

# HUNTINGDON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Administrative Office



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*Jennifer Mitchell*  
Superintendent

*Christopher Evans*  
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*Matthew R. Gibson*  
Business Manager

December 12, 2021

Dear Families and Guardians,

On Friday evening, December 10, 2021, I received notification that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court affirmed the Order of Commonwealth Court which vacated the Face Covering Order issued by the Department of Health in August. What that means for the Huntingdon Area School District is that the decision to wear masks in our schools is a local decision by our school board.

The local decision must be put into a health and safety plan as required by the Department of Education. In anticipation of a potential change, I had altered our district plan on the guidance of the school board and had placed it on our Monday night board meeting for discussion and a vote. The announcement Friday night after the close of the workday was a surprise to all.

Prior to my taking the lead, the interim superintendent decided to require masking for all students and staff ahead of the mandate as the number of Covid cases and the need to quarantine students sharply increased. This measure did control the numbers and allowed our students to stay in school as we do track numbers weekly. The current approved safety plan reflects that decision to mask universally.

Based on that information and the timing of our board meeting, we will continue to mask on Monday, December 13, 2021. This may not be a popular decision, but this is the process that we need to follow. I ask for your cooperation, so that we can have a productive day of learning on Monday.

We will address the safety plan at our regularly scheduled meeting on Monday evening and approve any changes to the plan. I will send out additional information following the Huntingdon Area School Board's local decision to ensure everyone knows the expectations regarding masking for Tuesday, December 14, 2021, and beyond.

Please note that this decision however does not impact the federal directive requiring all passengers and drivers to wear a mask on school buses. Students and drivers must continue to wear masks on school buses.

Whatever the decision, I must let you know that the district is still required by the Department of Health to monitor case numbers, report numbers, and quarantine close contacts or positive students. This will not change that protocol. So, to be clear if a student is a close contact and not masked or vaccinated, they will need to quarantine.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mitchell  
Superintendent