

Mask Wearing In Schools Questioned By Estevan Woman

September 16, 2020 Regular (Public) Meeting of the
South East Cornerstone Public School Division (SECPD) Board of Education



Submitted by Norm Park, Contracted Reporter for SECPD

Stating she was not an anti-mask advocate, Stacey Wempe appeared before the South East Cornerstone Public School Division's board of directors on September 16 to lodge an appeal against mandatory mask use in the southeast public school system.

She said she based this appeal on her history within the medical (dental) field where masks are used regularly. She stated that even with the wearing of more efficient medical masks, medical practitioners still come down with infectious diseases. She said it is accepted fact that "masks don't necessarily prevent disease. It's just not true that if you wear a mask you won't get a virus," she said.

She said further studies indicate the current virus transmissions in children are low and she feared harassment by teachers towards students who are reluctant to don the masks could escalate. She also spoke of special needs students being particularly vulnerable to the negative factors of the mask wearing edicts.

"Decisions are being made based on fear," she told the trustees, while wearing a mask along with all the trustees and administrators in attendance.

"The kids are saying it's all political and they feel miserable," she said, referring to the mandatory masking regulation currently in effect in all 38 SECPD schools.

Pointing to a petition she said had been signed by over 1,000 people that questioned the credibility of the provincial health ministry that is just now mandating masks, "Can you expect children to wear masks all day? They say they feel like they're in a prison camp," she said.

Wempe went on to state again she wasn't anti-mask, but simply anti mandatory masking and felt that with that mandate, the population felt threatened and within the school systems, a large part of communication is non-verbal, which is difficult when the face is partially covered.

"I have a different perspective maybe, but getting advice from one doctor is not ideal," she said. "I've been there and I wasn't going to enter into the debate but with mainstream media not picking up I went online and got 5,600 views," she added.

Wempe went on to say she feared a mass paranoia will grip the citizens and she said, "We are failing the children. It's time for some logic. I would rather be an advocate than be silent and using masks is not protecting others," she said. "I'm just a messenger, but this needed to be brought forward."

Later, in an exchange with trustee Elwood White, Wempe said COVID was “here to stay, it’s not going anywhere and there is fear mongering among the population so we need to have a different approach. We have to work together and parents were not brought into the discussions. I say read the studies.”

White noted he saw her passion, but “governments world-wide are recommending masks. So what do you see as a solution?”

“Wempe said she feared a false sense of security with masks. “There needs to be a choice. Where is the end game? Is this going to go on forever? How is learning going to be impacted?”

White said he felt it was best to “err on the side of caution.”

Estevan trustee Shari Sutter who joined the meeting online from her home, said, “masks do not harm students. I have talked with Japanese students who have worn them for various reasons over the years with no harsh responses.”

Wempe concluded her presentation by stating that, “each one of us will have personal issues. I have been to China where the air is awful, so I know about that too. But masks here (under current circumstances) can cause anxiety, so what is the end game?”

Board chairwoman Audrey Trombley thanked Wempe for her presentation and said the board would get back to her with a formal reply. Later after the meeting adjourned, Trombley told the media the reply would probably happen following an early October in-camera board session that would allow the trustees to further discuss the matter and come up with an appropriate response.

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