

Dear LPSD Covid Council Members,

On behalf of the Port Alsworth community, we as Tanalian LSAC, unanimously request that Tanalian School return to our site specific Smart Start Plan that was originally implemented in September 2020. We are currently in the Green Zone with no known school or community related Covid cases which meets the requirements for any school in LPSD to operate under their own Smart Start Plan.

We ask specifically that if there are no known school related Covid cases we would, as stated in our plan, move to masks being recommended but not required beginning January 25, 2021. This will be two weeks after the start of spring semester, allowing for any cases from break to develop, and is in compliance with state mandates requiring people to quarantine for two weeks after traveling. The reason we feel strongly about this decision is that we have observed that masks foster a poor learning environment for our students. Some students come to school for part of the day, but go home early (or come in late) at parent's request so they will not have to wear face coverings all day. In addition, we have students that complain of headaches and a few get migraines from wearing the masks for long periods of time which results in early dismissal. We have families that have chosen to homeschool as long as masks are mandatory, reducing our enrollment numbers. In addition to our recommendations regarding masks, we would like to be able to decide for our school if open gym is permissible for our students and other community members.

Our community, like all villages in our district, has a high understanding of safe behavior around Covid-19 and a desire to foster and perpetuate a healthy environment in our community. We also, as other villages, have the most intimate understanding of our community, its specific needs and challenges, and what would cultivate its overall health. Although we know the district has a high level of understanding about all our communities and a tremendous desire to keep us all safe and healthy, we would like the opportunity to make decisions for our school locally while in the safe zone of Green.

We thank you for considering the needs of our community during these unprecedented times and thank you for the involvement of the district to implement procedures that trust the parents and local teachers and administrators to do what is best for our children and students.

Sincerely,

The Tanalian LSAC Committee