



Southwestern Consolidated School District of Shelby County



Mr. Curtis Chase  
Superintendent

Mrs. Bonnie Thopy  
Treasurer

Mr. Travis Oliver  
Facilities Director

Mrs. Belinda Head  
Deputy Treasurer

Mrs. Susan Neville  
Technology Director

Monday, September 13, 2021

Spartan Nation,

Southwestern Consolidated School District of Shelby County has worked very hard to provide the safest learning environment for our students. I have been made aware of the vote by the county commissioners today to mandate masks in all school corporations in the county starting tomorrow. As of the end of the day Friday, September 10, 2021, we had 0.498% of our students in the corporation in quarantine with a current positive COVID19 test. We have another 1.993% of our students in quarantine for close contact. There are no documented or confirmed cases that have been traced to being transmitted in our corporation during the school day. We had 97.509% of our students able to attend school today because they aren't in quarantine. I know this can change; however, I wanted you to have the data collected from Southwestern Consolidated Schools as we have worked to put precautionary measures into place to mitigate the spread of COVID19.

The School Board of Trustees and myself believe the mask mandate put into place is not in the best interest of our students here at Southwestern, especially when we look around and see much larger events taking place with no mask mandate in place (Colts game, Guns N' Roses concert, and etc. that many of our students attended last week). We are able to effectively social distance at Southwestern for the majority of our students' day and have put precautions in to mitigate and do our part. At this time, data does not suggest that putting a mask on students needs to be one of those precautions in our corporation. The School Board of Trustees has given me the support to appeal this decision that the county commissioners have mandated. I am in the process of looking into the proper way to do that as we have data that strongly supports that our students do not need to be mandated to have a mask on during the school day in our corporation and it should be a parent choice.

In the meantime, please work collaboratively with us as a corporation and not let this decision divide our community. Our students have been attending school in a pandemic for the better part of 18 months. The last thing we need to add is a community divided over a mask mandate. If our appeal is not successful, please know we still have precautions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID19 as our data is outstanding with the low number of positive cases and contact tracing we are having to perform. I can say with certainty that our students will **NOT** be in masks all day as we are able to social distance for the majority of their day. We will only need our students to be respectful of our staff when they are asked to mask up as our staff has a responsibility to uphold if our appeal is unsuccessful.

Thank you for your understanding and I will continue to communicate with you as this situation develops.

Respectfully,

Curtis Chase

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***Our mission is to encourage, challenge, explore, and strive for excellence.***