

PUTNAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Dear Students, Staff and Families:

On Tuesday February 15, 2022, the Putnam Board of Education discussed the expiration of Governor Lamont's Executive Order regarding the mask requirement in schools. In doing so, the Board of Education acknowledged that it was important to consider the concerns and opinions of all constituents, including staff, students, and parents. Ultimately, the Board unanimously approved the following motion.

To suspend our current mask policies as of February 28th in following with guidance from the State of Connecticut to end mandatory mask wearing in schools starting that day. The exception to this is that all students, while on buses, will need to continue to wear masks indefinitely. Given the real health concerns that many of our staff, students, and their families have, given the level of COVID infection rates in our community, we urge all members of the Putnam community to remain masked voluntarily to help ensure the health of all school members and the health of their families until COVID infection rates in Putnam fall below 15 in 100,000 cases.

I recognize that some people are incredibly happy with this decision and that it leaves others concerned. In speaking with many of you over the last week, I understand your perspective and the decision of the board. As a school district, we are frequently asked to follow the guidance of the state government. In this case, Governor Lamont and Connecticut Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Manisha Juthani, recommended an extension of the mask mandate through February 28, 2022, and the Board of Education is trusting their judgment.

As we plan for schools to become mask optional, I would like to emphasize a few important points.

- Although the language of the motion encourages masks, it is critically important that the Putnam Public Schools remain welcoming and accepting environments for ALL students, staff, and families regardless of mask choice.
- Teachers, administrators, and other staff will not be responsible for monitoring and enforcing students to wear masks when wearing them is the parents desire.
- Masks will still be required on school buses, including but not limited to field trips and travel for athletics due to a Federal Order.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Sullivan, III
Superintendent of Schools

