

From: Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 7/2/2020 12:06:04 PM
To: Wade Roberts <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Mask Requirement

Hi Wade, appreciate the email and the thoughts. I hope you and Vicki are both doing well.

I'd say you're probably right. I think this is the most difficult task we've been up against. There's no past plans to follow, the information we have to go off of is incomplete, community sentiment is split with strong feelings on both sides that feels like it's more emotionally than factually driven, and state leadership has been, to be blunt, weak and indecisive. That said, the WCS Central Office Staff working on it is a strong group and they're not taking it lightly and are doing their due diligence to get it right.

Here's the standard response I'm sending back to parents who email the Board (below). To give you some added context though, we've seen a draft of the re-opening plan but the finalized version will be presented on July 13th and have more details after that. The draft plan was based on active Covid cases in the community of Low Spread (under .5% of the community), Medium (.5%-1%) and High (above 1%) with different protocols at each. Under the draft, masks would be strongly encouraged but not mandated under the Low spread protocols but some of us have expressed concerns about that.

Hope that helps and don't hesitate to let me know if you have any other questions/thoughts.

Warm Regards,
Eric

I'd like to provide some additional context on WCS' back to school planning, which is being led by our Safety and Security Director, Michael Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher is also the primary architect of our school safety plan as it relates to other threats against our students and much of it has been copied in part or whole by other districts across the state as well state agencies. Mr. Fletcher was hired by Williamson County Schools from the Williamson County Sheriff's Office where, among other accomplishments in his 15+ years, he established the tactical medical officer program for the department's SWAT team and still serves as a senior operator. Prior to that, Mr. Fletcher worked for Williamson Medical Center as an Emergency Medical Services Supervisor for 15+ years as well as being a certified Emergency Medical Technician - Paramedic in the State of Tennessee. He is currently in his seventh year with Williamson County Schools and has a detailed understanding of our district logistics and operations in addition to being a trained medical professional. I believe he is uniquely suited to the task at hand and I am also confident WCS has the best School Safety Director in Tennessee.

The Board was presented with a draft version of the plan at our June 11 work session and will meet on July 13th to be presented the completed version.

The Operations Plan Mr. Fletcher is preparing has been drafted in conjunction with other WCS department leaders, outside agencies and medical professionals that his position and more than 35 years of experience in the field give him access to. These contacts include but are not limited to individuals within:

- *The State Epidemiologist's Office*
- *The Tennessee Department of Health*
- *The Tennessee Department of Education*
- *Williamson County Medical Center*
- *County and City Sheriffs Office*
- *EMA/Public Safety*
- *City Administrators*
- *The Franklin Special School District*
- *Williamson County Education Assn*

- *Special Education Parent Groups*
- *School Safety Personnel in other School Districts*

In addition to first-hand collaboration with these contacts, he is also incorporating the latest information from the Center for Disease Control and World Health Organization in his plans to keep all our students AND staff as safe as is reasonably possible. I want to call out that I'm including staff in this as we have dual responsibility to our students and the adults in the classroom, many who fall into at-risk demographics. This includes but is not limited to 1-in-20 teachers, 1-in-4 substitute teaches, and 1-in-2 bus drivers being 60 years of age or older.

This is a tremendous task. The Corona virus has been diagnosed in the United States for only about 160 days and in Tennessee for only about a hundred days and we are learning more daily. We are simultaneously moving closer to the first day of school and having thousands of students and adults come in regular close proximity for the first time in the County since early March and we aren't taking this lightly.

Eric Welch
Williamson County Schools
Board of Education - District 10

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From: Wade Roberts <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2020 5:12 PM
To: Nancy Garrett <[REDACTED]>; KC Haugh <[REDACTED]>; Eric Welch <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Mask Requirement

Hello CHS Board Members,

This is my two cents regarding the board's current school opening proposal. I hope you will require masks be worn by all staff and students, with a possible substitute being a properly sized and properly worn face shield (for those who, for some reason, cannot wear a mask). I would also hope the district would develop a protocol that schools can follow when a student habitually fails to wear a mask or refuses to wear a mask (when something beyond gentle reminders is not getting the job done).

I do not look forward to trying to enforce such a requirement, it will take time, patience, and vigilance. However, I am willing to do so and believe it must become job number one in our schools, every period, every day; because required masks, in the absence of a vaccine, may be the only chance we have of keeping everyone well and schools open.

I can only assume this must be one of the most difficult situations you have faced. I really appreciate the job you are doing and we are fortunate to have the three of you as our board members, especially during this time. I am confident in yours and Superintendent Golden's leadership.

Thanks,
Wade Roberts
CHS