



Hello Lowell Families and Community!

The big news this week is of course the future change in the mask mandate in Oregon.

A date has been set for the end of the statewide school mask mandate, and there's also an end in sight to Oregon's wider indoor mask mandate in public places.

Starting March 31<sup>st</sup>, after Spring Break, each school district will be given the responsibility to decide whether to require masks for its students, staff, school volunteers and visitors.

**Reminder: Lowell School District's COVID protocols are still in place and will continue through March.**

**Next Steps:**

- The decisions on our path forward will take some time. Please understand we just received this news about the coming masking change and there is a lot to digest.
- Over the next several weeks, we will be working with our School Board, staff and families to determine the best course of action.
- ***Please continue to reinforce health and safety protocols*** because the Omicron variant of COVID has not yet reached its peak in Lane County and we hope to keep as many students in school as possible.

**Good News:** It is very encouraging that the Oregon Health Authority believes the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID – and the number of hospitalizations – will drop significantly by the end of March. Our combined efforts to manage the virus in Oregon are working. That is why the statewide mask mandate for all indoor public spaces is expected to end by March 31<sup>st</sup>, and possibly sooner.

**One Certainty:** Plans change, sometimes with little notice. The last two years have confirmed that *uncertainty* is the one thing we can count on. *Your continued patience and flexibility are essential* in helping to keep our kids in school.

We will provide updates for you as soon as there is news to share. Feel free to reach out with questions but be aware that we may have more questions than answers at this moment. Please be on the lookout for a confidential staff survey regarding masking in the district.

**Also, remember that Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup> is a no school day and the district will be closed.**

As always, be safe, healthy, and kind!