Resolution Regarding The South Carolina Department of Health (DHEC)'s Exclusions for Covid Exposure this day, Monday, January 10, 2022

Whereas DHEC added COVID Exposure to the School Exclusion List in 2021 with an update added January 2022;

Whereas DHEC is setting quarantine rules based on vaccination status even though the CDC has stated that their own data showed similar viral load between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated, and the CDC and multiple states have reported extensive breakthrough infections among fully vaccinated individuals;

Whereas DHEC's exclusion list provides for a shorter quarantine period for students wearing a mask, regardless of the type of mask and despite the state's budget proviso prohibiting the requiring of masks and despite numerous studies demonstrating the ineffectiveness of cloth masks in preventing the spread of the Omicron variant of Covid;

Whereas neither requiring vaccination nor requiring cloth masks appear to prevent the spread of Omicron;

Whereas the risk that Omicron will cause hospitalization or severe disease in children is currently small relative to many other health issues;

Whereas it is extremely important to the academic, social, and emotional growth of children for them to attend in-person school as much as possible;

Whereas it is unfair and an economic hardship to parents who have to stay home with healthy children who are quarantined;

Whereas it is an undue burden on teachers to have to keep up with mask rules for individual students and have to catch up students who have missed school due to unnecessary quarantines for healthy children;

Whereas it is inappropriate for a state agency to impose ineffective rules on a school district without funding to support such rules;

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties requests that DHEC re-evaluate its COVID exclusion rules to limit required quarantine only to students who are symptomatic or who have tested positive and remove any and all quarantine rules based on vaccination status or mask wearing.

Adopted 1/10/22 by board majority vote