



February 16, 2022

Dear students, staff, families and community,

As you all know, there has been much ado about masking this past week. We were all given notice by Governor Inslee and Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal that changes are coming. I was notified yesterday that Governor Jay Inslee will address the media tomorrow, Thursday February 17 to discuss the latest COVID-19 trends and plans for transitioning to the next phase of Washington State's COVID-19 response. He will be joined by Umair Shar, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health, Washington State Department of Health and Lacy Fehrenback, Deputy Secretary for COVID Response, Washington State Department of Health on Thursday, February 17 at 2:00 p.m. The press conference will be livestreamed by [TVW](#). I am not privy to the details of this announcement but am hoping it will be good news for our students and families. His message may or may not address schools. Please understand that until guidelines/mandates are lifted, we will follow the [K-12 COVID-19 Guidelines and Requirements](#). I am well aware that there have been a couple districts that have announced they are making masks a choice despite the guidelines. I am also aware that they have already received warnings regarding sanctions that will negatively impact their ability to operate.

As you might imagine, I have been fielding a great deal of communication regarding masks. The most compelling, thoughtful, and respectful communication has come from students. I truly appreciate students taking the time to reach out to me because their voice is important and impactful. Thank you Mount Baker students!

I would like to share our deep appreciation and love for the Whatcom County Sheriff's Office and specifically the deputies who were injured on February 10<sup>th</sup> while protecting a Mount Baker School District neighborhood. Deputy Ryan and Deputy Jason as well as their families are in our thoughts with an abundance of gratitude for their service. This was traumatic for many of our children and families. Mount Baker School District is blessed to have counselors and mental health specialists to support students and families in crisis situations. Whenever there is a crisis in our schools or community, we have systems in place to mobilize support. I would also like to thank the Kendall Elementary, Mount Baker Junior High, Mount Baker High School, Special Services, District Office, and Transportation staff for responding to this situation and ensuring students were safe while the situation was being handled by our first responders. This calls out the Power of Baker and the strength of our community.

Friday is an all-staff professional development day, so there is no school for students. Monday is the President's Day holiday. Enjoy the four-day weekend!

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