



RESPONSIBILITY | COURAGE | HONESTY | RESPECT

February 17, 2022

Dear Sherman School Families,

Last night, the Board of Education held a Special Meeting to publicly discuss and ultimately make an important decision regarding masking at The Sherman School. As you know, the masking requirement was part of an *Executive Order* which mandated mask-wearing in schools since the onset of the pandemic. However, a recent decision released on February 7th by Governor Lamont (and which was subsequently validated by the House and Senate) shifted the decision-making authority about masks to local school communities.

In advance of last night's meeting, the Board carefully reviewed the 78 responses to the survey that we received, listened to a presentation by our district's medical team, and heard comments from 17 of the 90+ community members who joined us in person or participated online. Strong feelings were expressed that reflected both sides of the issue and included remarks from parents, a teacher, and even one of our third-grade students.

Following these public comments, members of the Board had a thoughtful deliberation and voted unanimously that **families will have the option as to whether or not their child wears a mask effective, Tuesday, March 1st. Of course, staff may decide for themselves as well.** Please note that wearing a mask on public transportation, including school buses, will remain in effect as a mandate through the Federal Transportation Authority. We will advise families if that mandate changes in the future.

Although we are permitting choice with regards to masking in the school, please know that we will continue to implement a number of important mitigation measures to promote safety. As we await further guidance from the DPH, we will continue the following:

- Making available, free of charge, N95 masks as needed for any student or staff member
- Making available, free of charge, COVID home test kits for anyone who needs one
- Promotion of DPH mitigation strategies as recommended now or in the future
- Availability of sanitizing stations throughout the building
- Continued efforts to ensure proper ventilation and building cleanliness

Please discuss your decision regarding mask-wearing with your child before they return to school on March 1st. Our goal is to ensure all students feel safe, and that they demonstrate that they respect the choices of their peers and teachers who may choose differently. If you are unsure how to broach this subject with your child, please contact us and we will assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Jeff Melendez
Superintendent-Principal



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