

January 31, 2022

California State Senate  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
10<sup>th</sup> and L Streets  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear California State Legislature,

RE: Return to Local Decision-Making Authority and Reconsideration of Proposed Vaccination Mandate

As elected school board trustees from California school districts and county boards of education, we have worked collaboratively with state and local health departments to keep our schools open. For nearly two years, we have followed the issued requirements to prioritize the health and safety of our students.

Our districts have operated in-person learning safely since reopening, many since fall of 2020 without ever needing to close a campus due to COVID-19, without a COVID-19 vaccination mandate.

However, we now have seen first-hand the growing mental health crisis among children and must in all decisions weigh the need for normalcy, acknowledging our responsibility to protect not only the physical, but also the social, emotional and mental health of our students.

Parents, including COVID-19 vaccinated and pro-vaccination parents, have expressly shared that they are uncomfortable subjecting their children to a vaccination for which there is no longitudinal data. We support staff and families maintaining the choice and freedom to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine for themselves and their children, but believe the Governor's proposed vaccination mandate removes choice from the equation by forcing individuals to submit to the mandate or lose access to in-person instruction (if they are students) and their jobs (if they are staff).

Therefore, we believe that parent/guardian choice in vaccination and other health decisions is crucial. We believe that staff choice in vaccination and other health decisions is critical. While we understand the goals of the Governor and the CDPH to stop the spread of COVID-19, we believe the Governor's proposed K-12 student vaccine mandate is ill-advised and in opposition to the educational and social-emotional goals of the State and our districts, therefore we urge the Governor to reconsider and rescind the proposed vaccine mandate and the State

Legislature not to implement a vaccine mandate as a condition of in-person instruction and employment in grades K-12.

Additionally, we expect the end of the State of Emergency, no later than March 31, 2022, to return full local control and decision-making authority back to local school boards. We expect all masking, testing and vaccination mandates to terminate at that time to allow a return to normal school activities as consistent with our local conditions on April 1, 2022 at the latest.

Our children have carried this burden for too long. Statewide masking, testing and vaccine mandates are not the answer. We are asking for your support to allow us to return normalcy to our schools. Our students, educators and families need your support.

Sincerely,

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CC: Governor Gavin Newsom