

**RESOLUTION MAKING MASKS OPTIONAL UNDER
RANDOLPH COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY**

WHEREAS, as of this date Randolph County is not rated to have a "critical" rate of COVID-19 community spread, according to the County Alert System developed by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, which evaluates a county's COVID-19 case counts, percent positives, and hospital occupancy; and

WHEREAS, the requirement that masks be worn indoors in North Carolina was rescinded for all public settings save a few exceptions by Executive Order of the Governor of North Carolina No. 220 effective June 11, 2021; and

WHEREAS, the requirement to wear masks is only one of many prevention strategies that has been employed by the Randolph County Board of Education to prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on July 9, 2021, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") issued new guidance for COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools which indicates that the mask requirement can be lifted for fully vaccinated people in most settings including schools; and

WHEREAS, the CDC directs localities to make decisions on COVID-19 prevention efforts in light of local conditions; and

WHEREAS, promoting in-person learning and focusing the attention of educators on instruction (and not enforcement of mask mandates) are critical to the education and health of the children of Randolph County; and

WHEREAS, given current obstacles, distinguishing between vaccinated and unvaccinated students and staff raises enforcement and privacy concerns for school staff; and

WHEREAS, the Randolph County Board of Education believes strongly in the rights of individuals to make decisions regarding their own personal health; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Randolph County Board of Education has no individual mask mandate. Failure to wear a mask on the property of the Randolph County Board of Education or at a school in the Randolph County School System will not be considered a violation of Board policy or school rules. All students, staff, and community members are encouraged to make their own decisions respecting their personal health and to choose whether to wear masks. Any harassment, discrimination, bullying, or intimidation based on any person's decision to wear or not to wear a mask will not be tolerated.

Adopted by the Randolph County Board of Education this 19th day of July 2021.

Gary Cook, Board Chair

Date