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MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents and Charter Leaders

From: Katarina Sandoval, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Public Education Department
Gregory Frostad, Director, Safe and Healthy Schools Bureau

Date: May 6, 2021

Re: Updated Mask Guidance

The current Public Health Order (PHO) amends guidance on mask wearing from previous PHOs. The current PHO maintains the requirement for masks to be worn in public places, including schools, but does allow for some limited flexibilities.

All students and staff are to wear masks on school property, including buses, on field trips, and during school events.

Masks are to be worn at all times except when:

- Students and staff are eating or drinking;
- Students are taking short mask breaks outside in a socially-distanced supervised group of no more than five students;
- Staff are alone in an office or classroom with a closed door; and when
- Fully vaccinated staff members are meeting outdoors in a group of no more than 20 individuals, or the maximum mass gathering limit allowed by the color of the county – whichever is fewer (the red county mass gathering limit is five, and the yellow limit is 10).

An IEP team or a 504 team may provide a mask exception for a student with a disability whose disability prevents the student from wearing a mask; however, in most cases it is likely to be more appropriate to provide services to such students remotely for the safety of the student, the student's peers, the staff and school community.