



## **DOUGLAS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT #27**

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**Ana C. Samaniego**  
Superintendent

**Cesar Soto**  
Chief Financial & Operations Officer

**Denise Cox**  
Assistant Superintendent

August 18, 2021

Dear DUSD Staff and Families:

Throughout the pandemic, the Douglas Unified School District has remained committed to following the recommendations of national, state and local health officials to the extent possible. This included adhering to recommendations regarding masking – until our state legislature passed a law prohibiting mask mandates in Arizona school districts. We complied with that law. On Monday, August 17, 2021, an Arizona Superior Court ruling established that the “no mask mandate” law cannot take effect until the end of September 2021 despite language in the law which stated it would be applied retroactively as of July 1, 2021.

Given this ruling, our Governing Board has made the decision requiring again that all DUSD staff and students, regardless of vaccination status, to wear masks while indoors on school district property and on district buses, beginning tomorrow, August 19, through September 28. Masks *may* continue to be optional outdoors. This decision is based on the following reasons:

- Our public health officials – the CDC, the Arizona Department of Education, the Arizona Department of Health Services, Cochise Health and Social Services, and the American Association of Pediatrics – are all in agreement that adults and children should wear masks inside our public schools given current pandemic conditions.
- Community spread continues to rise. Cochise County is currently in High Transmission, with an increase in cases.
- Universal masking as recommended by all health officials is the top mitigation strategy for safe in-person learning.
- We are seeing cases in our schools.
- We know the Delta variant is present in Cochise County and it is an opportunistic virus that is very contagious. We know that we have had multiple break through cases where fully vaccinated individuals have contracted COVID-19. We know the data is now showing that fully vaccinated individuals can have COVID-19, be asymptomatic, and spread the virus to others.
- We must take action to reduce both the number of positive cases and the number of students and staff required to quarantine if we are to ensure the continued operation of our schools in-person.

We understand that masks are a hot topic and even a divisive issue, and there are many differing thoughts on the matter. At this point, in order to keep students and staff in class, learning to their best ability, our best defense along with vaccinations is to require masks so long as the law allows and/or until our community spread and cases in schools are well-managed.

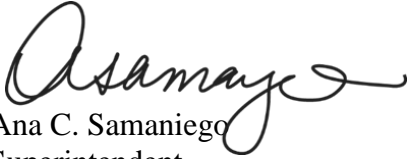
***Working together, raising standards, and developing leaders.***

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El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Douglas #27 no discrimina sobre la base de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, edad, religión o discapacidad.

The District does allow for individualized health accommodations for those who cannot wear a mask. Students who received an accommodation previously may continue with that accommodation. Students who wish to seek a new or revised accommodation may submit a request using the Chronic Health Condition Form to their school health office.

Thank you for being so understanding and let's continue to work together in the best interest of students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Asamanyo' or 'Asamanyo', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ana C. Samaniego  
Superintendent

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