

February 10, 2022

Dear Parents and Staff,

On Monday, Governor Ned Lamont announced that the executive order requiring face masks would expire on February 15. He has asked the state legislature to extend the date to February 28 to allow local school districts to implement their mask policies beginning March 1. This comes at the heels of discussion around the extension of other executive orders to be voted on by legislators. While our original Return to School Plan last July originally indicated flexibility with respect to masks, we amended our plan with the implementation of the Governor's executive orders.

We understand the sensitivity and the variation in people's comfort levels related to masks, as these have been employed for the last two years. At the school level, our decisions have been driven by an ongoing review of current data in our school community, and our actions were equally responsive to the advice from State and local medical experts throughout the pandemic. As you know, COVID response has been subject to many changes, and we all have learned a great deal more than we knew about the virus in March 2020.

The mitigation strategies in place served a purpose during the peak of the pandemic. Our students and staff, as well as our entire community, demonstrated a high degree of patience and respect throughout this challenging time. This was certainly not easy, but it helped our district move from closure to hybrid to a full return to in-person learning.

The news by the Governor that districts would likely be given the flexibility to make local decisions was shared at the onset of the week. However, like districts across the State, we will be discussing this with our Board of Education as we consider the path forward for our schools. Connecticut is only one of many states who are moving in this direction now. We do appreciate those who respectfully voiced opinions on this topic, and we remain mindful of your thoughts, concerns, and questions moving forward.

Please know that we have and will continue to make informed decisions in the best interest of students, staff, and families.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Superintendent