



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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SUPERINTENDENT

Todd A. Jaeger, J.D.

February 21, 2022

Dear Amphitheater Staff and Families:

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Amphitheater District has carefully evaluated ever-changing conditions and has consistently made very difficult decisions with two key priorities in mind: the health of students and staff and the provision of the best education possible in the midst of those ever-changing conditions. We have never deviated from those chief priorities, nor will we; however, the conditions, circumstances and realities through which we have pursued those priorities and which have even defined those priorities have changed. No doubt, they will continue to change.

Last week, in fact, the Pima County Board of Supervisors determined that the current county-wide mask mandate for indoor public spaces will expire on Feb. 28. This expiration mirrors similar actions occurring throughout Arizona, the nation and the world -- reflecting the evolving thinking, research and science on masks.

I have probably received or have otherwise reviewed virtually every study, article, or meta-analysis concerning the efficacy, importance, or necessity of masks in our schools – from various perspectives. A great many people have tried to convince me that, from that enormous and growing mountain of information, there was only one possible conclusion (or another) to be drawn. Notwithstanding those efforts to convince me this way or that, or perhaps because of them, I have ultimately felt compelled to rely upon public health care guidance, as our public health leaders are far better equipped to sort through all the conflicting medical data and opinions and divine a single “right thing” to do.

But now, more than two years into this pandemic, the only certainty we have come to see is how remarkably uncertain the body of evidence, thought and opinion regarding masks has become. Ultimately, even public health guidance across the country is changing, or evolving as they say. In addition, we have seen a sharp decrease of COVID cases in our District and in our wider community; we have greater availability of testing; and there is relatively unfettered access to vaccines for the majority of our staff and students. Continuing a mask mandate which restricts the freedoms of everyone at this point cannot be justified in this current public health landscape.

This letter will therefore serve to notify all in our Amphi community that the District’s mandate for wearing masks inside District facilities -- like the Pima County mandate -- will also expire on Monday, February 28, with indoor masks becoming optional in our District on Tuesday, March 1.

Amphitheater High School • Canyon del Oro High School • Ironwood Ridge High School
Amphitheater Middle School • Coronado K-8 School • Cross Middle School • La Cima Middle School • Wilson K-8 School
Copper Creek Elementary • Donaldson Elementary • Harelson Elementary • Holaway Elementary • Innovation Academy • Keeling Elementary
Mesa Verde Elementary • Nash Elementary • Painted Sky Elementary • Prince Elementary • Rio Vista Elementary • Walker Elementary • Rillito Center • Amphi Academy Online

Amphitheater Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion/religious beliefs, gender, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, creed, citizenship status, marital status, political beliefs/affiliation, disability, home language, family, social or cultural background in its programs or activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the District’s non-discrimination policies are handled at 701 W. Wetmore Road, Tucson, Arizona 85705 by Frances Araujo Lopez, Equity & Safety Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator, (520) 696-5164, faraujolopez@amphi.com, or Kristin McGraw, Executive Director of Student Services, (520) 696-5230, kmcgraw@amphi.com.

Our District will continue to encourage those who choose to wear a mask to do so, and we will enforce our prohibition of disrespectful behavior towards anyone based upon their choice of whether or not to wear a mask.

Please also be aware that there are certain circumstances in which an existing emergency order from the Pima County Health Department still imposes certain mandates regarding quarantines and masks that still do apply in schools:

- Students who have COVID must now isolate for five days regardless of vaccination status. They can return to school on day six, provided they have been fever free for 24 hours, their symptoms are improving, and they wear a mask for five days after returning. (If symptoms have not improved or resolved, then isolation must be extended beyond the first five days).
- Students who are not fully vaccinated and who become close contacts to persons with COVID must quarantine at home and be excluded from school and extracurricular activities for five days. On the fifth day after their exposure to COVID, the close contact may test for COVID. Those who remain asymptomatic may return to school on day six, but must mask around others for an additional five days.
- Students who have been fully vaccinated or have had COVID in the previous 90 days and who become close contacts to someone with COVID may return to school immediately if asymptomatic. The close contact should test for COVID-19 on the fifth day following their exposure if testing is available, as well as wear a mask for a minimum of 10 days.

Other conditions or exemptions relating to the foregoing may apply. Please consult with your school or work site for additional information and guidance when a situation arises.

In closing, I want to thank all those who comprise the Amphitheater community for all you have done to demonstrate grace, patience and fortitude over the last two years. Like you, I hope the encouraging signs we have seen in recent weeks are early messengers of even better news to come. And, with these changes in our District mask policy, I also hope we help find ourselves on the path to a brighter future – one marked by the smiles on the faces of those around us, especially those of our children.

Yours sincerely,



Todd A. Jaeger, J.D.
Superintendent