

Update Provided by the Division Officers on July 27, 2020

On July 17th, California Governor Newsom announced his "[Pandemic Plan for Learning and Safe Schools](#)." For schools that are permitted to have in-person learning in the fall (if certain conditions are met), his plan requires students in 3rd grade or above to wear a face mask, and his plan requires a minimum of 6-feet social distancing. The CDC guidelines also recommend that students wear a face mask and engage in social distancing.

Original Statement Released by the Division Officers on July 16, 2020

NCA Health Communication Division's Statement Concerning the Orange County, California, Board of Education's Recommendation for Returning to School

On July 14, 2020, NPR's Sarah McCammon interviewed Dr. Lisa Sparks (Chapman University)—a member of the Orange County, California, Board of Education—on the Board's recommendation to have students return to school in the fall without mandating social distancing or wearing masks. Dr. Sparks is a member of the Board and voted to approve the recommendation. [During the interview](#), Dr. Sparks also noted that her area of expertise lies in health communication and public health.

The NCA Health Communication Division Officers do not endorse the views of Dr. Sparks and the Orange County, California, Board of Education. Instead, we urge everyone to abide by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's general [guidelines](#) and [school-specific guidelines](#) that include wearing a mask and engaging in social distancing in public. The division officers value science and data-driven decision making as well as communication-science-supported health messaging.

Dr. Sparks and the Orange County, California, Board of Education's recommendations do not reflect the views of the officers of the NCA Health Communication Division. Although the officers cannot speak on behalf of all members of the Health Communication Division, many members have voiced similar concerns with Dr. Sparks's comments. The signatories of this letter represent a broad spectrum of health communication researchers, practitioners, and teachers who advocate for best practices -- including maintaining social distance, wearing face coverings, and reducing exposure to disease -- as the best way to overcome COVID-19.

Sincerely,

NCA's Health Communication Division Officers

Jennifer Kam (Chair), Kate Magsamen-Conrad (Vice Chair), Ambar Basu (Vice Chair Elect), Xiaoli Nan (Past Immediate Chair), Colter Ray (Secretary), and Victoria Ledford (Grad Student Representative)

If you would like to show your support for this statement, please type your first name and last name below:

- 1) Walid Afifi, Professor, Dept of Communication, UCSB
- 2) Katherine Grasso, PhD, Assistant Professor of Communication, DeSales University
- 3) Gary Kreps, Distinguished Professor of Communication, George Mason University
- 4) Lisa van Raalte, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies, Sam Houston State University
- 5) Maria Brann, PhD, MPH, Professor, IUPUI
- 6) Janice Krieger, Professor, University of Florida
- 7) Yerina S. Ranjit, Assistant Professor, University of Missouri
- 8) Yuping Mao, Associate Professor, California State University Long Beach
- 9) Teresa Thompson, PhD, Editor, Health Communication

- 10) Sarah Smith-Frigerio, Assistant Professor, Communication, Columbus State University
- 11) Angela Palmer-Wackerly, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 12) Heather J. Carmack, PhD, Associate Professor of Health Communication, University of Alabama
- 13) Benjamin R. Bates, Endowed Professor of Health Communication, Ohio University
- 14) Christina SanInocencio, PhD candidate in Health Communication, University of Maryland
- 15) Rebecca de Souza, Professor, University of Minnesota, Duluth
- 16) Melinda Villagran, PhD, Director, Translational Health Research, Texas State University
- 17) Nick Iannarino, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn
- 18) Nancy Grant Harrington, PhD, Professor, University of Kentucky
- 19) Jungmi Jun, Ph. D, Assistant Professor, University of South Carolina
- 20) Anne M. Nicotera, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Communication, George Mason University
- 21) Justin Boren, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Santa Clara University
- 22) Matthew Savage, Associate Professor, School of Communication, San Diego State University
- 23) Dave Keating, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication & Journalism, University of New Mexico
- 24) Heather E. Canary, Professor and Director, School of Communication, San Diego State University
- 25) Amanda Young, Associate Professor, Department of Communication and Film, University of Memphis
- 26) Iccha Basnyat, Assistant Professor, School of Communication Studies, James Madison University
- 27) Elisabeth Bigsby, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- 28) Maria Butauski, PhD, Instructor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Georgia
- 29) Lourdes S. Martinez, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Communication, San Diego State University
- 30) Lindsay Neuberger, Associate Professor, Nicholson School of Communication and Media, University of Central Florida
- 31) Elisia Cohen, PhD, Professor, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- 32) Megan Dillow, PhD, Associate Professor, West Virginia University

- 33) Daniel Totzkay, Assistant Professor, West Virginia University
- 34) Chris Skurka, Assistant Professor, Penn State University
- 35) Josie Gantermiller, Ph.D., Lecturer, Johns Hopkins University
- 36) Stephanie Tikkanen, Associate Professor, School of Communication Studies, Ohio University
- 37) Tara McManus, Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- 38) Jennifer Sandoval, Associate Professor, Nicholson School of Communication and Media, University of Central Florida
- 39) Dawn O. Braithwaite, Willa Cather Professor of Communication, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 40) Robin Smith Mathis, PhD, Assistant Professor of Communication, Kennesaw State University
- 41) Carolyn N. Sartain, PhD Student, School of Communication, Northwestern University
- 42) John Lynch, Professor & Graduate Director, Department of Communication; University of Cincinnati
- 43) Kami Silk, Chairperson, Department of Communication, University of Delaware
- 44) Parul Jain, Associate Professor, Ohio University
- 45) Pamela Lannutti, PhD, Professor and Director, Center for Human Sexuality Studies, Widener University
- 46) Anna M. Kerr, PhD, Assistant Professor, Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine, Ohio University
- 47) Jennifer Anderson, Associate Professor, School of Communication & Journalism, South Dakota State University
- 48) Sandra L. Faulkner, Professor, Bowling Green State University
- 49) Kristina M. Scharp, Assistant Professor, University of Washington
- 50) Allison Eden, Associate Professor, Michigan State University
- 51) Madeleine R. Holland, Assistant Professor of Instruction, The University of Texas at Austin
- 52) Carma L. Bylund, Professor, University of Florida
- 53) Dorothy Alston Calley, Assistant Professor, Biola University
- 54) Archana Krishnan, Assistant Professor, University at Albany, State University of New York
- 55) Leslie Ramos Salazar, Associate Professor, West Texas A&M University
- 56) Joy V. Goldsmith, Professor, University of Memphis
- 57) Meghan Bridgid Moran, Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
- 58) Heather L. Voorhees, Assistant Professor, University of Montana
- 59) Rachel A. Smith, Professor, Penn State University
- 60) Curtis Chamblee, 1st year PhD student, Department of Communication and Film, University of Memphis
- 61) Sean Upshaw, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Texas-Austin
- 62) Andrew Spieldenner, Associate Professor, California State University-San Marcos
- 63) Kristen Willett, PhD, Senior Lecturer/Assistant Program Director, Johns Hopkins University Krieger School of Advanced Academic Programs
- 64) Mohan J. Dutta, Dean's Chair Professor, Director, Center for Culture-Centered Approach to Research and Evaluation (CARE), Massey University; Editor, Journal of Applied Communication Research (JACR)
- 65) Katy Pearce, Associate Professor, University of Washington

- 66) Kerk F. Kee, Associate Professor, Texas Tech University.
- 67) Andrew High, Associate Professor, The Pennsylvania State University
- 68) Leah E. Bryant, Associate Professor, DePaul University
- 69) John W. Jordan, Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- 70) Rosalie S. Aldrich, John and Corinne Graf Professor, Chairperson, Department of Communication Studies, Associate Professor, Indianapolis University East,
- 71) Michael Waltman, Associate Professor
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- 72) Deborah Ballard-Reisch, Professor Emerita of Public Health, University of Nevada, Reno, Kansas Health Foundation Distinguished Chair in Strategic Communication, Wichita State University (Emerita), Provost & Academic Vice President (Emerita) The American Campus, Mauritius
- 73) Fran C Dickson, Professor, Eastern Kentucky University
- 74) B. Liahna Stanley, PhD Student, Arizona State University
- 75) Lucy Niess, Doctoral Student, Arizona State University
- 76) Christopher N. Poulos, Professor of Communication Studies, UNC Greensboro
- 77) Laura D. Russell, Professor of Communication, Denison University
- 78) Julie Volkman, Assistant Professor, Bryant University and Adjunct Assistant Professor, UMass Medical School
- 79) Kristy Maddux, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Maryland
- 80) Roy Schwartzman, Professor of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro & Past President, Association for the Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Medicine.
- 81) Carla L. Fisher, Associate Professor, University of Florida
- 82) Amy L. Delaney, Assistant Professor, Millikin University
- 83) Elizabeth A. Craig, Associate Professor, North Carolina State University
- 84) Aantaki Raisa, Doctoral Student, University of Florida
- 85) Amy Bleakley, Professor, University of Delaware
- 86) Heather Zoller, Professor, Department of Communication, University of Cincinnati
- 87) Sara Baker Bailey, Assistant Professor, Southern Connecticut State University
- 88) Daniel Stofleth, PhD, University of Washington
- 89) Carey Noland, Associate Professor, Northeastern University
- 90) Scott A. Eldredge, PhD, Associate Professor, Western Carolina University
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- 97) Stacy Smulowitz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Scranton
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- 99) Khadidiatou Ndiaye, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, The George Washington University
- 100) Tharwa Bilbeisi, Doctoral Student, Health Communication, University of Memphis
- 101) Elissa Foster, PhD, Professor, DePaul University
- 102) Marie Haverfield, PhD, Assistant Professor, San José State University

- 103) Elizabeth Cohen, PhD, Associate Professor, Comm. Studies, West Virginia University
- 104) Sandi Smith, PhD, Professor, Communication, Michigan State University
- 105) Charee Thompson, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Illinois
- 106) Christine Salkin Davis, PhD. Professor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
- 107) Robert D. Hall, Doctoral Candidate, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 108) Jody Koenig Kellas, PhD, Professor and Department Chair, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- 109) Susan Henry, RN, President, Huntington Beach Union High School District
- 110) Michelle Miller-Day, PhD., Professor, Communication Chapman University
- 111) Claudia McCalman, PhD., Associate Professor, S. Louisiana University
- 112) Emily Peterson, PhD, Senior Research Analyst, University of Southern California
- 113) Lillie Williamson, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison
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- 115) Jennifer Bute, PhD, Associate Professor, IUPUI
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- 117) Tracy R. Worrell, PhD, Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology
- 118) Michael Klajbor, PhD Student, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
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- 121) Angela M. Hosek, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Ohio University
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- 123) Shannon VanHorn, Ph.D., Professor, Valley City State University
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- 126) Marian L Houser, Professor, Texas State University
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- 128) Lori West Peterson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, St. Edward's University
- 129) Scott A. Myers, Professor, West Virginia University
- 130) Robert J. Sidelinger, Professor, Oakland University
- 131) Ashley Aragón, Doctoral Student, the University of Maryland
- 132) Dawna Ballard, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin
- 133) Chris R. Morse, Ph.D. Professor, Bryant University
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- 136) Peter Monge, Emeritus Professor, University of Southern California
- 137) Lynn Carol Miller, Ph.D., Professor, University of Southern California
- 138) Janet Fulk, Emerita Professor, University of Southern California
- 139) Tom Hollihan, Professor, University of Southern California
- 140) Kai Kuang, Assistant Professor, Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania
- 141) Ann Bainbridge Frymier, Ohio University
- 142) Karen Schlag, University of Texas at Austin