



GENESEE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

LEADERSHIP ♦ SERVICE ♦ INNOVATION *Partnering for success!*

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February 22, 2022

Parents and Families,

The Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) has followed the guidance of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the GCHD has not had a "mask mandate" since December 22, 2021, there *were* recommendations for universal masking in schools from both the MDHHS and the GCHD, which the GISD has continued to enforce for all programs, services, and buildings.

Last week, the MDHHS and the GCHD updated their guidance for schools (both documents are linked in the COVID-19 Resources section of our website: www.geneseeisd.org) indicating that Michigan is now in a "post-surge recovery phase" of the pandemic. Accordingly, the MDHHS and the GCHD no longer recommend universal masking in the traditional K-12 setting but have left the decision of universal masking to local school districts and their unique circumstances. Importantly, the MDHHS notes, "those with chronic illness or who are immunocompromised are at higher risk for poor outcomes from COVID and would benefit most from masking in indoor settings".

Many of the students served in our various center-based, project choice, and day treatment programs have unique health considerations and are medically vulnerable, placing them at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19. Furthermore, many students in our programs are not able to consistently mask due to medical/behavioral considerations. Therefore, after consultation with the GCHD, GISD will continue to require universal masking in our special education programs (as medically tolerable) at this time. We will continue to monitor case transmission across our community and consult with the GCHD on when it is prudent to lift this masking requirement, given the unique circumstances within our special education programs.

Additionally, the CDC mandate for universal masking in public transportation is still in effect. Therefore, GISD will continue to require universal masking on all district transportation (as medically tolerable).

The updated guidance from the GCHD also addresses isolation and quarantine procedures for schools:

- **Monitoring for Symptoms:** The updated guidance from the GCHD continues to require that individuals monitor for symptoms associated with COVID-19. To maintain a safe learning environment, we will continue to follow our daily health screening process at this time.
- **Confirmed and Probable Cases for COVID-19:** Students and staff who test positive (or are presumed positive) for COVID-19 must continue to follow the current isolation guidelines.

Richard E. Hill, President ♦ Larry P. Ford, Vice President ♦ Janis D. Bugbee, Secretary ♦ The Honorable John L. Conover, Treasurer ♦ DesRae A. Joubran, Trustee



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- **Contact Tracing:** One notable change in the GCHD guidance is that schools are no longer required to do contact tracing in the school setting, but quarantining guidance must still be followed for household contacts.

I want to thank you for your continued resilience throughout this global pandemic. As I have noted each step of the way, we will always follow the guidance provided by MDHHS and GCHD, while also doing our very best to protect those who are most vulnerable. I am hopeful that our continued decline in new COVID-19 cases and the accompanying updated guidance from MDHHS and GCHD is truly a sign of our move to a “post-surge recovery” both in Genesee County and across Michigan. However, we will continue to work closely with the GCHD to monitor transmission across our community and will implement any necessary changes in the future.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child’s principal with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Tunnick", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steven W. Tunnick, Ph.D.
Superintendent

st:tm