

## Community Survey Responses:

423 responses



Accepting responses



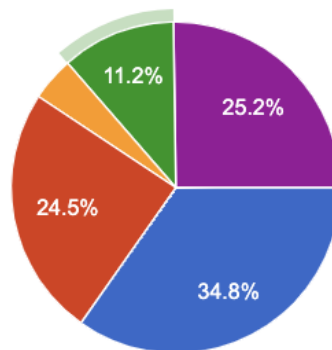
Summary

Question

Individual

Which option do you most support in terms of masking?

420 responses



- CDC guidance ("Strongly recommended")
- Universal masking PreK - 12
- Universal masking PreK-8, Strongly Recommended 9-12
- Universal masking PreK-12 when Oxford County is in substantial or high transmission rates
- Other (please describe in question 2)

Purple - "Other" responses indicated

Parent choice  
Offer remote options  
No masks

Comments:

I do not feel masks should be mandated for any school aged kids. Or anyone for that matter... unless it is their choice to wear one. These kids are going to be passing around all kinds of illnesses through the winter so we should be prepared for it rather than react to it. Promote healthy eating habits and washing their hands and not touching everything in sight, and I know teachers and school staff are being very good about all that which makes masks even more unnecessary. Let the kids smile and see their teachers and class mates emotions, that is such a huge part of what these kids learn in elementary school. We should not make school harder on everyone when it is inevitable that people will get sick this year and we should just roll with it and try not to have it affect the whole school. Forcing masks will certainly affect the whole school and not in a positive way.

proven regular masks do not work...viral particles can pass through. Breathing in CO<sub>2</sub> and mucous from breathing in a mask is gross and bad. Children need to see faces and expressions for good learning.

The board needs to push back on the over reaching DOE. The money from the state means nothing when the kids start leaving school because parents won't tolerate the absurdity of DOE required policy.

You are being trusted with the lives of our most vulnerable and the lives of our educators. Masking must be mandatory at this time. Do not let politics interfere with scientific fact. Will it only matter when it's your loved one who is in ICU? Only FIVE DAYS into this school year and two classrooms shut down. Take the lead and do what is right for the majority. Promote educating our youth about keeping themselves safe and doing their part to potentially save a life. After all, realistically pandemics will probably become a recurring factor for our up and coming generations. Lead them, and start by setting an example of what is right. Let's not buy into behaving as a polarized community. Let us show that when times are tough we look out for each other, no matter what.

This is America. Let every individual choose for themselves.

Out of a call for free choice the board has taken away my choice to protect my child. A "parents choice" policy is effectively a no mask policy. My child will not attend Dirigo Elementary until masks are mandated and the school board is capable of making informed and responsible decisions, not decisions based on hearsay and damaging political agendas.

My parents were vaccinated, wearing masks consistently and both tested positive for COVID with moderate symptoms. No proof the vaccine and or masks are effective.

Listen to the parents who voted to put you on the board. The school board is NO PLACE FOR POLITICS, think about the kids before you think about yourselves and your political aspirations

I still believe everyone should have the choice of making their child wear a mask or not. As soon as school is over the kids are not wearing a mask, they are not wearing them at the store or gatherings. It just doesn't make sense to make them at school if parents don't want them to.

If a child is a close contact they will still be required to quarantine regardless of wearing a mask or not, as there were many children that had to quarantine last school year when masks were required universally. Not sure what wearing a mask is going to change. If parents feel safer to have their child wear a mask that's fine, but quarantine will still be required if they are a close contact, correct? It won't really change lost time in the classroom in the end if they are still required to quarantine even if wearing a mask.

Masking is the "vaccine" for children under age 12...however this must be balanced by the benefits of parental cooperation with school guidelines/mandates. Perhaps the goodwill we generate with parents by not implementing universal masking when risks are lower may prove useful in increasing compliance when our risks are high.

Mandatory masking of children for 7+ hours per day is unnecessary and unhealthy for children's bodies & minds.

RSU 56 is doing an excellent job with this so far this year.

Our kids need to be in person. Don't close school down and fall prey to government intimidation.

It is infuriating how student and staff safety isn't immediately the number one priority.

Masks are ineffective! Dr. Fauchi is a liar!

Strongly consider the option to participate in pool testing so the kids can still stay in school if there was a positive case.

I've heard several called and spoke against masking. What about those who didn't call? We are hopeful that you have safety concerns for our children, and will follow CDC guidelines. Please keep them safe 🙏🥺

We should not be waiting for another board meeting to decide this. We should be calling an emergency meeting. Before the entire district has to close.

Give us the choice; it's not fair to our children to have to learn through masks.

Stay on topic and believe in the facts not opinions.

Wear a mask if you feel safer but these kids need normalcy back. These kids don't need to be out there this.

It is about time that we give our children back their lives. More and more we are seeing that what we are doing is completely wrong and not working. Masking children only serves to make YOU feel better. We know that children are not high risk and masks do nothing. Why are you allowing obviously flawed data from the CDC to cloud your judgement? It is YOU who will be directly responsible for the psychological damage for your own personal psychosis. Please do what is right and stop the testing, stop the mask, and LET THE KIDS LIVE. You owe that to them.

Why are you not requiring the vaccine? (Genuine question, not meant as an insult in any way)

No mask

This virus is not going anywhere! We need to learn to live normally with it!! Considering the 99% survival rate this shouldn't be hard! Living in fear is not the answer, this does more harm than the virus itself! Look at the long term repercussions for these poor kids that can't breathe normally all day both mentally and physically. KIDS NEED TO BREATHE!!! We need to stand up and put an end to this agenda as a community, supporting it will only lead to further more ridiculous mandates... I will say this one more time 99% SURVIVAL RATE!! Let's make our decisions based off the cold hard facts (the numbers), not people's emotions!

Let the parents decide if they want their child wearing a mask. Make it optional. This is child abuse.

The board needs to be educated on covid and keep their personal opinions and what they think they have for rights of their decisions. Covid is real, people are getting sick, kids are missing school and wearing a mask at least in a high transmission rate is minimal price to keep these kids in school. Maine is behind other states and Oxford County is even further behind Southern Maine. Look further into covid data in other states and now Maine. I made this point in the Facebook live stream and I was right unfortunately. Make an educated decision.

Facts = the masks and vaccines aren't working. The CDC and the scientists behind this man made virus have lied about it all it's all about control and we need to keep living and not give into the fear that is all made up, this is America Not China. This virus does not effect children.

Please do what is safest and universal mask

Keep it the parent's choice!!

I feel it is important to have masks on when the transmission rate is high to do our part to slow the spread of the virus.

The school board needs to put the safety first ,when making decisions that effect the health and well being about for all students but especially students that are not approved for vaccinations and have no protection.

Do not mandate the vaccine

There are physical and skin issues with wearing a mask all day.



If your vaccinated you should have the option if you want to wear one or not

Optional masking puts an extraordinary amount of pressure on the children who are trying to keep themselves and their loved ones at home safe by wearing a mask. Being the parent of a middle schooler who has felt the peer pressure at school first hand, I am heartbroken to hear, and I quote, my 13 year old saying it is, "Scary and awkward." She normally loves school, and is not loving this year.

I think our children have been damaged from all this fear regarding the COVID 19 virus and it needs to stop....now...Why don't we listen to the many doctors and scientists who believe the virus isn't such a threat to our children's life? We need to back off with the doom and gloom and recommend parents learn about building up their immunity....Maybe use some of the money being given for needless changes to our schools , and use it for educating everyone.....on healthier living..at least until this storm blows over and we are back to believing we can and will get through this. The food service people have done a remarkable service for our students..I'm very proud to live in this community where people love each other and will do what needs to be done to help everyone.. You've got this!

P.S.....Please check out some videos on YouTube regarding building up our immunity.....and the benefits of using food grade hydrogen peroxide, ivermectin, and the vitamins recommended...

Please do the right thing and vote for universal masking k-12. We need to protect our children, staff and community members.

I do not think masking is beneficial and is more harmful than good.

My kids are both vaccinated along with myself and husband . I think it's should be parents choice. I know my kids better than anyone. My son is hard of hearing and mask block what he hears and those clear ones muffle what is said and fog up so he can't even read lips correctly. I had them both vaccinated at the school and that alone should help make the decision to have parent choice at least for 6-12 grades.

Everything is very good

I would rather my kiddos wear a mask then risk others getting sick or themselves. I don't want my kiddos to feel guilty if someone in their class gets sick

I think it's important to think about term masking impact on our children and what we're doing to their mental health.

Mask data shows it's only 30% effective and our not really safe for children due to carbon dioxide

There are children in this school district that have to interact with children from other schools due to split parents and those schools mandate masking and these children are too young to be vaccinated. You not requiring masks is not helping to stop the spread. Kids can't afford to not be in school and parents home due to quarantines. Also, allowing it to be up to students will cause teasing and peer pressure to not wear them. Parents can't control if they are worn at school. Masks do help my kids weren't sick at all last year. Please consider this along with your decision. Thank you

I like the decision that was made at the last school board meeting. As much as we were out of school last year WITH universal masking, I say it's worth trying something different. I think personal freedom is important (and I am a VERY liberal person.... Soooooo 🍆). I like the decision to make it personal choice (and even my kids are split on this) and to reevaluate as we go. I'm interested to see how we shape up on percents when compared to RSU 10, since we are really the same community still. That will really tell us a lot.

No Masks

If parents don't like the mask being optional then they have 2 choices. Either home school or pay for them to go to another district plain and simple

Masks at the elementary school level are more harmful for children than proper hand hygiene to protect them from a virus. The masks that the children are required to wear in school aren't even the proper PPE to properly protect anyone from the covid 19 virus. Viruses are spread by touching surfaces with one's hands and then touching one's face where the virus can be introduced to the nose and mouth.. children that are wearing masks on their faces all day will be more likely to be constantly touching their face to adjust the mask or play with it making it easier for them to contract and spread a virus. Keeping their face clear and free from a useless annoying face mask will keep them more comfortable and less likely to continuously touch their faces. Teaching them proper hand hygiene is a much better defense than masks.

I believe that this should be the parents decision. The mask does not stop COVID from entering the schools and therefore should not be required.

Thank you for keeping our kids safe.

It has been proven that the CDC has been lobbied by the teachers union in emails between cdc,aft, and nea where the cdc's recommendations state verbatim the language that the Teachers union wanted the cdc to use. The cdc chose politics over science. The NEA donated \$20 to the Biden/Harris campaign.

PLEASE PLEASE do not overturn the decision to have masks be optional. My son so much enjoys going to school now and seeing his friends faces and learning and playing together. Adults have the rights and the means to protect themselves. Let the children be children.

We need to stop living in fear and live

I am unclear why this is being put out there as a decision was already determined

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This should not be up to the community to decide. It is already expected that you are doing universal masking per the DOE and CDC. How many kids do we need to have put of school or sick to make you understand this. It was expected at the beginning of the school year that you universal masked. My email went out to each and every board member along with superintendent on my feeling about the careless decision that was made prior to the school year.

Are there studies that show how compromising it is to our children's health breathing through an old dirty sweaty mask for 6 hours? Or how traumatizing it is for them to not see each other's faces to read emotions? Children's immune systems (hyper T cells- the cells that help fight off viruses) work at a 2-3 times faster rate than adults.They can beat this.

I do believe by maskinh it may slow things down as well as us still washing and sanitizing it keeps our rates low. We did fairly well last round

I'm curious why there is talk of the homecoming dance being held on the tennis courts because if it were held inside the SCC the kids would have to wear masks? It doesn't make sense to me why if all of the high school kids have the same lunch and don't wear masks. what is the difference? Especially since not all of the



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This is Brad Dyer. I would hope these responses are not "anonymous" as they can be manipulated.

There are some people that make it very difficult to come and speak at board meetings due to their strong political views. The public should be able to voice their opinion without being argued with by a board member.

Masks don't work, they increase risk of bacterial infections of the mouth nose, face and lungs. And who knows what the psychological impact might be.

Children are at zero risk for covid.

Masking children is child abuse. Emphasis on the \*period\*.

Quarantine classrooms need to be established.... Where kids can stay together and mask if necessary if one of their classmates test positive. These kids being out of school and virtual learning is detrimental to kids who aren't having more than your average cold/flu if anything when they have COVID. Honestly less time should be spent on masking decisions and more on how to keep these kids in school!

The masks definitely do not work and they are very unhealthy for our children to be wearing and breathing in their own bacteria in their own carbon monoxide

This seems pretty critical at this point. Our kids are getting sick, and a pretty significant number have already had to quarantine. Let's end this foolishness and get our kids masked and back in school.

I appreciate that you listened to us when making the decision and hope you continue doing just what we are doing now!

I urge all board members to vote for universal masking K-12. As a parent I shouldn't have to choose between my children's health and safety over getting an education.

Make sure you remember who you represent.

Masks don't do anything. They're bogus just trying to keep the people from panicking.

Stop making our children live in fear, let them as individuals know we all have choices, and the parents should be make the decision for them.

A mask mandate will help students feel " ok" about wearing a mask. My student wears a mask on the bus and out at stores in public but " feels weird" wearing a mask in school because " not many kids or teachers" are wearing them in the building. I feel that distancing is still important and not being followed everywhere in the district. My daughter has told me that there isnt assigned seats on her bus. I worry that some classrooms are set up with distancing in mind. Desk pushed together in rows, separated. Students eating lunch at the middle school with 5 students at a round table.

Masks are not proven to completely work and the carbon dioxide the kids breath in is a toxic amount for long periods of time and mask breaks even though they said they are going to be given, are NOT but maybe once first thing in the morning

Please keep our children safe🙏

I just want to say thank you to the board for giving the parents a voice and say in the decision. It seems like you are actually trying to listen to us, while making the best decision to keep staff, students and our community safe. I know with any decision you all make, you are going to receive backlash. I want you to know you are appreciated! I am thankful there is. Board to look at the big picture and do what is best for our students. I am also thankful you started the year the way you did. My student went to school smiling and everyone could see that bright smile. It gave a piece of "normal" school back. I just wanted to make sure you guys knew how amazing and hard working you are! Everyone might not see or know everything you guys are doing but I do, my family does, and my student does. We are proud to be part of the RSU 56 family! Thank you!

PLEASE PLEASE reconsider at the very least universally masking the group of kids (elementary) that are unable to be vaccinated at this time. I am the parent of a 3rd grader at DES that only made it 3 days before there was a positive case in his classroom and is now in quarantine. This year feels way worse than last year having the masks be a choice!! We KNOW the masks give our kids some protection and did a great job last year of helping to not spread COVID and other illnesses around the classrooms.

Wake up and protect our children

Masks don't do shit.

If there was one consensus among all medical professionals and scientific researchers that masks were an adequate way to get rid of this pandemic then there would be more precedent to require them. However, there are medical professionals on either side voicing concerns. How can we as a district force parents to only listen to one side. In a world where there is already so much uncertainty and things out of our control, the very least we should be doing is teaching our children how to do our own research, make choices that we feel are best for our families, respect each family's right to do so. We cannot mask forever. Let's teach building immune systems with nutrition, exercise, and mental health, practicing good hygiene, respect for others' choices, and confidence in our own choices. Yes, we do have the right to homeschooling or to choose a different school with different policies but RSU56 families want RSU56 teachers. We love the community feel, the quality education, and the opportunities provided to our small towns -- we shouldn't get to choose to give that up based on deeply controversial policies and political divides. Give the parents (and older students who can have the conversation with their parents) make the decision on what path will suit them.

If the parents want the kids to wear them, the kids should wear them. If the parents don't want the kids wearing them, they shouldn't have to.

If masks are mandated, many parents will remove students from your schools and choose to homeschool. Forcing children to wear masks is inhumane and borders on child abuse. Breathing in extra CO<sub>2</sub> through wet & dirty masks all day deprives students of the necessary oxygen their brains need to develop correctly. This prolonged fear and manipulation has to stop. COVID is not going away. Ever. Are we going to wear masks forever?

I think it's safe to say that most of us can at least agree that what's best for most kids and families is that they are in school learning and socializing as much as possible. It is my understanding that by universal masking that only students testing positive or showing symptoms would be required to quarantine. So wouldn't that allow for students as a whole to be in school more?? I feel like maybe this wasn't understood by a lot of families. The elementary age children don't even have the choice to be vaccinated yet. The only way we have to protect them and keep the spread low is by masking everyone and social distancing. I would also like to add that no one loves wearing a mask BUT from what I've seen and heard more times than not it is the parents that have a much bigger issue with the masks than the students. Please reconsider universal masking indoors for at least the elementary age kids.

I think all ages should wear a mask no matter if they got the vaccine or not cause I personally have a family member who got vaccinated and is now fighting for his life in the ICU due to him catching covid. So I think every body should wear a mask regardless and maybe think of going remote again cause the covid cases are just rising more and more everyday. So please don't be the problem help us and our kids be the solution.

Kids need to be in school but that makes for a long day wearing a mask all day at school.

My child is currently out of school on quarantine for holding the hand of a positive child. If we had social distance protocols in place my child wouldn't be missing his first 2 weeks of school. It isn't about control, my child DESERVES and education and flip flopping on policies is denying him that right.

Politics don't belong in schools

Going into the cold months out children wearing masks all day breathing in damp hot hair then going outside is going to cause some serious health issues. I think just like at flu season universal precautions and extra handwashing goes a long way. Let's not destroy the children's immune system by creating sterile environments for them to grow and learn in.



If masks are worn in school and there are positive cases in the classroom, students still have to quarantine. The masks have done more harm than good for my children. My 6 year old sons eczema was so bad from having to wear a mask all the time last year and my 7 year old daughter had pimples on her face from constant mask wearing. Masks are required on the school bus this year so my kids asked for rides to and from school because they are not comfortable in the face masks. We have been unmasked all summer and have had no issues being in close contact with friends or people in public places. Masks and socially distancing are only having negative affects on the children, especially the young children who don't understand why they can't sit close to their friends or see their whole faces. My kids are mentally and emotionally tired from it all and I will never support a mask mandate in the schools. It should be the parents choice because the parents know their children best. Please make the right choice and let it be the parents choice. Thank you.

Keep up good work, this is not easy for any of us, but realize it is especially tough for schools. Need to keep the kids in school as much as possible, as normal as possible.

Thank you for not mandating them right from jump! Plse let them be free!

If masks are required then remote learning should be offered again! For middle schoolers and high school I see no reason as to why their classes can't be live on zoom so there isn't much more work for the teachers!

I greatly appreciate being given the right as a parent to make decisions for my children thus far this school year.

I am a student at DHS that can't have my second vaccination because of my heart. I feel very unsafe at school with no one wearing masks

Vote on something for the year and get over it. I can't plan my year or childs plans with constant changes. Shes either going to school or home schooling based on this mask mandate and this constant talk about change that is disrupting my work and bills is getting old.

We need to consider real numbers. CDC has posted numbers that compare number of child deaths in one year from swine flu to child deaths since the beginning(over one year) from covid 19. There were more child deaths from swine flu than there have been child deaths in over one year of covid. Why are we following these quarantine guidelines? Why are we making people quarantine if they are not symptomatic? Please consider going against guidelines that make no sense. We did not wear masks for swine flu; however there were significantly more child deaths. We did not quarantine for swine flu. Yet here we are following MDOE guidelines that make no sense. From the last school board meeting the general consensus was that most everyone agrees these rules make no sense.



It is becoming exceedingly difficult for parents to accommodate remote learning due to their work schedules. If parents can't go to work, they cannot feed or house their families. Requiring masks and social distancing will keep our students in the classroom and minimize the threat of Covid-19. I would like to see our schools stay open to benefit our students and their families. We can accomplish this by working together as a community.

Masks work best when everyone is wearing them! The elementary age kids aren't able to be vaccinated and with the cases rising in the state everyone should be doing their part to minimize spread. Masking and social distancing work!

I feel with the rise of cases within the district, masking is just one way we can help lower the spread of the virus.

We need to do pool testing to keep kids in school.

It's just not worth the debate. Let's get over wave 2 and put this issue in the rear view mirror!