



East Lansing
Public Schools

Dori Leyko, Superintendent, 501 Burcham Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823, dori.leyko@elps.us

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Dear East Lansing families, staff and students,

Since last week's announcement by the Ingham County Health Department (IChD) that rescinded two emergency orders requiring universal masking in schools and detailing quarantine and contact tracing procedures, many of you have shared input on how ELPS should respond. Many individuals have advocated for student and family choice on whether or not to wear a mask in school, while others would prefer to see the mask mandate continue.

ELPS will maintain its mask mandate and reevaluate in mid-April, a couple of weeks following Spring Break. The rationale for this decision includes the following factors:

1. Universal masking in schools is still recommended by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Ingham County Health Department.
2. Transmission rates in Ingham County are still in the "High" range. Categories are: High, Substantial, Moderate, Low.
3. The Test-to-Stay Program may only be implemented if strict mitigation strategies that include universal masking are in place. This program allows unvaccinated close contacts to test at our schools in the morning and remain in school as long as they test negative on a rapid antigen test. Without universal masking and the ability to utilize Test-to-Stay, unvaccinated close contacts would be required to quarantine and miss school for no less than five days.
4. Many of our families have children under the age of five at home and/or other immunocompromised individuals at home with greater risks of complications should they acquire COVID-19.
5. We are still in the winter months that do not allow for open windows and increased air flow. We know that air circulation is an important mitigation strategy that can be better used in the warmer months.

The mitigation measures we've had in place have kept COVID transmission relatively low in our schools. As school leaders, we have a responsibility to implement practices that promote the health and well-being of our greater school community. Continuing our mask mandate in schools is the best single way we can increase our opportunity to provide in-person instruction to all students every day.

Sincerely,

Dori Leyko, Superintendent