

September 22, 2021

Dear West Salem Parents/Guardians:

It has been wonderful having our students back on campus to start the school year. It is important for us as a district to provide learning opportunities for our students as close to normal as possible, and we have been able to do that thus far. We have attempted modified mitigation strategies, with optional masking, to start this year. Over the past week, the number of students who have tested positive for COVID has increased to a point we haven't seen yet in the district. With this recent uptick, our modified mitigation strategies are not enough to reduce spread within our district. In order to meet our primary goal of maintaining in-person instruction, we are going to transition and use our full extent of mitigation measures and **require masking when indoors for all students, staff, and visitors district-wide beginning immediately on Thursday, September 23rd and lasting until at least Friday, October 15th.**

When we used all of our mitigation measures last spring, we were able to successfully have in-person instruction and continue to provide all of our students with the experiences that they deserved. We are looking forward to continuing to provide all of these experiences, including returning to our traditional homecoming celebration. Our students, staff, schools, and community all desire for these to occur.

We want to thank you for keeping your children home when they are not feeling well. This has been a tremendous help! Please continue to keep your child home if they are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19. If they have symptoms of COVID-19, please seek out testing. Your child must stay home until test results are confirmed by any **PCR test** ([Please see quarantine guideline and definitions here](#)). This is by far the best mitigation measure that we all can agree upon.

All other mitigation measures continue as articulated in the 2021-22 Return to School Plan including maintaining social distancing to the greatest extent possible, increased daily cleaning, increased fresh air supply in the HVAC systems, increased handwashing, and respiratory hygiene.

The district will continue to monitor local conditions, particularly those within our buildings and our community, and adjust as necessary. The district dashboard will be used as a means to inform families, staff, and the community of cases within the schools. Individuals identified as close contacts will be notified by a district staff member.

Thank you for your understanding, and we hope to return to optional masking as soon as possible.

Ryan G. Rieber
Superintendent

Dr. Nicole Hennessy
District Doctor

Mrs. Kate Brohmer
District Nurse