

## Mask Decision Notification from Dr. Irving

March 4, 2022

Dear Teaneck Parents/Guardians, Students & Staff,

Effective March 7, 2022, and in accordance with the State of New Jersey, Teaneck Public Schools will be moving to a “mask optional” environment for all students, staff and visitors. Anyone who wishes to continue wearing a mask will do so with our full support and understanding.

I want to assure our families and staff that we made this important decision based upon several factors:

- 1.) The Teaneck Township continues to advise us that the town’s positivity rate remains very low. Likewise, the district had no new cases reported over this past weekend. In fact, we have had very few new cases each week, for the past several weeks.
- 2.) Last week, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) joined many states in revising its guidance on wearing masks: [Many Healthy Americans Can Take a Break from Masks](#). Based on their new recommendations, New Jersey falls into the area of being deemed as safe for removing most mask requirements. NOTE: The CDC and the State have added that buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, and early care and education/child care programs, are part of their latest guidance.
- 3.) An overwhelming number of parents, students and staff participated in our “Mask Survey” (thank you!) and the results were split fairly evenly on masks. However, there’s a clear majority who want to see the desk barriers removed from the classroom.
- 4.) Our vaccination rate among staff is extremely high; and very good for our 12-18 year old student population. Although we would like to see more 5-11 year old children vaccinated - and hope that a vaccine for younger children will be coming soon - most small children struggle wearing a mask correctly all day.

If there are any significant changes in the COVID-19 positivity rate, our mask guidelines could be revised. As for the desk barriers, we hope to have these all removed over the next few weeks. Lastly, the District is currently reviewing the NJ Department of Health’s latest guidelines ([Updated Public Health Recommendations for K-12](#)) for our go-forward COVID-19 protocols under a “mask optional” environment in schools, on school buses, and in our child care programs.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for your patience and cooperation over the past two years. It is my hope that the remainder of this school year will bring about a gradual return to normalcy for our staff, and especially for our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools