



FULLERTON JOINT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Office of the Superintendent

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February 18, 2022

Dear FJUHS D Families and Students,

We would like to give you an update on some announcements this week about future changes regarding statewide mask mandates. Once again, California allowed its mask mandate for indoor public spaces to expire at the end of day on February 15, 2022. However, for K-12 settings, masks are still required for students and staff members while on school sites. However, **the State's top health official did state that a decision on masking in schools will be announced on Monday, February 28th.**

- California health officials announced on Monday, February 14th, that they will spend two weeks evaluating COVID-19 data and conditions before making a determination on the future of masks in schools. Until then, face coverings remain a state requirement for all students and staff while indoors on school grounds.
- Speaking during an [afternoon news conference](#) on February 14th, California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly did not identify a specific threshold for lifting the requirement. However, he said the state will reassess case rates, testing positivity percentages, hospitalizations, pediatric hospitalizations and vaccine rates and, on February 28th, announce a date for transitioning masks from a mandate to a “a strong recommendation” when students and staff are indoors on school campuses. “Masking requirements were never put in place to be there forever,” he said. “It’s not a question of if; it’s a question of when.”
- Meanwhile, the California Department of Public Health continues to recommend established precautions that, when taken together, close off nearly all avenues for COVID-19 infection. These include avoiding large gatherings, improving indoor ventilation, washing hands, wearing a mask in public, getting vaccinated and getting boosted when eligible.
- Based on these trends, a coalition of Orange County superintendents [issued a statement on Friday](#), February 11th, asking the governor and the CDPH to announce a criteria and timeline for easing school masking requirements and other COVID-19 protocols. They noted that all school districts are legally compelled to follow public health directives set forth by the governor, the CDPH and the OC Health Care Agency. Actions to the contrary risk school closures.

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- Dr. Ghaly said it is reasonable to conclude that the state is getting close to a point where masking requirements can be relaxed in schools, but the next steps will involve analyzing data and announcing a date. He added that some communities may choose to keep more restrictive precautions in place based on local conditions.
- **As California emerges from the Omicron surge, Governor Gavin Newsom unveiled the state's [SMARTER Plan](#) on February 17th, the next phase of California's pandemic response. During his press conference, Governor Newsom pointed to Monday, February 28th as the moment state leaders will announce a date for the removal of masks for students in K-12 in the very near future.**
- At this time, spring indoor athletes (Boys Volleyball) will continue to test on a weekly basis. Per CDPH guidance, students whose vaccination status is unknown, are unvaccinated, and choose not to test, must wear a mask while participating during practice and/or games.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Once again, the State's top health official and the Governor says a decision on masking in schools will be announced on Monday, February 28th. Following that announcement, we will provide an additional update to the FJUHSD community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve McLaughlin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steve" and last name "McLaughlin" clearly distinguishable.

Steve McLaughlin, Ed.D.
Superintendent