

TULSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

PUBLIC SAFETY RESOLUTION

REGARDING COVID-19 AND THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Whereas Tulsa Public Schools is committed to keeping our students, teachers, support professionals, families, and community members safe and healthy;

Whereas Tulsa Public Schools recognizes the importance of in-person teaching and learning to support children's academic success and their social and emotional wellbeing;

Whereas both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that children return to in-person education where it is safe to do so;

Whereas the current COVID-19 prevention and spread-mitigation guidelines from the CDC recommend that individuals, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors in the presence of others, particularly in areas of substantial or high transmission;

Whereas the Tulsa County Health Department currently reports that, with regard to daily new active COVID-19 case rates, 5 zip codes in the county are in a "high" risk category, 27 in a "severe" risk category, and 10 an "extreme severe" risk category;

Whereas the CDC has recognized that the Delta variant of Covid-19 is significantly more contagious than the original strain of the virus;

Whereas, the new Delta variant has caused an increase in the number of children in Oklahoma who have been hospitalized, placed on ventilators, and put into intensive care;

Whereas the CDC and the Federal Drug Administration have recognized that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, but children younger than twelve years old are not yet eligible to be vaccinated;

Whereas children under the age of twelve represent the largest portion of the student body enrolled at Tulsa Public Schools;

Whereas the Mayo Clinic reports that only 6.9% of Oklahomans under age 18 are currently fully vaccinated;

Whereas there are Tulsa Public Schools students, teachers and staff who are immuno-compromised --a class of individuals identified by the CDC as being more vulnerable to COVID;

Whereas new restrictions in state law (Oklahoma Senate Bill 658--namely, Okla. Stat. tit. 70, § 1210.189 - §1210.190), currently prohibit any Oklahoma public school district from requiring the use of masks in their schools;

Whereas, local communities should be empowered to implement common-sense public-health precautions, including requiring masks, in order to keep their students and employees safe; and

Whereas but for Senate Bill 658's statutory prohibitions, the Board of Education would implement a policy requiring the use of masks on its property to safeguard the health of its students and staff and support in-person learning;

Be it resolved that we, the Tulsa Public Schools Board of Education:

- Endorse the Tulsa Public Schools 2021-2022 COVID-19 safety guidance and protocols—specifically the *expectation* that individuals should wear masks while on Tulsa Public Schools property; and
- Urge all eligible Tulsans to protect in-person learning—and more generally the community, students, and families it serves—by getting vaccinated for COVID-19 as soon as possible; and
- Encourage Tulsans to maximize protection from the Delta variant by wearing a mask indoors in public as recommended by the CDC for areas with substantial or high transmission.