



January 27, 2021

His Excellency Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
24 Beacon Street  
Office of the Governor, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

*Delivered Electronically and via Certified Mail*

Dear Governor Baker,

We, the Merrimack Valley Superintendents Association, write to you as a unified group of 22 school superintendents joined in this effort by all 22 of the union presidents in our respective districts, to respectfully request that you reclassify educators and make them eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations during Phase 1 of the vaccination process.

We cite the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in urging you to prioritize the health and well-being of our educators so that Massachusetts school districts can operate at the fullest possible strength as our nation begins to emerge from this global pandemic.

In making our request, we cite the following:

1. Your office and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have drawn from the guidance and wisdom of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which strongly advocates for students to return to, at a minimum, an in-person hybrid learning model. AAP further advocates that students should fully return to the classrooms where and when possible.
2. We, as educators and leaders, recognize and agree that the best place for learning for our children is in the classroom.
3. We have a profound responsibility to support the educational, emotional, physical, and mental well-being of the children across the Commonwealth.
4. First responders, healthcare workers, and educators share a commonality in their work in that they must come into contact with dozens or hundreds of people daily and often cannot be completely socially distant from those they serve.
5. The stress and anxiety placed on educators as they continue to put themselves in this position without the protection of an existing vaccination is unfair and is not in the best interests of advancing public education in the Commonwealth.

6. Beyond the teachers, themselves, there is a very real risk that an educator could expose their own families after contracting COVID-19 in the performance of their duties.
7. To perform our jobs at the level desired by your office, DESE, and the AAP, the professionals in our field should be vaccinated as quickly as possible so they can continue to work with the children with whom they come into contact daily.
8. The CDC's guidance focuses on "Preservation of Societal Functions" under which health-care personnel, frontline essential workers, and other essential workers are identified for Phase I vaccination. We state, without reservation, that access to public education and access to school facilities is a societal function.

We believe it is inarguable that educators are front line workers. Given the societal need for public school – not just public school via Zoom – and the expectations set by your office and by DESE, educators should be vaccinated immediately and without delay so that they can perform their duties safely and securely.

While we understand that there is not an inexhaustible supply of vaccines, we believe the vaccination of educators should be a priority and is deserving of Phase 1 status. We also call your attention to other states of similar educational expectations including New York, Connecticut, and Maine that have classified educators in the first phase of vaccination.

As always, thank you for your leadership during this unprecedented time, and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Andover Public Schools - Claudia Bach (Superintendent) & Matthew Bach (Union President)  
Ayer Shirley Regional School District - Mary Malone (Superintendent) & Stephen Tulli (Union President)  
Bedford Public Schools - Philip Conrad (Superintendent) & James Sunderland (Union President)  
Billerica Public Schools - Timothy Piwowar (Superintendent) & David Adams (Union President)  
Carlisle Public Schools - Jim O'Shea (Superintendent) & Linda Vanaria (Union President)  
Chelmsford Public Schools - Jay Lang (Superintendent) & Lauren Cochran (Union President)  
Dracut Public Schools - Steven Stone (Superintendent) & Christine Lord (Union President)  
Georgetown Public Schools - Carol Jacobs (Superintendent) & Joe Pittella (Union President)  
Greater Lowell Technical High School - Jill Davis (Superintendent) & Chris Andros (Union President)  
Groton-Dunstable Public Schools - Laura Chesson (Superintendent) & Nancy Murphy (Union President)  
Haverhill Public Schools - Margaret Marotta (Superintendent) & Anthony J. Parolisi (Union President)  
Littleton Public Schools - Kelly Clenchy (Superintendent) & William Miskinis (Union President)  
Lowell Public Schools - Joel Boyd (Superintendent) & Paul Georges (Union President)  
Methuen Public Schools - Brandi Kwong (Superintendent) & Jonathan Becker (Union President)  
Nashoba Valley Technical School - Denise Pigeon (Superintendent) & David McCloskey (Union President)  
North Andover Public Schools - Gregg Gilligan (Superintendent) & Ryan Landry & Lisa Rasanen (Union Co-Presidents)

North Middlesex Regional - Brad Morgan (Superintendent) & Catherine Stepinski (Union President)  
North Reading Public Schools - Patrick Daly (Superintendent) & Peter Kane (Union President)  
Tewksbury Public Schools - Chris Malone (Superintendent) & Josh Bilodeau (Union President)  
Tyngsborough Public Schools - Michael Flanagan (Superintendent) & Shelby Gauvin & Jason Lewis  
(Union Co-Presidents)  
Wakefield Public Schools - Doug Lyons (Superintendent) & William Karvouniaris (Union President)  
Whittier Tech - Maureen Lynch (Superintendent) & Amanda Crosby (Union President)

cc: Michael J. Barrett, State Senator, 3rd Middlesex District  
John Cronin, State Senator, Worcester & Middlesex District  
Diana DiZoglio, State Senator, First Essex District  
Jamie Eldridge, State Senator, 37th Middlesex District  
Barry Finegold, State Senator, 2nd Essex & Middlesex District  
Cindy F. Friedman, State Senator, 4th Middlesex District  
Anne M. Gobi, State Senator, Worcester, Hamden, Hampshire, & Middlesex District  
Edward J. Kennedy, State Senator, 1st Middlesex District  
Bruce Tarr, State Senator, First Essex District  
James Arciero, State Representative, 2nd Middlesex District  
Colleen Garry, State Representative, 36th Middlesex District  
Thomas A. Golden, Jr., State Representative, 16th Middlesex District  
Kenneth I. Gordon, State Representative, 21<sup>st</sup> Middlesex District  
Tami L. Gouveia, State Representative, 14th Middlesex District  
Sheila C. Harrington, State Representative, 1st Middlesex District  
Vanna Howard, State Representative, 17th Middlesex District  
Bradley Jones, State Representative, 20th Middlesex District  
James Kelcourse, State Representative, 1st Essex District  
Marc T. Lombardo, State Representative, 22nd Middlesex District  
Christina Minicucci, State Representative, 14th Essex District  
Lenny Mirra, State Representative, 2nd Essex District  
Rady Mom, State Representative, 18th Middlesex District  
Frank Moran, State Representative, 17th Essex District  
Tram Nguyen, State Representative, 18th Essex District  
David Robertson, State Representative, 19th Middlesex District  
Danillo Sena, State Representative, 37th Middlesex District  
Andres Vargas, State Representative, 3rd Essex District