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Dear Queen Bee 16 Families,

As many of you may know by now, on Friday, February 4, 2022 an Illinois Judge made a ruling on a lawsuit challenging the authority of the school mask and close-contact exclusion mandates issued by the Governor and enforced by the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education. The Judge issued a Temporary Restraining Order, suspending the requirements issued by the Governor, and this ruling was immediately appealed. The laws currently in effect will require that the appeal of this decision will be heard on or before February 17th, 2022.

It is our understanding that the ruling does not apply to school districts not named in the lawsuit and, therefore, does not apply to our School District. Queen Bee 16 is not a named party in the lawsuit. The decision that will come from the courts on or before February 17th, 2022, will in all likelihood apply to all school districts and this includes Queen Bee.

Accordingly, we will continue to adhere to the same guidelines we have been following regarding masking, school exclusion for close contacts and vaccination/testing while we wait for the next ruling. Please continue to follow the guidance currently in place in our District as we monitor ongoing legal developments in this matter.

It is understood that the past two years have been incredibly challenging for every member of our community at multiple levels. Every effort has been made to work within the ever changing environment to prioritize the safety of students, families, and our employees. **We have employed a layered mitigation plan from our first opportunity to return to In-person Instruction. There is no one element of our plan that has been responsible for keeping our schools open and largely free of COVID transmission.** Our plan has been to match the level of mitigation to the level of the threat and I look forward to responsibly removing mitigation layers one at a time as we see COVID transmission play a smaller and smaller role in our daily lives.

At this time, I am asking for your patience as we continue to work through each challenge as a community and on behalf of our students. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions, concerns or insights to share.

Thank you,

Joseph R. Williams, Ed. D.

Superintendent