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T-E School District, Region 3

### Statement of Support for TESD COVID-19 Mitigation Protocol

I fully support the T-E School District COVID-19 Mitigation Protocol which is consistent with the Center for Disease Control guidelines in communities with substantial or high levels of COVID cases. It is imperative that TESD provide a safe environment that enables the students to return and remain for in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year. Our students, as well as their families, have suffered so much from the spread of the Coronavirus. We cannot return to the unmitigated spread which resulted in the virtual learning option and mom's trying to work at home while monitoring their children's remote learning.

I support the mask mandate because research demonstrates that wearing a mask, in concert with social distancing, increased ventilation, hand washing, testing, case monitoring, contact tracing, and quarantine reduces the spread of Coronavirus contained in respiratory aerosols as we speak, sing, cough, and sneeze. See attached article on mask effectiveness.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7883189/>

Why not optional? If some choose not to wear a mask, individuals who may be asymptomatic can spread the virus which diminishes the overall protection against the virus. Whenever the action or inaction of a person poses a risk to other people, the measures to protect public health are not optional. Current examples of mandated actions include requiring specific immunizations before attending school, wearing a seat belt, and prohibitions for smoking in public spaces and driving while under the influence of alcohol.

#### Vaccine Recommendations/Mandates:

The concept enshrined in the Hippocratic Oath cautions "First, do no harm." Since the current vaccines prevent severe disease, hospitalizations, and death due to COVID, what is the harm to the already vaccinated, if some choose not to get vaccinated?

Harms include:

1. The probability of viral mutations increases the longer the viral spread is unmitigated in a community, which also increases risks for the development of a variant that is resistant to the current vaccines.
2. As the hospitals are overwhelmed with treating the COVID cases, hospital beds and staff are unable to treat other conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, auto accidents, and other diseases. This crisis can be seen in other states which do not have mask mandates.
3. Prevention of severe disease, hospitalizations, and deaths does not mean that there are no repercussions to less severe symptoms. Patients may experience discomfort and increase the risk of spread of COVID to unvaccinated family members as well as to the immune-compromised.

The T-E School District is responsible for the education and safety of the students. I support these actions which ensure in-person education in a safe environment.