

BOARD RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION THAT FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1 OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, ARKANSAS, THAT BUT FOR ACT 1002, THE DISTRICT WOULD IMMEDIATELY REINSTITUTE THE REQUIREMENT THAT ALL EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS IN ALL K-12 SCHOOLS WEAR MASKS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT GUIDANCE.

WHEREAS, Arkansas is experiencing a public-health emergency due to COVID-19 and is the epicenter of the highly contagious new Delta variant; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Arkansas has issued a statewide public health emergency based upon the rising numbers of new COVID-19 cases; and

WHEREAS, there has been a recent increase in the number of children in Arkansas who have been hospitalized and placed on ventilators due to COVID-19, and Arkansas Children's Hospital reported on July 28, 2021 that it has the highest number of COVID-19 patients admitted to the hospital since the pandemic started; and

WHEREAS, in July of 2020, in Washington County, Arkansas, the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations was declining in July of 2020, while in July of 2021 they are now surging; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, but children younger than twelve years old are not yet eligible to be vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, both the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that children return to in-person education where it is safe to do so, and Fayetteville School District No. 1 recognizes the importance of in-person learning; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control currently recommends "universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status;" and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that everyone older than the age of two (2) should wear a mask in school regardless of vaccination status; and

WHEREAS, on July 28, 2021, the Arkansas Department of Education, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health and the Governor's Office, released the 2021-2022 COVID-19 Guidance for Schools, which provides that because children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 at this time, consistent and correct mask usage is recommended while indoors in all school settings with children under age 12. In addition, consistent mask usage should be strongly considered in any classroom setting where the vaccination status of students of any age cannot be confirmed; and

WHEREAS, masks have been proven to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus and are a necessary tool for protecting those not yet eligible for vaccination; and