



March 21, 2022

Dear SPEED Families and Staff,

As you are aware, both the CDC and Governor Pritzker have relaxed mask mandates effective Monday, February 28, 2022. Additionally, Governor Pritzker has lifted the mask mandate in schools. Although the mask mandate is lifted, local school districts can continue to require masks.

Beginning Monday, March 7, 2022, per the Governor's announcement, the CDC has recommended that masks are needed only in areas of high transmission and the State of Illinois will move forward to remove our school mask mandate. It is recommended that all school districts follow CDC guidance. In accordance with the Governor's Announcement, SPEED School District 802 will follow this direction. Therefore, effective **Tuesday, March 22, 2022**, masks will be optional. However, we **highly recommend mask usage** within all SPEED programs, especially with our medically fragile students.

We will continue to have masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available for any staff member who wants it. Please inform your administrator should you require additional items. Furthermore, we are asking all parents to please inform your child's teacher on your decision to have your child wear a mask. We continue to have masks available for students if you choose this option. Again, we are **highly recommending mask usage** within all of SPEED.

According to Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), our local health department:

- CCDPH strongly recommends wearing a face mask in schools. Only 48% of suburban Cook County residents younger than 20 have received one dose of COVID vaccine.
- In addition to schools, CCDPH continues to recommend masking in any crowded indoor public setting where physical distancing cannot be maintained such as at large indoor events. We will continue to monitor COVID-19 metrics in our suburban jurisdiction and may recommend additional mitigation measures in the future if the healthcare system is overwhelmed or if transmission rate increases warrant such action.

Please be advised it is recommended by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) that all individuals consider wearing masks based on their own personal risk factors and the transmission rates. This operational update regarding masking is subject to change as it may be necessary to comply with local, State, and Federal safety guidance in the future.

I thank you for your continued support and understanding with the need to have **masking highly recommended** in our programs; doing so will allow us to keep our students and staff healthy while continuing in-person learning.

Respectfully,

Dr. Tina Halliman

Tina Halliman, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools

