



*It is the mission of the Mansfield Public Schools, in partnership with the Mansfield community, to ensure that each and every child develops the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential for civic engagement and personal excellence in learning, life, and work within our local and global community.*

<b>Mansfield Board of Education Special Meeting February 24, 2022 APPROVED Minutes</b>	
<b>Attendees:</b>	Kathy Ward, Chair, Susannah Everett, Vice-Chair, Martha Kelly, Secretary, Edith Allison, David Litrico, Jeannette Picard, Kelly Zimmermann (electronically)
<b>Absent:</b>	Katherine Paulhus

The public may view the meeting live at <https://mansfieldct.gov/video>.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Ms. Ward.

Ms. Ward thanked everyone who contacted the board to offer input regarding mask wearing. She indicated the governor will not mandate masks after February 28, 2022.

Mrs. Lyman began her report with an update on the governor’s intentions regarding current pandemic practices as well as operating schools moving forward. She shared the latest guidance from the Connecticut State Department of Education and the Department of Public Health – “Transitioning to a Model of Routine Respiratory Disease Prevention and Enhanced Outbreak Management and Control for COVID-19 in PreK-12 School Settings” and the rationale behind the transition. There will be a third distribution of test kits to families next week. Mrs. Lyman described the ventilation systems and air-flow strategies at the schools. Mrs. Lyman also presented the case count data and vaccination statistics.

Referring to Ms. Ward’s earlier statement, Mrs. Lyman reiterated mask wearing becomes a local decision as of February 28th; mask mandates imposed on municipalities do not include schools. The Board of Education makes the decision regarding mask wearing in schools. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) determines mask requirements on all public transportation including school buses. Eastern Highland Health District not only supports the district in the event of an outbreak but will also direct schools on practices and protocols.

Twelve members of the public addressed the Board during the opportunity for public comment:

Jen Zugarazo, resident, parent and teacher – spoke in support of keeping the mask mandate as students have adapted well and masks allow them to interact closely at school

Dr. Jordana Frost, resident, parent and public health professional – urged the Board to focus on health equity and maintain the mask mandate

Erin Anderson, resident and parent – spoke against continuing the mask mandate due to the effects masks are having on children

Elena Schreiber, resident and parent – shared her support of continued masking to protect the community against the spread of Covid-19

David Slesinski, resident and parent – asked the Board to remove the mask mandate allowing so mask wearing to become a personal choice

Vince Tycer, resident and parent – urged the Board to continue the mask mandate until the youngest population is able to be vaccinated

Ben Hoffman, resident and parent – spoke against the continuation of masking and expressed the desire to allow children to have a choice to mask or not

Shannon Sion, resident and parent - spoke in support of continued masking

Christina Day, resident and parent (comments provided via text to Ms. Sion who spoke on Ms. Day's behalf) - is against continuing the mask mandate and would like the Board to allow it to be up to the parents/children

Emma Frost, resident and high school student – spoke in favor of the mask mandate

Steve Guyette, resident and parent – spoke against continuing the mask mandate due to the unknown long-term effects of masks

Rob Brandon, resident and parent – agrees with maintaining the mask mandate for the time being until vaccines protect against transmission of current and related variants

Following the public comments, Board members expressed their own opinions regarding whether or not to go optional with mask wearing.

Motion by Ms. Everett, seconded by Ms. Allison to extend mask mandate until March 14, 2022, to be revisited at the Board of Education meeting on March 10, 2022. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Ms. Ward reiterated the Board greatly appreciates all of the input on this difficult topic.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Ms. Everett, seconded by Mr. Litrico to adjourn at 7:50pm. Vote: Unanimous in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jil Corso, Board Clerk