

Board of Education Approves New Masking, Testing Requirements

At its September 2 special meeting, the Board of Education approved two new COVID-19 requirements:

- An outdoor masking requirement for all students and staff
- A COVID-19 testing requirement for all unvaccinated students

Outdoor Mask Requirement

Under state health orders, K12 students and staff in California are already required to wear masks inside school facilities. This new AUSD requirement extends the mandate to outdoors at school facilities as well, with three significant exceptions:

- While eating or drinking
- If a medical condition makes mask wearing difficult
- During short “mask breaks” outdoors if students can be physically distanced

“The current public health guideline is for people to wear masks in ‘crowded outdoor situations,’” says Superintendent Pasquale Scuderi. “We have crowded outdoor conditions every day on our elementary school campuses. It’s called recess.”

The outdoor mask requirement, which goes into effect immediately, also applies to secondary schools, where crowds of students move between classes five to six times a day. The requirement will be in place at least until Winter Break, and will be reviewed for possible update after November 1 (when the California Department of Public Health will also be reviewing its masking requirements for K12 schools).

COVID-19 Testing Requirement

AUSD currently offers a plethora of COVID-19 testing opportunities, including once monthly screening testing at elementary schools, response testing to positive cases at school sites, and voluntary testing at a centralized site six days a week.

Under the new requirement, all unvaccinated AUSD students will be required to test up to twice monthly through National Labs.

“While we know that some families want to test with outside providers, our preference is that they test through National Labs,” Superintendent Scuderi says. “That is because this testing regimen is too massive for us to be able keep track of results coming in from disparate sources. Keeping it centralized and coordinated is crucial to our being able to track and respond to positive cases.”

Where and how that mandatory testing will be offered is still in planning; we expect to share that information shortly.

The agenda and presentation are available [here](#); we expect video of the meeting to be posted within a few days.