

VAN BUREN LOCAL SCHOOLS



HOME OF THE BLACK KNIGHTS

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Dear VB Stakeholders,

Part of our strategic plan is to ensure we are doing a better job of communicating with you. The board recently organized and hosted a Community Forum on Covid, where we discussed several mitigation efforts and how our community and district were currently doing to help control the spread of this virus. In addition to the folks that attended in person, we also got feedback from staff, students, and other community members, unable to attend the forum. Suffice it to say, we had a variety of opinions on an extremely challenging topic. The immediate feedback we got from participants at the forum was in opposition to mandatory masking. The VBEA President shared a members' survey in which 80% of staff did not want to wear masks during school hours. The non-certified staff are also in opposition to wearing masks.

While there are some folks, in our district and even on the board, that believe masks are an effective mitigation tool, there is not enough support in our district or community to require them, without causing division in the district. However, one thing we can all agree on is that we want our wonderful students to stay in school, in-person. The board supports staying the current course: encouraging masks, and parent choice, social distancing, sanitizing, hand- washing and keeping sick kids home.

We will continue practicing effective mitigation efforts, along with utilizing Nurse Judy and working closely with the health department and the hospital to stay abreast of changes. The board would like to commend the administration and all staff for engaging in a heroic effort to ensure our kids stay in school. The board will continue to monitor the situation and we hope that we never have to mandate masks or close our school for remote learning. Going forward, and into the future, let us do our best to emulate the Black Knight traits: Be Respectful. Be Responsible. Be Resilient.

Thank you,

The Van Buren Board of Education