

Ohio Parents Against Mixed School Days 2020-21
Ohioans (Ohio Parents) Against Hybrid Education
Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom
Free Ohio Now

Date: June 23, 2020

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The Ohio House and Senate need to pass legislation to allow local school boards to determine the best way to open their school districts in the fall. Additionally, future budget cuts resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic shutdown need to come out of the budgets of the various State of Ohio agencies, preserving the remaining State funds for local Ohio government entities, including schools.

The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted everyone and everything in the State of Ohio since the Stay at Home Order was issued in March. Though some aspects of life are getting back to normal, one of the biggest unknowns is how the 600 plus Ohio schools districts will open in the fall for the 2020-2021 school year. This uncertainty negatively impacts 100,000's of Ohioans including parents, students, teachers and others who support our schools.

UNITED

Since this is such a critical issue, four organizations have joined forces to advocate for a normal opening of the schools this fall:

- **Ohio Parents Against Mixed School Days 2020-21** has circulated a petition calling for the normal opening of schools in the fall and has been signed by over 60,000 Ohioans from across the state. **Note:** Enclosure of 180+ pages of comments regarding school opening this fall and a version of this letter with active links is located at freeohionow.com.
- **Ohioans (Ohio Parents) Against Hybrid Education** is an active private Facebook group with over 8,600 members and advocates for a normal opening of Ohio schools this fall.
- **Ohio Advocates for Medical Freedom** is a non-partisan group advocating for your right to choose or refuse any medical treatment or procedure and has over 22,000 Facebook followers.
- **Free Ohio Now** is dedicated to the “Fighting the New Normal,” including advocating for a normal opening of schools, and has coordinated a series of rallies across Ohio covering 40 of the 88 counties at various times and has over 2,000 Facebook followers.

On Saturday, June 13 these groups worked together to sponsor rallies covering 25 counties across 18 locations throughout the state. There were an estimated 300 people who attended the hour long rallies and they generated an estimated 40,000 impressions with other Ohioans through our sign waving effort.

FIGHTING BAD POLICY

While initial caution regarding the Coronavirus may have been warranted, it is time to announce a return to normal classroom instruction for the fall school session and beyond. Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Health must transition to realistic data and practical action concerning reopening Ohio schools for the 2020-2021 school year. **Facts** since the time of the outbreak have shown our youngest citizens are among the **least impacted**

by the Coronavirus, while there is clear evidence of the perils of keeping these same young people out of structured classroom settings.

Closing the schools in March ruined the senior year for the Class of 2020 and negatively impacted all other students. The Ohio Department of Education's possible configurations for operating schools on alternating days or on half-day classroom schedules, commingling classroom attendance with distance learning, and requirements for students to wear masks all day are not sound academic policies. Staggering partial in-classroom schedules with distance learning cannot be effectively implemented by most districts, will not complement families with working parents, and will hurt single parents most.

Additionally, the Center for Disease Control, US Department of Health and the Surgeon General all have stated at various times wearing masks is not effective in preventing a virus which has already infected this many.

Additionally, research has shown the wearing of face masks by healthy persons is ineffective for their protection and poses its own health risks.

SEVERE BUDGET CUTS

As a result of the shutdown order, tax revenue has plummeted and Governor DeWine's solution was to make huge initial budget cuts with 87% of them coming from local schools, universities and healthcare. The Governor has promised more state cuts for next year, which, when coupled with the almost certain loss in property tax revenue, will create havoc for local school budgets for many years to come! Parents, students, school board members, administrators, and teachers want future cuts to come from the Columbus bureaucracy and not from local government funds.

CALL TO ACTION

We stand together to fight the new normal for Ohio's schools. We will work with our respective membership to regularly communicate with you to pass legislation, including Senate Bill 1, allowing local school boards to make the decision on how to open schools this fall and to ensure future budget cuts spare local school districts.

Signed,
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