



Union County Board of Education

124 Hughes Street ♦ Blairsville, GA 30512

Phone: (706) 745-2322 ♦ Fax (706) 745-5025

John Hill – Superintendent **Dr. Paula Davenport** – Asst. Superintendent **Dr. David Murphy** – Asst. Superintendent

January 4, 2021

Good Evening,

Tonight the Union County Board of Education held a called meeting to discuss how the recent spike in COVID-19 cases in our community will impact our school system. In the meeting, we informed the board that over the past few days, even in the past few hours, we have seen a significant spike in COVID-19 cases among our staff. We currently have 30 staff members quarantined or positive for COVID-19. Several schools and departments are running with the very minimum number of staff to serve our students. As a result of the numbers of positive staff cases we are experiencing, and the anticipation that it will continue to increase, we are going to implement a few stronger mitigation measures to hopefully allow us to continue to operate and serve face-to-face students.

The following mitigation strategies will be implemented effective January 5th, 2021. These measures will be evaluated on a weekly basis, and hopefully we can return to our guidelines previous to the holiday break as soon as possible.

CLASSROOM CHANGES

We are excited to have our students back in the buildings tomorrow, however, in order to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, we are requiring all students to wear a facemask at all times with the exception of eating and drinking. Extra masks will be available to students who need them on January 5th.

Parents will be asked to select one of two options for their child's learning:

1. Face-to-face learning
 - a. It is mandatory for all students to wear masks at all times except for during meals.

If you do not agree with wearing a mask, please keep your child home until we are able to return to pre-break mitigation practices. The only exception will be for children with medical issues (we will do our best to provide face shields to these students) and our students with disabilities.

 - Pre-K to 5th grade students: Teachers will work with the younger students to understand and use the mask to the best of their ability.
 - 6th to 12th-grade students will wear the mask (or face shield) as advised with no exceptions.
 - b. Return to the full quarantine of 14 days for exposed students.
 - c. Increase mitigations for mealtimes wherever possible.
 - d. Further separating/distancing of students when possible.
 - e. Increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures (frequency).
 - f. Students not observing these mitigation strategies will be sent home for Online Learning.

Board Members

Tony Hunter – Chair

Patrick White – Vice Chair

Janna Akins

Julia Barnett

Keith Potts



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1. Online Learning

- a. There will be no penalty or consequences for Online Learning until parents feel more comfortable with sending their child to school.
- b. Again, if you do not agree with wearing a mask, please keep your child home until we are able to return to pre Christmas break mitigation practices.

ATHLETIC CHANGES

- a. Athletic competition will be suspended for the week of January 4th - January 9th.
- b. Permit practice this week, but again, there will be no athletic games.
- c. Increase mitigation strategies for extracurricular activities that mirror face-to-face instruction.
- d. Evaluate (on a weekly basis) games, further reductions in fans, and other increased mitigation efforts.
- e. Visiting teams must follow UCS guidelines. Everyone wears a mask when not playing, and no visiting fans will be allowed.

*These recommendations are subject to change at any time based on the level of community spread and school spread.

Sincerely,

John E. Hill

Superintendent, Union County Schools

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Tony Hunter – Chair

Patrick White – Vice Chair

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