

Submitted via email on March 1, 2021:

Dear Governor Inslee,

The COVID-19 global pandemic and the emergency shut down of our state and schools that followed is a huge issue in Washington. In Seattle Public Schools, students have not received in person instruction since March 2020. We are coming up on the one-year anniversary that students have been out of school.

It has been reported that the vaccine roll out has suffered from organization and equity issues. As noted in a recent Seattle Times article dated February 8: "We now know all too well that Latinos, African Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Native Americans and Alaska Natives are hardest hit by coronavirus cases. We have known this since last April when we finally began to get solid data on virus transmission. Yet since vaccine distribution launched in December, we have again lagged behind other states in sharing public data by race and ethnicity, which makes it impossible to know whether we are getting the vaccines where they most need to go. "

As a PTSA, we want to see students safely back in school. As the largest district in Washington, we know that there are many risks for students, teachers, and school staff in a return to in-person school. We know that many students of all ages are feeling isolated.

How does our state focus on our most vulnerable populations and have our teachers and school staff get vaccinated in an equitable and timely fashion?

For the health and safety of our K-12 educators and school staff, we ask that you amend the vaccination plan to focus on Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and Immigrants to receive the vaccine as soon as possible to support our most vulnerable populations.

We also want to see students back in school. For that to happen we ask that you allow teachers, school staff, and childcare providers eligibility to receive the COVID vaccination. Schools throughout Washington are preparing to reopen in-person instruction. To ensure a safe and smooth transition from remote learning to in-person instruction, vaccinations are critical.

We are glad that recent amendments were made to the vaccination plan that will allow providers to make all school staff eligible for the vaccine, regardless of age, when the state transitions to Tiers 2-4 in late winter or early spring. There is a concern that teachers and school staff could be forced to come back to the classroom unvaccinated and risk transmission of the virus.

Further, we ask that you also amend the vaccination plan to allow childcare workers eligibility to receive the COVID vaccination. With families that have young children not yet in the K-12 system, having an older sibling return to school will undoubtedly result in more young children also returning to childcare.

As parents, we are excited for our children and happy that they will return to the classroom, and we also want our teachers, support staff, and childcare workers to be safe and healthy in this transition by receiving the vaccine. We want this to be equitable and balanced with the needs of our most vulnerable populations.

Please contact the Hazel Wolf K-8 PTSA if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Hazel Wolf K-8 PTSA

Seattle, WA

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