



Conestoga Valley School District
2110 Horseshoe Road
Lancaster, PA 17601



September 14, 2021

CV Community –

Thanks to all who came out to the Board meeting last night. I've included my Superintendent Comments for those who were not present or viewing online. Concerns were voiced in a respectful manner, and as such, were truly heard by me and the Board. A couple of overarching themes emerged from the comments. First, masks are causing stress to my child because he/she has trouble breathing or headaches are occurring; and second, the political view of individual rights versus the government overreach.

Let me tackle the first concern, the negative impact of wearing a mask for some children. Absent getting an exemption from the Order by obtaining documentation from a medical doctor, licensed psychologist or certified counselor, another viable option is the **use of a face shield**. The face shield is less constricting, does not impede breathing, and is an acceptable alternative under the Order. We talked about working together last night, and the use of a face shield is a shared focus with the child's best interest at heart.

As for the second concern, the legality of the Order is something over which neither I nor the Board has control. As mentioned last night, there is currently a case in the Commonwealth Court regarding the Secretary of Health's Order. As of today, the Court has issued a stay, meaning the hearing will not occur until sometime after the petitioners file a brief by September 16 indicating why they believe the Order is illegal. In addition, the Secretary of Health has until September 23 to file a brief stating her position. Until the Order is overturned by the Courts or the Secretary, we will comply with the Order.

We all want our children in school. As our principals continue to communicate with parents and guardians, we gave families a soft opening of two weeks to work with their child on wearing a mask; to secure documentation from a certified counselor, licensed psychologist or medical doctor who has seen your child; or to implement the option to use a less constricting face shield in lieu of a cloth mask. All of these actions outlined by the District have been designed to have our students continue to attend school in-person.

Beginning Monday, September 20, if your son or daughter arrives at school and does not have a mask or face shield on, a mask will be provided to them. If they refuse to wear one, they will wait in the office while a parent is notified to pick them up. If it happens a second time, a parent or guardian will again be notified to pick the child up and information will be sent home regarding our Conestoga Valley Virtual Academy. On a third similar occurrence, the child will be formally enrolled in CVVA, unless the parent or guardian has already enrolled the child in another off-campus school.

We all want our children in our CV schools and will continue to provide options that lessen or eliminate the impact of wearing a mask. We will maintain the focus on the child's ability to attend school in a least restrictive environment. We believe the use of a face shield will provide relief for the child who needs it and will allow the child to better enjoy school while engaged in in-person learning. We will continue to work with our parents as we all work through these challenging times. I am hoping to see all our children in school on Monday, September 20!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Zuilkoski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "D".

Dave Zuilkoski, EdD
Superintendent