



## Dartmouth Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent

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**Bonny L. Gifford, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

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Assistant Superintendent of  
Finance and Operations

February 9, 2022

Dear Faculty and Staff/Parent/Caregiver:

As per Commissioner Riley's and Governor Baker's joint announcement today Dartmouth Public Schools will be eliminating the mask mandate in our schools beginning on February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Please see today's press release from Commissioner Riley:

*"After consulting with medical experts and state health officials, the Commissioner will not renew the state mask requirement after it expires on February 28, 2022. Effective Monday, February 28, the DESE mask requirement will be lifted statewide. The Commonwealth's high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students support this decision.*

***Masking continues to be required on all school buses, per federal order.***

*DESE and DPH strongly recommend students and staff continue to follow the [DESE-DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios](#).*

*As always, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. DESE and DPH strongly recommend unvaccinated individuals should continue to wear masks in school settings.*

*The Commissioner will continue to monitor public health data, consult with medical experts and state health officials, and issue further guidance and/or requirements as needed.*

*More than 40 schools have already received approval from DESE to remove the mask requirement. With the removal of the statewide mask requirement, additional schools no longer need to apply.*

*DESE continues to recommend that districts and schools adopt a layered approach to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in school settings. DESE and DPH continue to strongly urge all eligible individuals to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and booster and continue to support schools with vaccination clinics. Other mitigations include participating in the statewide COVID-19 testing program, maintaining good hand hygiene practices, and staying home when sick."*

Please note we have been experiencing fewer and fewer COVID cases in the schools over the past two weeks. Additionally, we will continue to implement the “at home testing” program for as long as the state sends us the tests. I also want to emphasize that staff and students in our schools have the option of wearing masks as they see fit.

Additional important information:

- Upon return to school after a positive diagnosis staff and students are still required to wear a face covering for 5 days.
- The Department of Public Health continues to require the wearing of face coverings in health care settings, which include school nurses’ offices.

We want to thank the community for supporting our schools throughout this very challenging time.

Sincerely,

Bonny L. Gifford Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

***“Quality Education for All Learners”***

***The Dartmouth Public Schools, in partnership with parents and the community, will deliver challenging, standards-based instruction for all students that fosters academic, physical, social and emotional development. Utilizing data analysis to drive instruction, we will implement specific strategies to support every student to think critically, solve problems and become a responsible, contributing citizen. Our high school graduates will possess the required skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in their academic and vocational ambitions.***