

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 13, 2021

County's Public Health Order Results in Mask Mandate for Eagle County School District *Recent Community Spread and Fatalities Lead to Shift for PreK-8*

Eagle, CO – Eagle County School District announced on Friday that after meeting with Eagle County Public Health and other schools throughout the community, masks will be required for all students, teachers, staff and visitors at all buildings where students in PreK through 8th grade are present for the start of the school year on Monday. The mandate will cover the inside areas of all schools as well as Edwards Early Learning Center (for students aged 2 and up). The mask mandate will also be in effect during middle school indoor athletics.

Eagle County Public Health expects to lift this order when the incidence rate falls below 50 cases per 100,000 for seven consecutive days.

With Eagle County seeing three recent COVID-19 related fatalities and a continued uptick in the rate of disease spread and severity, ECSD made the move in order to maintain five-day-a-week -in-person instruction. This should prevent the need for prolonged quarantines or transitions to remote learning because of disease spread.

“Our hearts go out to the families who were so recently affected by the virus,” said Superintendent Philip Qualman. “We said there were specific metrics we’d follow and when and if they changed, we would change our policies. Unfortunately, here we are. As has been the case since the beginning of the pandemic, this disease does not care about our schedules or when school starts. Nevertheless, we regret the short notice,” said Qualman.

Families that would prefer their child(ren) not to wear masks may enroll in ECSD’s online school, [World Academy](#), opt for homeschool, or choose another alternative setting outside of ECSD.

“We are hopeful this is a short-term scenario and that our community continues to get vaccinated and take care of one another. We ask for everyone’s cooperation and understanding as we navigate these unprecedented times,” Qualman concluded.

Masks will continue to be required of bus riders and anyone visiting school health offices.

District leaders have heard from many community members on both sides of the mask issue. Public input is valued and helps inform leaders of community expectations. Some will not agree with this change and may wish to express their feelings publicly. The district asks that protests be

directed at locations other than schools. It is imperative that schools begin on Monday without disruption or additional emotional stress on students and staff. Please help us reduce the stress on schools by directing concerns to either Public Health officials who originated the orders, or ECSD officials who complied with the orders. Please allow schools to open without additional stressors that only serve to compound and prolong the social/emotional impact on our children.

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