

# WHAT SCIENCE SAYS ABOUT PROPER MASKING IN K-12 SCHOOLS



## WHAT DID THE ABC SCIENCE COLLABORATIVE STUDY?

This study describes two school districts' approaches to evaluate and encourage proper masking. The study took place in two large (more than 15,000 students) traditional public school districts in North Carolina. Masking was the major safety strategy for limiting spread of SARS-CoV-2.



## WHEN DID THE STUDY TAKE PLACE?

Researchers looked at data from April 5, 2021 to May 21, 2021.



## WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS LEARN?

- Researchers learned that a high percentage of students and staff were following proper masking (>80 percent) in both school districts at all school levels (elementary, middle and high school) and in both the daily and weekly mask monitoring.
- Rates of within-school transmission were low in daily and weekly masking groups and in both school districts, with only 14 within-school COVID-19 cases and 127 community-acquired cases documented in both school districts during the period of the study. This study took place before the Delta variant was dominant in the U.S.



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FAMILIES AND SCHOOL COMMUNITIES?

The results of this study suggest that safety programs led by staff and school administrators can be effective at ensuring highly consistent masking at all grade levels and at limiting spread of COVID-19 within schools.

Grassroots safety programs at schools that are developed by staff and administrators can help create a safe learning environment and a culture of trust and safety among school staff.



## WHO FUNDED THIS RESEARCH?

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COLLABORATIVE

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## WHAT HAPPENED IN THE TWO PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS DURING THE STUDY?

During the study, each district implemented their own grassroots safety program to help students and staff consistently use proper masking within school buildings. The two districts structured their safety programs as follows in the table below:

	DISTRICT 1	DISTRICT 2
 <b>Leadership</b>	Local teachers' organization and school leadership	School district administration
 <b>School levels</b>	Elementary schools (9)	Elementary (17), middle (9), and high schools (9)
 <b>Education</b>	Teachers' organization educated school leaders, safety teams, video on properly masking	ABC Science Collaborative provided education on proper masking to district administrators
 <b>Intervention</b>	Safety team member reminded students and staff of correct masking in real time	School administrators reminded students and staff of correct masking in real time
 <b>Monitoring frequency</b>	Daily (4 schools), weekly (2 schools), none/control (3 schools). If less than 90% proper masking within a building was recorded over a week, then the school took corrective action.	Daily, in 20% of students and staff at all schools in district
 <b>Weeks of intervention</b>	April 5 – May 14, 2021	April 19 – May 21, 2021