

## From Washington State Superintendents

August 18, 2021

### **Re: In Response to July 28, 2021 Department of Health Update**

Dear Honorable Governor Inslee and Washington State Department of Health:

**OUR STUDENTS NEED HOPE.** Coming off an unmasked summer of Washington State being “fully open”, our students are now going to be coming back to our schools with a continued mask mandate and other mitigation strategies. We are not health care professionals, and you have never made it clearer than you have now that the updated guidance holds the power of law. Further, Superintendent Reykdal has made it clear to us that if we do not follow these requirements our funding apportionment will be withheld, and further, that this is not a local decision in any way. Schools play a crucial role in the health of our communities, and being educators and not health care professionals, **we will follow these requirements as best we can in the midst of a very challenging situation.** We did our very best last year, and in the midst of a continued pandemic and impactful Delta variant, we will continue to do our best heading into this school year.

With all of this said, we have said for years in education that we are going to focus on the “whole child”. We know from talking with our students, surveying our students, and analyzing the state-wide COVID-19 student survey (6/28/2021) that **many, and in some cases the majority, of our students are struggling deeply with their mental health and well-being.** Given this, we are asking that you seriously consider:

- Any time you hold a press conference or update schools on data around COVID/Delta Variant, you include multiple metrics on the status of mental health and well-being of school aged children.
- Any time that requirements for schools are updated, include current mitigation strategies on the mental and emotional impact this pandemic is having on our students.
- Establish a specific metric to apply to LOCAL communities establishing a benchmark for when the masks can come off and other mitigation strategies are no longer needed. **This will provide HOPE for our students** and will give our communities a goal to rally around.

**Thank you for your serious consideration of this request.** We appreciate all that you are doing, as well as your ongoing leadership, as you help us navigate these difficult times.

Sincerely,

**Mr. Eric Sobotta**  
Superintendent  
Reardan-Edwall School District

**Mr. Bob Rogers**  
Superintendent  
Mill A School District

**Guy Strot**  
Superintendent  
Dayton Schools

**Mrs. Michelle Kuss-Cybula**  
Superintendent  
Cle Elum-Roslyn School District

**Mr. Kevin Young**  
Superintendent  
Republic School District

**Kim Spacek**  
Superintendent  
Inchelium School District No. 70

**Jeff Hardesty, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent  
Oroville School District

**Mr. Steve McCullough**  
Superintendent  
Tonasket School District

**Tom Whitmore**  
Superintendent  
Bickleton School District

**Mr. Tim Payne**  
Superintendent  
Ephrata School District

**Mrs. Ashley Goetz**  
Superintendent  
Okanogan School District

**Mr. Jim Kowalkowski**  
Superintendent  
Davenport School District

**Mrs. Ingrid Colvard**  
Superintendent  
Stevenson-Carson School District

**Mr. Bill Ressel**  
Superintendent  
Sprague School District

**Greg Goodnight**  
Superintendent  
Pateros School District

**Mr. Don Hawpe**  
Superintendent  
Cusick School District

**Mr. Charles Pierce**  
Superintendent  
Lamont School District

**Eric Driessen**  
Superintendent  
Brewster School District

**Mr. Brett Baum**  
Superintendent  
Great Northern and Rosalia School Districts

**Mike Messenger**  
Superintendent  
Mansfield School District

**Mr. Jerrad Jeske**  
Superintendent  
Liberty School District

**Brent Freeman**  
Superintendent  
Wahkiakum School District

**Mrs. Monica Burnett**  
Superintendent  
Paterson School District

**Suzanne Schmick**  
Superintendent  
St. John-Endicott Cooperative Schools

**Mr. B Paul Turner**  
Superintendent  
Grand Coulee Dam School District

**Mr. Matt Galley**  
Superintendent  
Nooksack Valley School District

**Mr. Don Vanderholm**  
Superintendent  
Lind-Ritzville Cooperative Schools

**Shane Schutz**  
Superintendent  
Napavine School District

**Mr. Dan Read**  
Superintendent  
Almira and Odessa School Districts

**Mr. Jason Perrins**  
Superintendent  
Chewelah School District

**John Cordell**  
Superintendent  
Tekoa School District

**Barry P. DePaoli**  
Superintendent  
Lake Chelan School District

**Chuck Wyborney**  
Superintendent  
Wilbur Creston School Districts

**Mrs. Tabatha Mires**  
Superintendent  
Waterville and Palisades School Districts

**Mr. Doug Curtis**  
Superintendent  
Lacrosse School District

**Zane Wells**  
Superintendent/Principal  
Garfield School District

**Mike Jones**  
Superintendent  
Palouse Schools

**Dr. Ken Russell**  
Superintendent  
Riverside School District

**Steven Marshall**  
Superintendent  
Hockinson School District

**Travis W. Hanson**  
Superintendent  
Deer Park School District

**Michael Olsen**  
Superintendent  
Kettle Falls School District

