

Subject: FW: Public Comment for the Board - Request for the Board to Advocate to relax school social distancing guidelines

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 3:52:48 PM Pacific Standard Time

From: Jennifer Perna <jperna@smcoe.org>

To: info@smcoe.org <info@smcoe.org>

From: elizabeth peters <elizabeth.h.peters@gmail.com>

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 3:00 PM

To: <jperna@smcoe.org>

Subject: Public Comment for the Board - Request for the Board to Advocate to relax school social distancing guidelines

Dear Ms. Perna --

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you as the executive assistant to the board of the San Mateo County Office of Education to urge the board to advocate to San Mateo County Health to relax the requirements on social distancing in the classrooms as COVID-19 case counts fall. I would appreciate you sharing this email with the appropriate people who review public comments for the board.

I am the parent of two elementary aged children in Menlo Park public schools. The MPCSD has done an exemplary job to date in the pandemic, but will be unable to fully reopen our schools to every day school for our children unless the current 6 feet of social distance in the classroom is relaxed to 4 feet of distance. The CDC has recently updated its school guidance to not require 6 feet of distancing and our county should follow the CDC guidelines especially once case counts move our county to the Orange Tier.

As a voter and a parent in the county, it is unacceptable to not have our children back in school 5 days per week in the fall of 2021. Given class sizes and physical building constraints, this can only be accomplished with an easing of social distancing requirements in classrooms. If case counts are low and adults are vaccinated, our county should adjust and reconsider these requirements. The evidence of the mental health impacts on parents and children has been mounting throughout the pandemic. As children will not be vaccinated next fall, this social distancing constraint must be reevaluated in order for our children not to have their 3rd instructional year impacted.

I realize the decision requests with San Mateo County Health, but I would appreciate the San Mateo County Office of Education advocating to the health department for them to reconsider this policy for schools in our county.

Many thanks for your consideration,
Elizabeth Peters
Menlo Park