

**LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING AGENDA
August 10, 2021**

ITEM: Information

TOPIC: Communications

PREPARED BY: Eddie Symington

WILL BE PRESENTED BY: Superintendent Gray

TYPE OF ITEM: Consent Information Discussion Decision

DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM:

- a. Written
- b. From the Audience
- c. Recognition

RECOMMENDATION:

None; for information only.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS: Attached: Yes No

Available: Yes No

Jutta Pearce
Toledo Elementary School Parent
PO Box 463
Siletz, OR 97380
541-272-9066

August 10, 2021

LCSD Board of Directors
PO Box 1110
Newport, OR 97365

Dear LCSD Board of Directors and Dr. Karen Gray:

I want to begin this letter by thanking you for your hard work to keep LCSD students safe and listening to parents' concerns while complying with federal and state guidelines. I know this has been a difficult year for everyone and I appreciate that many of you have persevered and some new board members have even been willing to jump in.

I write this letter to urge you to reconsider your policies on exclusion of parent volunteers and visitors. I have read Oregon Dept. of Education's Ready Schools, Safe Learners Framework and even communicated directly with them about it. Their vision of RSSL was to provide guidance so that school districts would have the ability to make decisions that best fit their needs. Studies have shown time and again that students with involved and engaged parents do better in school. By prohibiting our access to our children and their classrooms on a regular basis, you are increasing the risk of disengaging parents permanently creating long term damage to students' success. Please hear that I understand that you have to consider things like current virus spread within the community, masking and vaccinations. These are things that you could easily build within policies that would quickly allow parents back into the building once you and local health officials deem it safe. However your current mandate on no visitors and volunteers does not allow parents any hope that things can and will change.

Additionally, a natural and healthy relationship that children have with their parents is an attachment bond. Children need to know that their parents are accessible for their emotional needs. They need to see that their parents trust their teachers to take care of them. The current kindergarten cohort that you have preparing to begin the year were 3 or at most 4 when the pandemic began. Many of these children, like my own, have almost solely been in the care of the parents due to the Covid safety guidelines we have followed. They do not have many memories of a world that was Covid free and their parents have guided them through the uncertainties. They have little to no experience with leaving a parent, let alone entering a strange building without them to be taught by someone who is a stranger to them and their parents. We, as parents, need to be able to safely emotionally and physically help our children during this transition.

I ask you to please reconsider your policies on parent volunteers and visitors and create a pathway that will allow us to meet our children's needs so that they can be successful students that are emotionally and physically safe in their schools.

Sincerely,

Jutta Pearce