

January 29, 2021

Good afternoon Esteemed Members of this Senate Committee,

Although the schools where I, pre-pandemic, used to substitute teach are already open for K-3, hybrid instruction, and I have already decided I will not return until everyone is vaccinated, I still feel compelled to alert you, and anyone I can, to a serious flaw in the Ready Schools, Safe Learners literature.

As a concerned substitute and community member who most definitely does not want to get, nor spread around, this disease, I was saddened to read the entire RSSL document, and not find any guidance advising substitutes as to how they could safely return to work. Substitute teachers are mentioned exactly twice in the whole document.

According to the advice there, it is perfectly fine for me to go right back to my regular way of earning money -going to different schools, sometimes in different counties, utilizing materials a teacher has left me, because they, for a reason often unbeknownst to me, will not be in their class that day. Reality check. That teacher could be an asymptomatic carrier of CoVid-19, falling ill with CoVid, or even falling ill again after having it 6 months ago (There is *still* a lot we don't know about the *Novel* Coronavirus). After my day's work, I can then run errands with a mask, or maybe it won't be necessary (I don't see it being enforced), get home to my special someone, unwind and get ready to do it all again the next day in the same or, possibly, different classroom. I would never do these things without making an extra effort to re-engineer my habits to help limit the spread of CoVid, and in fact, as I stated, I have decided to take myself out of the mix and not participate at all until the metrics that were set at the start are met, but then, I am not everybody. I know of many that still call the Coronavirus the flu and will gladly accept any sub job that comes along; essentially becoming their own super-spreader event for a community to deal with.

The bottom line is people from all aspects of running a school need to have a seat at the table before any more of these life-altering decisions are decided. During times like these, it is imperative that we think of the long-term, common good for everyone. Subs are not the only ones falling through the cracks, as you well know, this disease disproportionately affects people of color, and there are implications that point to children becoming more of a target with the U.K. variant on the rise and studies showing children suffering long-term vascular and heart problems. I beg of you, analyze the data on an old-fashioned, pros and cons "T" chart, and you will see, there is no logic in opening up now, particularly if our districts' only guidance is the Ready Schools, Safe Learners literature that has clearly shown me, that all aspects of reopening school buildings are not being considered.

Thank you for your service.

Sincere regards,
Kimberly Mandel