

A MASK MANDATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, from the onset of the pandemic, our goal has been to continue to educate children in the safest way possible, and

WHEREAS, our experiences with both remote and hybrid learning last year confirmed our long-held belief, that children are best educated in a face-to-face classroom environment, and

WHEREAS, we have consistently advocated for the use of CDC guidelines as the baseline for safety decisions in our schools, and

WHEREAS, the CDC currently recommends that all students and staff wear masks in schools, and

WHEREAS, COVID cases in children aged 5 to 17 increased 198% from the week of August 15 to the week of September 4, and

WHEREAS, since July, there has been a 2000% increase in cases among Ohio children, and

WHEREAS, the rate of COVID cases in school-aged children is increasing at twice the rate as the rest of the population, and

WHEREAS, in Ohio school districts where masks are optional, there has been a 54% increase of COVID cases as compared to 34% increase in school districts where masks are either required for all students or for K-8 students, and

WHEREAS, students with disabilities or high-risk health concerns are the most vulnerable, and therefore the most likely to have their education disrupted this year or to face serious health risks as a result of being exposed to COVID, and

WHEREAS, neither our schools nor local health departments have the capacity for timely contact tracing in schools where masks are not mandated, and

WHEREAS, students and staff who are not masked and not vaccinated are subject to quarantine, resulting in lost learning time for students and lost sick leave time for educators, and

WHEREAS, our students cannot afford to lose more learning time to this pandemic.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ohio Federation of Teachers calls upon Governor DeWine, with support of the Ohio General Assembly, to implement a statewide mask mandate for K-12 schools, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ohio Federation of Teachers calls upon the 134th General Assembly to table or vote down any bills that prohibit mask mandates, including HB 400 and SB 209, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in the absence of the Governor implementing a mask mandate, the Ohio Federation of Teachers calls upon local superintendents and boards of

49 education to implement a mask mandate, so that our students can have the face-to-face
50 education they deserve in a safe environment, and

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52 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, if staff capacity is an obstacle toward effective implementation of
53 a mask mandate, the Ohio Federation of Teachers calls upon school districts to use federal
54 funds to ensure that staffing is adequate.