

Lake Charles Community,

As healthcare providers and advocates for our children's health and education, we write to reinforce our support for the safety measures instituted by our school for the start of the 2021/2022 school year. In strictly following the Center for Disease Control guidelines, our children will have the best chance to have a successful in-person school year and remain healthy in the process.

We are currently in a severe surge of COVID-19 in our community. This is driven largely by the presence of a new variant of COVID-19 as well as the poor uptake in compliance with the widely available vaccines. Hospitalizations in our community are currently rising faster than what we have seen in any of the prior waves of virus surge.

Vaccination remains the most effective way to reduce severe disease and likewise spread of this virus. However, the majority of children in our school are not eligible to receive the vaccine at this juncture due to age restrictions and therefore remain vulnerable. Their best line of defense will include social distancing, masking while indoors, and promoting vaccination of those eligible individuals who come into contact with them.

As supported by the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics, we encourage that all eligible individuals associated with this school (students 12 and older, parents, teachers and other supporting staff) be vaccinated against COVID-19. In addition, we support the back-to-school recommendation from the AAP that all children kindergarten and older wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status.

We know the mitigation measures being imposed are frustrating. Few feel the burden of this pandemic more than us in the healthcare community. Please continue to help our school maintain accordance with expert recommendations for the duration of this pandemic. In working together, we have the best chance of keeping our children safe and the school open.

Your healthcare providers of the Lake Charles medical community,

## Signed by

### **ANESTHESIOLOGY**

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### **CARDIOLOGY**

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