



West Orange Public Schools
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Superintendent of Schools

J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.

March 4, 2022

Dear West Orange Public School Community,

I hope this finds you well. In addition to spring, March also ushers in Women's History Month. Through a myriad of curricular experiences, activities, and events the district looks forward to acknowledging and celebrating not only the many outstanding contributions and accomplishments of women in our society; but also the trials and challenges they have faced along the way in realizing equity and which in some ways persist until this day.

You may already be aware that on Monday evening, the Board of Education accepted the appointment of Interim Superintendent Dr. C. Lauren Schoen, who began working with me starting Tuesday, March 1st drilling down on a very robust and productive docket at the administrative building. Over the next two weeks there are planned meetings and introductions as we transition leadership in the office of the superintendent. Together we have hit the ground running and, no doubt you will agree, that I leave my post in very capable hands. My last day in the district is slated for March 15th.

As previously communicated, beginning March 7th, the **mask optional** policy will remain in place, until such time that the community transmission rate were to elevate back into either the high or highest levels of risk. To this end, the COVID-19 activity report will be reviewed on a weekly basis. Any changes to the mask policy for the following week will be communicated to the community. We are confident that with the consultation of the district physician and local Department of Health, as well as the input from various stakeholders, this decision is both prudent and appropriate. Answers to many questions concerning the change can be found below:

It is important to note that the mask optional option does not apply to the following individuals:

- Fully vaccinated close contacts, who do not have to quarantine and should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days AND
- Individuals, who test positive, and can return on day 6, but should continue to wear a well-fitted mask when around others at home and in public through day 10. For those ending isolation on day 5, this would be during days 6 through 10.

Virtual instruction will remain for the following situations:

- Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and are isolating
- Individuals who are identified as a close contact to someone, who tested positive for COVID-19 and needs to quarantine

Per the recent guidance document "COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools" issued by the New Jersey Department of Health, the definition of a close contact is as follows, *"Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. However, without universal masking, the school must be able to readily identify whether both students were masked prior to applying the close contact exception. This exception does not apply to*

teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.” Contact tracing will take place to identify any individual, who was within 6 feet of the individual who tested positive and was not wearing a well-fitted mask. Close contacts will have to quarantine based on the guidance below:

SCENARIO	GUIDANCE
<p>Who does NOT need to quarantine</p>	<p>Individuals in the following groups who had close contact with someone with COVID-19 do NOT need to quarantine but should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days and get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact. If the test is positive or if COVID-19 symptoms develop, follow isolation recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons ≥ 12 years old who completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine AND have received all <i>recommended</i> vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people. ● Children and adolescents 5-11 years old who completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccine. ● Persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (positive viral test).
<p>Who should quarantine</p>	<p>Individuals in the following groups who had close contact with someone with COVID-19 DO need to quarantine and should take additional precautions during and after quarantine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persons ≥ 12 years old who completed a primary series of COVID-19 vaccine but have NOT received a recommended booster shot when eligible. ● Persons who are not fully vaccinated (haven't completed a primary vaccine series).

From NJDOE: At its meeting on March 2, 2022, the State Board of Education (State Board) discussed the resolution pertaining to the annual calendar of religious holidays for the 2022-2023 school year as established at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(j), pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14-16. The resolution can be viewed on the March 2, 2022, agenda webpage. The State Board values public input in all matters. Accordingly, public testimony will be held on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. Feel free to open the following link for more details: [Opportunity for Public Comment on Religious Holidays Calendar Resolution](#)

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration and wish you a restful weekend.

Sincerely,



J. Scott Cascone, Ed. D.
Superintendent