

Onalaska Independent School District

P. O. Box 2289, Onalaska, Texas 77360 - (936)646-1099
www.onalaskaisd.net

Dear Wildcat Family,

After receiving guidance from the Texas Education Agency and our local health authorities, Onalaska ISD has made the decision to continue with the prevention and mitigation strategies provided by TEA and outlined in our Onalaska ISD Strong Start Re-opening Plan. In making this decision, Onalaska ISD considered the following information:

- Texas Education Agency guidance recommends the following:
 - Every student, teacher, or staff member shall wear a mask over the nose and mouth when inside a school building, school facility, facility used for school activities, or when in an outdoor space on school property or used for school activities, wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household; provided, however, that this mask requirement does not apply to the following:*
 - Any person younger than 10 years of age, except where a school system determines it is developmentally appropriate;*
 - Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a mask;*
 - Any person while the person is consuming food or drink, or is seated in a dining area to eat or drink;*
 - Any person while the person is: (a) exercising outdoors or engaging in physical activity outdoors; and (b) maintaining a safe distance from other people not in the same household; or*
 - Any person while the person is giving a speech for a broadcast or to an audience.*
- Angelina County and Cities Health Department made the following recommendation:
 - The Angelina County & Cities Health District strongly recommends that area businesses, food service establishments and school districts continue to follow the CDC Guidance regarding COVID-19 protection and prevention measures that include wearing a well-fitting mask when not around immediate household family, social distancing, hand hygiene, COVID testing with isolation and quarantine protocols, and getting a COVID vaccination as soon as it is available.*
- On March 3rd school personnel were added the vaccination eligibility list. While that process has started, many of our staff have not had the opportunity to receive their COVID-19 vaccination. While that process continues, we believe these continued measures are important to their safety.
- CDC, TEA, and ACCHD have not changed the definition for close contact (exposure) and quarantine. As such, the potential for major disruptions to school operations would greatly increase. These potential disruptions may include: temporary school/campus closures, grade-level closures, individual classroom closures, extra-curricular activities (e.g. UIL athletics, UIL academics, FFA) postponements or cancellations, and cancellation of school/community activities (e.g. banquets and social events). Without the mask protocol, on-campus positive cases of COVID-19 will lead to more students and staff being placed on quarantine protocol. This not only disrupts the school community, but also places additional burdens on our students and families as they are required to quarantine.

Onalaska ISD knows that this is a contentious issue and we respect the differing opinions within our school community. However, please know that our number one goal is to provide the safest environment possible, while allowing for on-campus instruction, extra-curricular activities, and community events that so many students, families, and staff were deprived of at this time last year. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the District Administration Office at 936-646-1099. We appreciate your support and patience.

Sincerely,

Anthony Roberts
Superintendent of Schools
Onalaska ISD