

**Franklin Public Schools
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038**

Action Required

Subject: Mask Proposal

Date: November 23, 2021

Dept: SC

Reason: Required Vote

Enclosure: yes

Recommendation:

Proposal for Optional Mask Wearing by Vaccinated Students/Staff at FHS related to Policy EBCFA Face Coverings

I recommend approval of the proposal for optional mask wearing by vaccinated students/staff at FHS as discussed.

Action Requested of the School Committee:

Majority vote of the School Committee is required.

Vote Tabulator

C. Bernstein: Y / N D. McNeill: Y / N

D. Callaghan: Y / N M. Whitmore: Y / N

Al Charles: Y / N D Spencer: Y / N

E Stokes: Y / N Action: _____



Franklin Public Schools

*Office of the Superintendent
355 East Central Street; Suite 3
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038
Phone: 508-553-4819*

To: Franklin School Committee
From: Sara Ahern, Superintendent
Date: November 16, 2021
Re: Agenda Item for Discussion/ Action - Policy EBCFA Face Coverings

As you are aware, DESE approved a Mask Waiver for Franklin High School since the vaccination rate at the school is above 80%. With this waiver, the School Committee can make a local decision to ease the mask mandate for vaccinated students and staff, making wearing a mask or face covering optional for these individuals. The following memo outlines a proposed timeline, details, and process.

Background Information:

- The overall vaccination rate at FHS is 82%.
- There have only been 10 cases at FHS since the start of the school year. This is 10% of the FPS cases but FHS has 35% of the school population.
- We have had no evidence of in-school transmission or clusters at FHS.
- Hundreds of students eat lunch, unmasked, in the cafeteria each day.

With the waiver now granted, I propose the following provisions:

- Masks become optional for vaccinated FHS students and staff
 - Beginning December 13, 2021 through December 23, 2021 (this will allow us to see if we have an uptick in cases following the Thanksgiving holiday and plan for implementation); then again, beginning January 10, 2022 following the winter break.
 - Families complete an attestation form related to vaccination status and permission to share it
- Masks would still be required for
 - Unvaccinated FHS students and staff
 - All visitors, regardless of vaccination status
 - All individuals in the Nurse's office
 - All individuals on buses/school transportation
 - All spectators/audience members at events, regardless of vaccination status
 - Vaccinated individuals identified as close contacts
- Athletics - Mask requirements for athletes and MIAA events remain to be determined. We will remain apprised of MIAA/DESE/Hockomock League Rules (see also above).
- Masks remain optional as long as the following metrics are met
 - 14-day percent positivity in Franklin less than 4%
 - There is no evidence of in-school transmission
 - There is no evidence of clusters based on classroom or activity
- Recognizing that this is a fluid situation, additional metrics or provisions may need to be established

While this will not be welcome news to all, the sentiment I sense from FHS is that the school community is generally in favor of relaxing the mask mandate for vaccinated individuals. Masks are only one mitigation strategy among many that we are using to prevent the spread of COVID. Important FHS mitigation strategies also include vaccination, UVGI throughout the entire school, portable HEPA filtration units, good hand hygiene practices, monitoring symptoms and staying home when sick, Test and Stay for close contacts, and symptomatic COVID testing.