



STEEL CENTER

for CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

565 N. LEWIS RUN ROAD
JEFFERSON HILLS, PA 15025
PHONE: 412-469-3200
FAX: 412-469-3209
www.steelcentertech.com

Thursday, November 11, 2021

Dear Steel Center students and families,

I am writing to address yesterday's PA Commonwealth Court ruling to reverse the statewide mask mandate for schools that the Governor issued at the beginning of September. While this is likely to create some confusion and even stir up an already highly debated issue, it is my responsibility to follow through with the decision that I recommended and Steel Center adopted to require masks here which occurred prior to the state mandate. Because Pennsylvania's school including Steel Center retain the right of local control and decision making absent state or federal mandates, our decision will remain in place. This means that regardless of the current legal battle over masks, we will continue requiring our students, staff, and visitors to wear masks while in the building.

As I stated to you earlier this year, it is my responsibility and duty to put education and safety first. To accomplish this, we must stay open while doing everything we can to keep students and staff healthy and in school. Our Health and Safety Plan for this year was driven by the goal of providing a 5-day fully in-person learning model. This plan was written, adopted, and amended based on the best information and most current guidance available regarding COVID-19. Feelings and politics about masks aside, the overwhelming feedback that I received from students, their families and our staff is that we need to be here in-person, every day, and receiving hands-on learning and face-to-face instruction. That is how Career and Technical Education is best delivered period.

Our mask wearing policy reflects a commitment to keeping our programs "in-person" this year. We believe nothing replaces the experience of hands-on teaching and learning to support our students on their Pathway to Success. We all continue to be sick of COVID-19, sick of masks, and all that has come with it. I understand and respect the differing views regarding this issue. We are not trying to infringe on anyone's freedom or liberty, but are simply focused on the task at hand, keeping classes here running and the students learning and so far this year it has been working as well as could be expected. **So until further notice, keep those masks on and lets continue to learn and work together (in-person) right here at Steel Center- your Pathway to Success.** Please reach out to me with your questions and concerns on this topic at 412-469-3200 ext. 6741 or krice@steelcentertech.com.

Respectfully,

Kevin E. Rice
Executive Director