

August 3, 2021

Dear Molalla River Families and Staff,

I shared with you last week our surprise regarding Governor Kate Brown's mask mandate on July 29th. Since that time, I've heard from many parents, district staff and community members about their frustrations with the decision to require masks. Similar to other communities in Oregon, there are some in our community who would like to see the school district and Board of Directors defy the governor's order and the public health rule released today ([OAR 333-019-1015](#)).

Like other superintendents in the region, please know that I am frustrated. I believe the school district should be able to retain local control over decisions that affect our students, their families and all of our staff directly. In the Molalla River School District we stand ready, without hesitation, to make decisions about COVID mitigation at a local level in collaboration with our Clackams County Local Public Health Authority. At this time, however, the legal authority for local control over face coverings in all K-12 schools has been revoked by the state.

Even though the State of Oregon's direction to require masks does not represent the wishes of many in our community, including many parents and employees alike, neither the Board of Directors nor any District's employee can knowingly violate state orders. As a public servant and as superintendent, I stand by my commitment to enforce and adhere to all policies in the District which includes following all federal and state laws.

Oregon is a diverse state, each community, county and neighborhood with its own identity and set of experiences. Here in Molalla, the Board of Directors and I will continue to voice and defend the values of our community which includes pressing for local control over decision-making. You can do the same by writing to the Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Health Authority, and/or your local State Senators and Representatives to share your voice and influence the reopening of schools for the 2021-22 school year.

I understood from the Oregon Department of Education the mask mandate will be reviewed, as frequently as each month. Our [survey from last week](#) regarding community voice when local control is restored is important to us, and it will remain open through Thursday. As an MRSD community member, if you haven't already completed it, please take a few minutes to do so.

Please know we remain focused on our kids and our community as we get ready for the school year ahead. The full bulletin from the Oregon Department of Education regarding the change in the Ready Schools Safe Learners Resiliency Framework is linked [here](#) for your reference.

Sincerely,
Tony Mann
Superintendent

[Kate Brown, Governor](#)
[Representative Christine Drazan ~ House District 39](#)
[Representative Rick Lewis ~ House District 18](#)
[Senator Fred Girod ~ Senate District 9](#)
[Senator Bill Kennemer, ~ Senate District 20](#)