



WEST LONG BRANCH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION

135 Locust Avenue

West Long Branch, NJ 07764

TELEPHONE: (732) 222-5900 FAX: (732) 222-9325

Mrs. Christine Skellinger
President

Mrs. Meaghan Cavanaugh
Vice President

August 20, 2021


The Honorable Governor Murphy,

As the 2021-2022 academic school year quickly approaches, the West Long Branch School District eagerly awaits the full return of our students and staff to embark on a productive year of growth and learning. A new school year brings much excitement and anticipation to both children and adults in our community. Each new school year brings an opportunity to return to time honored traditions while simultaneously offering a fresh start for embracing new opportunities.

On behalf of the West Long Branch School District Board of Education, we respectfully request that you consider the work that our district has done in the face of this pandemic to keep our schools operating safely and successfully for our students and staff. Our K-8 district offered in-person learning opportunities 5 days a week throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Over the summer months we successfully and safely held academic summer programs and hosted recreational programming for children in our community without incident of COVID transmission in school. In partnership with our community we have observed all necessary COVID-19 recommendations and safety measures and have prioritized the safety of our students and staff. We understand firsthand the challenges this pandemic has presented to our school community and have worked with our stakeholders to meet these challenges in the best interest of our schools, students, staff and families.

The West Long Branch Board of Education urges you to reconsider your Executive Order 251 dated August 6, 2021. A universal mandate regarding the use of face coverings in all school indoor spaces disregards the individualized circumstances that exist in each school community and the layered safety approach that our school district has carefully considered and planned for the upcoming school year. The executive order requiring universal masking overreaches and needlessly limits the ability for our local community to work with our stakeholders, including school administrators, school staff, parents, students and community members to make decisions that are in the best interest of our schools. We respectfully request that you rescind Executive Order 251 prior to the start of the school year and return this important decision making to local school districts and the communities they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
The West Long Branch Board of Education


Christine Skellinger
President