



LACEY TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

A Tradition Of Pride · A Tradition Of Excellence

VANESSA P. CLARK, PH.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

August 17, 2021

The Honorable Phil Murphy
Governor of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
225 W. State St.
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

I write to you on behalf of the Lacey Township School District Board of Education to respectfully ask that you rescind Executive Order 251 in time for the start of the 2021-22 school year and allow school districts to self-determine whether and when to wear masks at school.

The District has taken steps to protect our teachers and staff by making the vaccine available for those who wanted it. We have invested significantly in PPE, infrastructure improvements, and training to return to full-day instruction. In many ways, you have entrusted us with this responsibility by providing a framework for our reopening plan while allowing us to operate within the individuality of our community.

While the number of cases appear to be on the rise in general while schools have remained closed, the CDC has found, "Although outbreaks in schools can occur, multiple studies have shown that transmission within school settings is typically lower than - or at least similar to - levels of community transmission, when prevention strategies are in place in schools." Our district carefully balanced prevention strategies and gradually removed some in a manner that kept school transmission levels at the absolute minimum while successfully increasing in-person instruction. As we are familiar with our community, our buildings, and what has been effective in limiting the spread, New Jersey should resume its policy of deference to local officials to do what is right for their schools. We have shown we can keep the schools operating fully in a conscientious and safe manner through decision-making at the local level.

As a result of Executive Order 251, local authority has been diminished and inhibits our ability to do what is right and necessary for our community. Therefore, we urge you to rescind Executive Order 251 and resume a policy that allows the local communities to determine what is appropriate for them. **As always, our district will operate in compliance with all state mandates.**

Thank you, Governor Murphy, for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership throughout these trying times.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Donna McAvoy
Board of Education President
Lacey Township School District