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Dear Oregon Health Authority Director Allen and Oregon Governor Brown,

The Redmond School District Board of Directors is writing to you today to request information regarding K-12 COVID rules.

As you will recall, in June you rescinded executive orders for K-12 schools and promised a shift to local decision-making models. You further determined that the guidance from ODE and OHA would be advisory for the 2021-22 school year.

The Redmond School District, like many others around the state, made plans to keep students and staff safe within those advisory guidelines and prepared for a return to some normalcy for the 2021-22 school year.

Just a month later, you reversed that statement and announced you would require masks in K-12 schools statewide, among other mandates put in place. At that time, the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance also stated that OHA would review the masking requirement in schools on a monthly basis to determine the need for it to continue.

Since then, OHA has never provided any evidence of its monthly review, nor has it provided any information to the public about what, if any, guidelines it would use to determine when masks were no longer required in K-12 schools and when districts could expect local decision-making to return.

The Redmond School District Board of Directors is asking OHA to immediately provide school districts and boards with a clear explanation of what its reviews look like, when they are held, and what information is considered in continuing the statewide school mask mandate.

For going on two years now, our schools have been disrupted by this virus. We understand its dangers, and we respect that districts must take precautions to keep our students and staff safe. However, here in Redmond as in other parts of the state, there is a great deal of COVID fatigue. We need hope, a light at the end of the tunnel -- and more than that, we need some guidance from the state leaders who have put these restrictions in place. We need clear information about when we can expect local decision-making to return -- what type of metrics our county needs to meet, for example, in order to see masks left up to our capable school leaders.

The Redmond School District Board of Directors appreciates your prompt response with this information.

Sincerely,

Shawn Hartfield, Chair

Michael Summers, Vice Chair

Jill Cummings, Director

Keri Lopez, Director

Liz Goodrich, Director

Redmond School Board of Directors

