

Westport Community Schools

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Westport Community Schools Shares Update Regarding DESE Mask Mandate for 2021-22 School Year

WESTPORT -- Superintendent Thomas F. Aubin and the Westport Community Schools would like to share an update regarding the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) mask mandate for the 2021-22 school year.

Earlier today, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education met and voted to give DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley the authority to institute a mask mandate for the beginning of the upcoming school year.

Following the approval of his mask mandate, all K-12 students, educators and staff will be required to wear a mask while in schools through Oct. 1 to ensure schools fully reopen safely and to provide ample time for more students and educators to get vaccinated.

After Oct. 1, the policy will allow middle and high schools to lift the mask mandate for vaccinated students and staff only if the school meets a certain vaccination rate – at least 80 percent of students and staff in a school building are vaccinated. Unvaccinated students and staff would still be required to wear masks. As the district nears this date further information will be shared.

Community members should also note that under the DPH’s mask advisory, masks are mandatory for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, while using public transportation and rideshares, and while inside healthcare facilities and other settings. As a result, students riding any district bus or visiting any of the district’s health offices must continue to wear masks at all times while in these settings.

“As we have always done, the Westport Community Schools will put the health and well-being of our students and staff first as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic,” Superintendent Aubin said. “While this latest mask mandate may not be what students and families wanted to hear, we must follow the latest guidance by DESE in regard to keeping our school community safe. We encourage everyone to continue practicing COVID safety precautions, and if we all do our part we hope to transition to no longer requiring masks in our schools in the near future.”

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