

January 14, 2021

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Secretary of Health Umair Shah
101 Israel Road SE
Tumwater, WA 98501

RE: Request to reconsider delivery of COVID-19 vaccine to educators

Dear Governor Jay Inslee and Secretary of Health Umair Shah,

On behalf of over 100,000 educators across the state of Washington, we add our names to the growing chorus of state elected and local education leaders urging the State of Washington to reconsider delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine to all school employees, employees of private contractors working in or public schools such as bus drivers and nutrition services workers, and higher education employees.

Please read what these leaders are saying:

- Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Education Committees – *“Nothing will even resemble normal until our schools are fully functioning, given that they are foundational in so many ways to all Washington communities.”*
- Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal – *“If we prioritize the 142,000 school employees earlier, we can open our schools much faster, and the subsequent vaccine rollout will have a far greater impact on returning our families, communities, and businesses to stability.”*
- Congresswoman and pediatrician Dr. Kim Schrier (D-8th District) – *“Working parents need schools to open as well. Think about all of the parents – disproportionately women – who left the workplace when schools shuttered last spring. Those families depend on the largest childcare provider in the nation – our public schools – for before and after-school care.”*
- Seattle Schools Superintendent Denise Juneau – *“Prioritizing vaccinations for public educators and critical support staff will send a strong message of the state’s commitment to public education and care for our public educators in a time when so much is uncertain. This action will help build trust in our collective commitment to recovery.”*
- Everett Schools Superintendent Andrew Kelly – *“If we really value our kids...support the safety of our educators and their families!”*

- Evergreen School Superintendent Mike Merlino and Vancouver Superintendent Steve Webb – *“To safeguard our employees as we expand in-person learning to middle and high school students, it is necessary to vaccinate educators, school leaders and support staff. Approximately half of our workforce is age 50 and older. We therefore are requesting that ALL pre-K through 12th grade school district employees be moved to Phase 1, B2, in the state’s vaccination schedule, allowing this group to be vaccinated in February.”*

Over the past 10 months, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated how foundational our public schools are to all other institutions and segments of our state. Delivery of the vaccine to all school employees, along mandated safety protocols that include face coverings and physical distancing, for example, would accelerate the safe re-opening of our public schools to in-person instruction.

Vaccination of our school employee community would also serve as a powerful demonstration of the efficacy of the vaccine to other populations all across the state, including specific at-risk groups.

In addition, some states have begun administering the COVID-19 vaccines to higher education workers, such as faculty teaching in-person classes, who do not work in health care. States such as New York have placed certain higher education workers at the same priority level as K-12 staff for the vaccines.

Getting our K-12 schools, colleges and universities back to “normal” operations will make it possible for more parents to return to the workforce, further fueling our state’s economic recovery and reducing the need for any painful cuts to education and other vital public supports.

Thank you for your consideration of this request,



Teamsters
Joint Council
No. 28

