

Greetings Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

I'm writing in support of SB 414. As a parent of a 4th grader who attends public school, I've been frustrated with the lack of urgency in improving the air quality in our schools during an ongoing pandemic. Clean air will continue to be a keystone issue like clean water was a generation ago. Just as we know it was true then, we know that legislation is needed to push us forward. I'm heartened by this bill and I think it is a very important first step. We cannot mitigate what we do not measure.

Two years ago, when schools re-opened, I was alarmed at the lack of improvements the school district invested in when the federal government sent aid money to help. With that money, they purchased one "HEPA-like" air filter per classroom that teachers didn't like to turn on high because they were too noisy. During periods of high community transmission, we hoped that classroom windows would be opened to improve airflow. We were told by the school administrators that it's up to individual teachers if they want to open their windows (many don't because of the outdoor noise) and building engineers advised that the HVAC system struggles when the windows are open. If your classrooms are empty because the kids and teachers are sick, what does it really matter if the HVAC system doesn't work well with the windows open? What learning is happening then? There is very little creative problem-solving occurring by school administrators. They are at capacity, aren't updated on the most recent science, and aren't supported enough by the school districts to make necessary changes.

With few institutional options available to improve air quality in the school, my spouse and I purchased 2 additional quiet but powerful HEPA filters to loan to our son's two main classrooms. They graduate to his classrooms each year and we perform the required monthly maintenance on them. We also purchased an Aranet4 CO detector for the express purpose of reducing CO levels in his classroom. We attempted to inform his teachers about CO concentrations and how filtration and ventilation work together. We offered to lend them the Aranet4 and work with them to help lower CO levels in the classroom. They have never taken us up on our offer. **This bill would work best with a mandate for an annual briefing on indoor air quality for teachers and administrators during existing statewide school in-service days.**

When our son enters middle school, it will be logistically impossible for us to add supplemental air filtration into his classrooms. It shouldn't be this way. All of our kids deserve clean air so they can learn and stay healthy. Our kids deserve the same clean air as the billionaires at Davos do. We all deserve it. SB 414 gives us the information we need to start moving in that direction.