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*News for Darien*

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## Schools Superintendent

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**Date :** February 11, 2022

Masking for Darien students and school staff may be over by Feb. 28, as the school District Medical Team has recommended, but the state Legislature and Board of Education will each need to approve the proposal, Superintendent Alan Addley said in his regular Friday message to district parents and staff.

Over 99% of students from ages 12 to 17 and staff in their schools has been vaccinated, and 55% of students and staff in elementary schools, Addley wrote.

"Making this recommendation is only possible given the success of our mitigation strategies, our high community vaccination rates [...] the sharp decrease in COVID-19 cases; low hospitalization rates; the lack of spread in the schools; and the minimal, if any, serious illnesses," he said.

Addley indicated that even if the mask requirements go, wearing masks would be voluntary, since "some

staff and students may need to or want to wear masks."

Addley also noted the Board of Education's approval of a Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget of \$110,607,016, which increases spending 3.74% above this year's budget (town and school budgets run from July 1 to June 30). "Your continued participation in the process is appreciated and encouraged," he wrote.

He also gave out information on upcoming vaccination clinics in town and reminded parents, "If your student tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact and is required to quarantine, please call or email your school nurse(s) [Nurse Contact List](#)." But don't call the hotline.

### **Full Text: Superintendent's Friday Message**

Feb. 11, 2022

Dear Families & Staff,

**Governor's COVID Press Conference:** On Monday, Governor Lamont announced his intent to permit local decision regarding the wearing of masks in schools, effective Feb. 28, 2022. Legislation permitting this change is presently making its way through the Legislature.

The District Medical Team met Tuesday and made the recommendation, effective Feb. 28, to make it optional for students (PreK-12) and staff to wear masks.

Making this recommendation is only possible given the success of our mitigation strategies, our high community vaccination rates (over 99% of staff and students aged 12 to 17 and at least 55% of students aged 5 to 11 are fully vaccinated); the sharp decrease in COVID-19 cases; low hospitalization rates; the lack of spread in the schools; and the minimal, if any, serious illnesses.

Over the next two weeks, school districts await additional guidance from the Legislature, [state] Department of Public Health (DPH) and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) on a number of mitigation strategies including metrics for decision-making, contact tracing, requirements for preschool, quarantining practices and bus transportation.

A special Board of Education meeting will be scheduled prior to Feb. 28 to review additional guidance received for the DPH and CSDE and to consider the Medical Team's recommendation to make mask wearing optional for students and staff.

In the event the BOE approves it being optional for staff and students to wear masks, the district will take the necessary proactive planning steps for staff and students to make a smooth, safe and respectful transition back to an environment where some staff and students may need to or want to wear masks.

It is great news for the community that we are close to returning to more pre-COVID educational practices. Your patience is appreciated over the next two weeks as we await further guidance from the Legislature,

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DPH and CSDE. We will provide you with updates as new information becomes available.

**Vaccination Clinics for School-Aged Children:** Additional state-sponsored vaccination clinics for students 5 to 12 years old, 12-plus and boosters, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 12 from 12 noon to 5 p.m. at the Darien United Methodist Church and Tuesday Feb. 22 at St. Luke's, 1864 Post Road from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. These are walk-in clinics. No appointments needed. Bring your ID and insurance cards. Please direct any questions regarding these clinics to the Darien Health Department at 203.656.7320.

**Reminder Notification of Positive COVID Cases:** If your student tests positive for COVID-19 or has been identified as a close contact and is required to quarantine, please call or email your school nurse(s) [Nurse Contact List](#). Please do not call the hotline. If it is after school hours, you can expect a response by the next school day.

**Board of Education FY23 Recommended Budget:** Thank you for your participation in the budget process thus far. At Tuesday night's meeting the Board of Education approved a FY23 Budget of \$110,607,016 representing an increase of 3.74% above the 2021-2022 budget. The budget supports all students and advances the district's priorities while being mindful of the Darien taxpayers. The BOE Recommended Budget now moves forward to the Board of Finance for review. Your continued participation in the process is appreciated and encouraged.

Wishing you and your family a relaxing and enjoyable Super Bowl weekend!

Sincerely,

Alan Addley, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools