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Ms. Lynne Ide
Chair of the Board of Education

Dr. Mary Gallucci
Vice Chair of the Board of
Education

Ms. Ilda Ray
Secretary of the Board of Education

March 4, 2022

Dear Windham Community,

Yesterday was our third consecutive day of zero (0) COVID cases in our district and our first day without the mask mandate. This letter serves to address some details associated with the recent elimination of the mask mandate in our K-12 schools, district offices and school buses.

As was stated in our messages Wednesday night, the Early Head Start and Head Start classrooms are still under a federal mask mandate. Since these programs are supported by federal funds, we are obligated to follow federal mandates. For further details: [Head Start Federal Mask Mandate](#)

As was evident in my school visits yesterday, we have a fair number of students and staff who wore their masks even without the mandate. Our schools will continue to support the idea of personal and family choice. We acknowledge there are a variety of health circumstances that may impact one's decision to wear a mask. I encourage families to have these same conversations with their children so we can ensure everyone is comfortable in our schools.

Since the district is no longer requiring masks, our staff members cannot be required to monitor the use of masks in our classrooms and schools. We, of course, continue to encourage strong communication practices between staff and families on masking and any other topics that impact our students' well-being.

The district recently received another shipment of COVID Home Test Kits which will be distributed to our students and staff. Symptomatic students and staff are encouraged to stay home, test themselves and report positive cases to our School Nurses. The district will continue to follow the CDC recommendations of a 5-day quarantine for those who test positive and mask wearing for days 6-10 once they return to school or work.

Since the district has consistently followed the Department of Public Health's focus on providing a "suite of mitigation strategies" in our schools, we are deliberately not making any other changes to our current practices while we watch to see the impact of eliminating the mask mandate. We plan to revisit our list of mitigation strategies, such as cohorting, social distancing, general cleaning and sending symptomatic students and staff home, once we are certain our district COVID cases are not on the rise.

I am looking forward to the arrival of spring and our full transition from an emergency response to COVID-19 to a management of the virus, similar to the way we manage influenza. This process will take some time to complete, so your continued support and patience is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tracy A. Youngberg