

Steve Sisolak  
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA

Rebecca Feiden  
Executive Director



STATE PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL AUTHORITY

1749 North Stewart Street Suite 40  
Carson City, Nevada 89706-2543  
(775) 687-9174 · Fax (775) 687-9113

2080 East Flamingo Road Suite 230  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-5164  
(702) 486-8895 · Fax (702) 486-5543

---

---

**BRIEFING MEMORANDUM**

---

---

**TO:** SPCSA Board  
**FROM:** Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Update and Mitigation Measures for the 2021-22 School Year  
**DATE:** July 30, 2021

---

**Background**

Pursuant to Emergency Directive 044, effective May 1, 2021, authority for managing certain COVID-19 mitigation measures is delegated to charter school sponsors. Therefore, the SPCSA may determine capacity limits, social distancing protocols, and sanitation protocols for school transportation, spaces within school buildings or on school grounds, and for public gatherings and events of up to 250 people<sup>1</sup>.

With regard to face coverings, pursuant to Emergency Directive 045, face coverings requirements continue to be governed at the state level through Emergency Directives. On July 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance regarding face coverings, which recommends that fully vaccinated people to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission. In accordance with Emergency Directive 045, Nevada automatically adopts the latest CDC guidance. However, in order to allow time to implement these changes, the Governor signed Emergency Directive 047 which provides a three-day grace period. With the majority of Nevada's counties currently experiencing substantial or high transmission, including Clark and Washoe Counties, face coverings will be required indoors in most counties across the State beginning on Friday, July 30, 2021. The press release from the Governor's Office also explained that this grace period would allow time for continued conversations between State and school district leaders regarding the measures need to keep

---

<sup>1</sup> Public gatherings and events of over 250 people require a Large Gathering Plan pursuant to Directives 044 and 041.

students and school staff safe amid the increases in community transmission. The most recent guidance regarding face coverings was issued by the Nevada Department of Education on May 11, 2021 and allows schools to relax requirements for face coverings for students that are nine years old and younger, though schools may maintain stricter standards. With the recent updates from the CDC, which included a specific recommendation of universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, it is possible this guidance will be amended prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

On June 25, 2021, the Authority voted to recommend that schools follow prevailing guidance from the CDC and any guidance provided by local health officials. Schools were also required to report to the SPCSA how they are addressing the CDC's recommendations within their reopening plans. All reopening plans have been submitted and can be found on the SPCSA's website here: [https://charterschools.nv.gov/News/2020/SPCSA\\_School\\_Reopening\\_Plans/](https://charterschools.nv.gov/News/2020/SPCSA_School_Reopening_Plans/)

### **Current CDC Guidance Regarding Schools**

On July 9, 2021, the CDC provided updated [guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#). In summary, this new guidance prioritizes safely returning students to in-person instruction in the fall of 2021. The guidance “emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together) to protect people who are not fully vaccinated” and covers a range of prevention strategies including promoting vaccination, consistent and correct mask use, physical distancing, screening testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfection. Of note, the guidance states that “masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated” and the updated guidance issued on July 27 reiterates the CDC's recommendation for universal masking in K-12 schools. In addition, the guidance recommends that schools “maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms” and adds that when it is not possible to maintain social distancing due to space limitations it is “especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as indoor masking.” Additionally, the guidance suggests that localities monitor community indicators regarding transmission and vaccination to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies.

### **Additional Requirements and Guidance for Schools in Clark County**

On July 20, 2021, the Clark County Commission voted to require all employees of businesses located in Clark County to wear face coverings while indoors in public spaces. Under Emergency Directive 041 Nevada transitioned COVID-19 mitigation and management measures to local authorities on May 1, 2021. Therefore, this requirement applies to all employees of charter schools located in Clark County (as well as SPCSA employees in Clark County). As a result, all charter school employees are required to wear face coverings while at school regardless of vaccination status. This requirement went into effect on Thursday, July 22 and will continue at least through August 17, 2021.

Regarding schools in Clark County, on July 22, 2021, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) issued recommendations regarding the use of face coverings for school in Clark County. Specifically, the SNHD strongly recommends that schools in Clark County adhere to the following guidelines:

- “Due to high levels of community transmission we strongly recommend schools support the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation, “All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).
- During periods of low transmission, “All students older than 2 years and all school staff should wear face masks at school if not fully vaccinated (unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit use).”

### **Recommendation**

Unfortunately, we again find ourselves in the difficult reality of increasing test positivity and case rates across most counties in Nevada. Due to the evolving nature of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the SPCSA should *continue to recommend that schools follow all prevailing CDC guidance and any guidance provided by local health officials*. As always, SPCSA staff will work to ensure schools have access to the most recent guidance, information, and resources to inform their ongoing efforts to maintain the health and safety of students and staff.