



**St. Mary's County Public Schools**  
**Central Administration**

Office of the Superintendent  
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**Dr. J. Scott Smith**  
Superintendent

February 25, 2022

Dear SMCPs Community:

At the beginning of this school year, St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPs) developed and communicated a plan based on school and community health metrics that would determine when SMCPs would allow for voluntary and recommended mask use. In the fall, the Maryland State Board of Education enacted *COMAR 13A.01.07, Face Coverings in School Facilities*, which was approved by the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review (AELR). This direction and state-wide mandate superseded local decision making. On Tuesday, February 22, 2022, the State Board voted to recommend rescinding this mandate and return this decision to our local school system. This recommendation was approved by the General Assembly's AELR this afternoon, February 25, 2022.

Following the Omicron surge over the winter holidays, state and local data has continued to trend downward, reaching the low levels of transmission we saw earlier in the fall. This data is posted online through our [COVID-19 Dashboard](#). In addition to the reduction of COVID-19 positive cases, vaccinations are fully available for all school-aged students (ages 5 and up) and adults. At the February 23, 2022, Board of Education meeting, I provided an [update](#) on our local data and our processes. These elements all contribute to the decision making process.

Effective Monday, February 28, 2022, SMCPs will no longer require masking in any of our buildings; instead we will be recommending students and staff who are medically vulnerable or are not fully vaccinated to mask. For those who elect to wear masks, we will continue to have both surgical and KN95 masks available upon request. However, per the [Department of Health and Human Services](#), students and staff in the Head Start program will still be required to wear masks. Additional information is forthcoming for families with students in this program.

We have all had our lives upended by this pandemic. For the past two years, we have put the focus on health, safety, and the incremental return to normal. This moves us one step closer.

We are grateful for your understanding and we respect the individual choices you may make regarding masking.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Smith, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools