

**JOINT RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR ENDING CONTACT
TRACING AND QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

WHEREAS, the Union County Board of Commissioners and the Union County Board of Education desire to make the following statement regarding school quarantine and contact tracing procedures;

The Union County Board of Commissioners and the Union County Board of Education reaffirm our commitment to the joint resolution adopted by both boards in December 2021. This resolution called for an end to school quarantine and contact tracing measures for COVID-19 by the beginning of the new school term, January 19th, 2022. There have been subsequent updates to the state's Strong Schools Toolkit that reduce timelines for quarantine and isolation, and we applaud the directional shift in policy and tone these changes reflect. However, there continues to be no end in sight for quarantine and contact tracing or even the prospect of it from the NCDHHS.

We recognize that we are amid a new surge of COVID-19 cases driven by the omicron variant. This surge of new cases has been despite the considerable public health response to date. It is becoming increasingly evident that this virus isn't going away, and that we are going to have to learn to live with it in a way that doesn't unreasonably risk our children's education and mental health.

Regardless of action by NCDHHS, we are planning changes to our approach to school quarantine and contact tracing procedures when we determine that cases in Union County are declining in the current surge. We anticipate this occurring in the coming week(s). Our focus is going to be on developing a collaborative approach that allows children to stay in school if they are not positive or symptomatic – the new approach is being fully developed and will be provided to the public in the coming week(s).

As the elected leaders of Union County, we remain committed to the residents of our community and public schools, supporting the mental and physical well-being of our children by keeping them in the classroom when they are healthy.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of these and other relevant matters, the Union County Board of Commissioners and the Union County Board of Education hereby jointly and resolutely adopt this statement.

Adopted the ____ day of _____, 2022, by the Union County Board of Commissioners.

Attest:

Lynn G. West, Clerk to the Board

Dennis Rape, Chairman

David H. Williams, Vice Chairman

Richard B. Helms, Sr., Commissioner

Stony D. Rushing, Commissioner

Jerry B. Simpson, Commissioner

Adopted the ____ day of _____, 2022, by the Union County Board of Education.

Melissa Merrell, Chairperson

Sarah May

Kathy Heintel, Vice Chairperson

Joseph Morreale

Jimmy H. Bention, Sr.

Todd Price

Matt Helms

Gary Sides

John J. Kirkpatrick, IV