

The **Bandera PROPHET**

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School districts keep mask policies in place

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The Bandera Prophet

Governor Greg Abbott announced on March 2 that he was rescinding his executive order mandating masks and opening all Texas businesses to full capacity, effective Wednesday, March 10. Local school districts, however, will maintain the status quo, for now.

"We are aware of the Executive Order from Governor Abbott lifting the statewide mask mandate beginning March 10th. We anticipate further guidance for districts from the Texas Education Agency regarding how the executive order will affect school districts. At this time, there are no changes to our current COVID-19 safety protocols to announce.

Next week is our district's scheduled spring break. As we have with any modifications to our guidelines, we will clearly communicate any updates prior to the beginning of school on Monday, March 15th," stated a press release issued by Bandera ISD.

Medina ISD's stance is the same.

"As with our neighbors in Bandera the Medina ISD administration and board of trustees are aware of the Executive Order from Governor Abbott lifting the statewide mask mandate beginning March 10th. We anticipate further guidance for districts from the Texas Education Agency regarding how the executive order will affect school districts. At this time, there are no changes to our current COVID-19 safety protocols to announce. The mask protocol has kept our students and staff at low risk and our school open with low cases of large quarantine numbers. We are certainly ready to get back to normal in our world but we will continue to make decisions that puts the safety of our students and staff as priority #1. The Medina ISD board of trustees will make every effort

to research any health updates or changes from the governor's office, the CDC, TEA and the Texas Department of Health and implement decisions based on qualified updates from those in these areas of expertise," MISD Superintendent Kevin Newsom wrote.

In its Public Health Guidance, issued March 3, TEA stated Abbott's Executive Order GA-34 provides it with the legal authority to publish requirements for the operation of public school systems during the pandemic. Further, TEA said school boards have authority to determine their districts' mask policies.

"TEA recommends that public school systems consult with their local public health authorities and local legal counsel before making final decisions regarding the implementation of this guidance," the guidance states.

In other school news, TEA has approved the missed school days waiver for the school closure from Feb. 12-19, during the extreme winter weather.

This means the district will not have to add minutes to the school day and students will not have to make up the lost days.