

Governor Eric J. Holcomb
Indiana Governor's Office
200 W Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Kristina Box, MD, FACOG
Indiana State Department of Health
State Health Commissioner
2 N. Meridian St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb and Dr. Box,

We urge you to revise the COVID-19 vaccine eligibility schedule to provide priority vaccination for those who work in the K-12 education sector. Indiana's teachers and support staff (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors, etc.) have been working diligently to provide in-person schooling for children around the state, often in a setting where social distancing is difficult to achieve. Now, rising levels of infection and a state shortage of teachers and support staff have created a perfect storm, disrupting school schedules and forcing schools to temporarily move to hybrid or online models.

When school schedules change, many working parents and caretakers have to find alternate supervision for their children during work hours or personally take time off from work. Some are forced to forgo much-needed income, increasing households' financial stress (which heightens the risk of child abuse and neglect), and hurting the greater Indiana economy. In addition, these necessary disruptions destabilize children's access to the high-quality education Indiana is known for. None of this loss can be attributed to a lack of caring from educators. On the contrary, teachers, staff, and administrators have been working punishingly long hours and putting themselves at personal risk to provide the best possible virtual and in-person education for the children they serve.

For Indiana's economy, the safety of teachers and students, and to allow in-person schooling to occur across the state with fewer interruptions, we ask that you adopt the CDC guidelines for COVID-19 vaccination (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations.html>), which indicate that teachers, support staff, and daycare workers should be vaccinated after frontline healthcare workers. Doing so will support families and show our educators that the State of Indiana values the work they do educating the next generation of Hoosiers.

Sincerely,



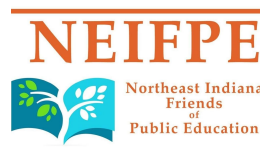
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