources on this here: <https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1003402> here https://www.businessinsider.com/cdc-black-and-brown-children-dying-from-the-coronavirus-2020-9?fbclid=IwAR2DcLi8merALCOEOfnkOsbD94DzQfLhkPkNCYJZiaZvYmpwZbDLEXCTf-0?utm_source=copy-link&utm_medium=referral&utm_content=topbar and here <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/covid/deaths-by-race>)

The push for in-person instruction seems to be driven by vocal political pressure from white families with means to make different choices and keep their families safe in ways that many other families cannot. This research is telling. The top 2 concerns of Black parents: racism and Covid. The top 2 concerns for White parents: overuse of social media and cyber bullying. Covid wasn't anywhere in the top 10 concerns of white parents. <https://mottpoll.org/.../top-health-concerns-kids-2020...>

What about the kids that aren't doing well in distance learning? Work WITH their families to find solutions. Keeping the vast majority of kids in distance learning would let schools put more resources into in-person supports for the kids that most need them and would make it much safer and more sustainable.

Again, please make decisions and plans for a return to in-person instruction based on equity, safety, education and kids' best interests.-----

Jennifer Rasset

At the end of the School Year last spring Thousands of Minnesotans responded to a survey about Distance Learning during the COVID Pandemic. The Resounding result was a repeated “Let Our Children Attend In Person”. As parents and concerned community members we communicated this, we wrote the reasons why, we explained why we value our teachers ability to educate our children in person, why we value the school experience, why it isn’t reasonable to have parents be full time teachers plus work full time, that our Children were NOT getting the same education, that our Children’s very Mental Health was being threatened by what has become an “experiment”. Even with that Resounding Gong of Send Our Children Back, the Walz Administration refused to listen, thinking that we as parents must not know what is best for our children, that in fact we must be lying, that the Government can do a better job with our children than we as parents can.

The result of this “experiment” has been horrific. In fact it took the utter failure of the experiment to convince the Walz Administration to send some students back, but only some. Again they still don’t believe us as parents, as community members that this experiment on our Children has been an utter failure. Just a few examples of what I have personally seen of the failure of this experiment, and if by failure I mean that if the goal was to provide a quality educational experience, then fail it has.

- My Daughter is in Speech, she would meet with her Speech Therapist on a regular basis during in person learning. Distance Learning we received handouts to practice at home. I appreciated the handouts, but that in no way replaces the professional education and interpersonal knowledge of a Speech Therapist. Speech is important, if she realizes that she cannot pronounce things, or miscommunicates something what does that do to her self confidence and further more her general Mental Health, it’s concerning that the Walz Administration is ok with this downhill slide, with NO concern for the Children.
- My Daughter and Son are in younger grades, learning to read. Reading is FOUNDATIONAL for the majority of further educational activities. If you can’t read you can’t do the math word problem, if you can’t read you can’t figure out the science project, if you can’t read you can’t read historical documents to learn details of the past, if you can’t read you can’t sing by just having sheet music, if you can’t read you can’t read the manual for how to operate or fix a piece of equipment, if you can’t read you can’t find out what sporting equipment will work the best for your needs, if you can’t read you can’t interpret graphs and statistical analysis to create informed decisions, if you can’t read you can’t develop the simple but enjoyable hobby of plain reading! It took the Walz Administration 8 months to even admit that the experiment has failed children in this aspect, that it’s not working and that in person learning provides the most valuable way to teach our kids a Foundational lesson – to read. It’s concerning that the Walz Administration was ok with this slide for so long, while so many, not to mention plain common sense, told him it was failing miserably. Again NO concern for the Children.
- My Community has always done a phenomenal job with special education, title 1, extra needs students, providing children with the resources they need in a fashion that doesn’t incriminate them but supports them. We often have Children that receive extra help in Grade School, moving onto to High School no longer needing help, instead excelling, some being Honor Students. I have such a strong appreciation for this program, for the staff involved, it’s amazing to be apart of. However Distance Learning stole the ability of this program to excel. The Walz Administration’s complete lack of acknowledging that some children need help in different ways has been horrific. I really don’t know how they sleep at night. To pretend that every student

can sit in front of a screen all day is a theory that should have never have been tested. Again plain Common Sense tells us it's not right to experiment on children in this manner. But Walz did, we mustn't pretend it didn't happen, nor that it isn't still happening. A student appreciates learning when they can understand what they are learning. If they are constantly not understanding, the mental health path is degrading. Children are Not stupid, but in this Distance Learning environment they begin to feel so. Is that really what the society of Minnesota is ok with? I can't be ok with this. I refuse to pretend that the Walz narrative is simply ok. I refuse to be ok with having NO concern for Children.

- My local property taxes and my income taxes go to support my local public schools and I am aok with that. I want Children to be IN School learning and having the educational experience that prepares them in so many ways that a Distance Environment does not. My local public school has tried their best to ensure our children are in school, however unwanted pressure from the County and the Walz Administration has made this difficult. Our Community wants to see our tax dollars Work, we LOVE to read about the kids in our Local Newspaper, we Love to see them outside at recess playing, we Want to see them succeed. Distance Learning is akin to stealing our dollars from the intended purpose, saying we'll use it for this, but really we won't. We have heard continually that it's a local choice – this has been an utter lie from the beginning, it's never been a local choice, if it was our High School Children would be In Person learning not hybrid, we wouldn't have done a pressured move to 100% distance learning. The Walz Administration can pretend that they offer local control but this is a lie that Again shows NO concern for the Children.
- Have you spoken with parents who educated their children while working full time jobs? Have you walked in their shoes? There were days where I would end my work day and be so depressed by my lack of ability to both do my job and teach my children that I contemplated my worth as an employee, as a mother, as a person. Walz has given zero concern to this, he's simply not concerned with it at all. He isn't concerned that productivity declined for parents who had to help their children, or the stress this creates in a family, he has never had concern for a parent's nor a child's resulting mental health from being in this environment. The expectation that this is even feasible, is so disappointing, to pretend that society can continue on this path and that it is somehow sustainable is distressing. The other thought that we should pretend that I as a parent can create the same experience of in person learning is laughable. I give a simple example of a lunch menu – if you were having tomatoes at school for lunch you could talk about the life cycle of the plant, you could do the vegetable or fruit concept, you can talk about origin of the food, there is so much that happens while getting in line, while doing simple things that I simply am not able to emulate while I quick make mac n cheese and get back to my own work. Then to pretend that multiple Zoom calls are not happening at the same time. I would be on my own Zoom calls at the same time as my children, I wasn't able to always be there to listen to the lesson to then help teach it more fully to my child. A Child then questions what is the worth of myself compared to my parent's work, am I less important? Questioning ones worth as a parent or a child is not ideal. Do we question why domestic abuse, child abuse, substance abuse have risen and the substantial impact that has on Children, the Walz Administration doesn't. Again he shows NO concern for the Children.
- I have always enjoyed statistics, I followed the daily updates this Spring listening as Jan told us that deaths were coming from Long Term Care Centers accompanied by Severe Underlying health conditions, day after day I heard this. As we moved throughout the summer into the fall this same theme stayed with us. The report didn't change to children dying, nor of spreading COVID, instead it appeared that they were blessed to be relatively free of it. Our schools that have been open have not experienced large factor student to student spread to warrant closure

either. I always try to examine something with a statistical true eye. In 2018 600,000 plus people died solely because of Heart Disease. In 2020 a little under 350,00 people died With COVID, however let us not forget Jan's word's Severe Underlying Health Conditions, the Governor may have enticed hospitals to write COVID as the cause of death, however recent investigative work proved, what many of us questioned all along, that those 350,000 deaths were not all Caused by COVID alone. When a tree falls and kills a person and their death certificate states COVID as the cause of death.... well is this really the narrative we are going to follow? Nursing Home workers have stated that many of the COVID Deaths were not caused by COVID, that COVID was a side factor not a major factor in death. This inflation of statistical information is not what we should be basing the decisions of the State on. The Walz Administration again shows No concern for Minnesota, nor for our Children.

- I live in a location with great representatives. I have been following their legislative actions, how they vote, what they have been vocal about. They have worked hard for my community, for our Children. Yet by allowing Walz to continue on his path of dictatorship their voices and thus my voice, my children's voices are not heard. We are under rule from a caucus of what Minneapolis and St. Paul want, even though we have been Very vocal that what they want is not what we want. By continuing to refuse to involve my representatives in the decision making process he is refusing to acknowledge the Voice of Minnesota. He refuses to acknowledge that our Children matter, Again he shows NO concern for the Children.

I implore you to do what the Walz Administration did not, and listen, listen to the cry of the Children, of the Parents, of the Community who all want students to be In Person, who all want to see Children succeed, to see our Teachers and Staff do what they do best! Please work for our children, please show concern for the Children. Please end the failed experiment that the Walz administration has placed on our Children.

Laura Taylor

I am a current parent of a high school freshman and a senior. You owe it to these future generations to do all that you can to get them ALL back in school as quickly as possible! I would like to share what I recently sent to our school board. I hope that you work collectively for the betterment of Minnesota students and families and get them back to in person learning where they all belong!

This first paragraph is a statement I made on behalf of a parent group called "Let Them Learn," and was recently used in public comment.

"Minnesota highschool juniors and seniors will no longer be able to fairly compete with students from surrounding states for scholarships and college admission. Our highschool students are suffering from lack of face to face learning, lack of sports and extracurricular activities that are equally as important to college admissions as academics. How do students ask teachers and coaches to write letters of recommendations when they don't even "really" know our student's? We can no longer compete with students from states who have not shut down the lives of our young people. This will continue to be a domino effect travesty in MN for years."

The following is what I recently sent to our Lakeville school board .

As the case numbers decline in MN and Dakota County, why aren't ALL students slated to begin back by 2nd semester? Even the timeline of [Feb 5th](#) seems too long! Our kids need to ALL be back in the building. This difficult distance learning has already gone on too long.

Similar to what's occurring with mandates on sports with the far overreach of requiring players to be in masks, the same is occurring with far overreach of unattainable "demands" with distancing, masks, and quarantining in schools. Even sources at MDH say that the new demands on masks with sports is not supported by them, but is the ruling of our governor. I firmly believe that the unattainable regulations set upon schools is also controlled primarily by the governor. This needs to change!

After watching back past school board meetings, there is a large group of parents that trust Superintendent Baumann has the best interest of our kids in mind, and that hopefully there is a plan in place to fully return to the classroom. However, the only hope that we may have is that the new House of Representative members will vote in January, along with Senate, to remove Governor Walz emergency powers. When this occurs, hopefully "governing" power will immediately be given BACK to individual school districts.

We owe it to our SENIORS to get them back to school for their final semester of high school! In fact, the recent national falling COVID case numbers may not even warrant calling this virus a pandemic anymore. It is a suffocating feeling living in a state that is so locked down, yet our surrounding states remain in school FT or at some capacity, neighboring states are playing sports without masks, and our private schools in MN are still operating with little disruption. These facts are extremely disheartening, to say the least. It's clear to see that MN mandates start to look like anything other than public health safety. Also disheartening to read that the teachers' unions don't seem to share the same collective desire to get kids back in the classroom. Extremely eye opening to read posts from Education Minnesota alluding their views against anything that feels back to "normal teaching environments."

Lastly, there are grassroots parent groups across MN working on fighting to change testing, as the PCR tests have been proven to be inaccurate throughout MN labs, quarantining students and staff that's too far wide and deep, contact tracing demands, social distancing and mask requirements. These are not easy battles when efforts fall on deaf ears of our governor. But I don't believe that parents will stop fighting! Thank you for whatever "behind the scenes" fighting you are doing to be aligned together in agreement that the BEST learning environment for our kids is in a classroom, in the building, back to socializing with friends, and engaged in all extracurricular activities and sports that create well rounded learning. You, as the decision makers for all Lakeville stakeholders, owe this to ALL students, to fight to get ALL kids back in the classroom.

Thank you, Senate Education Committee for looking at the risk factors of NOT being in school full time, and comparing to the risk factors of a virus that has minimum health risks to our kids, and has a 99% cure rate for healthy individuals. As of today, Minnesota truly feels like one of the worst states to raise kids in, and most of us are here for the excellent education system that is so quickly deteriorating. Please help students get back to their livelihoods, where the four walls of school mean so much more than just education.

Twila Wattenphul

I am the mother of 4 children. They are all COMPLETELY different learners! They each have different areas in which they excell and struggle. When I did my student teaching in college, I quickly realized that the hardest part of teaching is differentiated instruction. In a normal year, that is difficult. While distance learning, it is completely unfair. No teacher should be expected to meet the needs of 20+ different kids when he/she doesn't even get to see them for months on end! The teachers cannot maintain this long term. It needs to end now.

I have 4 kids. They are all struggling. For different reasons. My oldest is in 8th grade. She is my foster daughter whom I only just met 4 months ago. She is in a new family, a new town, and a new school. She has so many gaps in her education from years of foster care. Her teachers can't address her educational gaps when they can't even sit down with her. If I had a month of one-on-one time with her, I might be able to assess where she is at and what she needs to relearn. But I can't do that because I have three younger kids.

My second is in 4th grade. She is learning long division. She is a bright student, but this long division is getting the best of her. Her teacher had no idea how much she was struggling until I emailed her about it today. Her teacher sees the completed assignments with correct answers, but does not see how many hours and tears it took to get there. Luckily for my daughter, I know how to do long division and can walk her through each step. (My heart goes out to the kids who sit alone at home trying to figure this out on their own!) Unfortunately for her, I have three other kids to facilitate.

My third child had an IEP, but his teachers decided a year ago that his behaviors were no longer affecting his learning, so we agreed to not renew his IEP. That was just a few months before distance learning began. His behaviors absolutely affect his learning now! He struggles to wrap his mind around doing school work at home instead of at school. He struggles to focus if anyone else is doing something else in the room. Unfortunately, we all live here and people and animals are always moving around. We don't have enough space in our house to give each child a separate work space. If I walk away from him at all, he gets on YouTube. He just turned 8 and is not independent enough to facilitate his own education. I have to supervise his Zoom meetings to keep him off YouTube. His teacher can't constantly correct his behavior while teaching virtually. He requires about 95% of my attention. I don't have an assistant.

My youngest is academically gifted. He is in Kindergarten, but he is able to read and do math at a 2nd grade level. He loves school, loves his assignments, loves Zoom meetings. He is easy to please. But he cried when he realized he wouldn't be able to play with his friends anymore. He also is not learning anything at all because his teacher cannot tailor his assignments to meet his needs when she is struggling just to make these Zoom classes happen. He is just floating along, biding his time until he can start 1st grade. He is being cheated out of adequate education.

I do not blame any of my kids' teachers for their struggles! The teachers are doing everything they can and barely keeping their heads above the water! This needs to end now!

I am struggling so much. I am not teaching in a multi-level classroom; I am facilitating four different classrooms simultaneously. All of my kids have different classes at different times. We can't plan a schedule around their classes because they change from day to day. We can't even take a simple trip to the library just to get out of the house because their classes are all inconveniently staggered. I am usually helping someone with school work until at least 4:00 p.m. everyday. This is an insane burden to put on my parent. Yet I have it better than many parents because I do not have a job and I am able to give my kids my attention all day. My house is a mess, I struggle to make meals, and I have absolutely no time to recharge myself, but at least I can be here for my kids. Many parents and kids are not that fortunate. This needs to end now!

My mental health is failing. My kids' mental health is failing. I'm sure my kids' teachers are struggling as well! Yes, Covid-19 is a real threat, but let's not make our kids be the ones to carry the burden of it when they have such a slim chance of getting sick. This is not education, this is stupidity.

Kris Williams
EL ELA MS teacher

I'm an English Language teacher to students in middle school up in St. Cloud. I can tell you things are better than last seeing's distance learning when we had about maybe 30% of our regular students participating, but I will also tell you, I know for a fact, we aren't doing as well as when we are face to face. I'm tired of my schedule changing; I'm tired of being on the computer all day; I'm tired of knowing kids aren't getting all they need. I've read the reports. Students without symptoms aren't likely to spread Covid. Students aren't likely to give Covid to their teachers. Let's just get back to class, mask-free, so kids can see facial clues, learn how to say new words correctly because they see the teacher's mouth; practice speaking English, because they are no longer being muzzled, and start learning again.

Debbie Zeller

I am a parent of a 11th grader. I am emailing you today to beg you to please get our high school age kids back into the classroom - we are doing serious harm to this age group! Virtual education is no substitute for in person education, and in fact has lead to increased depression in a majority of the kids! Closing the schools does not save anyone from the virus, and it is forcing our children to live lives that are being found to be not worth living. These children need YOU to open schools and stop the isolation. If closing the schools was necessary, then how is it possible that schools in states all over the country and around the world (and even in our own state the private schools) have been able to teach in person all year. But not here in MN, no ... our teachers can't be asked to do the job they are being paid to do.

We are telling our kids that they don't matter to us with these choices. That their wellbeing, mental health and education aren't important. And YOU can stop this. Put an end to this power play by the teachers unions and show that as a legislator you care about the youth of our state. **You MUST take back your authority from the governor and act to return access to life, community, and education to the young, who do not represent a danger to others, and are being gravely harmed by isolation. Do your duty.**

Your continued failure to open schools and to open access to healthy (free breathing) sports, is directly damaging the health of our children, who, contrary to what the media says during COVID, are the most vulnerable among us.
