

Kalamazoo Public Schools

Every child. Every opportunity. Every time.

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Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri
Superintendent
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Dear KPS families:

In light of the recent announcements by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the State of Michigan relaxing mask requirements for vaccinated people, I wanted to reaffirm for families and reassure you that Kalamazoo Public Schools will adhere to a mask mandate for Summer Readiness 2021 and at least through the first trimester of the 2021-22 school year. The mask mandate will be reassessed in November and could be adjusted for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year based on grade bands (elementary, middle, and high school) and vaccine availability.

In April 2021, when KPS released plans for the reopening of schools, those plans included a mask mandate for all district property. Many families chose in-person learning based on our assurance that masks would be required, because mask-wearing has been proven to be the No. 1 mitigation strategy for reducing the spread of COVID-19. That being the case, not requiring masks on KPS properties would lead to the spread of the virus, which will create an unsafe environment for our students and staff — especially for our younger students who cannot yet receive the vaccine and for those in our community who may have compromised immune systems. Subsequent outbreaks would cause serious disruptions in learning during a crucial year for our students.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the district's priority has been the safety of students, staff, families, and the community. This was the driving principle behind our decision to engage in virtual instruction for the 2020-21 school year. Mask-wearing remains key to our safety plans for the coming school year — along with measures such as promoting hand hygiene, health self-checks, contact tracing, and Michigan High School Athletic Association safety protocols for student athletes.

KPS has been diligent in ensuring the safety of everyone since schools first closed in March 2020. We will continue to operate with safety first in mind by modeling the behavior we want our children to follow, as we help them learn about the civic need of caring for others and collective responsibility.

There is no way to know who has been vaccinated and who hasn't. We want everyone to feel safe, and the best way to do that is to continue our mask mandate as a mitigation strategy.

Please help us keep our students, staff, and community safe.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rita Raichoudhuri
Superintendent