



Maryland State Board of Education

200 WEST BALTIMORE STREET / BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2595 / (410) 767-0467 / (410) 333-6442 TTY/TDD

February 10, 2022

Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the State Board of Education, I express our appreciation for your strong leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic and your steadfast support of Maryland public schools. Like you, the State Board of Education and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) continue to prioritize safe, full-time, in-person learning with minimal disruption.

The Maryland State Board of Education is watching with optimism as Covid-19 metrics improve in the State. In fact, the State Board issued the current not-to-exceed 180-day face covering emergency regulation with off ramps during the Omicron surge, in anticipation of an improving environment in which face coverings would no longer be needed as we learn to live with the virus. As a transition to ultimately lifting the face covering requirement, these research-based off ramps allow local superintendents and school boards to unilaterally lift the requirement as follows:

1. A local board of education may lift the face covering requirement in a public meeting if at least 80 percent of the county population in the county where the schools are located is fully vaccinated, as reported by the Maryland Department of Health.
2. The local superintendent may lift the face covering requirement for a school facility or facilities after a principal or designated school official verifies that 80 percent of the school staff and students in the school facility have been fully vaccinated.
3. The local superintendent may lift the face covering requirement in schools if the county has sustained 14 consecutive days of moderate or low transmission rate of COVID-19 cases, as reported by the CDC.

At each monthly meeting, the State Board reviews current COVID-19 metrics in the State to assess the need for the continuation of the regulation. Our commitment has not changed, and we look forward to reviewing the latest data and health guidance at the State Board meeting on February 22, 2022. As you know, the State Board has and continues to rely upon science, research, and guidance from public health experts, including the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health in its efforts to ensure schools remain safely open. Again, we deeply appreciate your strong leadership and support throughout this once in a century pandemic. We, too, share your desire not to let this pandemic distract us from aggressively addressing the learning loss and social emotional harm this pandemic has done to our children. We look forward to working with you and stakeholders across the state to provide an excellent and equitable education for every Maryland child.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clarence Crawford", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Clarence Crawford
President
Maryland State Board of Education

cc: The Honorable Bill Ferguson
The Honorable Adrienne Jones
Charles Dashiell, Vice President, Maryland State Board of Education
Members of the State Board of Education
Mohammed Choudhury, State Superintendent of Schools