



NEWS RELEASE

Utah State Board of Education

250 EAST 500 SOUTH P.O. BOX 144200 SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-4200
www.schools.utah.gov

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Contact: Mark Peterson, public relations director
801-538-7635 · mark.peterson@schools.utah.gov

Utah State Superintendent Statement on OCR Letter on Mask Mandates

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson today had this response to the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) [investigation on statewide prohibitions of universal indoor masking](#).

“While we appreciate OCR’s efforts to protect children, specifically students with disabilities, we think they have unfairly defined Utah as a state where mask mandates cannot occur. State law places these decisions at the local level with local health departments and locally elected officials. We have witnessed the process occurring in several counties and currently Salt Lake City and Grand County School districts have indoor mask mandates in place,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Sydnee Dickson. “Our schools continue to utilize the many health and safety protocols developed and implemented last year to keep our students learning in person.”

A recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study](#) heralded Utah’s efforts in keeping students safe amid COVID-19 concerns. Utah law continues to allow school districts and charter schools to work with local health departments who can continue to issue public health orders on indoor mask mandates.

“We look forward to working with OCR to clarify Utah’s position on the issue. We continue to urge districts and charters to work with their local public health care professionals to continue providing Utah students and public school staff with safe and effective schools,” Dickson said.

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