

**Thursday, February 18, 2021**

## **Board of Education Coalition School District Vaccine Plan**

Dear Governor Lamont:

We know that you, the CDC, and Dr. Anthony Fauci have recommended that the education community be prioritized for vaccines. This is a top priority for the coalition of unions representing school educators and employees listed below, CAPSS representing superintendents, CABA representing boards of education, and the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association representing parents throughout the state.

We are writing about the School District Vaccine Plan that we want to have ready to roll out when the Essential Worker Phase begins at the end of this month.

Families must be comfortable and confident sending their children to school. When students safely interact with teachers and staff, we support their critical social emotional learning and mental health. Vaccinating educators and staff will ensure that there are enough school personnel to make this happen—with educators and staff safe in their work environment.

CDC guidelines now exempt those who are fully vaccinated from needing to quarantine, which will allow more schools to remain open when all educators and staff are vaccinated.

Our goal is for all K-12 school employees to be vaccinated, from start to finish, in the month of March, as Ohio is now doing this month. About half of all states are vaccinating school employees at present. When Connecticut begins vaccinating essential workers, we propose that 30,000 or more vaccines per week be directed to the School District Vaccination effort. Schools will work with local healthcare and public health institutions to provide on-site or local administration of the vaccine, in a manner similar to the way schools administer annual flu shots (understanding that protocols will be different due to the pandemic).

When overseen by school districts, the timing of the vaccinations can be arranged to complement and not disrupt school schedules. Given that there are more than 120,000 educators and staff in our K-12 public schools, and 11,000 in private K-12 schools, the effort for the first shot should be completed in March and would be repeated at the appropriate time for the second shot.

In summary, rolling out the school-based vaccine program as quickly as possible is critical given recent CDC guidance and ongoing concerns regarding safety in schools.<sup>1</sup> The CDC has reiterated that the school community should be prioritized for vaccines. As mentioned above, the CDC has provided new guidance stating that those who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine if they have been exposed to

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<sup>1</sup> [The CDC released two new studies of COVID school safety. Here's what they find.](https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/2/2/22262837/cdc-studies-school-reopening-wisconsin-covid-safety) Chalkbeat, 2/2/2021. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/2/2/22262837/cdc-studies-school-reopening-wisconsin-covid-safety>

Transmission in schools remains a concern. The CDC recently released two studies regarding such transmission. The first, which covered 17 rural schools in Wisconsin, concluded that there were few cases of COVID-19 spread within the schools between September through November 2020. Despite a high number of infection cases detected in the schools, contact tracing could not prove that most of the cases were transmitted in school, and there was no testing to determine whether it had spread through asymptomatic infections. The second study received much less media attention, even though it covered the entire state of Wisconsin. It determined that 5,700 cases were linked to spread in schools and childcare facilities, and that schools had more COVID-19 transmitted cases than restaurants, bars, or food production facilities. The differing conclusions of both studies are tied to the unreliable nature of contact tracing.

someone with COVID-19. Since the leading cause of school closures in Connecticut is the shortage of teachers and staff because of quarantine, vaccinating school employees now will help keep Connecticut schools open.

We would like to schedule a virtual meeting to discuss this at your earliest convenience. Let's work together to vaccinate all educators and staff in the month of March. Thank you.

Sincerely,

**The Board of Education Coalition**

*AFT Connecticut, American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees, Council 4, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, Connecticut Education Association, Connecticut Parent Teacher Association, Municipal Employees Union Independent, MEUI, SEIU Local 506, UAW, Region 9A, CSEA, SEIU Local 2001*