



# SOUTHWEST LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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John C. Hamstra  
Superintendent

Thomas J. Lowe  
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Adam D. Lohbeck  
Director of Operations

Dear Parents, Guardians, Students and Staff –

August 3, 2021

The last 18 months have been challenging, to say the least. The weight of the global health pandemic has been felt throughout society and especially in our schools. There has been much discussion and feedback with regards to direction for this fall – as we once again see an uptick in COVID cases in Ohio and the USA. Our #1 goal is, and always has been, to keep our students and staff safe and in school, and to maintain face to face instruction.

**For this fall, we follow the guidance of the Hamilton County Department of Health and STRONGLY RECOMMEND** that those not vaccinated wear masks while in school – this goes for both students and adults. This is different than last year – when masks were MANDATED by the State of Ohio. We fully agree that masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and that vaccinations are also an important tool in ending this pandemic.

We will continue to implement several of the mitigation strategies we had in place last year such as social distancing, improved air filtration / air movement within the schools and practicing good hand hygiene throughout the day. Attached, you will find the Hamilton County Department of Health’s “Covid-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio’s K – 12 Schools”, which speaks more in depth to several of these strategies.

Please note, there is a federal masking MANDATE in place for public transportation, which includes school buses and vans, that is in place through Sept. 13, 2021. For those utilizing school transportation, please keep this in mind. Again, this is a FEDERAL MANDATE.

Also, like last year, the situation is very fluid. Our nursing team and administrators will be working with the Department of Health to gauge both community spread and or any spread that may occur within our school walls. The goal is to maintain face to face instruction again throughout the year and to do so in a safe manner. We will need your continued support of our schools as we take this fall – one week at a time. As we stated last year, it’s important you have a plan in place for if and when a masking mandate is put forth (like what we have with public transportation) or if proven spread occurs within our schools and a shift to remote learning becomes necessary.

Lastly, more detailed information will be shared out by building, as we draw closer to the start of school. The situation we are working with right now is very fluid and it’s important that we work together for the best possible outcome for our students. We don’t know what the future holds, but we will work to take full advantage of the present.

Thank you again for working with us this fall and thank you to the folks that joined us at our ribbon cutting ceremonies this past weekend! What an awesome event!

Go Cats!

*John C. Hamstra*

John C. Hamstra  
Superintendent  
Southwest Local Schools

**Mission:** “Academic and Social growth for all students, EVERY DAY!”

**Motto:** “Excellence through Relationships!”

**Core Values:** Trust, Respect, Ownership, and Leadership