August 20, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Throughout the pandemic, our primary focus has been to create an environment within our schools that allows all students to return safely to school full time to learn, develop, and grow. Pedagogical research is clear that students learn best when in school five days a week, work closely with their peers and teachers and feel safe and secure. Students need to work one-on-one with their teachers in small groups and move about the classroom freely. Given the current CDC guidelines, a student sitting within 3 feet of an infected individual while unmasked would be considered a close contact and need to be quarantined for up to 10 days. When properly masked, and regardless of infection status, that same student would not be considered within close contact and would not need to quarantine. In a typical classroom setting, all students properly wearing masks would result in only one student being quarantined versus multiple students quarantined. As case numbers increase, the higher the number of infected individuals in a school building, the greater the chance that building would need to return to remote learning for an extended period of time.

After meeting with a team of St. Luke’s doctors specializing in pediatrics, infectious disease, and epidemiology, the Easton Area School District has instituted a mandatory universal masking mandate for all students, staff, and visitors, effective the first student day, Monday, August 30. In addition, masks will be required inside all EASD buildings at all times until further notice. The decision to institute universal mandatory masking was based on the level of community spread, the likelihood that positive test results will continue to increase, and the need to quarantine unmasked close contacts for up to 10 days. District administration will meet with the St. Luke’s medical team in the fourth week of the school year to determine the need for the continuation of mandatory universal masking. Specific guidance regarding masking and quarantining will be provided to the entire community early next week.

As always, we appreciate your support during a time in history that continues to require flexibility and patience.

Sincerely,

David F. Piperato
Superintendent

DFP/ar