

I write to express my deep disappointment and dismay that Oregon schools have fought reopening for so long, at the behest of the OEA. Now that Gov. Brown has revised the metrics and made it possible for schools to open, we are seeing a huge pushback from John Larson, the OEA, and teachers unions across the state. Even with the vaccine, these unions do not want to open for the next year or so. By following this craven course of action, not only has the OEA imposed yet more pain, suffering, and severe learning loss on all of our students, but it has also given up any position of leadership in Oregon.

What does it mean when the OEA and other Oregon teachers unions simply shrug and says "Sorry, can't help" to the thousands students who are being failed by distance teaching? Who just turn their back on the mental health issues, suicides, learning loss, skyrocketing child abuse, hunger, and neglect of so many children? Who value their own selfish desires to stay home and teach over children's desperate needs to be back in school?

We have watched so many children slip into depression and despair following over 10 months with no in-person schooling despite extremely low COVID numbers in Oregon over the last 10 months. Quite simply, it signals to me that the OEA values teacher convenience and unscientific fearmongering over the very children those teachers are hired to serve. Do Oregon schools exist for the students, or is it just a barely-show job for the teachers union? Shame on all the Oregon teachers unions for refusing to return to school when it is perfectly safe to do so right now, and shame on the all the school boards across the state for giving into their unjustified, unscientific demands.

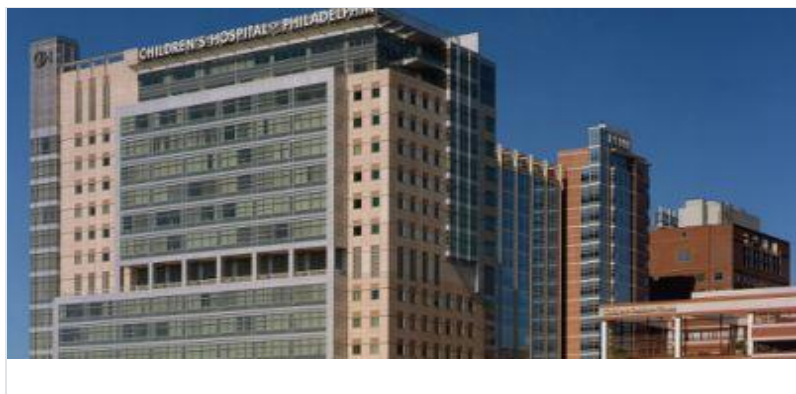
This decision to delay reopening for elementary school children, and possibly never reopen for middle school and high school students this spring, strips the state's children of so much. The message you have now sent to me, my family, and the state is that **students come last in Oregon**. If we continue to listen to the hysteria, fear-mongering, and unscientific demands of the OEA and other Oregon teachers unions, Oregon students may never recover from this disastrous decision. We will drop to the least educated of all states. I know my trust in the school system and my trust of Oregon's teachers will never be the same.

Ultimately, despite the length of this email, words can simply not express my bottomless disappointment with the OEA's decision to keep schools closed as long as possible for their own personal convenience and comfort. I hope and pray that the state quickly comes to its senses and **mandates return to school for all children ASAP, before more is lost**.

Here are the latest scientific studies showing that schools are safe to reopen NOW, before full vaccination of teachers is complete:

1) Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania Doctors find that Returning Children to School SAFER FOR THE COMMUNITY AND REDUCES SPREAD:

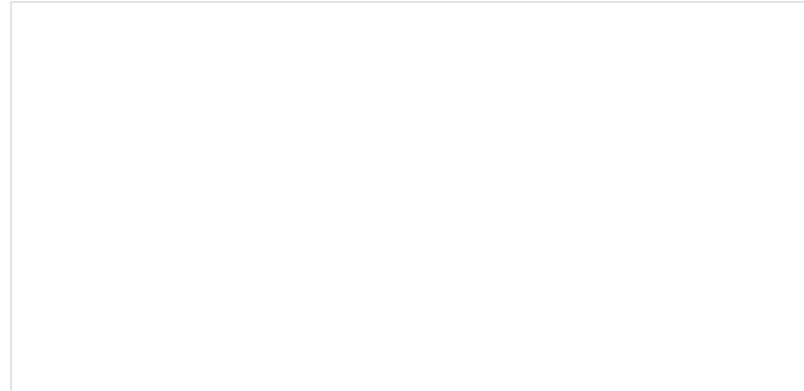
[CHOP doctors endorse return to in-person school in Philly area](#)



CHOP doctors, pointing to evidence in Rhode Island, said going to school in-person may actually reduce a child's...

2) Young children infected with the coronavirus (up through 12) have one SIXTEENTH of the viral load of over-80s — and rapid antigen tests 'are less sensitive for youngsters than adults.
<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.01.15.21249691v1.full.pdf>

3) Virtually ZERO prevalence of COVID in schools reopening in NC and SC:
[Study: In-school transmission of SARS-CoV-2 rare in schools implementing safety measures](#)



Thank you for your consideration of this written testimony.

best,
Laura I Appleman