



TOMS RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOLS

Designated a High Performing District by the NJDOE

TOMS RIVER BOARD OF EDUCATION

JOSEPH NARDINI, PRESIDENT

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May 24, 2021

Governor Phil Murphy
225 West State Street
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy:

I write to you on behalf of the Toms River School Board in order to express the overwhelming opinion of my fellow board members and the tens of thousands of students and families who comprise this school district, which as you know is one of the largest in the state.

It is with respect and great hope for your sincere consideration that I request you repeal Executive Order 175 in time for the start of the 2021-2022 school year, and relieve our students, teachers, and staff members of the obligation to wear masks inside of school. Additionally, I ask that there be no separation of students based on vaccination status.

This request is submitted in good faith and with great respect for the science and data which drives national, state, and local regulations regarding Covid-19. Our board and school district is not “anti-mask” as a general matter of supposed principle. In fact, it’s our community’s adherence to health and safety measures which prompts this reasoned request. We’ve worked alongside our partners at RWJBarnabas Health [to vaccinate our teachers](#), staff, and even students. We’ve consulted with the Ocean County Health Department and followed all state guidance throughout this pandemic. We’ve gone above and beyond with measures including desk dividers, additional PPE, air purifiers and, of course, a [mask mandate](#). We even installed a Covid Counter for full transparency on our [website](#).

At this point, however, and certainly projecting to September, we believe masks are unnecessary. The vast majority of our staff have been fully vaccinated, and the risk that Covid-19 poses to our student population-- many of whom will also be vaccinated heading into next year-- is extremely low, and not inclusive of the more dramatic symptoms and health problems known to affect older adults.

Please consider repealing Executive Order 175 in time for September, and restoring a sense of normalcy that will help us all breathe easier, literally and figuratively. Thank you, Governor Murphy, for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership throughout these trying times.

Sincerely,

Joseph Nardini
President, Toms River School Board