

## Utah PTA Position on Wearing Masks in Utah Schools

August 19, 2021

Utah PTA takes the position of LOCAL ISSUE on Mask Wearing in Utah Schools with the following statement:

Local leaders have reached out to Utah PTA seeking further guidance on the position of Utah PTA on mask wearing of children. Utah PTA recognizes this is a difficult and unfortunately highly politicized discussion, especially since none of our K-6 students have access to a vaccine.

Utah PTA positions on policies and legislation are directed by the Utah PTA Public Policy Program, which consists, in part, of our mission, vision, resolutions and position statements.

In 2011, Utah PTA members voted to approve [Utah PTA Resolution HEA-2011-1](#) "PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES". This resolution acknowledges those actions that help to alleviate the spread of disease, which are "hand washing ... cough[ing] into ... shoulders or elbows ... and donning a face mask ... to boost protection from severe respiratory illnesses such as influenza, as well as a good way to prevent the spread of microorganisms to others ..."

The resolution directs Utah PTA to "work with the Utah Department of Health, [and] the Utah State Office of Education, ... to educate parents and teachers about how to prevent the spread of communicable diseases; and ... to support legislative efforts to protect children and youth from communicable diseases through vaccinations or other prevention methods allowing for medical, religious, and personal exemptions ..."

That direction from our membership, along with the National PTA position statement on CDC Guidance for Reopening Schools, which states, "Reopening schools for in-person learning is vital to ensure the continuity of education for every child, particularly those who do not have adequate access to technology. However, health and safety must continue to be the utmost priority. Parents are depending on the CDC to provide the best guidance for informed decisions to be made.

"National PTA appreciates the CDC providing clarity on the critical importance of universal use of masks for students, teachers and staff, as well as physical distancing between people to the greatest extent possible ..." must dictate any position Utah PTA takes on mask wearing in schools.

Utah school districts have the important goals of keeping children healthy and safe, avoiding the spread of the virus and continuing in-person learning, however some of our districts only have 1-2 new cases, while other districts are heading to hundreds of new cases. The position of Utah PTA is that this is a Local Issue.

Utah PTA encourages parents to review the best practices for prevention of the spread of disease and to stay educated with accurate and reliable information. Utah PTA urges families to seek information from local and county health departments to get the most timely information and work with locally elected leaders to implement best practices to prevent the spread of disease. Utah

PTA recognizes how passionate parents are on each side of the issue and hope that first and foremost people can be kind as they advocate in the best interest of children.