

I am writing you today because enough is enough!

Our kids need to be placed at the absolute highest priority in our state and they need to return to school NOW!

Enough with pandering to teachers and teachers unions, waiting for vaccines, waiting for more education on how to handle the emotional consequences of having our schools closed since 3/13/2020. Our kids are suffering and the solution is simple, return to school (and school employees already receive mental health awareness training). Open the doors and resume in person education as seventy percent of districts across the country have safely done.

Follow the science and it is easy to see that returning to school does not lead to the dire pictures that are painted by teachers and their unions. Teachers not wanting to return to school have reasons that go far beyond the coronavirus (large class sizes, lack of aides in the classroom, large number of IEP students, poor funding, to name a few).

Listed below is just a small sample of proponents (groups and individuals) that prioritize return to school (or better yet, we should have never had school closed this fall at all!)

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/schools-should-close-last-resort-insists/>

<https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/press-releases/schools-should-be-last-close-and-first-reopen>

<https://torontosun.com/news/provincial/new-sickkids-report-warns-of-significant-harms-of-school-closure>

<https://www.cNBC.com/2020/11/20/dr-scott-gottlieb-schools-need-to-be-the-last-thing-shut-down.html>

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/education/2020/11/24/dr-ashish-jha-schools-should-last-close-covid/6413945002/>

<https://www.sfexaminer.com/opinion/ucsf-health-professionals-call-for-february-1st-school-reopening/?fbclid=IwAR0NG7TrC3XgixkW2CMB8W6PyYftYOb-9HdF3IRvwTHzqhQuJENeAmF33wY>

<https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2020/11/16/emily-oster-schools-should-be-among-first-to-open-and-last-to-close>

And here is a link to the latest article on what we can look forward to if we continue to be afraid of our own shadows and not open schools now:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/24/us/politics/student-suicides-nevada-coronavirus.html>

As a parent of a 10th grade high school student I am witness to the daily decline I see in my daughter. She asks me frequently "what is the point?" She says CDL learning is a joke and is worried how far behind she will be other kids across the county. Will she get into college? Will she be prepared? She mourns the loss of time spent with friends and activities at school.

She sees her friends and family across the county (all in states with higher Covid case counts than Oregon has ever dreamed of having) and asks Why? Why can they go to school and we can't?

Sadly, I have no answer except that for some reason, the adults in this state that make the decisions that affect her life and mental health are unable to follow science and are too afraid to make the right choices for our kids. Sad, but true.

Our families biggest regret throughout this whole Covid ordeal is that we did not move and enroll our child in a state that has prioritized staying open for the sake of the kids. A state and district that was able to follow science and knows how much damage keeping schools closed is doing to our children.

I know our daughter and our family would have been much better off if we had moved. That is sad for me to say as I have lived in Oregon since I was three years old but I have no interest in staying in a state that places such a low priority on our children's education and mental health.

It is time for the state and the school districts to step up, be leaders and finally do what is right! Open our schools now (not in months as teachers and teachers unions want)!! Our kids cannot do this any longer and they shouldn't have to.

<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/editorials/2020-exposed-the-teachers-unions-for-the-frauds-they-are>

Enough is enough!

Our schools (all of them! Not just elementary) need to be open now, in the two week pivot period we were promised in the fall.

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Thank you for your time,
Dawn Mikal Lorio