Subject: PLEASE GRANT PERMISSION FOR PSD TO CONTINUE IN-PERSON LEARNING

Dr. Chen and Board of Health Members,

I am asking that Peninsula School District (PSD) receive explicit written permission from Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) to continue in-person learning for grades K/1 and special education. The exceptionally low COVID-19 cases and strict adherence to safety precautions demonstrate that our students can safely learn in-person without an increase in virus rates.

On several occasions, you have insisted that the physical separation of our district by the bridge does not protect us from virus spread due to visitors and commuting parents. There is NO EVIDENCE to support this claim as virus rates have been consistently much lower than the rest of the county. Rates in the PSD area have fallen from ~57 cases per 100,000 people to ~40 cases per 100,000 people since the time you mandated fully remote learning on August 11 to now. Clearly summer visitors, nor a full month of school openings, have not had a negative impact.

Alongside TPCHD, and other elected officials, we have the opportunity to be leaders! The past 30 days since PSD reopened is proof that the COVID-19 School Response Toolkit that TPCHD created works. Together we can model a safe re-opening for school districts across Washington.

Thank you,