



RSAI Memo re OCR letter to Dir. Lebo on Mask Mandates

Hello RSAI Superintendents:

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights issued a [letter](#) to Iowa DE Director Lebo today stating the office is opening an investigation to look at whether Iowa's law banning mask mandates is keeping some kids out of school.

This is the statement that we provided to the Des Moines Register regarding the letter and ensuing investigation. Just a heads up that your local media may try to reach out to you as well.

RSAI leaders maintain a priority of local control as the authority which best meets the needs of students, families, staff and stakeholders. Although we would have preferred that school boards retained the authority to best determine the health and safety measures needed in their local community school district, at this time, HF 847 is the law of the land, prohibiting local school leaders from requiring mask mandates, which in essence prohibits the school from requiring that employees, students, or members of the public wear a facial covering while on school property.

I have not heard of any school districts intending to defy the state law and would expect obedience to the state ban will continue until there is a higher authority, such as a court order, the federal government, or a Governor's public health declaration of emergency granting such authority to mandate masks to local boards. Every school district is different, no doubt with as many communities comprised of majorities who would support a mask mandate as there are districts comprised of majorities who would not, so this is a challenging issue all around.

Margaret Buckton, RSAI Professional Advocate

Office: (515) 251-5970 ext. 1

Cell: (515) 201-375

Email: margaret.buckton@rsaia.org