

# *Hanover Township Public Schools*

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**Board of Education**

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August 19, 2021

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy  
Governor of the State of New Jersey  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

This letter is a follow up to the resolution passed by the Hanover Township Board of Education on June 15, 2021 and forwarded to your office as well as the office of Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education. In short, that resolution requested that the requirement to maintain at least six (6) feet of distance between individuals in all settings be rescinded along with the mandatory use of face coverings for faculty, staff, students, and visitors.

We were disappointed to see that another statewide mandate requiring face coverings has been instituted for the opening of schools in September. While the health and safety of our teachers and students is our primary concern, the Board feels strongly that families should be given the discretion to make their own decisions relative to the wearing of masks in school.

We respectfully request that this mandate be repealed, and replaced with the language originally published in the "Road Forward Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year" Plan jointly issued by the New Jersey Department of Education and New Jersey Department of Health in June. This guidance was appropriate in its message to districts in that it offered common sense approaches to mitigation that could be layered and implemented by local authorities based on the conditions of the buildings, outdoor facilities, and communities with which they are most familiar.

If the executive order remains in place, we ask that it be subject to quantified public health data, clearly and succinctly explained, regularly updated by the appropriate State agencies and provided to school districts statewide in a format allowing for ready communication to the community. Moreover, the Department of Education should provide clear guidance concerning issues arising due to the restored mask mandate, including the management of children and families who refuse to comply with the Executive Order, and whether and when virtual learning opportunities will be provided to children who do not feel comfortable attending school in person with the mandate in place.

Please repeal Executive Order 251 and give us the flexibility to make masks optional and allow families to decide what is best for their children.

Sincerely,

*Stephen Furda, President*

*Dan Breen, Vice President*

On behalf of the Hanover Township Board of Education