



PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Office of the Superintendent of Schools
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Ms. Eileen F. Shafer
Superintendent of Schools

January 13, 2023

Dear Paterson Public Schools Parents and Guardians:

I am pleased to inform you that **as of Tuesday, January 17, 2023, wearing masks will be optional** for all people entering district schools and buildings.

Just as with my decision to implement the mask mandate, my decision to make masks optional again is based on district data, data from St. Joseph's University Medical Center, and consultation with the City of Paterson's Chief Health Officer, Dr. Paul Persaud. The data has shown a recent downward trend in COVID-19 cases both within the district and throughout Passaic County. Since we returned from the holiday break, the district has gone from 32 total COVID-19 cases in a single day on Tuesday, January 3rd, to 4 total cases yesterday, Thursday, January 12th. We have also seen a downward trend throughout Passaic County with 208 COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, January 3rd, to 146 yesterday, Thursday, January 12th.

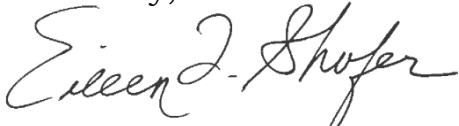
While these numbers allow us to return to optional masking, they should serve as a reminder to us that the pandemic is not over. In addition, we remain susceptible to the flu virus and the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). That is why I kindly ask you to respect anyone who chooses to continue wearing a mask in a school or a district building. Also, please continue taking the necessary safety precautions to guard against infection; precautions such as frequent sanitizing and washing of hands, avoiding large gatherings, monitoring symptoms, and staying home when sick.

My top priority is and has always been the health and safety of our stakeholders. My goal is to keep students and teachers in classrooms where the best education can take place. With everyone's cooperation, I am confident we will achieve that goal.

Your cooperation in wearing masks while in all district schools and buildings since we returned from the holiday break has been a huge help in slowing the spread of the virus and is very much appreciated.

Thank you and enjoy your weekend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen F. Shafer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eileen F. Shafer, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools

c: Board of Education Commissioners
Superintendent's Cabinet Members
Principals