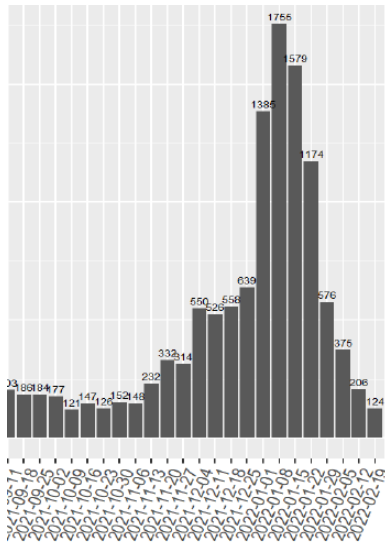


Superintendent's Update – February 25, 2022

Montville Public Schools

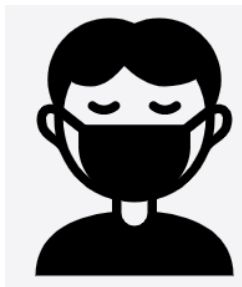


From Pandemic to Endemic Approach

With COVID-19 case rates falling, the widespread availability of COVID-19 vaccines, at-home testing, and effective medications to treat COVID-19, the CT Department of Public Health is moving toward a model for COVID-19 management that aligns with the public health approach to the routine management of respiratory viral diseases. We will rely less on case investigation, contact tracing and quarantining following school exposure and focus on responding to clusters of cases and local outbreaks.

Many state mandates have become recommendations and most restrictions on school-based activities have been lifted. Please review this update carefully for important changes.

Please know we will be poised to respond to increased case rates if necessary, but at this time case rates in the Uncas Health District (pictured at left) are at the lowest levels seen this school year.



Beginning Feb. 28th – Face Masks Optional

Based upon guidance from DPH, **the requirement for faces masks while indoors at school will end on Feb. 28th**. Masks will be optional but recommended for students and staff **beginning Monday morning**.

At this past week's Board meeting, the date for ending the mask-wearing requirement was moved from March 1st to Feb. 28th based on new guidance from the state.

For more detail, please see our [mask-wearing guidance](#).

[CDC Community Level Metrics](#) released today support this change.

We will respect all individual decisions about whether to wear or not to wear a face mask. We will not monitor and enforce mask-wearing so please ensure your child understands your expectations.



Face Masks No Longer Mandatory on Buses

Effective Feb. 25, CDC just communicated that it will not require wearing of masks on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and child care programs.

My prior communication citing a federal requirement for mask-wearing on school buses is no longer correct.

Please know that students are sitting three to a seat on some buses and they can certainly choose to wear a mask.



Test Kit Distribution for All Students and Staff

On March 2, we expect to receive enough COVID-19 rapid home test kits for our entire school community.

We will offer two test kits to every family and staff member. Kits will be distributed to families on March 2 and March 3 from the main entrance at Montville High School between 4-7 p.m.

Please see the [attached letter](#) for more information about distribution and use of home test kits. This link provides [CDC guidance for use of home test kits](#).



Stay Home When Sick!

Please do not come to school / work if you exhibit any of the following symptoms and have not received an alternate diagnosis from your doctor:

- Fever (100.4 or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



New Approach to Quarantine and Isolation

Following DPH and CSDE guidance regarding routine disease prevention strategies, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate from school for at least 5 full days. Day 0 is the date of first symptom or the date of positive test if asymptomatic. **If symptom-free**, students can return to school on day 6, and it is **highly recommended** that they wear masks through day 10. Students may remain home for the full ten days; school work will be provided and students will be counted as “Present-Quarantine.”

Individual case investigation and contact tracing is no longer recommended, and even without masks, school-associated close contacts are not required to quarantine unless symptomatic. We will notice contacts by class, program, or school when multiple cases occur and testing is recommended. [School-wide data](#) is posted on the website.



Sports

Sports teams will follow the most recent [CIAC Guidance](#).

Effective Feb. 28th, CIAC guidelines allow for student athletes to practice and compete without masks both indoors and outdoors. Athletes may choose to wear a mask.

Mask-wearing for spectators will also be an individual choice.



Questions?

Please reach out to your school principal, school nurse, or Central Office staff if you have questions or concerns.

We recognize that our protocols continue to change rapidly as we adapt to new guidance, and we are happy to address any questions you may have.