



Mecklenburg County Public Schools

Post Office Box 190 • 175 Mayfield Drive • Boydton, Virginia 23917

Phone: (434) 738-6111 Fax: (434) 738-6679

Mr. Paul Nichols
Division Superintendent

Paula Giammatteo
Clerk

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January 21, 2022

To: Mecklenburg County Parents, Students, and Community,

From: Paul Nichols, Division Superintendent

Re: Governor Youngkin's Executive Order on Masks

As you may know, Governor Glenn Youngkin recently issued an executive order that repealed Virginia's mask mandate for all public school divisions. The repeal is set to take effect Monday, January 24. I released a letter and video about this to our parents, staff, and the public last weekend. In that communication I expressed hope that we would receive more guidance from officials at the state level because there is significant conflict between his order and state law that the General Assembly passed last year. While there has been much debate about the order we do not have any official clarification.

It is my understanding that, even with the executive order, Virginia commonwealth law allows divisions the flexibility to continue requiring masks if their elected school boards choose to do so. Our school board has not met since the order was put in place. I have consulted with our school board attorney and have been advised that our best option is to continue to follow the expectations of the General Assembly until the courts determine which dictate takes precedence. Therefore, students and staff at Mecklenburg County Public Schools will continue to wear masks in school until further notice.

As a division, our top priorities are to protect the health and safety of everyone in our buildings and maintain in-person learning for our students. By continuing to require masks, we can help reduce the spread of the virus and avoid high numbers of exposures, quarantines, and positive cases that can disrupt the learning process.

We know that not everyone will agree with this decision. We ask for your understanding as we work to do what we believe is in the best interests of our students, families, and staff.

As always, thank you for your support as we navigate the many challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has presented to our school division community.