

My name is Melissa Bermel, I am the mom of two Oregon K-12 Students and I am a teacher who has been supporting students in-person on a regular basis throughout the pandemic following COVID-19 Safety Protocols. In addition, my parents are over the age of 70 and live in Oregon.

I am writing to encourage you to open Oregon's K-12 Schools. I have seen first hand the negative impacts of Distant Learning in my own two children. My High School Junior will likely not be ready for college based on the poor quality distance learning he is receiving, and my middle school daughter has missed key instruction in math and science (something that will need to be made up before she enters high school). The State of Oregon needs to focus on getting students back to in-person instruction. Please know, I respect my co-workers and team members who are at a greater risk from COVID-19, however, teachers are getting vaccinated ahead of the elderly generation in our State and the Governor has made this a priority so we can open up our schools.

My parents are in a higher risk category for COVID-19 due to their age and medical conditions. They are eager to get vaccinated but understand that our children's education is important and are willing to wait as long as the wait for the COVID-19 Vaccine has a purpose (getting kids back to school).

Please open our schools and make decisions that support all of our Oregon Students. They need to know we support them and we are putting them first. Through all of the school closures and COVID-19 shut-downs our students have been the ones to suffer the most. Teachers are getting vaccinated, that is a good thing. We should be returning to school and working towards mending the academic loss that has taken place during the Distance Learning Model.

Sincerely,

Melissa Bermel