



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

LINDSAY BERSCHAUER • CASEY KULLA • MARY STARRETT

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February 17, 2022

Debbie Brockett, McMinnville School District Superintendent  
Dr. Dave Novotney, Newberg School District Interim Superintendent  
Clint Raever, Yamhill Carlton School District Superintendent  
Jeff Clark, Amity School District Superintendent  
Dorie Vickery, Sheridan School District Superintendent  
Carrie Zimbrick, Willamina School District Superintendent  
Dr. Steven Sugg, Dayton School District Superintendent  
Summer Catino, Gaston School District Superintendent

Yamhill County Superintendents,

As you are aware, Governor Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority issued a statement on February 7, 2022, announcing that COVID indoor mask mandates will be lifted on or before March 31, 2022. The statement also included guidance about masking policies in schools, indicating that masking in K-12 schools could be lifted on March 31st. Since then, OHA has stated that each school district will have local control, in conjunction with their county public health authority, to set COVID masking guidelines past March 31st.

Yamhill County's Board of Commissioners has been advocating for local control since the beginning of the pandemic, arguing that counties should be able to respond directly to what's happening in our schools, businesses, and hospitals. We are pleased that OHA is shifting away from statewide mandates and back to local control.

As you are keenly aware, our children have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID pandemic. Initial school closures and remote learning took a heavy toll on our students, and we have always strived to keep schools open for in-person learning. Since the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, we have been concerned about COVID protocols that keep children masked indoors and outdoors, separate them from their peers and limit full engagement in classroom learning.

Masking children during the entire school day has had severe consequences, from learning impairments, prolonged issues with or delayed speech patterns, health impacts, and social and emotional isolation. As Commissioners, we are concerned about our children's overall health.

We want to be clear that Yamhill County will not be issuing any guidance or recommendation that children continue to mask indoors or outdoors. We hope every school district agrees.

Thank you,

Lindsay Berschauer  
Chair

Voted No

Casey Kulla  
Vice-Chair

Mary Starrett  
Commissioner

cc: Shanna Andres, Executive Assistant Newberg School District

Accepted by Yamhill County  
Board of Commissioners on  
2-17-2022 by Board Order  
# 22-51