The Ector County ISD Board of Trustees held a special meeting on August 26. A recap of the agenda is below.

1. Roll Call. Steve Brown was absent.

2. Verification of compliance with open meetings requirements.

3. In his opening comments, Superintendent Dr. Scott Muri said he appreciated the attendance at this meeting, not only were community members seated in the board room but also two other, overflow rooms. He pointed out there is a single item on the agenda, with a number of people who requested to speak to the issue. He asked that each speaker be given the chance to speak, with no cheering, clapping, booing, or making other sounds as they speak. He mentioned that the news has shown several meetings from around the country that were poor examples of decorum and respect for others, and he hoped this meeting would remain respectful for all.

4. During public comment, 33 people spoke to the school board, most of whom asked the board not to adopt a mask requirement. Each was given two minutes to speak. At the end of the public comments, Dr. Muri told the audience he was proud of the way the session had gone, the level of respect shown to each of the speakers, and the information and opinions shared. He called it an impressive experience.

5. Trustees moved to closed session to consult with their attorney.

A. Trustees voted 6-0 to approve a resolution to allow the superintendent to implement a temporary mask requirement when it is determined to be legally and medically appropriate. If implemented in the future, it would include these four stipulations: 1. All students, staff, and visitors while indoors on ECISD property and while riding ECISD buses, must wear face masks covering the nose and mouth; 2. Masks are not required while eating, or at other times specifically deemed reasonable appropriate by the campus principal or building administrator related to health and safety; 3. Individuals with religious or medical needs/disabilities that prohibit the wearing of masks, upon acceptable verification, are excused from this requirement; 4. The superintendent shall review COVID-19 related conditions regularly and is authorized to determine the duration of the mask requirement, cessation of the requirement based on improved conditions, and/or reinstatement of the mask requirement if lifted.

Before the vote, Dr. Muri showed a few slides (below) illustrating the number of COVID cases and exposures/symptomatic cases inside ECISD, many showing spread in schools. He also pointed out the number of cases in Odessa hospitals tops the numbers in El Paso, a much larger city.
COVID in ECISD

- Daily Cases for Staff
- Daily Cases for Students
- Daily Total Cases
- Total Positive Cases

Highest Number of Positive Cases in 1 day

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Staff Cases</th>
<th>Student Cases</th>
<th>Total Cases</th>
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<td>8/20</td>
<td>589</td>
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As of 08/26/2021

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Staff (approx.)</th>
<th>Student (approx.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OUT FOR COVID POSITIVE</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUT FOR EXPOSURE OR SYMPTOMATIC</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1,290</td>
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Dr. Timothy Benton, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Professor and Interim Regional Dean/ECISD Medical Director, spoke to the board. He pointed out masks have been a long-used medical tool for infection control, and is an effective means for reducing spread of the virus.

Following Dr. Benton, Medical Center Health System Chief Nursing Officer/Quality & Patient Experience Officer Christin Timmons described the situation at the hospital. She said current totals at Medical Center Hospital are 87 total COVID patients, 42 of them in critical care, and 34 on ventilators. She presented a couple of historic comparisons and projections (slides below) showing the critical care numbers growing to critical levels. She also spoke about the trauma being experienced by hospital staff as they treat the rising cases hitting younger people. On behalf of those MCH staff members, she asked the community to trust them that wearing masks will help mitigate the virus being spread as easily.

Dr. Muri pointed out the number of state and national organizations that support the idea of wearing masks to help slow the spread of the virus (slides below). ECISD attorney Mike Atkins also addressed the board with the latest news from the Texas Supreme Court that changed the legal landscape of this issue earlier this afternoon. The Supreme Court says it will honor the governor’s executive order but did not fully resolve the issue of which governing body has the final authority on this type of mandate. Mr. Atkins said it would be ill-advised to enact a mask requirement at this time. The board resolution gives the superintendent the authority to do it at a later time, if appropriate.
“Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.”
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“...the AAP advocates for all students, teachers and staff to wear masks while indoors in school.”
- American Academy of Pediatrics

“...we are urging the American public to take the simple steps we know will help stop the spread of the virus: wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands.” – American Medical Association

“...we are urging the American public to take the simple steps we know will help stop the spread of the virus: wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands.” – American Hospital Association

“...we are urging the American public to take the simple steps we know will help stop the spread of the virus: wearing a face mask, maintaining physical distancing, and washing hands.” – American Nurses Association

“...wearing a mask in indoor public spaces can help protect you and everyone close to you.”
- Texas Department of State Health Services

“We recommend that mask use requirements are implemented by governments, or, when governments do not, by organizations that provide public-facing services.”
- Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America

“Community mask wearing substantially reduces transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus2 (SARS-CoV-2)...”
- The Journal of the American Medical Association

“Please listen to your local public health guidance, wear a mask, stay healthy and save lives.”
- American Lung Association

“Masks should be used as part of a comprehensive strategy of measures to suppress transmission and save lives...”
- World Health Organization

6. There were no closing remarks.

7. The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.
RESOLUTION
REGARDING TEMPORARY WEARING OF MASKS AT DISTRICT
FACILITIES AND ON DISTRICT BUSES

WHEREAS, the Ector County Independent School District ("ECISD") Board of
Trustees ("Board") recognizes that on January 31, 2020, the United States Secretary of
Health and Human Services declared a public health emergency in the United States due
to COVID-19, and on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the
outbreak and spread of COVID-19 in the United States a national emergency, and these
declarations remain in effect; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has created serious health and safety
concerns for students and staff within the District; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing information from local medical officials and local
hospital officials regarding the resurgence of COVID-19 related diagnoses and
hospitalizations in Ector County, the transmissibility of the new COVID-19 variant, and the
need for all residents of Ector County to take precautions, which include the wearing of
protective face masks; and

WHEREAS, after reviewing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC")
guidance, which among other things recommends universal indoor masking by all students
(age two and older), staff, teachers, and visitors at K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination
status; and

WHEREAS, after considering that the CDC and Department of Transportation
Orders mandate that masks be worn on buses;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of the Ector
County Independent School District, pursuant to Sections 7.003, 11.051, and 11.151 of
the Texas Education Code and other applicable law, finds a substantial public purpose
exists to protect the health and safety of its students, staff, and community during the
COVID-19 pandemic by requiring that reasonable safety measures be taken to stop the
spread of the virus within District facilities and on buses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when the Superintendent determines that it is
legally and medically appropriate, the following may be required by the Superintendent on
a temporary basis:

1. All students, staff, and visitors while indoors on ECISD property and while
   riding ECISD buses, must wear face masks covering the nose and mouth.

2. Masks are not required while eating, or at other times specifically deemed
   reasonably appropriate by the campus principal or building administrator related to health
   and safety.
3. Individuals with religious or medical needs/disabilities that prohibit the wearing of masks, upon acceptable verification, are excused from this requirement.

4. The Superintendent shall review COVID-19 related conditions regularly and is authorized to determine the: (1) duration of the mask requirement, (2) cessation of the requirement based on improved conditions, and/or (3) reinstatement of the mask requirement if lifted.

APPROVED this 26th day of August, 2021.

BY: ____________________________
    Tammy Hawkins
    ECISD Board President

ATTEST:

BY: ____________________________
    Carol Gregg
    Board Secretary

BY: ____________________________
    Steve Brown (Not present in vote.)
    Vice-President of the Board

BY: ____________________________
    Delma Abalos
    Board Member

BY: ____________________________
    Nelson Minyard
    Board Member

BY: ____________________________
    Donna Smith
    Board Member

BY: ____________________________
    Christopher Stanley
    Board Member