



STRAWN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
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March 5, 2021

Dear Strawn ISD Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents & Community,

I hope everyone is having a productive, safe week. We have received many questions regarding Governor Abbott's announcement this week about the new executive order rescinding state COVID mandates, including masks. The Strawn ISD School Board and district leaders will continue to monitor our COVID responses for the remainder of the school year, and if any changes are made to our current protocols, that will be communicated out immediately.

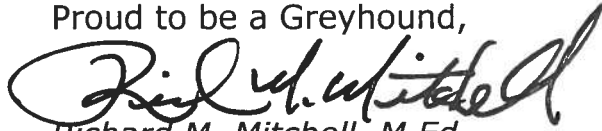
It has been very busy the last 36+ hours since the Governor made the announcement that commences statewide on March 10<sup>th</sup>. As you can imagine, I am receiving much advice and opinions from staff and parents about future decisions regarding this, and that communication is always welcomed. To make sure we are on the same page, I need you to know the next steps. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) sent us guidance yesterday that states a school system's current practices on masks may continue unchanged.

Please know it was not my intent to address our COVID protocols again until the end of this school year. All of our staff and students have done a wonderful job this year trying to keep each other safe, and I feel our safety measures (including masks) have been working as designed.

Currently, we are changing nothing in relation to our COVID protocols, and my intent (once again) is to revisit the safety measures at the end of the school year. My hope and prayer is that I am able to inform all Strawn ISD students, families, and staff – that we will begin the 2021-2022 school year with **NO** masks. We might still follow some of the protocols, but I want the masks out of our professional lives next year. Whether I am able to make that announcement remains to be seen, but I feel strongly that it becomes

more of an option if we finish this year as we began....by following our safety rules. We are happy to receive the great news that the Texas Department of Health is instructing vaccine providers to start prioritizing teachers and school district staff immediately. For those of us who intend to be vaccinated, please make sure you are registered. If I receive any additional information on this issue, we will communicate that out as quickly as we can. Everyone continue the work to stay safe, and thank you for your continued support of our children and our school.

Proud to be a Greyhound,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

*Richard M. Mitchell, M.Ed.*

*Superintendent*

*STRAWN ISD*