

**Special Meeting of the  
VALLECITO UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Governing Board  
AGENDA**

*Special Meeting agenda called by the Board President Pursuant to Government Code section 54956*  
**Wednesday, March 2, 2022**  
**4:00 p.m.**

This meeting is being held only through remote teleconferencing in accordance with Government Code section 54953 and all other applicable provisions of the Brown Act. The links to access this virtual board meeting is provided below:

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**Google Meet joining info:**

*Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/eth-ggco-fvu>  
Or dial: (US) +1 470-242-8388 PIN: 184 511 594#*

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- I. SPECIAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**
- II. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**
- III. OPEN SESSION**  
Pledge of Allegiance

*Government Code Section 54954.3 provides that the public will have an opportunity to address the Board on any item described on a regular or special meeting either before or during the consideration of that item. The Board reserves the right to limit the time of presentation by individual and cumulative (BB 9323)*

**IV. COVID-19 Health Guidance Updates Regarding K-12 Schools - Discussion Item**

**Description:**

There have been multiple updates regarding Health Guidance related to COVID-19 since mid-February. The California state indoor masking mandate expired on February 15, 2022 for vaccinated people, however masks continued to be mandatory for indoor K-12 schools. On February 25, 2022 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance that no longer recommends universal mask wearing in K-12 and early education settings in areas with a low or medium COVID-19 community level. Then on February 28, 2022 the California Health and Human Services released a statement that after March 11, 2022, in schools and child care facilities, masks will not be required but will be strongly recommended. The Governing Board will consider the updates being released from various authoritative agencies to discuss the implications and directions for VUSD going forward.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

*In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, for those requiring special assistance to access the Board meeting room, to access written documents being discussed at the Board meeting, or to otherwise participate at Board meetings, please contact the Board Secretary Cheryl Boyd at 209-795-8503 for assistance. Notification at least 48 hours before the meeting will enable the District to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the Board meeting and to provide any required accommodations, auxiliary aids or services.*

*Documents provided to a majority of the Governing Board regarding an open session item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the District Office located at 4545 B Moran Road, Avery, CA during normal business hours. In addition, such writings and documents may be posted on the district's website at: [www.vallecitok12.com](http://www.vallecitok12.com)*

From the Office of Governor Gavin Newsome – News Release

# Governors Newsom, Brown and Inslee Announce Updated Health Guidance

Published: Feb 28, 2022

SACRAMENTO – With declining case rates and hospitalizations across the West, California, Oregon and Washington are moving together to update their masking guidance. After 11:59 p.m. on March 11, California, Oregon and Washington will adopt new indoor mask policies and move from mask requirements to mask recommendations in schools.

State policies do not change federal requirements, which still include masks on public transit.

**Statement from California Governor Gavin Newsom:** “California continues to adjust our policies based on the latest data and science, applying what we’ve learned over the past two years to guide our response to the pandemic. Masks are an effective tool to minimize spread of the virus and future variants, especially when transmission rates are high. We cannot predict the future of the virus, but we are better prepared for it and will continue to take measures rooted in science to keep California moving forward.”

In California, starting March 1, masks will no longer be required for unvaccinated individuals, but will be strongly recommended for all individuals in most indoor settings. After March 11, in schools and child care facilities, masks will not be required but will be strongly recommended. Masks will still be required for everyone in high transmission settings like public transit, emergency shelters, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and long-term care facilities. As always, local jurisdictions may have additional requirements beyond the state guidance.

**Statement from Oregon Governor Kate Brown:** “Two years ago today, we identified Oregon’s first case of COVID-19. As has been made clear time and again over the last two years, COVID-19 does not stop at state borders or county lines. On the West Coast, our communities and economies are linked. Together, as we continue to recover from the Omicron surge, we will build resiliency and prepare for the next variant and the next pandemic. As we learn to live with this virus, we must remain vigilant to protect each other and prevent disruption to our schools, businesses, and communities—with

a focus on protecting our most vulnerable and the people and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.”

In Oregon, the Oregon Health Authority rules requiring masks in indoor public places and schools will be lifted after 11:59 p.m. on March 11. Other state and federal requirements, such as those for health care settings, public transit, and other specialized settings, will remain in place for a period of time.

**Statement from Washington Governor Jay Inslee:** “We’ve continued to monitor data from our state Department of Health, and have determined we are able to adjust the timing of our statewide mask requirement. While this represents another step forward for Washingtonians, we must still be mindful that many within our communities remain vulnerable. Many businesses and families will continue choosing to wear masks, because we’ve learned how effective they are at keeping one another safe. As we transition to this next phase, we will continue to move forward together carefully and cautiously.”

In Washington, indoor mask requirements will be lifted as of 11:59 p.m. on March 11. This new date does not change any other aspect of the updated mask requirements Inslee [announced last week](#). Masks will still be required in certain settings including health care, corrections facilities and long-term care facilities. The Washington State Department of Health will be issuing new guidance for K-12 schools next week so schools can prepare to implement updated safety protocols.

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### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Norma Wallace

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Summerville Elementary School  
Summerville Union High School District  
Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools  
Twain Harte School District  
Vallecito Union School District

February 17, 2022

To: Members of the California State Legislature  
Governor Gavin Newsom  
Brooks Allen, Executive Director, California State Board of Education  
Dr. Tomas Aragon, California State Public Health Officer  
Toni Atkins, Senate Pro Tempore, California State Senate  
Andreas Borgeas, California State Senator  
Senator Brian Dahle  
Frank Bigelow, California State Assembly Member  
Ben Chida, Governor's Office  
Connie Leyva, California State Senator (Chair Education Committee)  
Patrick O'Donnell, California State Assembly Member (Chair Education Committee)  
Dr. Richard Pan, California State Senator  
Anthony Rendon, Speaker, California State Assembly  
Dr. Sohil Sud, California Department of Public Health  
Dr. Eric Sergienko, Interim Public Health Officer, Tuolumne County  
Dr. Rita Huspen Kerr, Amador County Public Health Officer  
Dr. Renee Ramirez, Calaveras Public Health Officer  
Dr. Richard Johnson, Alpine County Public Health Officer  
Tim Taylor, Small School District Association

*Re: COVID-19 Impact on Schools and the Shift from Pandemic to Endemic Response*

The twenty-one school districts in the counties of Alpine, Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne serve more than 14,000 children in TK-12 schools. Over the last two years, we have been working alongside local public health, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), and other health professionals to respond to the global pandemic. The efforts of educators in these counties along with those across the state has been heroic. As we approach the two-year mark of the initial school closures in our counties (March 16, 2022), it has become critical that we must request a clear and immediate plan that permits schools to respond to the shift from a pandemic to an endemic.

The current health mitigation practices, strategies, and recommendations have forced schools to spend a tremendous number of resources and time meeting these requirements. This comes at the expense of efforts toward education and support services. Some examples include:

- ✓ A superintendent spends the majority of their day mitigating COVID-19 protocols rather than leading educational initiatives to benefit students.
- ✓ Students are losing more academic time due to COVID-19 testing, isolation, and quarantine rather than spending time in class.

- ✓ Principals are contact tracing and entering data into cumbersome Public Health systems that consume nearly 100% of their day rather than assisting new teachers, leading efforts at addressing learning loss recovery and providing students with mental health and wellbeing support.
- ✓ The 21 superintendents in the Tuolumne JPA are spending a significant amount of time managing risk assessments related to COVID-19, which causes a significant disruption to their ability to provide needed educational services.

The burdensome interpretation and enforcement of frequently changing and misaligned guidance from California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) has become exhausting and is creating divisiveness between parents, schools, and communities.

To reiterate what our Santa Clara Colleagues stated so eloquently, “School staff are not medical experts, yet are called upon to keep abreast, implement and provide assistance on detailed and complicated COVID-19 isolation and quarantine guidance from the CDPH.”

Inconsistent masking requirements across all sectors has become a significant point of contention for school officials and parents causing discord which takes away from building trusting relationships.

We request immediate and decisive action in regards to the following:

- ✓ Align CDPH and Cal/OSHA guidance on isolation and quarantine rules for staff and students or establish Cal/OSHA exemptions for the education sector to mirror the CDPH guidance that allows staff alignment with students to return safely while maintaining health and safety precautions.
- ✓ We echo the request from our Santa Clara counterparts: “Eliminate, reduce or fully transition responsibility for COVID-19 testing, isolation and quarantine to the healthcare and insurance providers or public health sector as appropriately defined.” School officials and staff are working out of their scope of authority in regards to the health care decisions required to be made. We request those decisions be shifted back to the healthcare sector immediately.
- ✓ Reduce the complexity and number of reports school districts must produce so they may have time to spend with students to address their social emotional, academic, and learning loss needs.
- ✓ Establish criteria immediately that allows school districts to safely shift to an endemic response that aligns with safety practices found in other public sectors.
- ✓ Align masking standards for all public sectors.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective as leaders who are working directly in the field. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you toward finding solutions.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew Strahl, Superintendent, Alpine COE/USD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Torie Gibson, Superintendent, Amador COE/USD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Carla Haakma, Superintendent, Belleview ES

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wynette Hilton, Superintendent, BOFG USD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Chimente, Superintendent, Bret Harte USD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Nanik, Superintendent, CCOE

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Campbell, Superintendent, CUSD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Gillum, Superintendent, Columbia USD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Mori, Superintendent, Curtis Creek SD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contessa Pelfrey, Superintendent, Jamestown SD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paula Wyant, Superintendent, Mark Twain ESD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tami Beall, Superintendent, Sonora ES

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ed Pelfrey, Superintendent, Sonora High SD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Winfield, Superintendent, Soulsbyville EDS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ben Howell, Superintendent, Summerville ESD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Merrill, Superintendent, Summerville UHSD

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cathy Parker, Superintendent, TCSOS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Gabe Wingo, Superintendent, Twain Harte SD

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Hoskins, Superintendent, Vallecito USD

## **Correspondence from California School Employees Association (CSEA)**

(received on Feb. 28, 2022 at 4:27pm via email)

Good afternoon-

CSEA and its Chapter 748 is writing you this message to confirm that we will follow the guidelines that are updated regarding masks and social distancing requirements that are currently being considered. Currently, we are operating under the January ETS issued by Cal OSHA, we expect these guidelines to be updated by them and the California Department of Public Health in the coming days. Until these orders are updated, we will follow the guidelines that are in place now. Thank you, Kyle

Kyle Harvey  
Labor Relations Representative  
California School Employees Association, 5375 West Lane, Stockton, CA 95210



Summary of Announcement regarding Health Guidance Updates for K-12 Schools provided by California School Boards Association (CSBA) on Feb. 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:18pm

## California school mask mandate ends March 11

School masking moves from required to strongly recommended; end dates for staffing flexibility confirmed

California will change its school masking policy from “required” to “strongly recommended” beginning March 12, according to a [joint release](#) in which Gov. Gavin Newsom joined the governors of Oregon and Washington in announcing new masking policies. The decision to sunset the statewide mask mandate was accompanied by confirmation that the measures giving local educational agencies greater flexibility to deal with staffing shortages will expire on March 31 as originally scheduled.

CSBA President Dr. Susan Heredia welcomed the dual announcements as responsive to many of the requests issued in the organization’s [Feb. 22 letter to Gov. Newsom](#) and described them as important steps toward a more sensible and productive learning environment for California students.

“We’re pleased that Governor Newsom has heeded CSBA’s call for a data-informed, K-12-specific exit strategy for emergency COVID-19 measures in California schools. The Feb. 25 executive orders and today’s announcement provide needed clarity for schools from both an operational and a community engagement standpoint as they make plans for staffing, budgeting, and health and safety procedures,” Dr. Heredia said. “Governing boards required this information for critical decisions on emergency substitute credentials, student teachers, long-term substitute assignments, financial incentives for retiree teachers and school masking.”

Gov. Newsom praised the effectiveness of masking as a preventive measure against the spread of COVID-19 while adding that the latest data convinced his administration’s experts that it was time to replace the school masking requirement with a “strong” recommendation. This transition aligns schools masking regulations more closely with the policy for the general public. Masks will still be required for everyone in high transmission settings like public transit, emergency shelters, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and long-term care facilities. In addition, local jurisdictions and LEAs may have additional requirements beyond the state guidance.

“California continues to adjust our policies based on the latest data and science, applying what we’ve learned over the past two years to guide our response to the pandemic,” said Gov. Newsom in a statement. “Masks are an effective tool to minimize spread of the virus and future variants, especially when transmission rates are high. We cannot predict the future of the virus, but we are better prepared for it and will continue to take measures rooted in science to keep California moving forward.”

In a [press conference](#) following the announcement, Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly cited the metrics behind the decision. Cases continue to trend

downward in the state, decreasing 66 percent from Feb. 14. Hospitalizations are about half of what they were in the state two weeks ago and test positivity has dropped 53 percent. “We looked at what’s happening with the pediatric data and California is among the lowest pediatric hospitalizations compared to other states. And this is in part about the important mitigation tools that we’ve equipped schools with throughout the school year,” Ghaly said.

Ghaly added that California has roughly 12 percent of the nation’s students, but has been responsible for less than 1 percent of the country’s COVID-related school closures this year. He credited those results to multiple layers of health protections, including masking, vaccines and testing. Ghaly also noted that while masks have effectively reduced risk, and their impact is greater when rates are higher. So, as transmission rates dropped, his team began to consider whether a statewide indoor school making requirement remained necessary and consulted with other states on policy measures.

Ghaly emphasized the state’s continued focus on equity through its [SMARTER Plan](#). “California and its regions do not experience the pandemic exactly the same way and although these are statewide numbers, they have a range across the state. Some places are still seeing their hospitals impacted” Ghaly said. He emphasized the point by showing slides illustrating the disparities in groups across the state. For example, case rates in lower-income communities are 24 percent higher than the statewide average and death rates for the Black and Latino communities are 17 percent higher and 16 percent higher, respectively.

“Education leaders can now use both statewide data as well as constituent input and the facts on the ground in their specific communities, including any local public health orders, to craft sensible COVID-19 mitigation frameworks for local schools,” Dr. Heredia said. “Our state has experienced significant declines in case rates, test positivity, hospitalizations and other key indicators over the past month, factors that led to the revocation of mask mandates in almost all indoor public places, except for schools and other settings like skilled nursing facilities. Aligning school regulations with current trendlines in the data and with overall public policy will help refocus attention from adult conflicts toward what is required to create a productive learning environment for California students as we transition to this latest phase of the fight against COVID-19.”

Ghaly stressed that local public health agencies and individual districts can continue to require masking and that the state has gone from a requirement to a strong recommendation — a level above “recommended” and “optional” — for a number of reasons, including protecting children who are not yet eligible for vaccinations as well as those who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons and immunocompromised individuals. He also noted that no person can be prevented from wearing a mask as a condition of participation in an activity or entry into a school or business.

In conclusion, Ghaly stated California will remain vigilant on surveillance and continue to track data and conditions with a robust school testing program that can help the state adjust to unpredictable turns in viral transmission and protect children who are not eligible for a vaccine, senior citizens, and people who are disabled, as well as those who have compromised immune systems or other chronic conditions.

Also clarified by the Administration is how this announcement impacts students on school buses. The clarification stated that school buses serving K-12 populations are considered

a school setting and accordingly, masking remains required through March 11, 2022, after which time masking will be strongly recommended.

**Expiration of staffing flexibility orders confirmed**

On Friday, February 25, 2022, the Governor issued an Executive Order clarifying how flexibilities that are scheduled to expire on March 31, will carry schools through the end of the current school year. Specifically after March 31, 2022:

- Days that a substitute teacher provided instruction in a single assignment prior to March 31, 2022, will not count towards that teacher's 60-day limit during the 2021–22 school year.
- Post-retirement salary earned by a retired educator that returned to teaching in the 2021–22 year prior to March 31, 2022, will not count towards that retired teacher's post-retirement earnings cap for the 2021–22 school year.
- Retired educators that returned to service prior to March 31, 2022, may continue in service even if they are still within the 180-day post-retirement employment wait period.
- Allows for the lapsation of flexibilities around issuance of local substitute credentials without requiring a separate application to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and state funding for classes taught by unsupervised student teachers.



## Correspondence Received by the Tuolumne JPA

(Received March 1, 2022 at 9:41 via email)

### Changes Made on February 28, 2022:

- Effective March 1, 2022, the requirement that unvaccinated individuals mask in indoor public settings will move to a strong recommendation that all persons, regardless of vaccine status, continue indoor masking.
- Universal masking shall remain required in specified high-risk settings.
- After March 11, 2022, the universal masking requirement for K-12 and Childcare settings will terminate. CDPH strongly recommends that individuals in these settings continue to mask in indoor settings when the universal masking requirement lifts.

### Masking Requirements

Masks are required for all individuals in the following indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. Surgical masks or higher-level respirators (e.g., N95s, KN95s, KF94s) with good fit are highly recommended.

- Indoors in [K-12 schools](#)[6], [childcare](#)[7] (through March 11, 2022)\*
- On [public transit](#)[5] (examples: airplanes, ships, ferries, trains, subways, buses, taxis, and ride-shares) and in transportation hubs (examples: airport, bus terminal, marina, train station, seaport or other port, subway station, or any other area that provides transportation)
- [Emergency](#)[8] shelters and [cooling and heating centers](#)[9]
- [Healthcare settings](#)[10] (applies to all healthcare settings, including those that are not covered by the [State Health Officer Order issued on July 26, 2021](#))\*\*
- State and local [correctional facilities and detention centers](#)[11]
- [Homeless shelters](#)[12]
- [Long Term Care Settings & Adult and Senior Care Facilities](#)[13]

\*After March 11, the universal masking requirement for K-12 and Childcare settings will terminate. CDPH strongly recommends that individuals in these settings continue to mask in indoor settings when the universal masking requirement lifts. For additional information on types of masks for children, the most effective masks, and ensuring a well-fitted mask, individuals should refer to [CDPH Masks for Kids: Tips and Resources](#).

\*\*In certain healthcare situations or settings surgical masks are required. See [State Health Officer Order, issued on July 26, 2021](#), for a full list of high-risk congregate and other specifically enumerated healthcare settings where surgical masks are required for unvaccinated workers. The Order also includes recommendations for respirator use for unvaccinated workers in healthcare and long-term care facilities in situations or settings not covered by Cal/OSHA ETS or ATD.

Additionally, masks are strongly recommended for all persons, regardless of vaccine status, in indoor public settings and businesses (examples: retail, restaurants, theaters, family entertainment centers, meetings, state and local government offices serving the public). Surgical masks or higher-level respirators (e.g., N95s, KN95s, KF94s) with good fit are highly recommended.

For additional information on types of masks, the most effective masks, and ensuring a well-fitted mask, individuals should refer to CDPH [Get the Most out of Masking](#) and see [CDPH Masking Guidance Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/guidance-for-face-coverings.aspx>

*Norma A. Wallace, CSR*

Executive Director-JPA

Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools

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## **Update from California Association of School Business Officials (CASBO) Regarding the Update on State's COVID-19 Response for Schools**

(Forwarded to VUSD by JPA on March 1, 2022 at 8:55am)

### **Update on State's COVID-19 Response for Schools**

On February 28, 2022, California Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly released an update on the state's mask requirements as follows:

Starting March 1, 2022, masks will no longer be required for unvaccinated individuals but will be strongly recommended for all individuals in most indoor settings.

After March 11, 2022, in schools and child care facilities, masks will not be required but will be strongly recommended.

Masks will still be required for everyone in high transmission settings like public transit, emergency shelters, health care settings, correctional facilities, homeless shelters and long-term care facilities.

Local jurisdictions may implement additional requirements beyond the state guidance based on local conditions, including community vaccine rates or vaccination rates in schools and child care settings.

Article From SacBee – Published on March 1, 2022

## **More Sacramento-area teachers walk out of class over district rollbacks of COVID mask mandates**

Nearly 200 Rocklin Unified School District educators called in sick or took leave Monday, protesting their district's last-minute defiance of state-imposed K-12 mask mandates.

An angry Rocklin Teachers Professional Association in a statement Monday afternoon said its teachers learned the district's board held a special Feb. 23 meeting ahead of its regularly scheduled March 2 meeting on a day's notice and during the district's President's Week break to adopt a new mask enforcement policy.

"While there are varying opinions on masking in our community and our schools, the issue teachers are most concerned about is the lack of respect for educators blatantly displayed by the RUSD Board of Trustees in making this change," the statement read.

Union leaders contended that teachers were unaware of the meeting and that the district's board made the decision in closed session instead of a public meeting. "Our school board's actions not only violated the state mandate, they violated our collectively bargained agreements, and, most importantly, the trust we worked so hard to establish," the union's statement concluded.

District spokesman Sundeep Dosanjh said teacher absences were "unexpected." "While unexpected, like many school districts across the nation, Rocklin Unified has been dealing with staffing shortages since the start of the current school year and continues to utilize credentialed substitute teachers and central office staff to fill vacancies and to supervise students as needed across the district," he said in a statement.

The walkout came as Gov. Gavin Newsom announced changes to the state's COVID-19 mask requirements for classrooms. His administration said masks would not be required for in-person learning on March 11, easing into a policy change he has signaled over the past month.

Rocklin Unified joins a growing list of suburban and foothill school districts in the greater Sacramento area to break with the state, voting to ignore the in-class mask mandates for K-12 students before the Newsom administration rules change. Roseville Joint Unified, El Dorado Joint Union High School District, and also last week, Nevada Joint Union High School District, each voted to make enforcing the mandate optional.

Nevada Union district officials in a letter to parents and students last week explaining their decision said they and other California school districts are "caught in the middle of a very difficult and progressively escalating situation where we acknowledge our obligation to comply

with state and California Department of Public Health mandates and our ability to effectively and humanely enforce them.”

District leaders ultimately decided that the disruption the masking rule caused to classroom learning made enforcing the mandate “unsustainable.”

Newsom’s announcement altering classroom masking rules after March 11 to recommend rather than mandating masking would seem to render the local districts’ decisions moot. But teachers and other schools personnel in Rocklin and in Grass Valley in neighboring Nevada County are angry enough to sit out classes, frustrated, they say, that district leaders are forcing them to choose between obeying state mandates still in place and orders not to enforce those same rules.

Nevada Union was forced to cancel classes Thursday and Friday after dozens of its educators failed to show up for work. Then came Monday’s sick-out in Rocklin. Teachers were back in class on Monday at Nevada Union, but union officials in both districts say the votes to ignore the mandates are also end-runs around bargaining agreements negotiated with teachers and staff. “The issue for our unit remains: It is not about the mandate. Teachers are angry over the board violating our contract and disregarding the collective bargaining process,” Eric Mayer, president of the Nevada Union High School District Teachers Association, said Monday via text. “Our (memorandum of understanding) states we will follow public health guidelines. Having clear agreement between our district’s guidance and the law will make our teachers feel supported and safe.”



Article From EdSource – Published on February 24, 2022

## **Teacher sickout in opposition to decision to end mask mandate closes Nevada Union High School**

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 24, 2022

2:11 PM

DIANA LAMBERT

Some Nevada Union High School teachers pushed back against a decision by their school board to defy state mask mandates by staying home, resulting in the closure of the school on Thursday.

The school board voted Tuesday to make wearing a mask optional for students despite state law and an agreement with their teachers union that masks would be required.

In an interview with CBS13, Brett McFadden, superintendent of the Nevada Joint Union High School District in Grass Valley, said he felt forced to write the policy approved by the school board because students and parents were protesting the mask requirement, making it “untenable.”

Teachers chose to call in sick because the school board is asking them to ignore the state mask mandate, potentially putting their credentials at stake, said Eric Mayer, president of Nevada Joint Union High School Teachers Association. Certificated school staff, including administrators, can be disciplined by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing if they violate state law.

“They are put in a position by the board’s actions where they have to choose between defying the board or defying state law,” Mayer said, stressing that this was not an organized action by the union.

Mayer said the school board also bypassed the collective bargaining process by passing the resolution without an agreement with the union. Mayer said the district has a memorandum of understanding with the district that states that decisions related to Covid would be based on public health guidelines.

The state will likely drop its school mask mandate sometime after Feb. 28, California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said earlier this month. State health officials are reviewing student

vaccination rates, Covid case numbers, hospitalization rates and national and global trends to determine an appropriate time to drop the mandate, he said.

“I don’t understand why they would damage their trust with the collective bargaining units — with us and the classified union — days before the state is set to revise the laws,” Mayer said. “Our position isn’t about masks. Our position is about defending the collective bargaining process.”

On Wednesday the staffing shortage at Nevada Union High School resulted in a school auditorium packed with students — masked and unmasked — watching movies, according to the Nevada Union newspaper.

Nevada Joint Union High School District is one of the latest school districts to make wearing a mask in classrooms optional in defiance of a state mandate from California Gov. Gavin Newsom. Since Feb. 13, when Roseville Joint Union High School District made wearing masks optional, about a dozen other school districts have followed suit, including Clovis Unified in Fresno County, El Dorado Union High School District in El Dorado County, Wheatland Unified in Yuba County and Rancho Sante Fe School District in San Diego County.

State officials have warned that violating the state mask mandate could carry significant legal and financial risks. By violating the state requirement, districts are opening themselves up to lawsuits and could potentially lose their insurance.