

To whom it may concern:

I wanted to attach a letter that I sent to the MCPS Board of Education as well as to various members of our state senators, governor, and county executives. I received NO response, but perhaps you will read it and consider my words now.

In addition to the attached letter, I wanted to share the recent statistics from the CDC.

According to the CDC statistics, as of July 31, 2021, a total of 34,722,631 tested positive for Sars-Cov-2 and of those cases, 609,853 people have died *with* (not *from*) Sars-Cov-2. This means that 10.5% of the US Population has tested positive and only 1.8% of those who tested positive died (which comprises only 0.18% of the total US Population.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 1.8% of people who died *with* Sars-Cov-2,

- 0.06% were under 18 years old (0.001% of total cases)
- 0.41% were 18-29 years old (0.007% of total cases)
- 1.18% were 30-39 years old (0.02% of total cases)
- 3.14% were 40-49 years old (0.06% of total cases)
- 16% were 50-64 years old (0.29% of total cases)
- 22% were 65-74 years old (0.40% of total cases)
- 27.3% were 74-84 years old (0.49% of total cases)
- 30% were over 85 years old (0.54% of total cases)

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *COVID data Tracker Weekly review*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>.

Provisional COVID-19 Deaths by Sex and Age

State	Sex	Age Group	COVID-19...	Total De...	Pneumo...	Pneumo...	Influenz...	Pneumo...
United States	All Sexes	All Ages	603,504	5,133,751	543,345	296,653	9,203	858,110
United States	All Sexes	Under 1 year	84	29,112	311	12	22	405
United States	All Sexes	0-17 years	340	51,213	831	65	187	1,293
United States	All Sexes	1-4 years	40	5,314	167	6	65	266
United States	All Sexes	5-14 years	117	8,518	240	27	79	409
United States	All Sexes	15-24 years	1,022	54,936	1,161	399	80	1,859
United States	All Sexes	18-29 years	2,493	96,625	2,688	1,090	148	4,227
United States	All Sexes	25-34 years	4,437	113,135	4,321	2,005	235	6,970
United States	All Sexes	30-39 years	7,145	137,849	6,593	3,301	320	10,733
United States	All Sexes	35-44 years	11,288	162,844	10,159	5,391	362	16,380
United States	All Sexes	40-49 years	18,976	205,309	16,326	9,394	500	26,337
United States	All Sexes	45-54 years	31,090	294,030	27,262	16,038	796	42,987
United States	All Sexes	50-64 years	96,318	852,808	90,074	51,381	2,183	136,850
United States	All Sexes	55-64 years	77,194	675,915	72,891	41,353	1,699	110,164
United States	All Sexes	65-74 years	134,601	1,038,010	126,933	72,586	1,990	190,613
United States	All Sexes	75-84 years	165,059	1,246,844	151,198	84,118	1,998	233,861
United States	All Sexes	85 years and ...	178,572	1,505,093	148,702	74,718	1,877	254,196

According to CDC statistics, people under the age of 50 only make up 4.7% of all deaths *with* Sars-Cov-2.

Additionally, as of July 23, 2021, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) shows 518,769 reported adverse events due to the COVID-19 vaccine. Of those adverse events, 11,940 people have died as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine. 12,808 people have been left permanently disabled.<sup>2</sup>

I understand that all COVID vaccines are still undergoing clinical trials. Furthermore, I understand that all COVID vaccines are under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) only and have not obtained full FDA approval.<sup>3</sup>

Given the current CDC statistics, the risk to the majority of the population is exceedingly *low*, but even if it wasn't, our United States Constitution has NOT given any government authority over our God-given individual human rights and liberties. Along with individual liberty also comes the need for personal responsibility. Neither of which can be forced or coerced.

I would encourage all of you to go back and read our founding documents again. Any government that institutes a mask mandate is null and void for violating our original contract - the Constitution of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> COVID Vaccine Data. OpenVAERS. (n.d.). <https://www.openvaers.com/covid-data>.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioner, O. of the. (n.d.). *Learn more About COVID-19 vaccines from the FDA*. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/learn-more-about-covid-19-vaccines-fda>.

If we are forced, then we are not free. If you attempt to force free citizens to do anything, that will result in my and many others' peaceful noncompliance.

Thank you for considering the individual freedom and liberty that so many of our ancestors bravely fought and gave their lives for. Please take a drive past the cemetery in Washington, D.C. and consider. So many brave men and women gave their lives so WE could be free - and not so that you could enslave us again with immoral and illegal mask mandates *especially* for a virus with a 99% recovery rate.

Thank you for continuing to uphold the Supreme Law of the Land and for honoring the freedom that makes this country great.

Sincerely,

Angela Harders

May 20, 2021

Dear Governor Larry Hogan,

CC:

Brian Frosh, Maryland State Attorney General  
Benjamin Cardin, Maryland State Senior Senator  
Chris Van Hollen, Maryland State Junior Senator  
John Sarbanes, Maryland State Representative, 3rd Congressional District  
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive  
Dr. Karen Salmon, State Superintendent  
Dr. Monifa McKnight, Interim Superintendent of Montgomery County Public Schools  
Brenda Wolff, President of the Montgomery County Board of Education

I am writing this letter in order to address some concerns that I am having regarding the changes to the mask mandate in Montgomery County. My main question to you is: “Are we following the science or not?” Schools are meant to be institutions of learning and education. We, more than anyone else, should be the ones to “follow the science,” however, the Governor’s updated executive order and Montgomery County Public Schools’ policy do the exact opposite.

I am a special education teacher for high school biology, and I am greatly concerned about the fact that we are forcing teachers and students to reject the science regarding masks and vaccines in favor of the political leanings of those who will never set foot inside of our classrooms.

On May 16, 2021, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) released an update regarding masks which states that “fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, *except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.*”<sup>1</sup> This statement is inconsistent and misleading because either the vaccines work or they do not. If they work, then there should be no need to force vaccinated individuals to continue to wear a mask or physically distance themselves. If they do not work, then the CDC should not instruct individuals that it is safe to resume normal activities.

I understand that some may argue that children under the age of 12 are not able to get a vaccine; however, children under the age of 12 also pose virtually zero risk of contracting, much less dying, from SARS-CoV-2. In fact, children ages 0-19 have a 99.997% recovery rate from COVID according to the CDC. Additionally, for all children aged 5-17, there have been just 4 hospitalizations

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<sup>1</sup> “When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 16 May 2021, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html).

per *million*.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore irrational and immoral to force or coerce all children of any age to get an experimental vaccine that has not been FDA approved or had safety studies conducted for their age group in any clinical trial. It is equally irrational and immoral to force or coerce all children to wear masks when the vast majority are not at risk of contracting, spreading, or dying from the virus.

The effectiveness of masks at preventing the transmission of viruses has been largely debated, but there is no debate about the harm that they cause - especially for our children. Currently, I work with students that have disabilities. Wearing a mask is difficult and oftentimes impossible for children that have autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), anxiety, or are deaf and hard of hearing. Although I am not hearing-impaired, I often struggle to understand my students when they talk to me behind a mask. I cannot imagine how difficult it must be for them to understand their teachers who are giving instruction with a mask on. Students with ADHD are having greater difficulty focusing because they are not able to see their teacher's face and lips which is an essential part of communication. Students with PTSD and panic disorders have also expressed to me that it is difficult for them to focus on the content when they are struggling to breathe and cope due to their disabilities. Requiring students with disabilities and teachers of students with disabilities to wear masks is a direct violation of Section 504 which "requires a school district to provide a 'free appropriate public education' (FAPE) to each qualified person with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, *regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability*."<sup>3</sup>

Previously, I worked as an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher, and I, as well as others in my field, believe that it is unethical to wear a mask while instructing English language learners who depend on the ability to see their teacher's face and their lips in order to understand what they are saying. Wearing a mask in front of English language learners is nothing less than discrimination against minority students by interfering with, and even prohibiting, their legal right to access a free and *appropriate* public education. They are not able to have an appropriate education if they are unable to communicate and/or receive communication effectively from their teachers.

Furthermore, continuing to force teachers and students to wear masks in school is causing psychological, mental, emotional, and physical harm to *all* children, regardless of their age, disability, language, or race. Masks inhibit a child's ability to recognize facial expressions or to read human emotion which are essential components of their social-emotional development.<sup>4</sup> Masks perpetuate an

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<sup>2</sup> "COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 14 May 2021, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/).

<sup>3</sup> "Free Appropriate Public Education under Section 504." *Home*, US Department of Education (ED), Aug. 2010, [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html#:~:text=The%20Section%20504%20regulation%20requires,severity%20of%20the%20person's%20disability.](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html#:~:text=The%20Section%20504%20regulation%20requires,severity%20of%20the%20person's%20disability.)

<sup>4</sup> Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. V. *Unmasking the face*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

irrational fear of death, which undermines our physical health.<sup>5</sup> Fear is also “one of the most significant underlying elements that could lead to impairment of mental health conditions and wellbeing.”<sup>6</sup>

We will not be able to fully identify or even grasp the damage that we have caused to our children for decades to come. Our children are being traumatized just by living through a pandemic. When coupled with irrational measures, such as forced masking, knowing full well that most children lack “the fine motor coordination to use a face mask appropriately and are unlikely to be able to show the level of compliance required”<sup>7</sup> has created a system of abuse that has been inflicted upon our most innocent and vulnerable. Our children are relying on us to make evidence-based and science-backed decisions considering their best interests today and for the years to come. If we cannot trust our schools, the “pillars of science,” to make appropriate decisions based on science, then we cannot call ourselves an educated society. It is inhuman and abusive to make decisions that not only go against science, but also knowingly inflict harm - whether that harm is physical, psychological, emotional, or mental.<sup>8</sup>

As a lifelong resident of Montgomery County, a proud public school teacher, and a human being who deeply loves and cares for children, I will not stand for the continued abuse of our children any longer, and I hope that you will not either. I cannot in good faith continue to perpetuate illogical fears that I know will cause harm to my students’ psychological, emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing, and I hope that you will not either. Therefore, I urge you: please follow the science and end the mask mandate in our schools immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angela Harders". The script is cursive and fluid.

Angela Harders, M.Ed.  
Special Education/ESOL Teacher  
Montgomery County Public Schools

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<sup>5</sup> Page-Reeves J, Niforatos J, Mishra S, Regino L, Gingrich A, Bulten R. Health Disparity and Structural Violence: How Fear Undermines Health Among Immigrants at Risk for Diabetes. *J Health Dispar Res Pract.* 2013;6(2):30-47.

<sup>6</sup> Zolotov, Y., Reznik, A., Bender, S. *et al.* COVID-19 Fear, Mental Health, and Substance Use Among Israeli University Students. *Int J Ment Health Addiction* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00351-8>

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Advice on the use of masks for children in the community in the context of COVID-19: annex to the advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19, 21 August 2020. World Health Organization; 2020. [cited 2020 Nov 23]. Available from: [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC\\_Masks-Children-2020.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-IPC_Masks-Children-2020.1).

<sup>8</sup> Documents on the Laws of War, (eds.), Adam Roberts and Richard Guelff, 2nd edition, p.170.