

# Union County School Board decides to keep masks optional at schools

WFAE | By [Nick de la Canal](#), [Ann Doss Helms](#)

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*Union County Public Schools / Facebook*

A class session at Union County's Parkwood Middle School, where masks inside are optional.

The Union County School Board voted to keep masks optional for students and staff. The 7-2 vote at Tuesday night's meeting came after an hour of public comment from parents, teachers and others who spoke both in favor and in opposition of the move.

Ahead of the vote, Assistant Superintendent Jarrod McCraw said the school district was

who test positive or have close contact with someone who tests positive.



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“I want the public to know we provide seating charts, we provide information that can mine that data down to the positive case and who was seated within six feet of those students,” McCraw said. “We provide that to Union County Public Health.”

As of last week, there were 225 coronavirus cases reported in Union County Public Schools, and more than 1,600 students and staff were staying home because they were either infected or had close contact.

Union County is one of a handful of mask-optional school districts in North Carolina.



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students or school employees will notify the other. The school district will also give the health department information about who was likely in close contact inside schools when a case is identified. And the school district will enforce the county’s quarantine orders.

A new North Carolina law requires districts to vote on mask policies every month.

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## Nick de la Canal

Nick de la Canal is a reporter for WFAE covering breaking news, arts and culture, and general assignment stories. He work frequently appears on air and online. Periodically, he tweets: @nickdelacanal

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## Ann Doss Helms

Ann Doss Helms covers education for WFAE. She was a reporter for The Charlotte Observer for 32 years, including 16 years on the education beat. She has repeatedly won first place in education reporting from the North Carolina Press Association. Reach her at [ahelms@wfae.org](mailto:ahelms@wfae.org) or 704-926-3859.

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