



NEWS RELEASE

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DECEMBER 8, 2020

STATE BOARD RESPONDS TO NSEA PETITION

The Nebraska State Board of Education has declined to issue a declaratory order that would mandate masks in schools as requested by the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA).

In November, the NSEA petitioned the State Board for an order that would require all students and staff to wear masks in all Nebraska schools. The petition also called for a number of additional requirements for schools related to COVID-19 strategies and a requirement for the commissioner of education to investigate and report compliance of the order.

After careful consideration, the request was declined as the board does not have the authority, by law, to issue such health mandates. Nebraska state law gives local boards of education the authority to make rules and regulations concerning the health of students in public schools. Therefore, the board believes local school districts have the power to require masks in their schools. By law, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) also has the ability to issue Directed Health Measures (DHMs) that could require masks in schools.

The State Board fully realizes the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on all schools. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) as a whole commends the educators and staff who continuously provide high-quality teaching during one of the most challenging times of our generation.

Throughout the pandemic the board has supported districts that have mask mandates and recommended a statewide mask mandate in a resolution in November. Since March the NDE has also provided schools with guidance through the Launch Nebraska website, including the recommendation of masks and the requirement of schools to follow state and local DHMs.

[Determination Declining Declaratory Order](#)

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