



TO: Chair and Members
of the Board

DATE: 22 November 2022

RE: Wearing of Masks for Educators, Staff and Students

Trustee Kaplan-Myrth has given notice of motion and intends to move as follows at the Special Board meeting on 22 November 2022:

WHEREAS there has been a significant increase in COVID-19 cases, and influenza cases, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) cases, and other serious respiratory and airborne diseases in the City of Ottawa;

WHEREAS these put the health and safety of educators and students in jeopardy, as demonstrated by the intensive care unit (ICU) and emergency room crises at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and the other Ottawa-area hospitals;

WHEREAS recent statements from Dr. Lindy Samson, the Chief of Staff of CHEO, and Dr. Vera Etches, the Medical Officer of Health for Ottawa Public Health (OPH), and Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, strongly recommend wearing a well-fitted mask in any indoor setting to curb the spread of respiratory viruses;

WHEREAS Ottawa Public Health acknowledges that increased respiratory virus activity is causing people to miss work and school at unprecedented levels, and OPH fully supports any business or organization that chooses to implement a mask wearing policy in Ottawa;

WHEREAS there is no evidence of harm, to an adult or child's physical or mental health, from wearing of masks, and there is strong evidence of harm caused by infections with COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other viral illnesses;

WHEREAS safety in schools must be governed by the precautionary principle, as well as principles of equity and accessibility, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) has a responsibility to take steps to reduce health and safety risks to all educators and students;

WHEREAS under Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, failing to institute or maintain health protections in schools further disadvantages an already disempowered group: educators and students with health vulnerabilities and disabilities;

AND WHEREAS it is possible to obtain and distribute the highest quality N95 masks to educators and families that cannot afford to purchase their own masks;



THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

THAT staff be directed to require, from an occupational health and safety perspective, use of surgical or N95 masks by all educators, staff, and students in all OCDSB buildings and in all OCDSB-led activity, with the exception of musical/performing arts instruction or sports in which masks cannot be worn, and with the exception of nutritional breaks;

THAT the policy to require masks will take effect on 23 November 2022;

THAT children or adults with written medical exemptions from their physicians on the basis of documented disability will not be subject to this mandate;

THAT enforcement of, and consequences for violations of the mask requirement, will be subject to same operational rules that govern other OCDSB health and safety policies and codes of conduct; and

THAT the mask requirement will remain in place until such time as Ottawa Public Health declares that influenza season has ended in the City of Ottawa, CHEO pediatric ICU occupancy is less than 85% for a period of at least two weeks, and Ottawa Public Health no longer advises the public to wear a mask to protect against exposure to airborne and respiratory viruses in indoor spaces.

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education and
Secretary of the Board

Michèle Giroux
Executive Officer
Corporate Services

Signatures on this Notice of Motion confirm that the Notice was submitted in accordance with Section 12.9 of the Board's By-laws and Standing Rules.