



TWINSBURG CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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August 19, 2021

Good morning Tiger Family,

Today, I am sending this correspondence to provide details about the REVISED District Reopening Plan for the 2021-22 school year which I presented during last night's BOE Meeting. As you may know, the BOE had authorized an initial plan on June 23, 2021. At that time, we all understood that the coronavirus was evolving and that the DELTA Variant was on the horizon, thus the commitment was made to study the science throughout the summer, to analyze the data, and that I would recommend a revised plan to the Board in August.

As you know, masks and facial coverings have been hotly debated over the last few months. This topic is divisive and politicized. SB22 takes the power away from Governor DeWine, from the Ohio Department of Health, and from local departments of health to mandate masks and facial coverings. Basically, the decision to mask up...or not...now lies solely at the discretion of Boards of Education with recommendations from school superintendents. Regardless, two days ago, Governor DeWine held a press conference and later tweeted out the following message:

"To all those who are making decisions right now about our schools, if you are not requiring masks, please think about this again. At the very least, consider requiring masks for the next few weeks when we know the spread level will be very high."

Further, over the last several weeks, I corresponded with some of our parents who are medical doctors, asking them for their professional opinion about masks and masking requirements. They have been gracious with their time and continue to provide resources in support of masks and facial coverings for students and staff members, regardless of vaccination status.

Yesterday during a conference with Summit County Health Commissioner Donna Skoda, the Commissioner stated that even vaccinated individuals can spread the virus. She also stated the following:

"If you are masked, you are protecting everyone. We need to wear masks so COVID does not mutate. We are fearful of a mutation that will not respond to the three vaccines that are currently working. If that happens, we will be back at March 2020...It is time to protect everybody, not just the vaccinated or the unvaccinated. Vaccinated people can spread the virus. Why wear a mask? If not, we are never getting out of this."

Please know that I have really struggled in making the recommendations that I have as I am not a scientist, medical doctor, nor an epidemiologist. But what I am is an educator and a Superintendent who cares deeply for our Tiger family and worries about keeping everyone safe and healthy. We all worked together last school year, students, parents, and staff members, and had a successful school year because we followed the recommendations and the mandates. Unfortunately, those who have the experience and



knowledge to set forth mandates have had that authority taken away from them, thus, after much consternation, and considering the advice of those noted and studying the evolving statistics related to COVID-19, I recommended, and the Board authorized, masks to be required for all students in Kindergarten through grade 12. Preschool students are strongly recommended to wear masks. Students will not need to wear masks when they are actively participating in physical education classes or if they are outside for recess, athletic activities, Marching Band, or other school sponsored outdoor events. Masks are to be worn at all times when in classrooms (except when enjoying meals while seated), restrooms, hallways and common spaces.

All staff members and anyone entering the buildings are required to wear masks or facial coverings when working in direct contact with our students. Masks and/or facial coverings are required to be worn by staff members and anyone entering the building in hallways, main offices, classrooms, and common spaces.

By federal law, bus drivers, bus aides, bus mechanics and students/adults riding on our school buses and vans are required to wear masks at all times when on the school buses/vans.

Attached to this email is the formal plan that was presented to the Board during last night's Board meeting. It may look somewhat similar to last year's plan however, please be sure to read the details as new information has been added throughout the document.

The truth, as you all know, is the fact that this pandemic continues to evolve. What we knew yesterday is different today and what I know as I type this email will likely change by this evening. I continue to seek the best information from health officials. The plan, as described in part above and in more detail in the attachment, will be evaluated and reviewed with recommendations to the Board for possible revisions every six weeks, unless something occurs for which a drastic change is immediately required. Thus six (6) weeks after the first official week of school, by NEOEA Day, I will make recommendations to the Board for the next six weeks of the school year. We will continue this cycle unless the science tells us otherwise.

I know you may be disappointed and/or frustrated by this news. I sincerely apologize if that is how you are feeling. Please know, our Board members and I truly desire just two things... to keep everyone as healthy and safe as possible and to do what is best for the greater common good.

Last year was a very successful year because we all worked together to keep our Tiger family safe and I know this year will be successful too. Thank you for your continued support.

Kathi Powers, Superintendent

