(Español Abajo)

Dear KIPP Colorado Team & Family,

We are writing with an important announcement regarding mandatory masking at our schools and Home Office. As we communicated on 2/9, the City of Denver decided to lift the mask mandate for schools and childcare facilities, effective next Monday. However, after thoughtful consideration, looking at local COVID data and metrics, and discussion with myriad stakeholders, **we are extending mandatory mask usage for all students and staff for an additional month, until 3/25.** We have always upheld the safety and security of our Team & Family as our number one priority at KIPP Colorado. We want to keep everyone safe and ensure that the learning can continue for all of our KIPPsters.

We received 573 family responses to the Mask Mandate survey, with the distribution of response numbers as follows:

* KSPE- 60 responses
* KSPA- 91 responses
* KDC- 151 responses
* KNE- 169 responses
* KNDMS- 140 responses
* KNDLA- 115 responses

The survey concluded with 67% of families in favor of keeping the mask mandate or 384 of respondents. Some comments we received highlighted the fact that families were uncomfortable with lifting the mask mandate before our youngest KIPPsters have access to the COVID vaccine, the recent omicron variant, and student and teacher absences.

We received 235 staff responses to our Mask Mandate survey, representing an equal distribution of respondents from all schools and the Home Office. Among this staff survey, 57% of respondents were in favor of keeping the mask mandate. Some comments we heard from staff who voted for lifting the mask mandate indicated that they felt comfortable with either decision.

Although we are excited by the recent (since late January) downward trend of [local COVID case rates](https://www.denvergov.org/Government/COVID-19-Information/COVID-19-in-Denver/COVID-19-Case-Dashboards#section-2), we feel it is too early to pull back on our mitigation efforts. The state positivity rate remains at 8%, with 7.4% of those cases among children ages 0-9, with ~13% of cases for ages 10-19. Our youngest KIPPsters still do not have access to the COVID vaccine. The vaccine may be approved soon for this age group and we will also take that into consideration as we look toward the future of our mitigation policies.

As such, we will continue to monitor local health metrics, our attendance records, staff, student, and family sentiments, and other relevant data. We will revisit this decision next month in order to determine our next steps. We will keep you informed as we begin to make adjustments and appreciate your flexibility during this time.

Please click [this](https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine/where-you-can-get-vaccinated) link if you would like to get a COVID vaccine or booster shot. If you would like to get tested for COVID, you can do so through our partnership with COVIDCheck Colorado. To schedule a test, visit <https://www.primarybio.com/l/cdphe>.

Please feel free to respond directly to this email to lift any questions or concerns you have. Thank you for always doing what is best for our entire Team & Family–big and little KIPPsters.

In Partnership,

The Executive Team