

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Contact: Joaquin Romero  
[joaquin.romero@nmlegis.gov](mailto:joaquin.romero@nmlegis.gov)  
(505) 506-5798

## **Senator David Gallegos Urges Secretary of Education to End Mask Mandate in Schools**

*New Mexico's holdout as one of the last states with a child mask mandate demonstrates PED is fighting against scientific consensus*

SANTA FE – Following announcements this week that New Jersey, Connecticut, Delaware, and Oregon will remove masking requirements for school children, **Senator David Gallegos** (District 41-Lea and Eddy) today submitted a letter to Secretary of Education, Dr. Kurt Steinhaus, urging the Governor's Administration to follow suit.

Senator Gallegos released the following statement regarding his letter to the Secretary:

"I hate to see it, but it seems as though New Mexico is at the bottom of another bad list. We are now one of the last holdouts to accept the widespread conclusion that there are demonstrable drawbacks to masking our kids and very little data, if any, to support their continued use. As a state, we must begin our transition to normalcy now, beginning with our kids who are most resilient to the virus and most impacted by masking and lockdowns. I urge the Governor and the Secretary to follow the lead of these other states by immediately rescinding the statewide school masking policy."

Senator Gallegos' letter to Secretary Steinhaus is attached.

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New Mexico State Senate  
State Capitol  
Santa Fe

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**SENATOR DAVID M. GALLEGOS**

R-Eddy & Lea-41

P.O. Box 998  
Eunice, NM 88231

Cell: (575) 390-7570  
E-mail: david.rsi@hotmail.com

February 8, 2022

The Honorable Kurt Steinhaus  
Cabinet Secretary  
New Mexico Public Education Department  
300 Don Gaspar Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Sent via email to [kurt.steinhaus@state.nm.us](mailto:kurt.steinhaus@state.nm.us)

Dear Secretary Steinhaus:

On behalf of concerned parents and educators, I urge you to personally petition Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to immediately remove the masking mandate in our schools.

This week alone, four states—New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, and Oregon—have announced the lifting of similar masking requirements. They follow other recent decisions in Pennsylvania and Maryland, leaving New Mexico as one of the last remaining states with a statewide school masking mandate still in effect.

We now have several studies demonstrating “a minimal reduction in COVID-19 transmission with masks in schools,” most of which do not account for vaccinations.<sup>1</sup> It is also worth noting that the World Health Organization has advised against masking young children because of the “potential impact of wearing a mask on learning and psychosocial development.”<sup>2</sup>

I hope you will agree that the time to remove the statewide school masking mandate is now, for the health and safety of our children and the good of our schools. Continuing to impose a policy with many potential risks and few palpable benefits is wrong, and we must restore the authority to make this personal decision to parents.

Your serious consideration of this request is appreciated and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David M. Gallegos".

DAVID M. GALLEGOS  
State Senator

<sup>1</sup> Knips, J. (2022, February 5). It's Time to End Mandatory Masks in Schools. Retrieved from Time: <https://time.com/6145291/end-mandatory-masks-schools/>

<sup>2</sup> Smelkinson, M., Bienen, L., & Noble, J. (2022, January 26). The Case Against Masks at School. Retrieved from The Atlantic: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/01/kids-masks-schools-weak-science/621133/>