



Kenosha Education Association

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January 2, 2022

As COVID cases rise across the country, the Kenosha Education Association (KEA) is asking the Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) to follow the lead of other districts across the state that are taking proactive steps to protect its staff, students, and community against this latest variant which is highly communicable.

We want to continue to promote and protect in-person learning. We know this is the best way for most students to learn and maximize their education. However, we have also been a leader in stressing the importance of using science and data to make hard decisions during this pandemic. KEA leadership, on behalf of its membership, is imploring District Leadership and the School Board to acknowledge the importance of universal masking and weekly COVID testing to mitigate spread. As inconvenient as it is, the virus is not going away this school year, and we will continue to lose qualified, dedicated educators due to the way this crisis has been handled, if not to the virus itself.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Madison Public Schools, Greendale Public Schools and Racine Unified School District are just a few of our neighboring districts who are being proactive to help curb the spread of Covid-19, and KUSD should look to them for examples of actionable responses to the post-holiday surge in COVID cases.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services is urging all students to be vaccinated, masked at all times when indoors (with a proper-fitting mask), and tested when symptoms are present. If we want to keep students in the building AND healthy, we are asking KUSD to facilitate the following:

1. **A Short Term Pivot to Virtual Learning:** In order to maximize in-person learning for the remainder of the year, we need to take action now with a short term shift to virtual learning to mitigate the spread of COVID in our community. The end of the semester is in a few weeks and high school students will have finals - let's take preventative measures now to avoid further disruptions to learning.
2. **Improve Testing and Vaccination Access:** Work with the Kenosha County Health Department, community stakeholders and leaders to secure more tests and consider offering a financial incentive for vaccination. We should also adopt a test-to-stay program for students and staff who are not fully vaccinated.
3. **Provide KN-95 or N-95 Masks:** The new variant of COVID requires different styles of masks, therefore we request that KUSD works to purchase and provide KN-95 or N-95 style masks for students and staff.

With federal ESSER funds available, we have the ability to ensure all students and staff have personal protective equipment (PPE) and can partner with local health officials to provide necessary testing to students and families, as appropriate, and in compliance with applicable privacy laws implement CDC's operational strategy for in-person learning. With a proactive approach, we will have the ability to sustain the safe operation of in-person learning for the remainder of the school year through these COVID-19 mitigation strategies. We thank you for prioritizing the health and safety of our students, families, and educators.

On behalf of KEA Leadership,

Sarah Ratelis, KEA Vice President