

# Surry County Public Schools

P. O. BOX 317

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(757) 294-5229

February 15, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians:

At Tuesday's School Board Meeting the School Board revised our Health Mitigation Plan to include a roadmap for making masks optional for families in Surry County Public Schools (SCPS), when conditions are safe. Briefly, the plan entails using data from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) as guidance to determine when conditions are favorable for making masks optional and also provides several protocols that will be followed. The conditions and protocols are as follows:

## Conditions for Mask Removal

Factors to consider when transitioning to making masks optional:

- Community transmission/spread (Surry County) is less than 8% positivity for one month prior to masks optional implementation as reported by the VDH.
- No significant or uncontained outbreaks in our schools
- Guidance from VDH and Crater Health District. Currently, VDH offers the following table that is organized according to 4 colors that correspond to Levels of Community Transmission:
  - Red - High Transmission - Over 10% Positivity - **Masks Required**
  - Orange - Substantial Transmission - 8 to 10% Positivity - **Masks Required**
  - Yellow - Moderate Transmission - 5 to 8% Positivity - **Masks Optional**
  - Blue - Low Transmission - Less than 5% - **Masks Optional**

## Mask Removal Protocols

- Masks for students will be optional for families: with exceptions:
  - On school buses and other school vehicles (federal mandate).
  - In areas where social distancing cannot be maintained (i.e., secondary hallways, computer labs, in-door dances, graduation and assemblies).
- Face masks for all employees and visitors will be mandatory until further notice.
- Principals, teachers, and other school personnel will not assume responsibility for mask enforcement.
- Parents will be responsible for communicating mask expectations to their children.

- Maintenance staff will continue to monitor and maintain ventilation systems and custodial staff will continue recommended surface and air disinfection procedures.
- All must continue to follow district illness procedures and protocols if someone becomes sick.
- Continue to train and educate staff, students, and parents on key infection control practices like hand-washing and proper sanitizing procedures.
  - Establish and maintain hand hygiene stations at key locations in the buildings
  - Continue to use school nurses to communicate COVID-19 protocols to employees, students, and families.

In conclusion, SCPS will continue all pandemic related health and mitigation strategies in all areas of our schools, facilities, and buses after conditions have been deemed safe to allow parental choice for mask removal. The School Board has also indicated that guidance from health professionals, schools and local data will determine if we will need to transition back to masks for all in our buildings.

Our ultimate goal is to keep our schools safe and open for in-person instruction. I appreciate the multiple stakeholders that assisted with the development of this plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Serbrenia J. Sims". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Serbrenia J. Sims, Ed.D, Superintendent