



Parents Have Rights!

Description

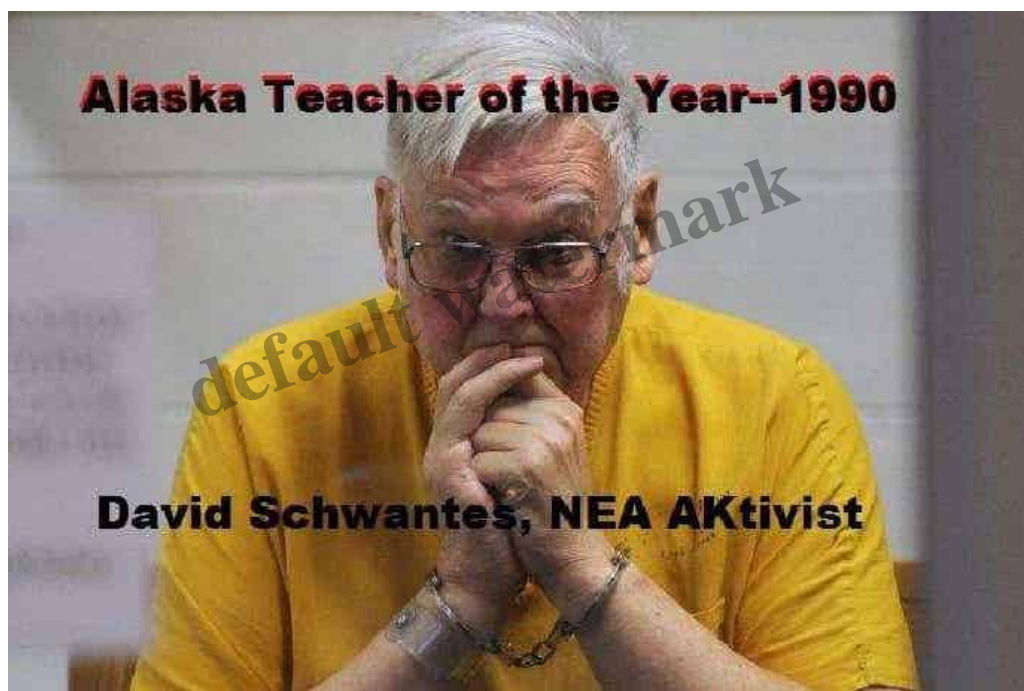
Choosing what Hill to Die On



Former *Anchorage Education Association (NEA)* President, *Andy Holleman* walks through a group of protesters for a work session prior to the August 3 meeting at the *Anchorage School District* central office.

Every Alaskan should know you don't get between a mama bear and her cubs. The same is true for Alaskan women and their children. These mothers inherently know they must protect their children from predators who might cause harm—even while pretending to *care about all children*. We all also know various institutions—including schools—have been established to care for and train children in our society, and we are expected to trust their good intentions.

But parents are the first teachers. Parents are responsible for the training and education of their own children. Parents must therefore take charge of the education of their children. That is one primary mission of life. Each parent must teach their own cubs to know right thinking from wrong thinking, and each must train them to recognize danger when offered candy by a stranger.



I knew **David Schwantes** as an early elementary Anchorage teacher, NEA-Alaska vice-president and strong political fundraiser during the 1980-90s. Every penny Schwantes raised for political action contained the taint of his molestation of children, a felony for which he was convicted. But don't expect the union, or candidates he helped to elect, to care one bit. (ADN Photo)

Meaningful training for life traditionally happens with a classical education—language-intensive, not image focused. Students must use and understand words, not video images. Students must be taught the true lessons of history with a comprehensive understanding of human endeavor from the beginning until now. Students must learn math, from the basics of arithmetic to algebra, geometry and percentages, to be able to evaluate information meaningfully. In short, future citizens in a free society must be trained to analyze and draw conclusions. And, well-trained minds require discipline.[1]



*Top Row L-R: Dave Donley, Carl Jacobs, Kelly Lessens, Andy Holleman
Bottom Row L-R: Dora Wilson, Margo Bellamy, Pat Higgins*

Anchorage School Board members are elected at large. This is established in the Municipal Charter.

ARTICLE VI. – EDUCATION

Section 6.01. – Public school system. The system of public schools for the municipality shall be operated by a school board of seven persons elected at-large from seats designated as seat A, seat B, seat C, seat D, seat E, seat F, and seat G.

Therefore, individual members have no alliance with any particular part of the area which extends from Girdwood to Eklutna.

Lately some parents in Alaska have lost faith in our public education institutions to provide a basic classical education. They see the priorities being expressed by elected school boards and hired bureaucrats as contrary to educational goals they have for their own children. These parents monitor **happytalk** in conversations with union-owned teachers and school board members, as well as proclamations from the school district authorities. **Some parents are becoming so concerned about where this is going given our bottom of the nation educational outcomes, that they are ready to take action. They believe school is not supposed to replace parent values with excuses for failure and social justice diversions. Some have had enough of it.**

Declaring what Hill to Die on



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Annie Massey has three children in the Anchorage School District. She has been motivated to become an activist by the actions of the *ASD Superintendent and Board of Education*. Massey is imploring parents of this community to become involved in stopping the indoctrination of children in lieu of meaningful education. Massey has created a *Parents' Rights in Education* Facebook page affiliated with that group Outside and recently organized a demonstration to bring attention to the proposed ASD mask mandate prior to the August 3 board meeting.

Our goal of this protest is to bring attention to Mask Choice, explained Massey to a core of parents assembled around her Eagle River kitchen table. Participants can wear masks or not wear masks. The point is we have a choice.



On very short notice the plan was to have parents paint their cars with the message of Mask Choice and arrive at the ASD Central Office to welcome participants in the workshop prior to the meeting to consider mask policy for the coming school year. The board allowed the policy declaration by Bishop to stand.



ing an American Flag, told me: *As parents is my hill.*

Alaska Parent's Rights in Education Director, Massey provided a statement in opposition to the masking policy.[2] We know now that the School Board voted 6-1 to follow Superintendent **Deana Bishop's** recommendation to require masking for all children and adults in ASD for the coming year. ASD Board Member, **Dave Donley** has written a statement about why he voted against it.[3]

Sixty-two people provided written testimony for this meeting.[4] A preview of what arguments were made for and against masking of children in ASD is revealing. Here are selections from some of the statements from both sides.

Kathleen Easley BSN, RN, NCSN is the school nurse at *Gladys Wood Elementary School* and the Gladys Wood P.T.A Co-President.[5]

I was very disappointed to read in the news that mask wearing in schools will continue to be optional this Fall (from summer sessions that didn't require them). While we know students benefit from in-person learning, we have an obligation to keep them safe while they are at school, in our care. Last year, we used masking, physical distancing, hand washing and other mitigation strategies that worked well and kept our students, staff, and ultimately our community safer. The students I worked with seemed to do an amazing job adapting to this and were happy and eager to be in person learning.

Citations:

CDC Information on COVID & Schools: https://www.cdc.gov/.../transmission_k_12_schools.html

WHO recommendations:

<https://www.cnn.com/.../delta-who-urges-fully-vaccinated...>

Timelines for Pfizer's vaccine for 5-11yo:

<https://abcnews.go.com/.../pfizer-advances.../story...> Delta variant & children

<https://missouriindependent.com/.../delta-variant-spread.../>

(dense article, but paragraph on spread in their summer schools) <https://apnews.com/.../health-coronavirus-pandemic...>

<https://abcnews.go.com/.../mississippi-health.../story...>

COVID in Alaska and the MOA: Alaska DHSS COVID:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/.../2d19dc2b5c7e4b399ff649.../>

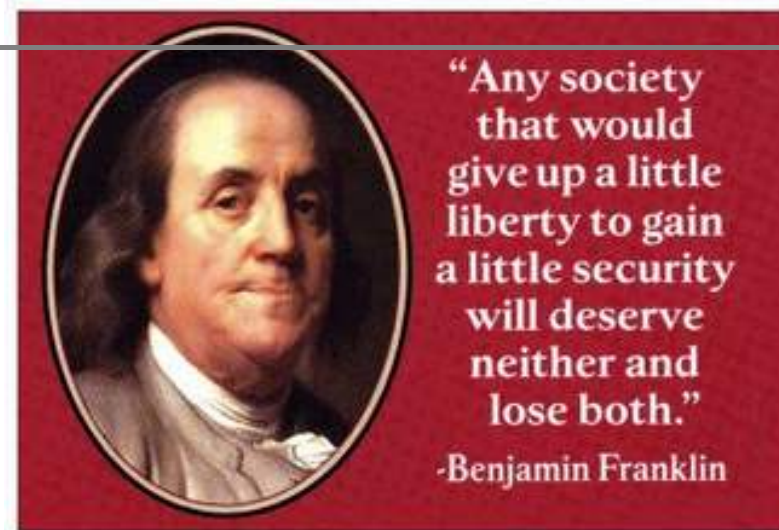
MOA COVID dashboard: <https://covid-response-moa-muniorg.hub.arcgis.com/.../exp...>

Long-COVID in children:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7927578/>

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/.../long-covid...>

The message is safety and security above all. Most other testimony in favor of Superintendent Bishop's mask mandate were some variation of this argument; ASD is simply protecting children of the community in its care. Who would dare argue against that?



Jake and Leigh Sloan parents of three students, made their concerns very clear to the ASD Board:

I urge you to VETO the recommendation that was made to institute mandatory masking this school year. Please empower parents and students with the CHOICE as to whether or not to wear a mask. Until parents have a full and equitable choice to fund other schools that support their individual health decisions, the option of what to do with masks need to be left up to them. Demonstrate that you trust families to make their own decisions with their children. By mandating masks, you are alienating parents and students who are under the conviction not to mask. You are making it difficult for these families to access public services, and many are already exiting the system, leaving them with fewer educational options. Mask discrimination in the city of Anchorage needs to end. We are all individuals making the best health decisions we can for ourselves and those in our community. We, the voters, recently elected a mayor in good faith that he would help free our city from overreaching Covid 19 restrictions. Send the voters who elected you the clear message that you trust them and desire to liberate them from unnecessary restrictive measures upon entering school doors. Your veto will send the message that diversity of opinion and practice is welcome in our schools. Schools should be a place of freedom and tolerance of the many different families and individuals who participate.

Testimony from **Barbara Norton** questioned why the ASD Board was wasting time listening to concerned parents:

Please don't waste time arguing about the facts. Masks do work to lower the spread of infectious diseases. Vaccination against Covid does prevent serious illness, hospitalizations and death. The science is clear. We waste too much time trying to give equal time to the people who oppose masking and vaccination. I implore you to look at the facts, mandate masks in all schools and protect our vulnerable children.

Another parent, **David Abbott** wrote:[6]

I am writing to voice my disagreement and dissatisfaction with the proposal made by Superintendent Bishop regarding mandatory use of masks in Anchorage schools. My wife and I recently registered our daughter to attend Kindergarten this fall. While in the school for the registration process we observed happy, healthy, mask-free, children participating in the Anchorage School District's summer school program, a program which ASD had praised for having, "no known spread," of COVID-19. A few days following our registration for kindergarten, Superintendent Bishop released her proposal, causing me to immediately question the leadership of ASD. It is my opinion that mandatory masks for children would do more harm than good, particularly in elementary schools.

Another concerned parent **Breanna Creek**: [7]

We are a military family and posted here last fall. Last year I chose to homeschool my oldest child due to the pandemic and the mandates enforced by the school district. My son has anxiety and does not do well wearing masks. I am also the Committee Chair for Cub Scouts Pack 110 on JBER and know a lot of other children that also have issues with the masks. Over the last year we have followed guidelines set by the CDC but have not been super strict with our interactions with others. We have still gone out and done things and have tried to keep as much normalcy in our family as possible. Mind you, my youngest child was born July 31, 2020. None of us have gotten the Coronavirus nor do we feel it is necessary to continue with the masks. I have a teaching background but have chosen to stay home for the time being. In my experiences and as a mother I do not feel that masks are necessary for these children.

Finally, the statement of **Tom Norbert** seems to sum up why some parents disagree with ASD mask mandates for the coming year:[8]

I strongly disagree that students of any age (K-12) should be required to wear a face covering (mask) while inside an ASD school, building or school bus. Please change the ASD return to school operational guidelines to reflect that masking is optional and each parent's choice. Our students should NOT be required to wear masks for the following reasons:

- *There is NO mask mandate in the Municipality of Anchorage.*
- *Each family should have the ability to CHOOSE (to mask or not mask) based on their individual needs.*
- *Parents choice (to mask or not to mask) protects everyone's medical freedoms and personal concerns.*
- *Kids of all ages do NOT socialize or communicate and isolate themselves when wearing masks.*
- *Nonverbal communication is so important and cannot be achieved with masks.*
- *Children thrive with facial interaction and masks limit their abilities/desire to communicate (which limits their education and involvement)*
- *Masks are harming our children's mental health (creating anxiety, depression, and anti-social behaviors).*
- *ASD is creating restrictions without taking into account the parents who do NOT want our children to wear masks in schools or on the bus.*
- *Our son has a Special Education Individual Learning Plan (IEP) and sever asthma. He is unable to wear a mask for 6-8 hours/day. MASKS need to be PARENTS CHOICE and not required for all students.*
- *Our son as severe asthma and wearing a mask will hurt and hinder his ability to breath and participate in PE and after school sports.*

- *Masks should not be required for students to wear during PE activities inside or outside. Similar to no masks on the playground (outside).*
- *In the 20-21 school year, we pulled both of our children out of ASD and HOMESCHOOLED because of we knew that long distance learning and the limited in-person learning with restrictions would be a disaster. Homeschooling was the best experience for our children and family. Many of our friends also unenrolled their children from ASD and homeschooled with great success.*
- *ASD is depriving our child the right to a public education.*
- *I don't want my children shamed for not wearing masks (if providing medical exemptions)*
- *Middle school is difficult enough with pre-teen hormones, drama and bullying. Do NOT add more stress or require masks for my children who have ADHD, battle to focus, would fidget with their masks (resulting in punishment/detention) and dyslexia just to get an education.*
- *Masking should be OPTIONAL and EACH PARENTS CHOICE. This protects our family medical privacy, freedom and safety for our child during school hours. The bottom line is masks to not protect against the virus.*
- *If you require masks in schools it will deter families from enrolling this school year and your funding.*
- *Stop dividing and creating barriers between families and ASD over masks and vaccinations. We all have the freedom to choose what is best for our families.*
- *ASD teachers/employees should not discuss their opinions regarding masking, vaccines or COVID at school. As an involved parent, I will educate my children on all topics surrounding COVID. NO MASK SHAMMING!*
- *Teachers should also have the choice (for or against) wearing a mask at school. Many teachers agree that masks should NOT be required, but are afraid of losing their job if they say anything. My children are excited for the opportunity to go back to school WITHOUT MASKS. However, if ASD requires masks for all students, we will unenroll our children to either homeschool or send them to private school.*

ASD Superintendent Bishop and a majority of the school board appear to be responding to these serious concerns by sticking their fingers in their ears and loudly saying “La-La-La-La-La...” Parents are offended and seeking alternatives.

References:

[1] The Well-Trained Mind;

<https://welltrainedmind.com/a/about-the-well-trained-mind-a-guide-to-classical-education-at-home/>

[2] Parents Rights in Education Letter to ASD Board.



August 2, 2021

Dear School Board and Superintendent,

I am writing to urge you to ensure that our schools are returned to normal for the '21-22 school year. The COVID-19 school guidelines passed down by the CDC are unnecessarily harming our kids. There's no long term safety data on the guidelines, kids have a 99.997% recovery rate from COVID and the research shows kids do not pass the virus to adults.

When the benefit of a medical intervention is in question, it is crucial to consider the potential harm. Social isolation through mandatory masking and contact tracing causes substantial harm for children because according world-renowned psychiatrist and medical ethicist Peter Breggin, M.D. there's nothing more important than facial expressions for a child's emotional and social development.

I urge you to reflect on the damage these guidelines are causing our children and to protect our kids by lifting the guidelines.

As you know, children are being forced to stay masked for hours on end to be able to attend school. Can you please send me the science documenting the necessity and safety of masking children along with the other COVID guidelines being put in place on their behalf? My child is suffering, and I have heard from countless other parents whose children are suffering too. More and more scientific evidence is mounting that COVID-19 protocols are causing extreme emotional, psychological and physical harm — particularly in younger, children who are vulnerable and going through important developmental changes. Can you please show me the science that demonstrates that the benefits of these measures outweigh the harms?

Please put parents back in the driver's seat for their children's health by returning our school to normal: no masks, no social distancing, no temperature checks, no plexiglass dividers and no contract tracing. Return to regular class sizes and reinstate all extracurricular activities.

Please let me know how you plan to proceed for the upcoming school year so that I can assess my options, if you would like to discuss this issue further, please let me know a good time to do so.

We know when K12 schools require masking, this DETERS parents from using this public accommodation. We ask for your support and representation of public interest that preserves, respects and supports a parent's fundamental right to direct the upbringing of their child in education by ending ALL COVID restrictions for the 2021-2022 school year and add this item on the next school board agenda.

In addition, we would like the board to review the following in the upcoming work session 8/3/2021: "Reference guide for parents, grandparents, caretakers and others" and "Putting our kids First- Community" Powerpoint. Both are attached in email for the work session 8/3/2021.

Grateful for your service in representing our community values and interests,

Sincerely,

Annie Massey
Director, Alaska Chapter
Parents' Rights in Education

[3]Dave Donley Statement

<https://mustreadalaska.com/dave-donley-why-i-voted-against-masking-the-kids/>

[4]Written Testimony Submitted

Agenda Item
Details

Meeting

Aug 03, 2021 – School Board Meeting

Category

Public Testimony on Non-Agenda and Non-Action Items (1-Hour Time Limit)

Subject

Written Public Testimony

Type

Information

Written public testimony:

1. [Andrea Dewees](#) – Require masking
2. [Ann Mayo-Kiely](#) – Require masking
3. [Kathleen Easley](#) Reinstate mitigation strategies
4. [Kayla Andrew](#) Require universal masking
5. [Lisa Pekar](#) Require masks for students under age 12 until eligible for Covid-19 vaccine
6. [Rachelle Griffiths](#) No to masking and CRT
7. [Zom Biezley](#) Multiple subjects
8. [Adina Roberts](#) Wearing masks
9. [Anne Remick](#) Universal masking
10. [Bob Keiner](#) No masking requirements
11. [Davyn Williams](#) Require masks
12. [Kelly Deason](#) No to masking
13. [Sara Gilk-Baumer](#) Require masks
14. [Shina duVall & Guy Runco](#) Require masking
15. [Addie](#) No masks
16. [Addilyn Dixey](#) Choice of masking
17. [Alecia Rathlin](#) require masks
18. [Andrea Gardner](#) 2021 mitigation concerns
19. [Areana Cuddy](#) opposition to universal masking
20. [Aubrey Burns](#) optional masking
21. [Barbara Norton](#) mandate masks
22. [Bethany Burgess](#) require masks
23. [Bonnie Bryan](#) support of masks
24. [Breanna Creek](#) choice of masking
25. [Bridget Partain](#) no masking requirements
26. [Brittany](#) end all COVID restrictions
27. [Christine Cook](#) support masking mitigation
28. [Chrystle Lyon](#) masks should be choice
29. [Cindy Early](#) require masks for all
30. [Colette Thibodeau](#) support mask requirement
31. [David Abbott](#) no mask requirement
32. [Evgeniia Sienkiewicz](#) no mask mandate
33. [Heidi McCroskey Heimerl](#) support proposed COVID policy
34. [Jack and Leigh Sloan](#) Veto recommended mandatory masks
35. [Janet Sacora](#) alternatives to mandating masks
36. [Jasmine Carter](#) support requiring masks
37. [Jennifer Hurt](#) do not mandate masking, make masking a choice
38. [Jerrod Dunbar](#) masks should be choice not mandate
39. [Kathy Rumsey](#) oppose mask mandate
40. [Kenisha Johnson](#) no mask mandate
41. [Kimberly Lunn](#) masks should be choice
42. [Kira Maltbie](#) support all masks
43. [Miles Maltbie](#) yes to mandatory masking
44. [Mandy McConnell](#) support masks in schools
45. [Marie Gall](#) masks should be choice
46. [Mark Truog](#) require masks in schools
47. [Melissa Wagner](#) oppose mask mandate
48. [Michael Williams](#) support not requiring masks
49. [Miriam Roberts](#) support mask requirement
50. [Misty Ellis](#) do not mandate masks
51. [Nathan Seymour](#) make masks optional
52. [Nicki Holmen](#) make masks optional
53. [Robin Marsh](#) oppose mandatory masking
54. [Shannon Wileman](#) no mask requirement
55. [Stephanie Flood](#) allow parent choice for masking
56. [Stephanie Theisinger](#) masks should be choice
57. [Steve Kruse](#) do not mask school kids
58. [Tammy Choromanski](#) support required masks indoors
59. [Tanya Greenway](#) oppose new mask mandate
60. [Tiffany Bolinder](#) make masks optional
61. [Tom Norbert](#) masks should be optional
62. [Victoria Claus](#) require universal masking

[5] Testimony of Kathleen Easily, RN

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5AUZS7E85E1/\\$file/Kathleen%20Easley.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5AUZS7E85E1/$file/Kathleen%20Easley.pdf)

Testimony of David Abbott:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKH3809FFE/\\$file/David%20Abbott.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKH3809FFE/$file/David%20Abbott.pdf)

[7]Testimony of Breanna Creek:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKAU7D61D0/\\$file/Breanna%20Creek.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKAU7D61D0/$file/Breanna%20Creek.pdf)

[8] Testimony of Tom Norbert:

[https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKQ90256FF/\\$file/Tom%20Norbert.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/asdk12/Board.nsf/files/C5KKQ90256FF/$file/Tom%20Norbert.pdf)

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“Lately some parents in Alaska have lost faith in our public education institutions to provide a basic classical education. They see the priorities being expressed by elected school boards and hired bureaucrats as contrary to educational goals they have for their own children.”

<https://donnliston.net/2021/08/parents-have-rights.html>

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Category

1. Uncategorized

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donn