



'Hamilton' tickets are on sale now for Saroyan Theatre run

CHOICES, 3B



VISALIA TIMES-DELTA

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022 | VISALIATIMESDELTA.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Visalia, Tulare schools encourage mask use



Daisy Guzman, student at Global Learning Charter School, works on an assignment during class on ct. 15, 2021. LAUREN JENNINGS/VISALIA TIMES-DELTA FILE PHOTO

Big contrast between Valley, state with school masking

DIANA LAMBERT, CAROLYN JONES, ALI TADAYON, EMMA GALLEGOS, AND KATE SEQUEIRA
Ed Source

California students and school staff had mixed emotions about the end of the state's school mask mandate Monday. In the Bay Area many students and school staff opted to continue to wear masks, while face coverings were scarce in schools in the Central Valley and Northern California foothills.

At Concord High School in Contra Costa County, about 70% of students wore masks Monday, at least some of the time, said principal Rianne Pfaltzgraff. Most of the staff also chose to keep their mask on, but some were still elated that masks were no longer required.

In at least one class, teachers held a "mask reveal" where students flung off their masks and looked at each other's faces for the first time. Junior Kaila Murillo was amazed at how different her friends looked than she expected. The eyes and ears offer only a glimpse of a person – so much is expressed in

See MASKING, Page 8A

Students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, no longer required to wear masks as of March 12

Lauren Jennings Visalia Times-Delta
USA TODAY NETWORK

Students all over California are no longer required to wear masks while on campus or while attending school and district activities.

The drastic change comes two years after schools throughout the nation were forced to close following the pandemic. California's mask mandate officially went into effect in the summer of 2021.

Classes resume in-person that fall for some students, while others decided staying home was safer. As COVID-19 numbers dropped nationwide and pressure to lift the mandated mandate, state officials reevaluated over the winter.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced in



A masked student returns to Mountain View School on Aug. 12, 2021. RON HOLMAN/VISALIA TIMES-DELTA FILE PHOTO

late February students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, would no longer be required to wear masks starting March 12.

"While the statewide school masking mandate goes away..." a letter sent to Visalia Unified parents reads, "the California Department of Public Health and VUSD continue to strongly recommend

face coverings as a personal choice to protect against COVID-19 exposure."

Tulare Joint Union Superintendent Lucy Van Scyoc sent out a similar statement to parents last week.

"Even though masks are no longer required, they are highly recommended," Scyoc said, "and we respect the choice of our students, parents, and staff."

Masks are no longer required indoors and while riding on Visalia Unified school buses. Students and faculty are also no longer required to social distance while eating indoors and/or outdoors.

The district's update asks that its stick students stay home. "If your student has multiple symptoms that are aligned with COVID-19," the letter continues, "please consider having them tested."

The California Department of Public Health's recent K-12 guidance states students who test positive must isolate five days and provide a negative test, or isolate for 10 days, before re-

See SCHOOLS, Page 2A

Special US House election will fill term of Trump ally Nunes

Michael R. Blood
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES – Former California U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes' resignation to lead Donald Trump's media company has left his one-time constituents with an odd special election: Voters will select someone to complete the remaining months of his term in a district that will disappear next year.

The election next month in the Republican-leaning 22nd District in the state's Central Valley is largely an afterthought as national Republicans and Democrats focus on November elections that will determine control of Congress in 2023.

See NUNES, Page 2A

Russia's onslaught continues amid optimism

Andrea Rosa ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine – Russian forces destroyed a theater in Mariupol where hundreds of people were sheltering Wednesday and rained fire on other cities, Ukrainian authorities said, even as the two sides projected optimism over efforts to negotiate an end to the fighting.

The airstrike ripped apart the center of the once-elegant building, where hundreds of civilians had been living since their homes had been destroyed in the fighting, Ukraine's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Many people were buried in the rubble, officials said, though there was no immediate word on how many had been killed or injured. Satellite imagery from Monday showed the word "children" written in large white letters in Russian in front of and behind the building, the Maxar space technology company said.

"Another horrendous war crime in Mariupol," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter, calling the bombing a "massive Russian attack."

The Russian defense ministry denied bombing the

See UKRAINE, Page 4A



USA TODAY
Experts worry CDC loosened mask guidance prematurely. 6A

Weather
High 73° || Low 43°
Sunny. Forecast, 2A

Volume 140 | Issue 73
Home delivery pricing inside
Subscribe 888-487-9565
©2022 \$1.50



Visalia Times Delta
Tulare Advance-Register