

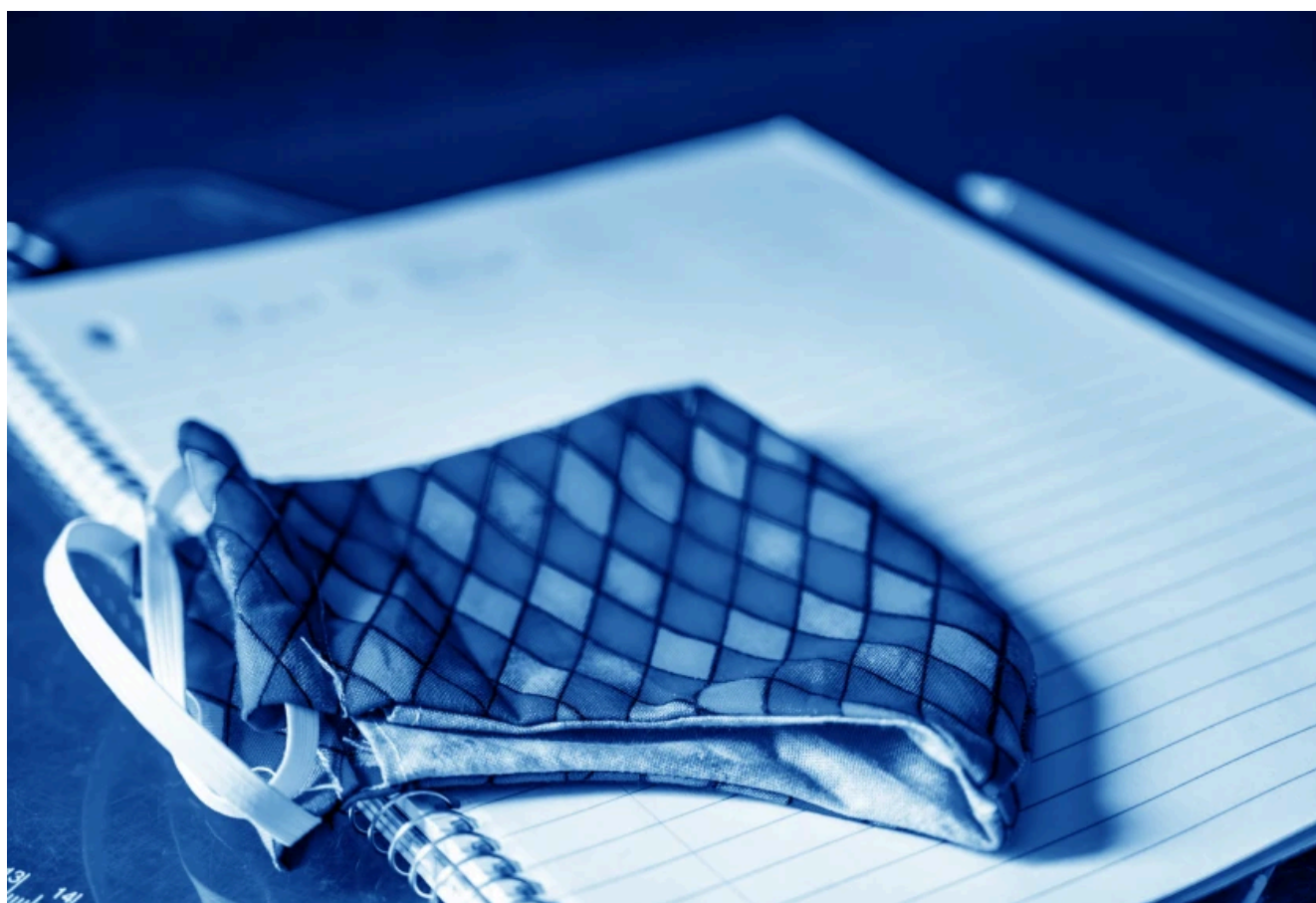
Which States Banned Mask Mandates in Schools, and Which Required Masks?

A look at school mask policies during the 2021-22 school year



By [Stacey Decker](#) — August 20, 2021 | Updated: July 08, 2022

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According to Education Week, 18 states and the District of Columbia required masks to be worn in schools at some point during the 2021-22 school year. By the end of May, all but one of those states — Hawaii — had dropped their requirement.

Meanwhile, 11 states had at some point during the school year banned school districts from setting universal mask mandates.

One state, Virginia, shifted over the course of the school year from requiring the wearing of masks to banning mask mandates.

The remaining 22 states did not issue state-level mandates, which allowed districts to set their own mask policies.

It's worth noting:

- At the start of the school year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended universal indoor masking in schools. In February, the agency relaxed that recommendation.
- Some state-wide mask policies included exemptions for certain districts, schools, groups, or individuals.
- States that banned school districts from enacting universal mask mandates had policies that varied. Some forbade districts from setting mask mandates. Others required districts that had them to allow students or their parents to opt out for any reason, effectively preventing a universal requirement.
- State-wide mask policies shifted throughout the school year as state officials changed course or courts ruled to block or halt them.
- Additionally, in some states, policies were unclear or outright defied by individual districts.

[View a collection of Education Week's coverage of masks in schools.](#)

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