

**JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55**

February 15, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.

MEETING HELD REMOTELY THROUGH ZOOM

Mattapoisett, MA 02739

EMERGENCY MEETING

<https://vimeo.com/678412958>

District Members Present: Heather Burke, Chairperson, Michelle Smith, James Muse, Margaret McSweeney, Frances Kearns, Matthew Monteiro, Joe Pires, Jason Chisholm, Suzanne Tseki.

District Members Absent: None.

Union Members Present: Sharon Hartley, Chairperson, Anne Fernandes, Nichole Daniel, April Nye, Robin Rounseville, Christine Marcolini, Karin Barrows, Tiffini Reedy and Carly Lavin,

Union Members Absent: None.

Other Staff Members Present: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools, Diana Russo, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Administrative Team, staff members, parents, community members and members of the press.

Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Chairperson Burke of the ORR School Committee and Chairperson Hartley of the Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT:

Chairperson Burke made the following statement:

“As Chairs, Ms. Hartley and I would like to open with a few words for the committee. Let’s be clear about what our mission is here tonight, we are here to weigh risk, we need to decide what kind of risk and how much risk we feel is appropriate for our school committee, because every action, every decision even doing nothing has inherited risk. So before we get into this discussion, we want to be sure that everyone understands there is unlikely to be any perfect solution. We will determine the next step forward in these difficult times to be best of our abilities, that is all we can do and nothing here is absolutely final, the situation will continue to evolve and we may have to revisit our decisions. Furthermore, we are here to discuss one issue, the policy around masks in ORR Schools, any decision or non-decision here will not return these to “normal” whatever that word even means, it will not make COVID go away and there will still be layers of mitigation measures in our schools. No matter what the committee decides tonight, forms of anxiety will persist, disappointments will happen, learning will be hard, life will be taxing and inconveniences will abound. This is the hard work of everyday life, there are no magic wands. What will happen tonight, we hope is that we work to ensure and continue to be an incredible committee and community that rallies around our schools, that we will remember all of the lessons we teach children on kindness and make sure to model that behavior ourselves. Risk feels risky so it tends to elicit an emotional response, but tonight we want to remember that we all share a common goal, to find the best way forward for our schools. All of us have demonstrated that we serve on volunteers on this committee in order to strive toward that common goal, we ask everyone to respect each other here tonight as we do at our other meetings and recognize that we are trying to work through a complex situation.

To the public we ask the same, the members of this committee and the administration have selflessly put countless hours working to make our schools a nurturing and vigorous academic environment in order to help Tri-Town children discover their best self. This committee deserves your respect, no matter how much you agree or disagree with decisions it makes and we expect you to give to them.

As always, we want to receive public input, we have a policy on public comment which Ms. Hartley is going to cover now.

Chairperson Hartley read the BEDH Policy - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS in full.

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires citizens of the District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear public comment.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority.

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

- 1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. The public comment segment shall not exceed 15 minutes. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner. (Ms. Hartley indicated that the Chairs of the committee extended this 30 minutes for this meeting only)*
- 2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and city/town. The presiding Chairperson may permit extension of this time limit, in extenuating circumstances.*
- 3. Topics for discussion must be limited to those items listed on the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of the School Committee authority.*
- 4. The chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate speech which is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless conduct, or contains obscenities.*
- 5. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the School Committee.*
- 6. Sign up instructions will be provided by Chairperson Burke in just a moment.*

Ms. Burke expressed that in addition to the policy the Chairs would like to request that to make the most of this time that we have for public comment please do not repeat the same messages as speakers before you; if we as Chairs deem that new comments are not being made we will end public comment; all comments need to be respectfully made and the chairs may rescind the right of the speaker if their language is inappropriate. As we are an educational entity, if you site facts, please

site your sources either in your comment or in the chat and if you are quoting people please share their full names, positions and affiliations.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Nelson expressed that he will reserve most of his comments for the general agenda, however he wanted to thank this committee for their guidance throughout the pandemic and also for their help in terms of navigating the process that we are implementing tonight, in terms of talking about the future of masking in our schools beyond February 28th. Mr. Nelson also wanted to thank the many, many parents, guardians and caregivers who took the time to either call me directly to have conversations, to email me and share their thoughts and also thank the over 2,000 people who took the time to respond to our survey that was issued to parents, guardians, caregivers and staff members. He expressed that we value everyone's input and it was great to hear so many voices that will help informed decision making tonight. Thank you Chairpersons Burke and Hartley for the opportunity to provide opening remarks.

OPEN COMMENTS SECTION:

The following citizens of the Tri-Town made open comments.

Alison Costa – Mattapoisett: Ms. Costa was wondering if the survey results would be shared prior to the vote. Chairperson Burke apologized for not covering this before and expressed that during open comment session questions could not be answered, she expressed that any questions such as this should be directed to the superintendent's office. Ms. Burke did however say that the school committee would be having a comprehensive conversation on this topic and that committee members have received information about the survey.

Richard Reilly – Mattapoisett: Mr. Reilly expressed the following: When I was on in September I shared that we spent a lot of money as a cooperation to have our scientists come in and test our masks and we proved that it doesn't work, so to this point, I just want you to know should the vote go past this point on continuing the masks based on no science, we are forming this organization to come at this on a more official basis, we are going to file a claim, this mask has to end, I have a granddaughter whose having migraines, I have two grandsons who are having breathing problems, we brought in a specialist, we offered the scientific data, nobody accepted so it's time for it to come to an end. Thank you.

Sara Bernier – Rochester: Ms. Bernier expressed the following: Hi everyone, I live over in Rochester and I have one kiddo at RMS and two younger ones that will eventually be there, I reached out to all the committee members and I thank you for your service and I know that you can't make everybody happy, however my standpoint comes from a medical perspective, I work in the medical field, I've been dealing with COVID for the last two years, we are lucky we live in a state that has an exceptionally high vaccination rate, the numbers have been tremendously dropping and in my opinion no reasonable person would continue to mandate masks, as I said in my email to the board members, in my opinion what goes hand in hand with unmasking and allowing parents to make a decision for their children is also respecting those who continue to wear a mask, no judgement, teaching our children that, people can mask if they want to mask, and they should if they are in a protective population or live with relatives, my children live with elderly parents, but at this point luckily we are in a state that is in really good condition, the virus is never going to go away, this will be with us forever, they will have us booster every year, and we have to go onto the next stage which is to allow our children to interact normally and to get back to some sense of normal. The only other thing I was wondering about is the survey data and how that's used.

John Miller – Marion: Mr. Miller expressed the following: Good evening everyone, I have three children at Sippican School, all three were involved in SAIL, so knowing that they were not required to be masked, the point of extensive, external testing requirements, we have our own direct evidence

based on what happened at SAIL this summer as the infection rate varies between having everyone required to be masked versus not masked, so I would suggest that we go look at the information from SAIL, with the number of kids that were involved in that and say how effective are masks. Thank you.

Amy Carlson – Rochester: Ms. Carlson expressed the following: I have two of my daughters over at RMS, my information comes from an email that I just received today as a state employee, just changing our mask advisory throughout the commonwealth, which I think says a lot and I'm quoting from the Department of Public Health "please be advised, effective today the Department of Public Health has amended its' mask advisory as it applies to any indoor space. DPH now only advises that a fully vaccinated person should wear a mask or face covering when indoors if you have a weakened immune system or if you are at an increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlining medical condition or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at risk for increased disease or unvaccinated. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated are encouraged to wear masks indoors". I share that with everyone, given the fact that working for the state, that this is the position that the entire state has taken, and then just kind of going back and circling to Charlie Baker when he made his announcement about the plan to end the mask mandate as of February 28th and citing that the numbers were really low infection rate, I believe it was around 1% for students and 1.3% for teachers. So at that point if we are going to be following the science the entire way through since it's telling us that it's safe and comfortable for our children.

Misty King – Rochester: Ms. King expressed the following: Hello Good Evening, thank you everyone for your service and I'm sure this isn't an easy night for everyone. But I just wanted to bring to the attention of the school committee and the administration and residents here that the policy that was approved by the Joint School Committee on September 24, 2020, I won't read the entire policy, but there is one thing that stands out. "students in Grades 1 and below are exempt from this policy although they are encouraged to wear face coverings when possible". It also states that it is not necessary for a mask to be worn during gym class. So I'm not sure if students in grades in 1 and under have been wearing masks this whole time and if so and they been exempt, how come? And also the legal reference for this policy is based on the governor's order number 31, which has long expired, so I don't know if there was another update that was used or an amendment. To those who have students in grades 1 and under maybe just take a peek at the policy and ask if they really need to wear it. Thank you.

Tara Tracey – Marion: Ms. Tracey expressed the following: Hi I'm a mom of two and also a registered nurse, I'm not going to continue to cite the studies that everyone has cited but the fact that our Governor and our State have dropped the mandate should be enough for this committee to understand that masks are not needed and that they harming and not helping our children. I think we know what we need to do and you have not heard one person here to try to vote otherwise I think you should hear the Town, hear the State and what your health officials are telling us.

Alison Ward - Mattapoisett: Ms. Ward expressed the following: Hi I'm a senior at the High School and I just want to say that I'm the youngest member of a multi-generational home, I live with my parents and also my mom's mom who is quite severely immunity compromised and so this whole pandemic has been slightly terrifying trying not to bring anything home to her. And from what I've seen up at the High School really no one seems to mind masks, they are just really the easiest thing that we've been able to do to prevent the spread of virus and as far as I know from talking to others including staff it's an easy thing to do to protect others because I would probably be fine if I got but if I brought it home it would be an issue, so just try to think about others and what they need more than what you need.

Rhonda Baptiste – Rochester: Ms. Baptiste expressed the following: I have a 6th grader at RMS and although the numbers have decreased rapidly we are still looking at 13% positivity rate for Rochester which is quite high, so I'm looking forward to having kids safely remove their masks, however I think we need to wait just a little bit longer, because there are kids as Ally just so eloquently said who live with people who immunity compromised who this virus would be detrimental to and we all want it to be choice, but at the end of the day if everyone wears a mask everyone is just a little bit safer, and so if we just hang on a little bit more until the numbers get a little bit better, it would be safer for those who live in this community.

Noelle Stork – Marion: Ms. Stork expressed the following: Good Evening everyone and thank you very much for allowing us the opportunity to speak, everything that I feel has pretty much been said but I just wanted to piggy back that we really do need to lift this mandate, we got an email today indicating the Jay McGrail is lifting the mandate for all the municipal buildings in Town, everyone around us is lifting the mandate and for some reason the schools are the only ones that are hesitate to do it, it's time to lift this mandate, if folks feel uncomfortable with that than they can continue to wear their masks.

Karen Thomas – Rochester: Ms. Thomas expressed the following: I'm a retired nurse and I really feel like I really wanted to add on when that last person spoke, along with a lot of people in Town removing the mandates, there are currently 42 schools in Massachusetts where no masking will be done for children, so it's time to let it go, as I said I'm a retire nurse, I know about masks, the masks do not work, the contamination, the cross contamination is out of control, you're really spreading it more, let the children be children please, it just makes me so sad to see.

Vanessa Everett – Marion: Ms. Everett expressed the following: Everybody has spoke beautifully this evening, I really appreciate everybody's comments and I respect everybody's views, but it is time to unmask. It's an express less world here and I'm also seeing the effects of what it's doing to my daughter and because the other 42 schools have lifted the mandate it's just time that we give students the choice to wear them.

Rebecca Davenport - Rochester: Ms. Davenport expressed the following: Hi everyone I have a son in 4th grade who attends RMS my husband is also a teacher in a different district, and I just wanted to use my voice for the opposite side. So in 2020 when this public emergency started there were public policies that were put in place with specific criteria in order to unmask, vaccination status was one of them and in order to de-mask in schools the vaccination had to be at 80%, right now the vaccination rates are at 40%, so I live in a fully vaccinated house including my son, so if we unmask how do I protect my son who has done everything we've needed to do in order to protect ourselves and everybody else, how do I protect him. So I'm hoping that the committee takes into consideration what the vaccination rates are at each school. And we talk about all the psychological effect of masks on children, but what about the psychological effects of children who experience loss due to COVID, so I just wanted to speak for the voice to continue masking for just a little bit longer until the COVID and flu season is over. We can't use data from the summer the virus doesn't behave the same.

Greg Hardy – Rochester: Mr. Hardy expressed the following: I have two kids at RMS, basically definitely time to get rid of the masks, you guys have been following the DESE guidelines since the start so now the DESE guidelines say to get rid of the masks, so it's time to get rid of them. I don't think the masks really worked and if the people are vaccinated what are you so worried about? They can still wear a mask and that's fine if kids want to wear them they can it's optional and the ones that don't want to wear them don't have to. It's time to follow the guidelines still. It's time.

Kristen Bobriewicki – Rochester: Ms. Bobriewicki expressed the following: I have two daughters at RMS, I have a second grader and a kindergartener and I'm here in particular to talk about my kindergartener because she has been masked ½ of her life and it's very unfortunate, I very much support us removing these masks so that our children can get back to some form of normality. I can tell you personally that there is no way these masks are working for my children because I see how they actually use them, especially my five-year-old, most of the time it ends up in her mouth, so I think she's spreading more germs with the mask than without the mask, that's my own opinion on that one and I absolutely support other parents if they want to keep a mask on their children.

Kristin Canto – Marion: Ms. Canto expressed the following: Hi I just want to echo what she just said, I have two kids at Sippican, my son is 7 years old and he had to do his graduation from preschool in a drive by in his car because COVID first came out at that point and from then he's been masked his whole school career. My daughter is 12 and she's autistic and she has a lot of social issues and the mask has made her take many step back because she can't see her peers faces, she can't see if people are smiling at her, she can't see how people are reacting to her, I am personally immune compromised and I respect everyone's opinion if they want to continue to mask to protect people in their household but I have seen what this has done to my children emotionally and psychologically and it is absolutely heartbreaking and these cloth masks they don't do anything, science is proving that and I think it should be lifted at this point.

Courtney Soares – Marion: Ms. Soares expressed the following: I have three children, two who attend Sippican, I'm also a registered nurse, I'm just here to use my voice, me and my family we support lifting the mask mandate, I think it's important that by lifting the mask mandate we are not taking away the option to use masks and that's going to be the way to protect those who are immunity compromised along with their families the option is still there, but we need to get back to some kind of normalcy.

Ms. Hartley thanked everyone for their comments.

V. General

A. Review Recent DESE Guidance/Face Coverings

First, I would like to start with a summary of the recently released memorandum titled Update of DESE Mask Requirement issued by Commissioner Jeffrey Riley on February 9, 2022. Within this issued memorandum Commissioner Riley shared that after consulting with medical experts and state health officials – that he will not renew the state mask requirement that is currently in place after it expires on February 28, 2022 and that it should be considered lifted. It should be noted that per federal order – individuals must continue to mask on school buses and in school health offices. Furthermore, the memorandum strongly recommends that students and staff members continue to follow the DESE-DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios and recommend that unvaccinated individuals consider continued masking. The memorandum emphasizes that individuals should be fully supported with their masking choice. Commissioner Riley cites the Commonwealth's high vaccination rates and widespread availability of COVID-19 testing for school personnel and students as the basis for his decision. In closing, DESE continues to endorse a layered approach to mitigate the spread of the virus in schools' settings. Regarding our schools' layered approach to mitigate the spread of the virus – we will continue to do the following:

- implement and follow the most current DESE-DPH Protocols for Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios*

- utilize social distancing strategies in our classrooms, cafeterias and other spaces*
- operate our air purifiers and maintain our air quality and HVAC standards*
- make PPE available to individuals as needed and appropriate*

-continue our participation in the statewide COVID-19 testing program (this means home testing for those who opted-in and symptomatic testing as needed)
-we follow outside of school contact quarantining requirements, but no longer conduct in-school contact tracing
-we encourage good hand hygiene practices, and
-most importantly message and encourage individuals to stay home when sick and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms

Our schools' current vaccination rates are as follows (this means individuals who have received the one shot Johnson or Johnson vaccination or the two shot Moderna or Pfizer vaccination):

Center School

Staff – 85%

Students – 37%

Total Building – 46%

Old Hammondtown School

Staff – 95%

Students -55%

Total Building – 62%

Rochester Memorial School

Staff – 72%

Students – 35%

Total Building – 40%

Sippican School

Staff – 62%

Students – 44%

Total Building – 47%

Junior High School

Staff – 85%

Students – 61%

Total Building – 64%

High School

Staff (includes food services, custodial, central office) – 89%

Students – 72%

Total Building – 75%

Our system-wide vaccination rate is currently 57.8%. Next, I'd like to share with you our current number of COVID-19 positive cases as of the close of school today:

Center School – 0

Old Hammondtown School - 0

Rochester Memorial School – 1

Sippican School – 0

Junior High School – 2

High School – 1

This means there are 4 active positive cases system-wide. As for other agency positions the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association – known commonly as the MIAA recently announced that they will align to the DESE mask requirement update, beginning on February 28, 2022. They will adhere to the host school and venue-specific restrictions for competitions and local schools are expected to communicate their protocols to their opponents. EEC – or the Department of Early Education and Care continues to follow an advisory on mask wearing – that aligns with the

recent DESE guidance. It is important to note that our preschool programs are DESE programs because they are housed and operated by our school districts and are not licensed by EEC. I've also consulted with our local health officials regarding masking in our schools moving forward. Although there is caution about shifting from the current model of universal masking –there was general support for aligning with the most recent guidance. All health officials recommended a continued use of layered mitigation strategies and to recognize that no decision is permanent and that if guidance or trends were to change – we should reassess the situation accordingly. Mr. Craig Davidson, Director of Student Services shared the results from the Mask/Face Covering Input Survey (please see attached)

After listening to Mr. Nelson's comments and also hearing the survey presentation, the Old Rochester Regional School Committee and the Massachusetts Union #55 School Committee had a lengthy, robust, educated and respectful discussion regarding the recently release guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about the mask requirement in Massachusetts Schools effective February 28th. During the discussion all school committee members shared their opinions, some believed that students and staff should start to follow the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, others thought we should wait a couple of weeks until after February vacation to stop the mask requirement. The School Committee members took this task very seriously and after three votes, one from the Massachusetts Union #55 and two from the Old Rochester Regional School Committee, the Joint School Committee ultimately made the decision to follow the DESE Guidance effective February 28, 2022 and rescind policy EBCFA Face Coverings Policy for all staff and students for schools in Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester.

1st Round of Votes

Motion to rescind Policy EBCFA Face Coverings Policy and to follow the Guidance from DESE that came out on February 9th

Union, Ms. Nye

District, Ms. Tseki

Union, Ms. Daniel

District, Mr. Pires

ROLL CALL-Union (Fernandes: yes, Daniel: yes, Hartley: yes, Rounseville: no, Nye: yes, Lavin: yes, Marcolini: yes, Reedy: yes, Barrows: yes)

ROLL CALL-District (Tseki (1.10): yes, Chisholm (1.00): no, Monteiro (.95): no, Muse (1.00): no, Smith (1.00): no, McSweeney (.90): no, Kearns (1.10): no, Burke (.90): no, Pires (.95): yes)

MOTION ONLY PASSED ON THE UNION SIDE

The school committee members had further discussion about the motion to better understand the specifics of the motion and discussed further what this would mean for the school district. The same motion was made on the Old Rochester Regional School Committee side and a roll call was done.

2nd Round of Votes for the ORR Side

Motion to rescind Policy EBCFA Face Coverings Policy and to follow the Guidance from DESE that came out on February 9th

District, Ms. Tseki

District, Ms. McSweeney

ROLL CALL-District Tseki (1.10): yes, Chisholm (1.00): yes, Monteiro (.95): yes, Muse (1.00): yes, Smith (1.00): no, McSweeney (.90): yes, Kearns (1.10): yes, Burke (.90): no, Pires (.95): yes)

MOTION PASSED with a 7.00 points per the weigh voting system

Chairperson Burke expressed that the current policy has been rescinded and at this point both committees are in unison.

Superintendent Nelson thanked both School Committees for their hard work and expressed that he would continue to keep them updated on guidance and would also continue to work with local health officials. Mr. Nelson also reported that per DESE guidelines masks would still be worn on school buses, in health offices and 5 days after children being quarantining.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 10:04 p.m.

District, Mr. Muse

Union, Ms. Nye

District, Ms. Smith

Union, Ms. Daniel

ROLL CALL-District (Tseki: yes, Chisholm: yes, Monteiro: yes, Muse: yes, Smith: yes, McSweeney: yes, Kearns: yes, Burke: yes, Pires: yes)

ROLL CALL-Union (Fernandes: yes, Daniel: yes, Hartley: yes, Rounseville: yes, Nye: yes, Lavin: yes, Marcolini: yes, Reedy: yes, Barrows: yes)

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MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55
February 15, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

Zoom link:

<https://oldrochester-org.zoom.us/j/93298016078?pwd=bFFqMzIzbWt2eTNsUG5qUjRBamc4Zz09>

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

MEETING TO ORDER

RECOGNITION

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

OPEN COMMENTS

- I. Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Regular Minutes: NONE
 - 2. Executive Session Minutes: NONE
- II. Old Business
- III. Agenda Items Pending
- IV. Special Topic Report
- V. **General**
 - A. **Review Recent DESE Guidance/Face Coverings**
- VI. **New Business**
 - A. Curriculum
 - B. Business
 - C. Personnel
 - D. **Policy Review**
- VII. School Committee
 - A. Reorganization (Union #55 Only)
- VIII. Future Business
 - A. Timeline
 - B. Future Agenda Items
- IX. Open Comments
- X. Information
- XI. Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT

**JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
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MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55**

TO: Old Rochester Regional District School Committee and Massachusetts School Superintendency Union #55

FROM: Michael S. Nelson, Superintendent of Schools

DATE: February 11, 2022

SUBJECT: Agenda Items

The following items are on the agenda of February 15, 2022

V. General

A. Review Recent DESE Guidance/Face Coverings Recommendation

That the School Committees review the most recent guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please refer to “JSC 02152022 DESE Guidance”.

VI. New Business

D. Policy Review Recommendation:

That the school committee review the EBCFA Face Coverings Policy per the recent guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please refer to “JSC 02152022 EBCFA Policy”.

VIII. Future Business

A. Timeline

The next meeting of the Joint School Committee will be held as follows:

Joint School Committee

April 28, 2022 @ 6:30 p.m.

- ❖ Budget Update (April)
- ❖ Approval of School Committee Dates (April)
- ❖ Professional Development Plan Approval (April)
- ❖ Superintendent’s End of Year Evaluation (June 2022)

If you have any questions regarding any of these recommendations please feel free to call me.

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6. Sign up instructions will be provided for those who wish to participate in Public Comment.

LEGAL REFS:

M.G.L. 30A: 18-25

CROSS REFS: BE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS, BEC EXECUTIVE SESSIONS, BEDA NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS, BEDB AGENDA FORMAT.

Approved by the Joint School Committees on January 20, 2022



Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents, Charter School Leaders, Assistant Superintendents,
Collaborative Leaders, and Leaders of Approved Special Education Schools
From: Jeffrey C. Riley, Commissioner
Date: February 9, 2022
Subject: Update on DESE Mask Requirement

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.



Joint School Committee Meeting

Mask/Face Covering Input Survey Results

February 15, 2022

Old Rochester Regional School District
MA Superintendency Union # 55

Contents



Current Confirmed Cases



**Mask/Face Covering Input
Survey Results**



Individual School Vaccination Rates



Current Confirmed Cases:



Current Confirmed Positive Cases In Isolation

- Center School - 0
- Old Hammondtown School - 0
- Rochester Memorial School - 1
- Sippican Elementary School - 0
- Old Rochester Regional Junior High School - 2
- Old Rochester Regional High School - 1

Total - 4 Active Positive Cases System-Wide

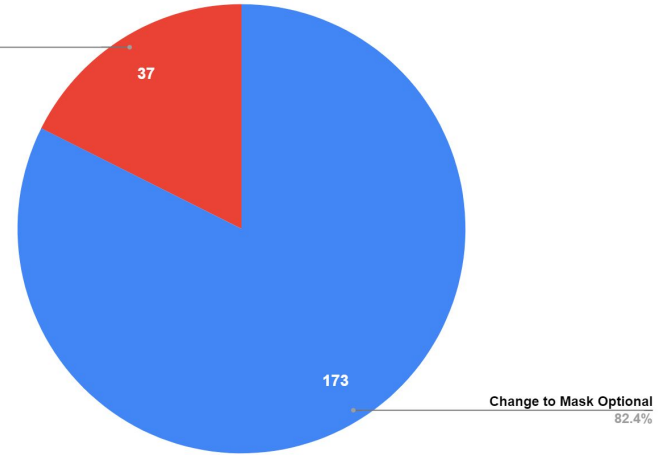


Mask/Face Covering Input Survey Results:

Center School Survey Results

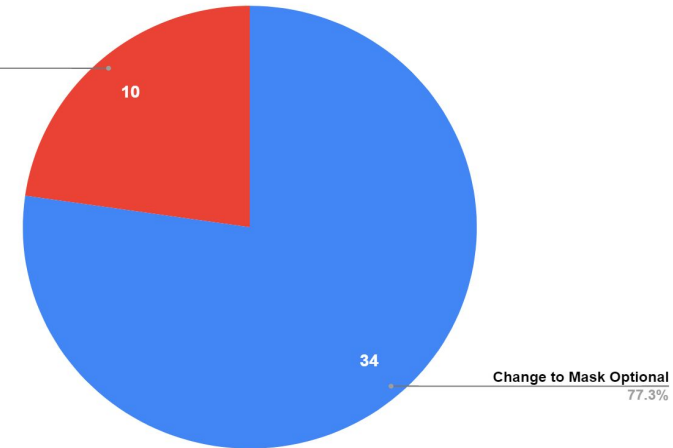
Center School Parent/Guardian Responses

Remain the Same
17.6%



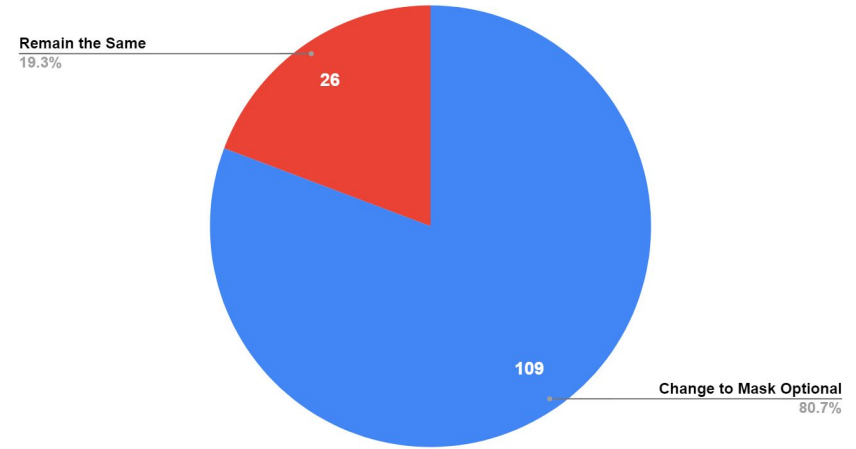
Center School Staff Responses

Remain the Same
22.7%

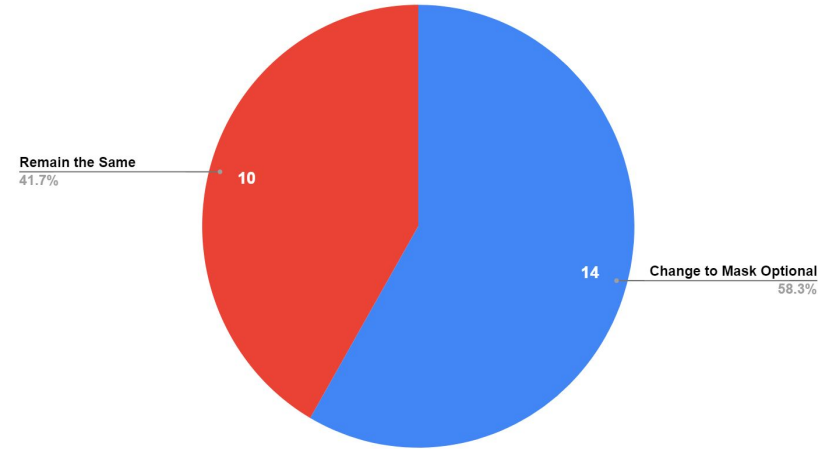


OHS Survey Results

Old Hammondtown Parent/Guardian Responses

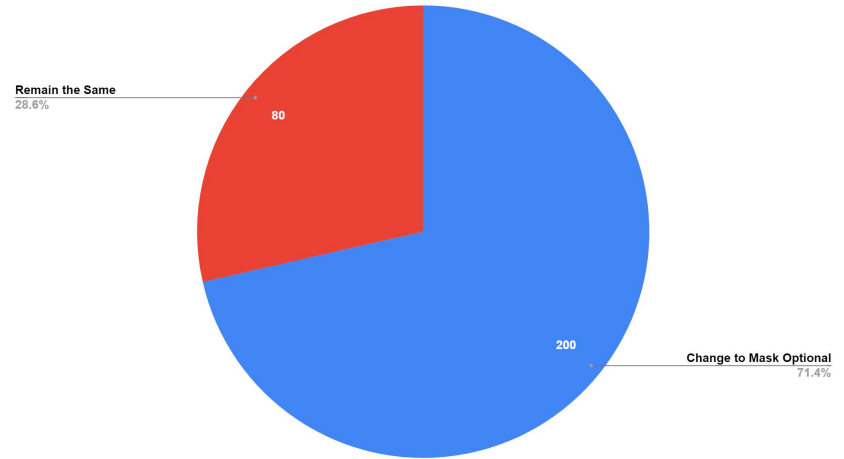


Old Hammondtown School Staff Responses

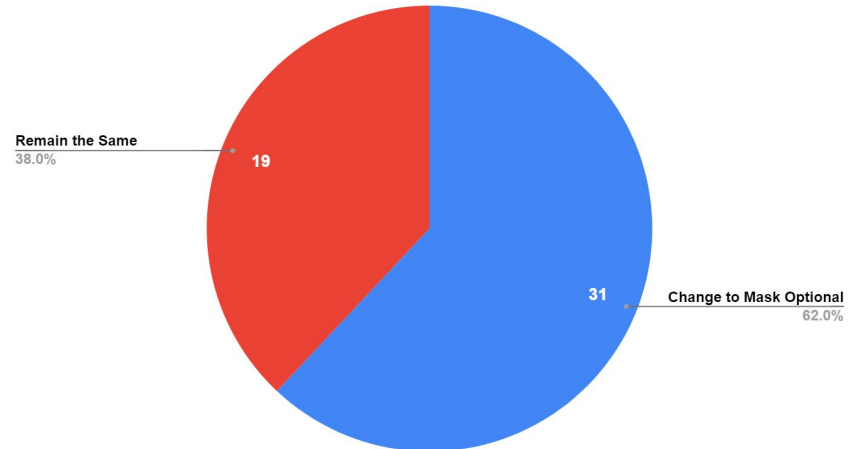


Sippican Survey Results

Sippican Elementary Parent/Guardian Responses

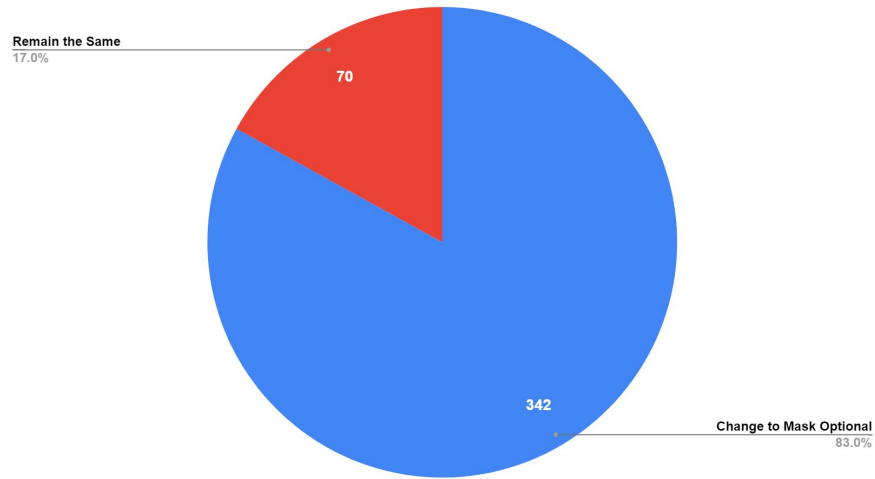


Sippican Elementary School Staff Responses

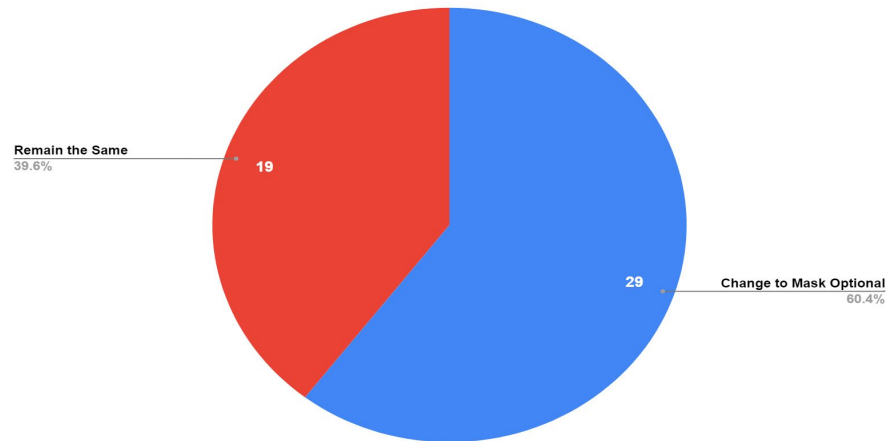


RMS Survey Results

Rochester Memorial Parent/Guardian Responses



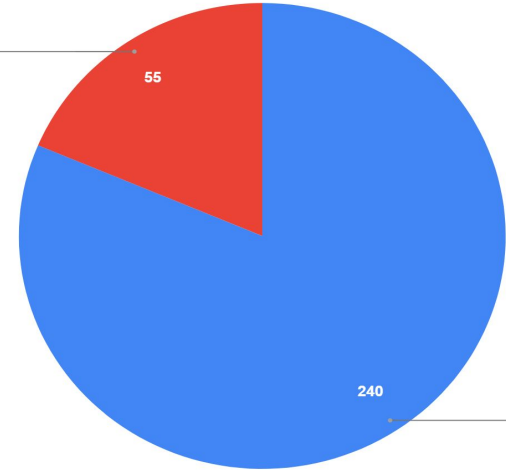
Rochester Memorial School Staff Responses



ORRJHS Survey Results

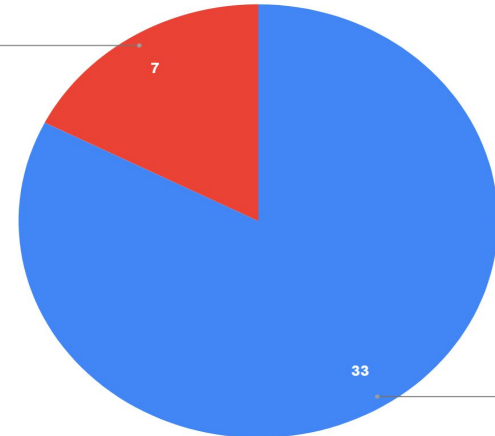
Old Rochester Regional Junior High School Parent/Guardian Responses

Remain the Same
18.6%



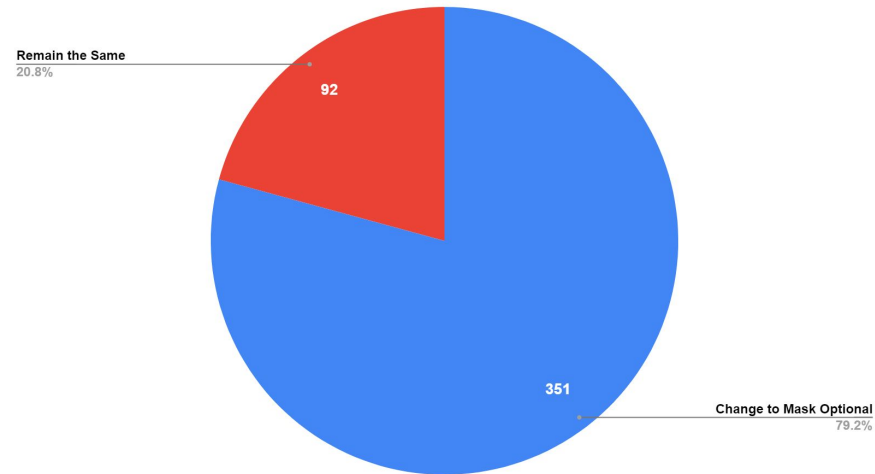
Old Rochester Regional Junior High School Staff Responses

Remain the Same
17.5%

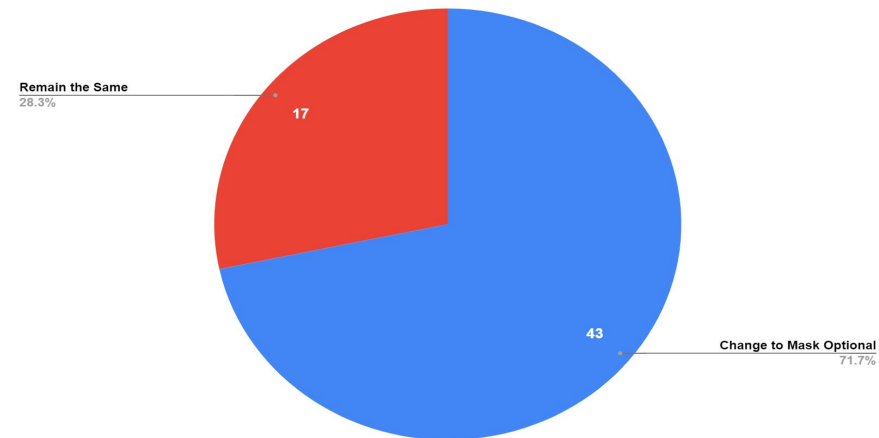


ORRHS Survey Results

Old Rochester Regional High School Parent/Guardian Responses

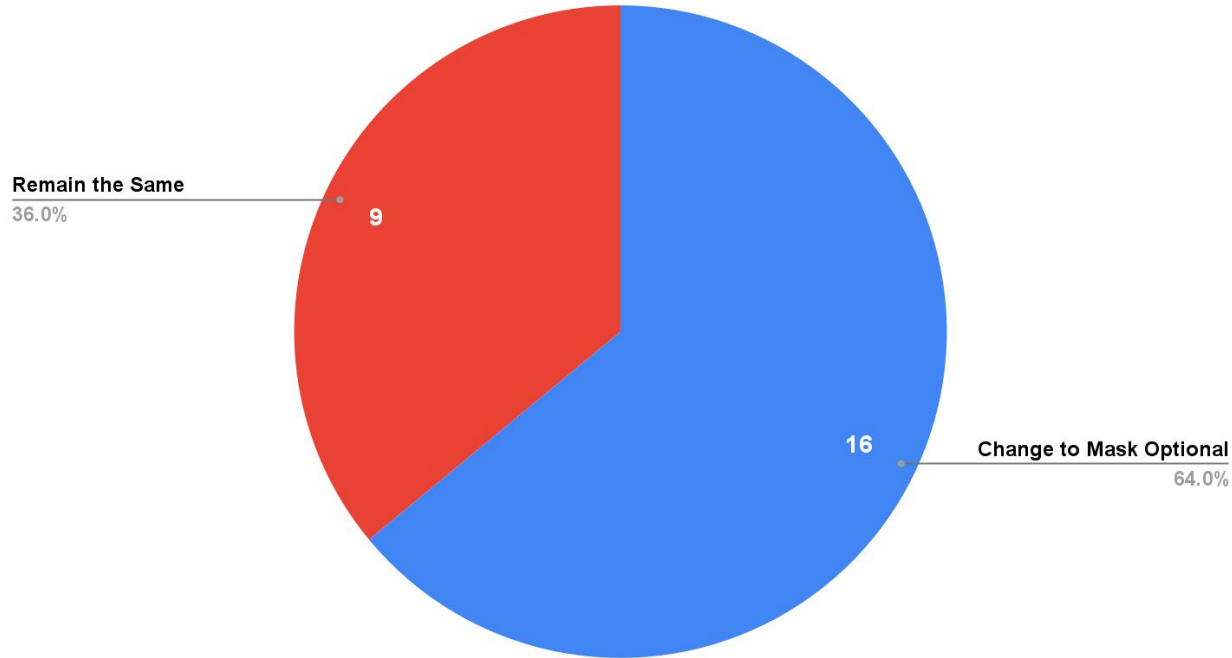


Old Rochester Regional High School Staff Responses



District Staff Members (Multiple Buildings):

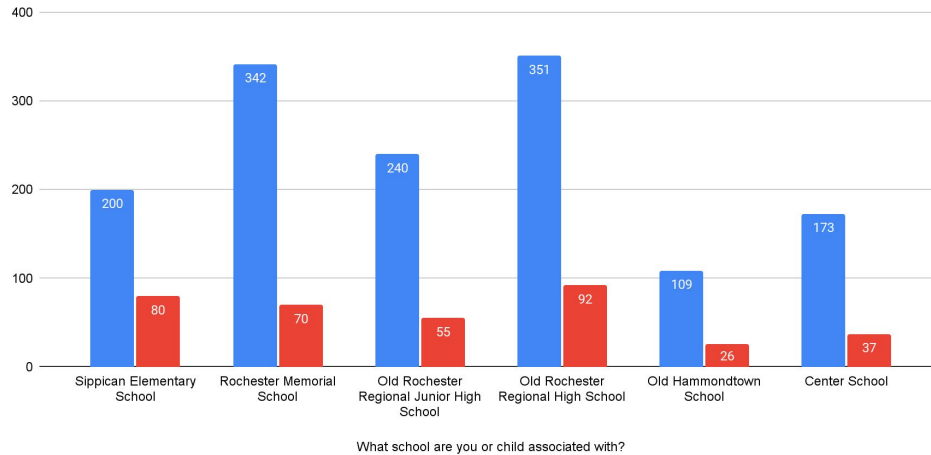
District Staff



Parent/Guardian Responses - 1775

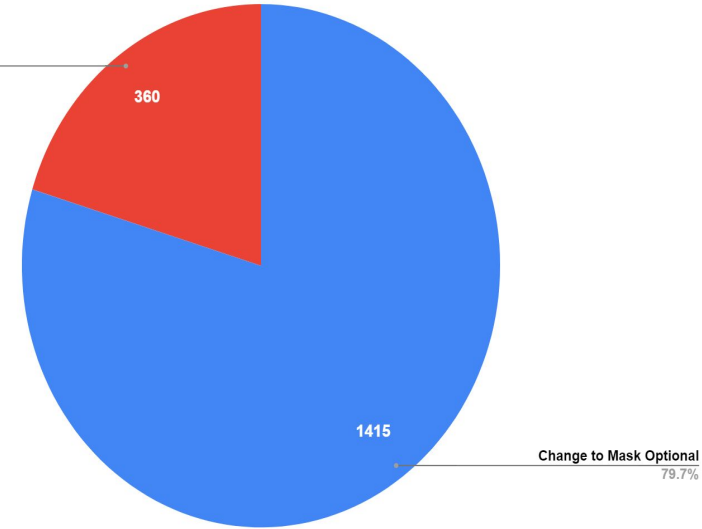
Parent/Guardian Responses - In my opinion, the masking policy should:

- Change - to mask optional (except where mandated by state or federal regulations) per the latest guidance
- Remain the same - fully masked at all times when indoors



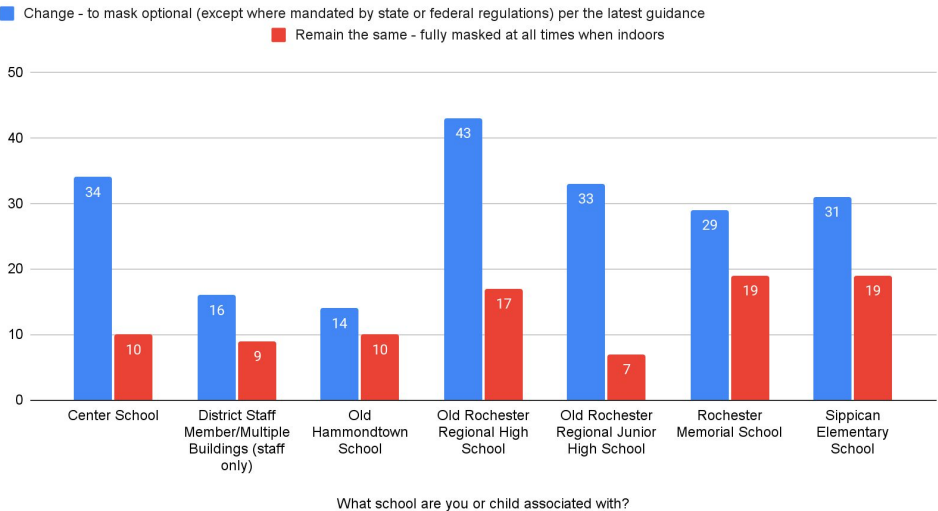
District Wide Parent/Guardian Responses

Remain the Same
20.3%

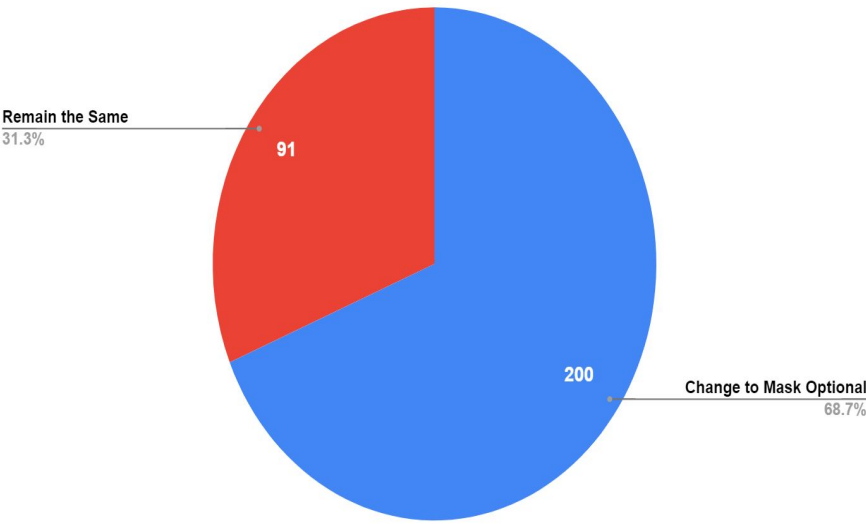


Staff Responses 291

Staff Responses - In my opinion, the masking policy should:

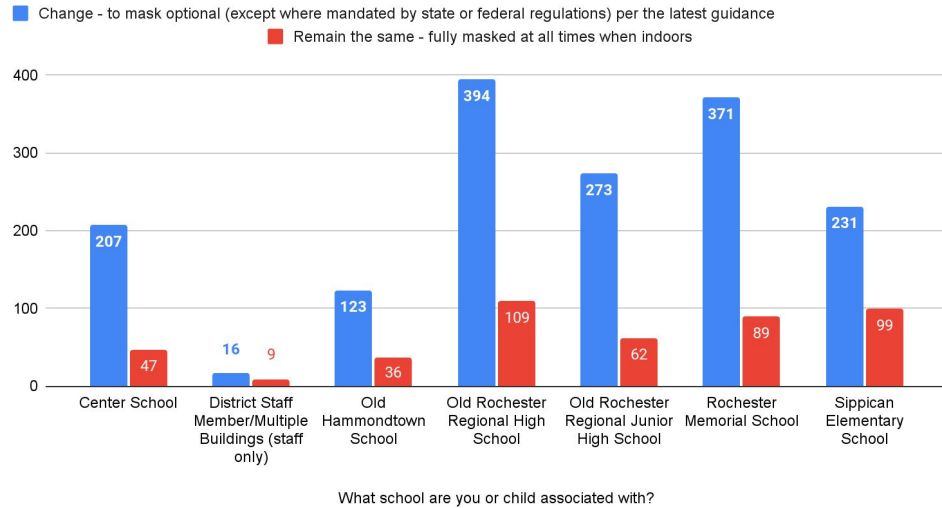


Distict Wide Staff Responses

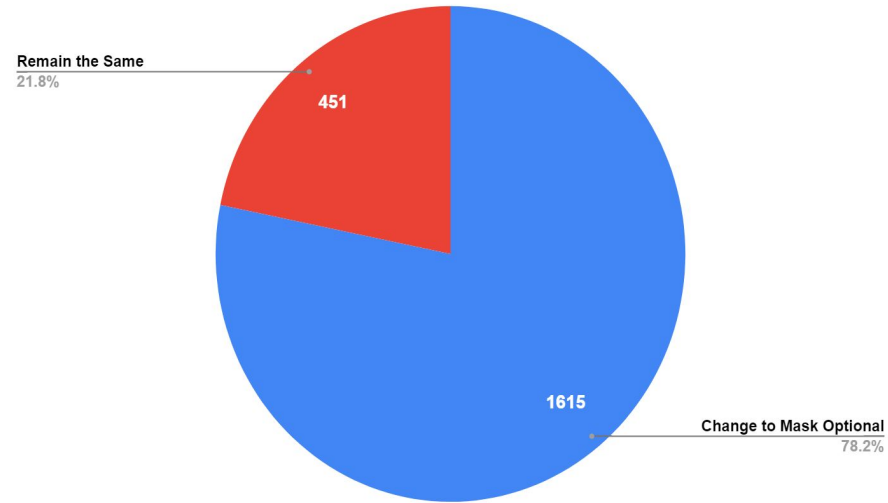


District Wide Responses - 2066

Building Total Responses - In my opinion, the masking policy should:



Distict Wide Responses



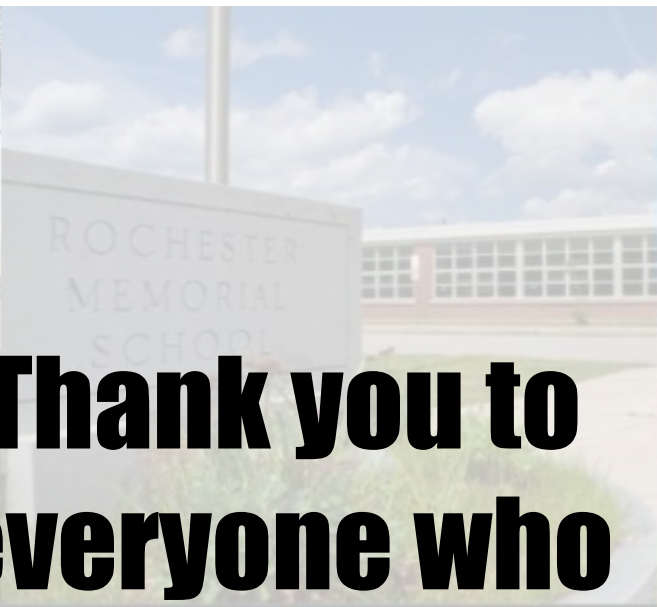


Individual School Vaccination Rates



Current Vaccination Rates by School

- **Center School**
 - Staff - 85%
 - Students - 37%
 - Whole Building - 46%
- **Old Hammondtown School**
 - Staff - 95%
 - Students - 55%
 - Whole Building - 62%
- **Rochester Memorial School**
 - Staff - 72%
 - Students - 35%
 - Whole Building - 40%
- **Sippican Elementary School**
 - Staff - 62%
 - Students - 44%
 - Whole Building - 47%
- **Old Rochester Regional Junior High School**
 - Staff - 85%
 - Students - 61%
 - Whole Building - 64%
- **Old Rochester Regional High School**
 - Staff (Includes Food services, Custodial Staff, Central Office) - 89%
 - Students - 72%
 - Whole Building - 75%



**Thank you to
everyone who
participated.**



MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



To: MIAA Membership
From: Dr. Robert Baldwin, Executive Director
Re: MIAA Masking Guidelines
Date: February 11, 2022

Interscholastic athletics are an integral component of the educational program within our schools. Throughout this school year, the MIAA mask guidelines have been in lockstep with the protocols that take place during the school day.

To remain consistent with the DESE mask requirement update, beginning February 28, 2022, the MIAA mask-wearing protocols will end. Moving forward as we navigate the winter Statewide Tournament, we will adhere to host school and venue-specific restrictions. Member schools will need to communicate with and respect the specific protocols set forth at the local level. Anyone who chooses to wear a mask may continue to do so.

As we have learned throughout this ordeal, we will continue to monitor facts that we receive to inform future decision-making. I would like to commend the perseverance and understanding of all stakeholders as you have attempted to adhere to the arduous task of masking guidelines during this winter athletic season.

EDUCATIONAL ATHLETICS

MIAA | 33 Forge Pkwy | Franklin, MA 02038 | 508-541-7997



EBCFA FACE COVERINGS

The Old Rochester Regional School District and the Massachusetts School Superintendency Union # 55 is committed to providing a safe environment as schools reopen during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to public health experts, one of the best ways to stop the spread of coronavirus and to keep members of our school community safe is the use of face masks or face coverings. Therefore, in accordance with guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), the following requirements are in place until further notice.

A face covering that covers the nose and mouth must be worn by all individuals in school buildings, on school grounds and on school transportation, even when social distancing is observed. Students in grades 1 and below are exempt from this policy although they are encouraged to wear face coverings when possible.

Individuals may be excused from the requirement for the following list of reasons, per CDC guidance:

The individual:

- has trouble breathing;
- is unconscious;
- is incapacitated;
- cannot remove the mask or face covering without assistance.

In addition, masks or face coverings will not be required for anyone who has a medical, behavioral or other challenge making it unsafe to wear a face mask or face covering. A written note from a physician is required for a requested exemption. Parents may not excuse their child from the face mask requirement by signing a waiver.

Additionally, face masks or face coverings will not be required when appropriate social distancing is enforced as directed by staff members:

- during mask breaks;
- while eating or drinking;
- during physical education classes;
- while outside.

Exceptions to this policy under certain circumstances, such as for students with medical, behavioral or other challenges who are unable to wear masks, must be approved by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse or local Board of Health.

A student's mask or face covering is to be provided by the student's family. Staff members are responsible for providing their own face coverings. However, the district will supply disposable face coverings for individuals who arrive at a building, or board school transportation, without one. Student face coverings must align with building dress codes (obscene, profane language or pictures on clothing or jewelry, or clothing that advertises or promotes alcohol, drugs, or illegal activities should not be worn to school).

If students are in violation of this policy, the building principal will consult with the parent/guardians to determine whether an exception is appropriate, or the student may be referred to the remote learning model, until such time as they can comply with the requirement or the requirement is lifted.

Violations of this policy by staff will be handled in the same manner as other violations of School Committee policy.

Visitors in violation of this policy will be denied entry to the school/district facility.

This policy will remain in place until rescinded by the School Committee.

LEGAL REF.: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, COVID-19 Order No. 31 -

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/may-1-2020-masks-and-face-coverings/download>

REFS.: Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Considerations for Wearing Masks -

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - Reopening Guidelines - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/>

Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Mask Up MA! -

<https://www.mass.gov/news/mask-up-ma>

Approved by the Joint School Committee on September 24, 2020

SOURCE: MASC - August 2020

EMERGENCY MEETING
OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION NO. 55
Marion, Mattapoisett, and Rochester, Massachusetts

TO: Town Clerk, Town of Marion, Massachusetts
Town Clerk, Town of Mattapoisett, Massachusetts
Town Clerk, Town of Rochester, Massachusetts
DATE: February 11, 2022
SUBJECT: Meeting Notice

Pursuant to Chapter 30A of the General Laws, you are notified of the following SPECIAL/EMERGENCY joint meeting of the **OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE and the MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55.**

Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Please see attached agenda. This meeting will be held remotely using zoom. Please refer to the zoom information below.

<https://oldrochester-org.zoom.us/j/93298016078?pwd=bFFqMzIzbWt2eTNsUG5qUjRBamc4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 932 9801 6078

Passcode: 985778

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 508-758-2772 ext. 1956.

Respectfully submitted,
Diana Russo
Secretary to the Superintendent

**EMERGENCY MEETING
JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OLD ROCHESTER REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY UNION #55
February 15, 2022 – 7:00 p.m.**

Zoom link:

<https://oldrochester-org.zoom.us/j/93298016078?pwd=bFFqMzIzbWt2eTNsUG5qUjRBamc4Zz09>

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

MEETING TO ORDER

RECOGNITION

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

OPEN COMMENTS

- I. Consent Agenda
 - A. Approval of Minutes
 - 1. Regular Minutes: NONE
 - 2. Executive Session Minutes: NONE
- II. Old Business
- III. Agenda Items Pending
- IV. Special Topic Report
- V. **General**
 - A. **Review Recent DESE Guidance/Face Coverings**
- VI. **New Business**
 - A. Curriculum
 - B. Business
 - C. Personnel
 - D. **Policy Review**
- VII. School Committee
 - A. Reorganization (Union #55 Only)
- VIII. Future Business
 - A. Timeline
 - B. Future Agenda Items
- IX. Open Comments
- X. Information
- XI. Executive Session

ADJOURNMENT