



SPECIAL COMMUNICATION ADDRESSING THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S FACE COVERING MANDATE

Friday, September 3, 2021

Greetings, Bulldogs:

As you are most likely aware, on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADoH) announced a [mandated masking order](#) for K-12 schools. This order takes effect on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. The definition of what constitutes an acceptable face covering may be [found here](#).

In consultation with our District's solicitor, and after careful review and interpretation of the order, the West York Area School Board and District Administration have determined the order to be within the scope of law and will adhere to the mandate. Please remember that we (the School Board, Administration, Faculty, and staff) did not create this mandate, but we are legally bound to follow it unless and until a court decides otherwise. We have prepared a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) that may answer some of your questions, as well as provide some contact information where you may direct your concerns and/or further questions. Please know that the WYASD School Board will continue pursuing legal avenues to bring this matter back to one of local control. One of these measures is that we have asked the District solicitor to begin the process of filing an injunction. We will keep the community apprised of this process as it unfolds.

Preparing for the opening of schools during any school year requires a great deal of planning and time. This year our plans included the additional efforts of transitioning nearly 700 students from cyber and cyber/charter back to our brick-and-mortar classes, five days per week. Our planning was predicated on the lifting of the Universal Masking order on June 28, 2021, and the ongoing [communication](#) (as recent as August 6th) from Harrisburg indicating the CDC guidelines were to be considered by each District and applied to the extent practicable by local school boards.

The August 31st announcement represents a sudden and complete departure from the Governor's prior messaging on masks in schools and has generated consternation and anxiety among our families while creating significant logistical hurdles that will take time to address. For example, our families who decided to rejoin our brick-and-mortar classrooms from cyber/charter

schools will need time to process the impact of the PADOH's mask mandate on their children. Families' decisions will presumably lead to some students returning to our WYCA which could then lead to additional changes to class lists and teaching assignments. Families must notify the building principal that they are interested in the WYCA no later than Monday, September 13th. We also need a reasonable period of time to be able to change the existing plan within our schools - for example, we will need to purchase additional masks, etc. As a public school district, we are required to follow the lawful orders from our governing agencies (PDE, PADOH, etc.), but the timing of this mask mandate obviously disrupts the plans that we had in place to start the school year.

While there are exemptions allowed by the order (see [Section 3.](#)), the District will need time to process individual applications for exemptions. Applications will be available on our website by Monday, September 6th, and will be processed on a first-come-first-received basis beginning Wednesday, September 8th. Applications may also be requested from building offices if you do not have printing capabilities at home.

The PADOH's August 31st Masking [Order](#) requires school districts to enforce the mandate that all teachers, children/students, staff, and visitors wear a face covering. **The following expectations and processes will need to be followed for a reasonable transition time until we can fully implement the new mask mandate:**

- All faculty/staff, students, and visitors will wear face coverings at all times while inside school buildings except when involved in the following activities: eating or drinking; playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face covering, participating in athletic practices or activities; or while participating in physical education class when appropriate social distancing can be maintained.
 - Applications for approved exemptions will be on a case-by-case basis.
- All students and families will be reminded on a regular basis of the mandated order requiring face coverings.
- Anyone not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on.
- If the choice is made to not wear a face covering, principals will meet with students to individually address each situation.
 - Those students found to be in violation of the order will be given a letter to take home to parents/guardians.
 - Parents/guardians will also be notified by building administration via blackboard communications.
 - Students will not be denied instruction as a result of not wearing a mask during this time period.
 - Continued non-compliance will be addressed by building principals.
- Faculty, staff, and students will respect others' choices and not coerce, bully, or intimidate others into making choices they are not comfortable with.
- All students will continue to adhere to the WYASD Student Code of Conduct.

- Disrespect toward administration, faculty/staff, or fellow students will not be tolerated.

We understand the frustration with these changes resulting from the PAdoH Masking Order. Our purpose is to educate our students in a safe environment, and we will continue to do so but only with the help and support of our families and community. If anyone is not in agreement with the PAdoH order, we encourage you to directly contact the [Governor's office](#), as well as the [PAdoH](#) to voice your concerns. We ask for your support and cooperation to ensure your children have a successful school year.

Community members are always welcome at Board meetings. We will continue to offer virtual attendance as well as live streaming on our YouTube channel. Please visit the [website](#) for more information.

Upcoming Board Meetings

(in-person attendees should plan to wear face coverings until further notice)

September 14, 2021	5:30 PM	EPC Meeting
	7:00 PM	Work Session of the Board
September 21, 2021	5:30 PM	PRIDE Meeting
	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
September 23, 2021	3:15 PM	Wellness Committee
September 28, 2021	6:30 PM	AdHoc Policy Committee Meeting
October 12, 2021	5:30 PM	EPC Meeting
	7:00 PM	Work Session of the Board
October 19, 2021	6:30 PM	Board Meeting
October 26, 2021	6:30 PM	AdHoc Policy Committing Meeting

Sincerely,

Todd M. Davies
Superintendent of Schools

[9.3.21 Mensaje de mandato de enmascaramiento de comunidad especial](#)