

**From:** Tom DiBello <[tomdibello@hotmail.com](mailto:tomdibello@hotmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2021 11:18 AM

**To:** Orme, Gareth <[Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com](mailto:Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com)>

**Cc:** [mtorchia@boyertownasd.org](mailto:mtorchia@boyertownasd.org); [brett.cooper@dboone.org](mailto:brett.cooper@dboone.org); [dfinnerty@pgsd.org](mailto:dfinnerty@pgsd.org); [wshirk@pgsd.org](mailto:wshirk@pgsd.org); [rizz@spring-ford.net](mailto:rizz@spring-ford.net); [pwinters@tvsd.org](mailto:pwinters@tvsd.org); Whitlock, Nicola <[Nicola.Whitlock@pasenate.com](mailto:Nicola.Whitlock@pasenate.com)>; Miron, Luc <[Luc.Miron@pasenate.com](mailto:Luc.Miron@pasenate.com)>; [basdschoolboard@boyertownasd.org](mailto:basdschoolboard@boyertownasd.org); [julia.olafson@dboone.org](mailto:julia.olafson@dboone.org); [steve.miller@dboone.org](mailto:steve.miller@dboone.org); [kevin.stroble@dboone.org](mailto:kevin.stroble@dboone.org); [bucky.scott@dboone.org](mailto:bucky.scott@dboone.org); [beverly.albright@dboone.org](mailto:beverly.albright@dboone.org); [tanya.bell@dboone.org](mailto:tanya.bell@dboone.org); [asheli.godfrey@dboone.org](mailto:asheli.godfrey@dboone.org); [jennifer.leone@dboone.org](mailto:jennifer.leone@dboone.org); [christen.thompson@dboone.org](mailto:christen.thompson@dboone.org); [RLindgren@pgsd.org](mailto:RLindgren@pgsd.org); [AlLeach@pgsd.org](mailto:AlLeach@pgsd.org); [AshleyCuster@pgsd.org](mailto:AshleyCuster@pgsd.org); [pgrimm@pgsd.org](mailto:pgrimm@pgsd.org); [JimLapic@pgsd.org](mailto:JimLapic@pgsd.org); [TinaMcIntyre@pgsd.org](mailto:TinaMcIntyre@pgsd.org); [CharlesNippert@pgsd.org](mailto:CharlesNippert@pgsd.org); [JayStrunk@pgsd.org](mailto:JayStrunk@pgsd.org); [BillParker@pgsd.org](mailto:BillParker@pgsd.org); [Margaret\\_Wright@spring-ford.net](mailto:Margaret_Wright@spring-ford.net); [Wendy\\_Earle@spring-ford.net](mailto:Wendy_Earle@spring-ford.net); [Linda\\_Fazzini@spring-ford.net](mailto:Linda_Fazzini@spring-ford.net); [David\\_Shafer@spring-ford.net](mailto:David_Shafer@spring-ford.net); [CZasowski@hotmail.com](mailto:CZasowski@hotmail.com); [Clinton.Jackson@jacobs.com](mailto:Clinton.Jackson@jacobs.com); [Christina\\_Melton@spring-ford.net](mailto:Christina_Melton@spring-ford.net); [Diane\\_Sullivan@spring-ford.net](mailto:Diane_Sullivan@spring-ford.net); [tvsdboard@tvsd.org](mailto:tvsdboard@tvsd.org); [rspeaker@mciu.org](mailto:rspeaker@mciu.org); [jilhac@berksiu.org](mailto:jilhac@berksiu.org); [GeorgeF@cciu.org](mailto:GeorgeF@cciu.org)

**Subject:** Re: Communication from Senator Katie Muth

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Typical, sit on the sidelines and grandstand. I ask the same question if such the concern why wasn't this request sent or copied to the county commissioner? They have to ability to institute a mandate county wide but ignore to. Where was the concern when Gov Wolf stated: Pennsylvania Will Not Issue Indoor Mask Mandate For Schools Like New Jersey. I don't recall any statements or concerns then. If school districts follow exactly the recommendations from the county and CDC what makes Sen Muth different?

Don't abandon school districts for the past 18+ months and now try to ride in on a white horse for political posturing . You should be ashamed of yourself.

Tom DiBello

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 19, 2021, at 5:38 PM, Orme, Gareth <[Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com](mailto:Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com)> wrote:

Good evening. Please see the attached letter from Senator Muth.

**Gareth Alister Orme (He/Him/His)**  
**Special Projects Coordinator**  
**Office of Senator Katie Muth (D-44 | Montgomery, Chester and Berks Counties)**  
**338 Main St. Royersford, PA 19468**  
**Mobile: (610) 290-6475**  
**Office: (610) 792-2137**  
**Email: [gareth.orme@pasenate.com](mailto:gareth.orme@pasenate.com)**

44TH DISTRICT  
STATE SENATOR  
**KATIE MUTH**  
SENATE BOX 203044  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3044  
717-787-1398  
FAX: 717-783-4587  
338 MAIN STREET  
ROYERSFORD, PA 19468  
610-792-2137  
FAX: 610-948-3037



Senate of Pennsylvania

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ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES  
& ENERGY  
FINANCE  
STATE GOVERNMENT  
RULES  
EMAIL: [senatormuth@pasenate.com](mailto:senatormuth@pasenate.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.SenatorMuth.com](http://www.SenatorMuth.com)  
FACEBOOK: @SenatorMuth  
TWITTER: @SenatorMuth  
INSTAGRAM: @SenatorMuth

August 23, 2021

Tom DiBello  
School Board Member  
Spring-Ford Area School District

Tom,

It's great to hear from a member of the Spring-Ford school board. I hope you and your family have been healthy throughout this pandemic.

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, my office has had meetings with school district officials, local emergency response departments, and other human service entities to help provide guidance and assistance to the many challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. None of these meetings were partisan in nature, but rather concerned community leaders working together to fight a deadly pandemic. It is important to mention that Spring-Ford was the only district out of the twelve school districts in my senate district that did not attend a single COVID-19 meeting with my office. Despite the unfortunate lack of participation, our office still serves as a resource for the Spring-Ford community. Hence, the reason that you received my letter regarding the need to implement evidence-based policies to protect students and staff.

While I am frustrated with the lack of action from the county health department and the Administration in Harrisburg, I do not recommend waiting to be mandated to do the right thing. Despite your personal opinions of me "sitting on the sidelines", I have been fighting for my constituents' health and well-being since the day I took office. I take on the fights others opt to avoid, ignore, dismiss, or run away from. I do my due diligence to research and educate myself on many issues, including best practices from public health experts. I urge you to do the same. Every school board has the legal and moral responsibility to protect the students and staff within their district. I reiterate my request for you and your colleagues to take the necessary action to implement and enforce effective, evidence-based mitigation policies.

Lastly, let's not forget that at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Governor took statewide action to mitigate the spread of the virus, many local officials and school board members were enraged that local control was not an option. I listened to many school board meetings, including your board's meetings, where the majority of you insisted that our local elected officials would be better suited to protect the community and would take the necessary steps to do so. Here we are, 17 months later, and YOU have the power to make the decisions that you were elected to make – decisions about prioritizing the health and safety of our students, our teachers and our community. Now that you have the power and authority to act in good conscience, you want another government body to force your hand and ultimately allow you to grandstand. I realize your reply to my original correspondence likely empowered you in some sick way, but I will not be bullied or disrespected and will not back down from fighting for what's right and fighting for the families in my district and across this Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

**From:** Jackson, Clinton

**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 6:20 PM

**To:** Orme, Gareth

<[Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com](mailto:Gareth.Orme@pasenate.com)>; [mtorchia@boyertownasd.org](mailto:mtorchia@boyertownasd.org); [brett.cooper@dboone.org](mailto:brett.cooper@dboone.org); [dfinnerty@pgsd.org](mailto:dfinnerty@pgsd.org); [wshirk@pgsd.org](mailto:wshirk@pgsd.org); [rrizz@spring-ford.net](mailto:rrizz@spring-ford.net); [pwinters@tvسد.org](mailto:pwinters@tvسد.org)

**Cc:** Whitlock, Nicola <[Nicola.Whitlock@pasenate.com](mailto:Nicola.Whitlock@pasenate.com)>; Miron, Luc

<[Luc.Miron@pasenate.com](mailto:Luc.Miron@pasenate.com)>; [basdschoolboard@boyertownasd.org](mailto:basdschoolboard@boyertownasd.org); [julia.olafson@dboone.org](mailto:julia.olafson@dboone.org); [steve.miller@dboone.org](mailto:steve.miller@dboone.org); [kevin.stroble@dboone.org](mailto:kevin.stroble@dboone.org); [bucky.scott@dboone.org](mailto:bucky.scott@dboone.org); [beverly.albright@dboone.org](mailto:beverly.albright@dboone.org); [tanya.bell@dboone.org](mailto:tanya.bell@dboone.org); [asheli.godfrey@dboone.org](mailto:asheli.godfrey@dboone.org); [jennifer.leone@dboone.org](mailto:jennifer.leone@dboone.org); [christen.thompson@dboone.org](mailto:christen.thompson@dboone.org); [RLindgren@pgsd.org](mailto:RLindgren@pgsd.org); [AlLeach@pgsd.org](mailto:AlLeach@pgsd.org); [AshleyCuster@pgsd.org](mailto:AshleyCuster@pgsd.org); [pggrimm@pgsd.org](mailto:pggrimm@pgsd.org); [JimLapic@pgsd.org](mailto:JimLapic@pgsd.org); [TinaMcIntyre@pgsd.org](mailto:TinaMcIntyre@pgsd.org); [CharlesNippert@pgsd.org](mailto:CharlesNippert@pgsd.org); [JayStrunk@pgsd.org](mailto:JayStrunk@pgsd.org); [BillParker@pgsd.org](mailto:BillParker@pgsd.org); [MargaretWright@spring-ford.net](mailto:MargaretWright@spring-ford.net); [WendyEarle@spring-ford.net](mailto:WendyEarle@spring-ford.net); [LindaFazzini@spring-ford.net](mailto:LindaFazzini@spring-ford.net); [DavidShafer@spring-ford.net](mailto:DavidShafer@spring-ford.net); [CZasowski@hotmail.com](mailto:CZasowski@hotmail.com); [ChristinaMelton@spring-ford.net](mailto:ChristinaMelton@spring-ford.net); [DianeSullivan@spring-ford.net](mailto:DianeSullivan@spring-ford.net); [tomdibello@hotmail.com](mailto:tomdibello@hotmail.com); [tvسدboard@tvسد.org](mailto:tvسدboard@tvسد.org); [rspeaker@mciu.org](mailto:rspeaker@mciu.org); [jilhac@berksiu.org](mailto:jilhac@berksiu.org); [GeorgeF@cciu.org](mailto:GeorgeF@cciu.org)

**Subject:** RE: Communication from Senator Katie Muth

■ EXTERNAL EMAIL ■

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Good Afternoon Gareth-

Is there a particular reason why Senator Muth's "request for mandate" was not sent directly to the Montgomery County Health Department and to Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MP, Ken Lawrence and Joseph C. Gale?

Looking forward to your response.

Have a nice evening.

Clinton L Jackson

44TH DISTRICT  
STATE SENATOR  
**KATIE MUTH**  
  
SENATE BOX 203044  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3044  
717-787-1398  
FAX: 717-783-4587  
  
338 MAIN STREET  
ROYERSFORD, PA 19468  
610-792-2137  
FAX: 610-948-3037



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**FINANCE**  
**STATE GOVERNMENT  
RULES**  
  
EMAIL: [senatormuth@pasenate.com](mailto:senatormuth@pasenate.com)  
WEBSITE: [www.SenatorMuth.com](http://www.SenatorMuth.com)  
FACEBOOK: @SenatorMuth  
TWITTER: @SenatorMuth  
INSTAGRAM: @SenatorMuth

August 23, 2021

Clinton Jackson  
School Board Member  
Spring-Ford Area School District

Dear Mr. Jackson,

It's great to hear from a member of the Spring-Ford school board. I hope you and your family have been healthy throughout this pandemic.

In response to your follow-up question regarding my letter, the county and state health departments were both copied on the letter. While I am frustrated that the county and state have yet to enforce a standardized COVID-19 mitigation plan, every school board has the legal and moral responsibility to protect the students and staff within their district. I reiterate my request for you and your colleagues to take the necessary action to implement and enforce effective, evidence-based COVID-19 mitigation policies to keep our students, staff, and communities safe.

The state and county governing entities have given local school districts direction that should help inform decisions about prioritizing the health and safety of our students, our teachers and our communities. We will reiterate our ask to the County Health Department and the Governor to mandate masking and other life-saving mitigation policies in our school districts, but I do not recommend waiting for a mandate from a higher level of government to do the right thing. Wasting time pointing politically aimed fingers at different government officials does not save lives or implement a safe return to in-person learning plan. I, along with the many families who wrote and called my office, hope that the leadership team at Spring-Ford is soon able to present an effective COVID-19 mitigation protocol to ensure the safest learning and working environment while we continue to battle this pandemic.

Please feel free to reach out if you need additional assistance with keeping our community safe.

Sincerely,