

Date: September 1, 2021

For Immediate Release

The Operations Team of the Beadle County Covid-19 Task Force **“Urgently Requests that Area Schools Require Masking”**.

The Operations Team of the Beadle County Covid-19 Task Force met on Wednesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, and reached agreement on the following **updated** position concerning precautions with the upsurge of Covid 19 infections:

***“The Operations Team of the Beadle County Covid-19 Task Force is now urgently requesting area schools REQUIRE MASKING INDOORS, effective immediately, to help protect our students.”***

***Additionally, the team would “Strongly Recommend” that all citizens mask when indoors, as a strategy to help all of us stop the spread of the Delta Variance of Covid-19.***

Rationale includes the following:

- 1. The infection rate continues to increase in the schools and in the communities.***
- 2. The State Fair brings thousands of people to one location, thus causing concern for school children in the days that follow.***
- 3. Children less than age of 12 years currently have no access to COVID-19 vaccines.***
- 4. Of children who are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, less than 60% have been vaccinated.***
- 5. The Delta variant is 2-3 times more contagious than other variants, and poses a significant threat to our children and educators.***
- 6. This summer, we are seeing the emergence of other respiratory viruses that are causing a huge burden and disruption to education. Masking will help mitigate those other viruses.***
- 7. The Delta variant may cause breakthrough infections in our vaccinated population, which may cause death and permanent disability in the medically frail.***

The goals of this position include:

- Keeping students and staff safe.***
- Keeping students in school and activities.***
- Reducing pressure on medical providers.***
- Keeping parents available to work.***
- Keeping businesses open.***