

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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**Charles E. Lawrence
Division Superintendent**

February 22, 2022

Dear Families,

On Wednesday, February 16, Governor Glenn Youngkin signed Senate Bill 739 into law. It removes all school mask requirements in Virginia..

As a result, the Northampton County Public Schools will transition to a mask-optional learning environment for all students in our buildings, effective Wednesday February 23, 2022. However, we will continue to strongly encourage mask wearing as a key strategy in our efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and community.

In making this transition, we will focus on maintaining a positive and welcoming learning environment in which students feel comfortable wearing a mask if they choose to do so. Please speak with your children about your decision and expectations about whether they will or will not wear masks in school, and ask that they respect the choices of other students. School employees will not be asked to enforce parents' mask decisions.

It is important to note that masks will still be required in certain cases:

- Per Federal regulations, students are required to continue wearing masks on school buses.
- Students will be required to wear masks when returning to school on days 6-10 after testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact of someone who is COVID-19 positive.
- All employees, visitors, and volunteers shall continue to wear masks, per Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Standards, which state that school employees are required to wear masks in areas of substantial or high community transmission regardless of vaccination status. Northampton County remains in a “high transmission” phase.

As a school division, we will continue to review and update our mitigation strategies to keep our staff and students safe and our schools open for the remainder of the school year. As always, thank you for your flexibility, support, and understanding as we navigate the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Lawrence
Superintendent



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THROUGH ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS**