

DATE OF MEETING: 8/1/2021

ITEM NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MTA Board of Directors' Meeting  
**ITEM OF NEW BUSINESS**

Check One:    Proposed Policy    **Proposed One-Time Action**    Informational Item

**MOVED:**

1. That the BOD endorses the following statement, which calls upon the governor and DESE to take action regarding the need for continuing protections in our preK-higher ed settings in order to help protect students, staff, and communities against the threat of COVID:

“The MTA Board of Directors endorses the [CDC’s updated mask guidance for in-person K-12 education](#) this fall, which recommends that all students and staff wear masks inside schools, regardless of vaccination status. The Board also endorses the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [COVID-19 Guidance for Safe Schools](#), which states that schools “*must continue to take a multi-pronged, layered approach to protect students, teachers, and staff (ie, vaccination, universal mask use, ventilation, testing, quarantining, and cleaning and disinfecting).*”

The Board also believes that multiple layers of protection and mitigation strategies against COVID need to be in place in our public higher education settings.

The importance of fully vaccinating the population cannot be overstated, but we have yet to reach that goal. As of right now, the percentage of fully vaccinated children under the age of 12 sits at 0%. There are no vaccinated children enrolled in PreK through Elementary school, and not all of them are yet eligible in middle school. With all the mitigation protections DESE mandated last year currently lifted (and that locals negotiated MOAs around), nothing in the state guidance stands between our youngest learners and COVID-19. And although many students between 12 and 17 have been vaccinated, not all have. And in higher education, we will have students coming here from all over the country, without consistent, mandatory vaccination requirements for enrollment, and no way of knowing their status.

The CDC, the AAP, and over [200 Massachusetts medical professionals](#) are recommending that even vaccinated students and staff wear masks and that other health and safety protocols remain in place because [new data has emerged](#) showing that the Delta variant can cause breakthrough cases in vaccinated individuals, and these individuals can also carry and spread the virus to others asymptotically.

Our immunocompromised educators, students, and their family members must also be protected.

For all these reasons, multiple safety measures, including but not limited to universal masking and social distancing, must remain in place for the foreseeable future.

Finally, the MTA Board calls on Governor Baker to

- implement a mandatory mask requirement for preK-higher education
- increase efforts to vaccinate students who are eligible
- provide access to free and regular in-school COVID testing
- provide funding to continue to repair ventilation systems

and for DESE to

- modify its [July 30th, 2021](#) guidance that lifts all of last year’s health and safety requirements by issuing new guidance that includes mandatory universal masking and other health and safety recommendations that the CDC and AAP are recommending for school this fall and beyond.”

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2. The MTA publicizes this statement by:
    - a. Sending it to Governor Baker and Commissioner Riley
    - b. Sending it to the MTA membership and local leaders
    - c. Posting it in appropriate MTA social media
    - d. Sending it to other media as appropriate

**RATIONALE:**

The threats from the Delta variant of COVID are becoming more severe, and cases are on the rise as school approaches. We have nowhere near universal vaccination, and children under 12 are not vaccinated at all. It’s time to rescind the lifting of all restrictions and safety mitigations for our schools in order to stem the spread of this variant and help to prevent the development of even more variants.

**COST ESTIMATE:**

**STAFF TIME ESTIMATE:**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Sue Doherty, 29D

Heidi Lahey, Executive Committee Region B