

Good afternoon,

My name is Lindsay Sanders. I am a mother of 3 school-aged children. I am a former educator and current education technology professional who has recently become an advocate for reopening our schools. Safely. But with urgency.

I'm a member of a Facebook group called Open TTSD Schools, a member of ED300. Together with our sister pages, we represent over 40k Oregon families, all seeking to safely reopen schools. We represent teachers, parents, and community members. Witnessing my own children and their experience with comprehensive distance learning, I can attest that this school model is not working for the children of Oregon. I'm not going to debate the science here. There are dozens of studies and articles that clearly articulate both the safety of reopening now and the harm being inflicted on children by continuing to shutter our schools.

You will undoubtedly get emails from the OEA and from some teachers. Whatever they say in those emails, they have also come out and publicly said that school is not safe and should not reopen until kids are vaccinated with little to no evidence this is true or based on science. The union demands for reopening are sensational and unreasonable, it is hard to follow them because they are constantly shifting based on what best fits their desires at the moment.

I am not against teachers. I love our teachers. I want them safe. I myself am a former educator, so I understand how hard teachers work and the sacrifices they make for their students. Even so, I am disappointed and disheartened by what is happening now. The union is not representing so many who feel powerless to speak up for fear of retribution. Remember as you read their submissions that they have a union. They have lobbyists.

Also, remember that kids do not have unions or lobbyists. Neither do their parents. Remember that while no child in Oregon has died of Covid, many have died by suicide. Remember that there is scant evidence that any teacher or staff person across the country has contracted Covid AT school. Manufactured fear in aid of ulterior motives should not trump sound science.

The governor set a goal of returning to in-person school by February 15. As of today, most schools across this state are nowhere close to achieving that. And to the extent they are motivated, they are being stonewalled by calculated demands designed to not return teachers to the classroom for the foreseeable future.

You mandated that schools close nearly a year ago. Most schools will not reopen until you once again mandate they reopen. Absent such a mandate, the unions will continue to be obstreperous and block the way.

The ones harmed are the children. Who have do not have a say or power. They have already yielded a year of their lives for the sake of adults who refuse to follow the guidelines and make sacrifices themselves. Adults are meant to protect children, not the other way around.

This is really all about the kids. Remember them. Fight for them. Because it has now become clear that the union and by extension teachers and schools are not.

Thank you,

Lindsay Sanders