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Honorable Gov. Jay Inslee
State Health Officer Dr. Umair Shah

This evening, the WEA Board of Directors passed a resolution ([link](#)) stating that all educators working in school facilities should have access to both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine before returning to in-person learning. The Board's position groups all PK-12 and higher education professionals working on-site into one category, regardless of age, and does not divide them into two groups the way that the state Department of Health (DOH) guidelines do. The risk is present and real for anyone working on-site.

As schools continue to re-open, even while case numbers climb, and a new, lesser understood but more highly contagious variant continues to spread, WEA thinks this is the only responsible position to take to support the health and safety of our members, students, their families and our communities.

WEA has said, and continues to say, that our members want to be working in-person with students but conditions must be safe. Access to vaccines, when coupled with implementation of state Labor and Industries (L&I) workplace health and safety requirements, are two critical steps in creating safer schools for educators and students participating in in-person teaching and learning.

The resolution includes several additional elements.

- 1) Recognize the disproportionate impact COVID has had on communities of color, and the historical abuses of those same groups that may lead to reluctance to get vaccinated. The resolution asks the state to prepare a medically based information campaign to address these concerns.
- 2) Ensure equitable access to the vaccine for educators in rural communities.
- 3) Create vaccine distribution plans that address the above issues so that vaccines are available to all educators who are working with students in-person and who want them.
- 4) Educators who are returning to in-person instruction should receive both doses before re-opening school in person. Those who are already on-site should receive the full vaccine dosage promptly.
- 5) Given the uncertainty of when vaccines will be available, districts must continue to bargain with their local associations to address and solve inequities created by online learning.

WEA's Government Relations Director Djibril Diop and I are both willing to meet and discuss this further should you have questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Larry Delaney", written in a cursive style.

Larry Delaney, WEA President