



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Sunday, January 16, 2022

Coalition of Arlington Parents and Educators Backs Universal Masking in Schools

Arlington, VA: The grass-roots parent and educator group Smart Restart APS applauds the recent [announcement by Arlington Public Schools](#) (APS) Superintendent Durán to keep the universal mask requirement for all students, staff and visitors in APS. Dr. Durán made his announcement in response to newly-elected Governor Youngkin's [Executive Order](#) rescinding the statewide school mask mandate.

Universal masking is a critical safety measure in schools, recommended by the CDC, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the US Department of Education, the National Association of School Nurses, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, and the [Northern Virginia Health Directors](#). The CDC "recommends universal indoor masking by all students (ages 2 years and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status." ([CDC: Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools. Updated Jan. 13, 2022](#)) Smart Restart is pleased that APS is following the recommendations of these organizations.

"I am relieved that Dr. Durán is prioritizing the safety of students and staff in APS by continuing to require masks in schools," said Dasha Herмосilla, an APS parent. "Studies have shown masks lower Covid transmission rates and keep kids and staff in school."

"Mask mandates directly impact our most vulnerable students," said School Social Worker Naghmeh Merck. "No student or family should have to choose between their health or their education. All students have a right to be educated in a safe environment and I thank you for being their voice."

“Unfortunately, pandemics don’t come with expiration dates. I’m happy Dr. Durán is keeping the mask requirement, especially since only 48 percent of our elementary students are vaccinated and breakthrough cases are still causing a problem. Protecting our teachers and most vulnerable population should be a top priority,” said APS parent Tammie Dzubak.

Smart Restart APS is grateful that our Superintendent and School Board are demonstrating strong leadership and a commitment to providing a safe school environment for APS students, teachers and staff during the pandemic. We thank APS for continuing the universal mask requirement and other mitigation strategies to ensure in-person education remains safe and accessible for ALL students.

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About Smart Restart APS

Smart Restart APS is a coalition of parents and educators in Arlington VA that advocates for Covid-19 safety measures in schools.

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