



Dr. Rick Cobb
Superintendent

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September 3, 2021

Dear Mid-Del Community,

In response to Oklahoma County District Judge Natalie Mai imposing a temporary injunction on SB 658, the Mid-Del Administration recommends the following changes to the district Return-to-Learn plan:

- Effective Wednesday, September 8, 2021, all students and staff will be required to wear masks inside all school and administrative buildings.
- The mandate will also apply to all school vehicles, including buses.
- Students will be allowed to opt-out of the mask mandate for health, religious, or personal reasons, using a form available on our district website. Parents will need to return completed forms to their children's school(s).
- Employees will have the same opt-out provisions and will return completed forms to their supervisors.
- In classrooms with universal masking in place, the distance for contact tracing may be reduced from six feet to three feet when determining quarantines.
- Visitors entering our buildings - including for student activities that occur indoors - will be required to wear masks.
- This policy expires when one of the following occurs:
 - The first semester of the academic school year has ended.
 - A subsequent court ruling reinstates SB 658 in full.
 - The Mid-Del Board of Education either amends or ends the policy.
- This policy can be extended by the Mid-Del Board of Education at a regular or special board meeting.
- The district will supply masks at the schools, as we did last year.
- Employees working alone in their classroom or offices will not be required to remain masked.

The Mid-Del Board of Education will hold a special board meeting at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, to discuss this recommendation and vote whether or not to approve these changes. **Since we do not have public participation during special board meetings, we have provided a feedback link to allow you to share your thoughts.** Comments included will be visible to members of the Board, and to members of the administration.

<https://forms.gle/CmPcHA8miiTBhTyw9>

If the Board approves the recommendation, a form for opting out of the mask mandate will appear on our website shortly after their vote. While I know this is a divisive issue, the recommendation is based upon our two previously stated goals for this year: keeping people healthy, and keeping people in school. It is also based on a thorough review of data.

We have been tracking Covid data since the beginning of last school year. We publish based on Thursday's numbers (so the recording week runs Friday to Thursday). For the week ending yesterday, we had 144 known

new Covid cases among students and staff. Additionally, we had 1,223 active quarantines. We know that masks can reduce the spread of Covid-19 and that universal masking can help us reduce the number of quarantines required, following CDC, OSDH, and OCCHD guidance. For comparison, I reviewed data from our two statistically heaviest Covid weeks from last school year. You can see that we had more new positive cases this week than we did during our two worst weeks last year, combined.

Date	Known Positive	Active Quarantine	Total
Sept. 2, 2021	144	1,223	1,367
Jan. 14, 2021	50	1,062	1,112
Dec. 17, 2020	67	937	1,004

We also have continued tracking Oklahoma County infection rates, and wanted to compare the last seven weeks to the worst time period from last winter. Using published data showing the rate of new cases per 100,000 population, we can see that during the winter, countywide infection rates were actually higher than they are right now.

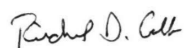
Date	Rate/100,000	Date	Rate/100,000
7/20/21	11.18	12/10/20	84.49
7/28/21	19.44	12/17/20	84.11
8/4/21	30.72	12/24/20	69.71
8/11/21	42.10	12/31/20	53.42
8/18/21	49.32	1/7/21	69.96
8/25/21	51.47	1/14/21	94.36
9/1/21	62.77	1/21/21	60.52

The biggest difference between last year and this year is that we don't have a mask mandate in place. Simply put, I believe the first month of the school year would have had fewer interruptions for our students and been less complicated for our teachers if SB 658 had never become law.

Our goals remain the same as when this school year began. We want to keep people healthy, and we want to keep students in school. Hopefully this surge will end soon and this policy will not be necessary for long.

Thank you for all you do for our students and for the district.

Sincerely,



Rick Cobb