

Hello Senate Committee on Education:

I am the concerned parent of two high school students in PPS. I am writing because I am worried about the continued long-term closure of our schools. When the schools first closed in March, it seemed to be the safe and prudent thing to do. It was a new virus that we did not know very much about. However, ten months later, we know a lot more about it and that our children are paying an outsized price by not being in school. We have heard from many scientists, doctors, and organizations (Dr. Fauci, the CDC, the WHO, UNICEF, American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Ashish Jha (Brown University of Public Health), and others) that schools should be the last to close and the first to open. Science is behind schools reopening, and we need public policy to follow. These experts say schools should be open particularly in a state with such low spread like Oregon. We are consistently the 2nd or 3rd lowest in the nation, and our cases continue to fall. They have fallen for the last six weeks.

There is a study that recently came out of North Carolina (Duke University and UNC). It looked at 56 districts with 35 with some in-person learning and 17 open full time. Every case associated with the schools was traced. There were NO cases of children transmitting to adults. No school district in the nation has seen any sort of super spreader event or large outbreaks of COVID from schools.

The virus is not going away. It will stay within our community for the foreseeable future even with vaccines. It is not our children's responsibility to protect the adults of our state any longer. Stop placing the burden on our children. Our children need to be back in school. Schools have opened safely all over the country even without a vaccine. Oregon is last at opening schools, yet has one of the lowest rates of COVID. It is embarrassing that we are failing our children in this way. I ask that you as legislators demand our state do better for our children.

My daughters are good students who are struggling with distance learning. They are not succeeding. They are in their formative years when peer interaction is a necessity. They will not get these years back. They need to be back in school before it is too late. We know that schools can be reopened with strong safety protocols in place. Science has proved that. It is time to reopen Oregon's schools. Please advocate for our children and push to reopen our schools.

Sincerely yours,

Stacia Gibson

SW Portland  
Senate District 19  
House District 38

[Study: In-school transmission of SARS-CoV-2 rare in schools implementing safety measures](#)

