

River Bend Families and Staff,

Sunday February 6, 2022

On Friday, Feb 4th at 5:00 PM Judge Grischow released her ruling on the mask mandate, quarantine/close contact and mandatory vaccination executive orders. A twenty-nine (29) page ruling was provided to the plaintiffs and the school district defendants, which expressly includes River Bend CUSD #2. A brief summary of the rulings are provided below.

The ruling by the judge temporarily invalidates the executive orders by the governor, as well as the rules and regulations issued by IDPH and ISBE. This means our school district may no longer require masking, enforce close contact quarantines, require staff to be vaccinated, or require a negative test to be at school. Symptomatic or known positive COVID cases will still be required to remain at home and not attend school.

We caution that the situation remains very fluid. The State has already sought to obtain a stay on the ruling until the 4th District Appellate Court can provide further guidance. A temporary stay on the ruling by the 4th District Appellate court could prevent the District from moving forward to implement Judge Grischow's ruling. It is currently anticipated that the Appellate Court will decide that issue as soon as tomorrow or mid-February.

Student, staff and community safety is extremely important to the Board and Administration as we continue to navigate what is hopefully an end to the pandemic. The good news is that our positive case numbers are the lowest they have been all year. As of Monday, it is anticipated that FES will have no positive cases, RBMS also has zero positive cases, and FHS has zero positive cases. All other current mitigation measures will stay in place.

Effective Monday, February 7, 2022 the District will shift to a mask recommended policy during the school day and at extracurricular activities. **However, the ruling makes it clear that mandatory mask wearing may not presently be enforced.** Wearing a mask will be an individual and family decision.

The District will continue to offer voluntary testing and exclude positive and symptomatic students and staff that test positive. It is important that we do our best to identify and keep positive cases out of the schools. If you have symptoms or have a positive household contact please communicate with the school so that test to stay measures can be utilized. Students considered to be close contacts, but are asymptomatic may be given notification and the option to remain at school unless otherwise determined by the family.

Masks **will be required** while utilizing school provided transportation. Mask requirements on buses are controlled by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) order under section 361 of the Federal Public Health Service Act. The judge's order in this does not affect Federal Law.

We also hope that each of our students, teachers, parents, and members of the Community will respect the decision others make when it comes to wearing masks. We will continue to focus on student learning as we move forward tomorrow.

Thank you for your perseverance, grace and support as we navigate this together,

Darryl Hogue