



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



February 8, 2022

Via Electronic Mail

Dr. Steven F. Cheeseman
Superintendent of Schools
Diocese of Bridgeport
238 Jewett Avenue
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06606

Re: Mask Mandate

Dear Dr. Cheeseman:

I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut State Department of Education ["CSDE"] regarding your February 7, 2022, mask-mandate letter to the parents of students who are enrolled within Bridgeport Diocesan schools. In that correspondence, you stated: "I have chosen to end our mask mandate on Valentine's Day, February 14th." As you may be aware, the statewide mask mandate in Connecticut schools was promulgated pursuant to Executive Orders, which remain in force through February 15, 2022. Executive Orders have the force of law, and thus, terminating the mask mandate as of February 14 would be in contravention of law.

Furthermore, Governor Lamont has asked Connecticut's General Assembly to extend certain of these mandates, including those pertaining to masks in schools, through at least February 28, 2022. Should the legislature do so, then such masking would remain legally required through that date, after which it would fall upon individual school districts and schools -- including Diocesan schools -- to decide whether or not to implement their own directives. Should the legislature vote to continue the masking mandate, the CSDE will work in close collaboration with the Department of Public Health to provide updated guidance in advance of the conclusion of the mandate on the 28th.

Given this, the CSDE is asking that the Diocese rescind the February 7, 2022 correspondence and that it discontinue its plans to terminate the legally required mask mandate on February 14, 2022.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions regarding this matter.

Very truly yours,


Michael P. McKeon
Director of Legal and
Governmental Affairs