

## Debra Thompson

---

**From:** PSD Superintendent <supt@pcsd.us>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 4, 2021 10:56 PM  
**To:** Assembly; Stephen Giesbrecht  
**Subject:** letter in support of emergency mask mandate

To: Petersburg Assembly  
Cc: Steve Geisbrecht, Borough Manager

I will be unable to call into the meeting on Friday afternoon, so I wanted to send a letter of support for the emergency mask mandate.

I want to thank the Petersburg Borough Assembly for the work you are doing. I know you truly care about our community, schools, businesses, and medical facilities. I know your work on the assembly is often thankless and challenging, and I appreciate you taking the time to consider a community-wide emergency mask mandate during this current spike in Covid cases.

As some of you know, the schools are nearly at a breaking point right now. Our administrative and office staff are spending the majority of our time testing, making phone calls to public health, taking phone calls from public health, sending letters, fielding phone calls from frustrated families, dealing with sick students and staff members, and still trying to provide quality instruction to our students who are in the classroom learning and students who are out of school in isolation or quarantine. We are killing ourselves trying to implement mitigation measures to keep our students safe and in school, maintain extracurricular activities, and provide a consistent education for all. We will continue to do whatever is needed to keep our schools open, but we are fighting an uphill battle when there are few mitigation strategies being followed in the community at large, even when we are in the midst of multiple positive cases nearly every day.

We understand that people are going to get Covid, and that we are all going to learn to live with it on some level. People intentionally ignoring quarantine/isolation rules and going to work/school with symptoms, gathering in large groups with few, if any, mitigation measures, etc. is pulling our schools under. We have 430 students and 85 staff members with families and multiple community connections. We are absolutely connected to every agency, organization, church, and business in town, and we are being severely impacted by community decisions and actions that enter our buildings. We do not want to close our doors or cancel more activities for our kids. Visiting schools are not comfortable (or in some cases, allowed) to send their teams to our community with this level of spread. We have already canceled a large volleyball seeding tournament scheduled for this weekend due to these concerns.

I know you don't have all of the answers and can't "fix" this problem entirely, but it is frustrating to think that our schools may have to close their doors while bars, churches, and large social group gatherings continue unchecked. Schools are not considered large areas of spread with the layered mitigation strategies in place, including testing, but we do not exist in a vacuum. We are impacted by actions inside and outside our walls, and we can't carry the burden of mitigation alone. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Erica Kludt-Painter

*MISSION: Petersburg Schools will advocate for continuous growth, promote a healthy environment, and provide diverse educational opportunities where all students achieve.*

Erica Kludt-Painter  
Superintendent  
Petersburg School District  
P.O. Box 289  
Petersburg, AK 99833

Phone and Fax: 1-877-526-7656

E-mail: [supt@pcsd.us](mailto:supt@pcsd.us)

Website: [www.pcsd.us](http://www.pcsd.us)

PLEASE NOTE: This communication, including any attachment, contains information that may be confidential or privileged, and is intended solely for the entity or individual to whom it is addressed and contents may be subject to terms of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). If you are not the intended recipient, you should delete this message and are hereby notified that any disclosure, copying, or distribution of this message is strictly prohibited.