



**Brookfield Public Schools
BOARD OF EDUCATION**



June 18, 2021

Attn: The Honorable Ned Lamont, Governor of Connecticut
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dr. Charlene Russell-Tucker, CSDE
P.O. Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06145-2219

Re: Masking Policy in Schools

Dear Madams and Sirs:

Brookfield, like all districts in Connecticut, operates under the guidance and leadership of the Connecticut State Department of Education, and during this pandemic period, under the orders from the Governor and the Department of Public Health. We are writing to urge you to provide updates to the Governor's orders and CSDE and DPH guidance regarding the requirements of the wearing of masks in schools very quickly, and not let such decisions drag into the summer months.

Here in Brookfield, we are hearing from a large number of parents on this policy. Their sentiment and logic is very thoughtful:

- That the 2020-2021 school year was very difficult on our children, socially and emotionally, including long stretches of either remote or hybrid education, and when back in school, wearing of masks full time. We have heard very emotional stories of the severe impact this past year has had on many of our children, and that children aren't as resilient as many say.
- That the science tells us that children, especially younger children, are much less susceptible to Covid-19, and especially for severe symptoms.
- That community transmissions of Covid-19 are at low levels, and that school-related transmissions of Covid-19 are extraordinarily low and have been all year.
- That adults (and even the older students who are eligible) in Connecticut have done a good job of being vaccinated.
- That many states have already lifted mask mandates in schools for the above-mentioned reasons.
- That most Connecticut schools are eliminating the option for full-time remote learning in the 2021-2022 school year, so to deal with concerns for their child's well-being many parents are considering private or home-schooling options and need to make decisions.

As a Board, we find that we agree with much of this input. Our administration tells us that they, too, would like to see a return to normalcy – it is better for all involved, but most especially for the emotional well-being of the children. That said, we fully understand that State-level guidance that we receive is designed to carefully balance the health risks of Covid-19 against all these other factors.

Summer school programs start within the next few weeks. Return-to-school planning is already well underway. Parents need time to make informed decisions. For all these reasons, we urge you to act quickly in addressing state level guidance on this matter within the next few weeks, and not let such decisions drag on until July and August.

On behalf of the Brookfield Board of Education,



Mrs. Rosa Fernandes
Chair, Brookfield Board of Education



Dr. John W. Barile
Superintendent

cc: Brookfield BOE Members
Robert Rader, CABE
Fran Rabinowitz, CAPSS
Steven Harding, State Representative
Dr. Matthew Cartter, CT DPH
Dr. Thomas St. Louis, CT DPH
Dr. Lynn Sosa, CT DPH