

September 3, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I wanted to take this opportunity to reach out to all of you to provide the most up-to-date information concerning COVID-19 and the district. Our district health and safety plan was developed this summer to offer masking as an option if the county was in the low, moderate, substantial, and the high range of COVID-19 transmission. Even at the high level of transmission in the county, our Mountain View School Board authorized me to keep the masks optional, but closely monitor the transmission level in the district.

After the opening two days of school, we had 5 positive COVID-19 cases within the elementary and high school. With that number of positive cases, we would have closed last school year. However, in an effort to stay open and not have to quarantine large numbers of students, temporary masking was implemented. I knew that this decision would upset some people. However, I felt that I needed to do something to try to stay open, not move to virtual, and slow the spread of COVID-19. My goal and sincere hope was to monitor the situation on campus and if the positive cases slowed by September 10th, we would consider moving masking back to optional.

However, Governor Wolf and the Department of Health announced that under the order of Acting Health Secretary Alison Beam, all students and staff would be required to wear masks in all public and private K-12 schools in the Commonwealth. This order will be effective starting Tuesday, September 7, 2021, which overrides my local decision and takes my decision making power away to move masking back to optional.

My goal is to safely lead our district, listen and always work as closely as possible with our students, parents and school community, because what you say truly matters to me. However, this masking order must be followed by all schools and enforced. I deeply understand your frustrations and can relate to how upset many of you feel.

I wanted to thank all of you for your partnership and collaboration as we work together to provide the best school year possible for your children. In the upcoming weeks, as new information becomes available from the state level, I will reach back out to you.

Gratefully,

Dr. Michael S. Elia
Superintendent of Schools
Mountain View School District