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Schools Must Quickly Implement Newly Announced Mask Mandate as Schools Open

The Education Law Center applauds the Wolf administration's announcement acknowledging the ongoing health pandemic and related need to ensure safe learning by issuing a universal statewide mask mandate for all Pennsylvania public schools, effective September 7. The order will create safe learning environments during the pandemic while establishing appropriate exceptions for students and school staff with qualifying disabilities.

Masks have proven to be highly effective at reducing the spread of COVID-19 in schools, and the need for masking is well-established. "We believe that today's directive requiring schools to mandate masks is essential to ensuring the health and safety of all our students, teachers, parents, school staff and communities," said Education Law Center legal director Maura McInerney.

Yesterday, the Education Law Center, alongside four dozen organizations from across Pennsylvania, sent letters to the governor, secretary of health, secretary of education, and leaders of the General Assembly, requesting this mask mandate.

"Today's action is science-based and vitally necessary to prevent further spread of the Delta variant. We urge local school leaders and lawmakers not to stand in the way of this public health measure, which will help keep children safe and in school. Black and Brown children have been disproportionately affected by school closures, further contributing to disparities in educational opportunities. A strong mask requirement will help to ensure both safer and more equitable learning opportunities," McInerney said.

Read the advocates' letter to the governor and secretaries of education and health [here](#) and the letter to the General Assembly [here](#).

The Education Law Center-PA (ELC) is a nonprofit, legal advocacy organization with offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. Through legal representation, impact litigation, community engagement, and policy advocacy, ELC advances the rights of underserved children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, English learners, LGBTQ students, and children experiencing homelessness. For more information, visit elc-pa.org or [@edlawcenterpa](https://twitter.com/edlawcenterpa) on Twitter.