



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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TIMOTHY A. OLDENBURG, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

January 25, 2022

Dear Tonawanda City School District Families, Students, and Staff:

Thank you for your patience and understanding throughout the pandemic and during the recent confusing information and news regarding the current NYS mask mandate.

The primary goal of our district has been to protect our students and staff while maintaining the safest environment possible. We are keenly aware of the diverse positions, perspectives, beliefs, and information that is held among the members of our school community. While many people may hold similar beliefs as you do, it is important to recognize that many others have different concerns and positions.

Our district leaders are working to the best of our abilities to do the most we can for ALL students, ALL staff, and ALL parents.

Here are facts relating to the recent information regarding a judicial decision from Nassau County that challenged the current NYS masking mandate as instituted by the Governor:

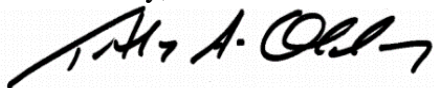
- This decision came from the NYS State Supreme Court in Nassau County. This court, although titled “Supreme Court”, is the lowest level of court in NYS. The Court of Appeal and Appellate Court are the higher court systems in NYS. This is the reason that no school districts in WNY or Erie County changed their masking policies yesterday.
- Earlier today, this judicial ruling was appealed in the higher court which immediately and automatically issued a “stay” of the original ruling. **This means that the current masking mandate will remain in effect until this higher court hears the appeal and delivers a decision.**
- Since this initial ruling in Nassau County, the NYS Education Department, the NYS Department of Health, and the Erie County Executive and Erie County Department of Health have all reiterated their masking mandates, which are not party to the decision from Nassau County.
- **In short, this means that our district, and all other districts in Erie County, will continue to follow the current masking mandate until further notice.**

Please know that our district is prepared to take appropriate action and make responsible changes to our practices as soon as possible. Our district is hopeful that we can soon safely and properly return our school environment to most of our traditional norms and protocols. Careful and thoughtful decision making will allow for less confusion and conflicting messages sent to our students, staff, and school community as this masking ruling plays itself out in the court system.

We are committed to making certain that all district interests, especially the health and welfare of our students and staff, are protected.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation as we all continue to deal with the frustration and upset of this pandemic in professional and reasonable manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy A. Oldenburg", written over a light gray rectangular background.

Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools