

# Gloucester County Association of School Administrators

February 2021

Dear Governor Murphy:

We write to you as the united Superintendents of Gloucester County to urge that educators receive the highest priority in the distribution of COVID vaccines. Until our teachers and support staff can return to classrooms safely and with confidence, New Jersey will feel the negative consequences of the pandemic both educationally and economically.

Our ability to maintain classroom learning is directly affected by having healthy teachers and staff, whose safety and confidence hinges on access to the vaccines. As the school year progresses, we must provide a consistent environment for student success, one as free as possible from the disruptions of sudden quarantines and reversions to remote instruction.

We all agree that the current environment is the most serious threat to education and the well-being of our children that we have seen in our careers. Your leadership can make a difference. It is urgent that we vaccinate educators quickly and stabilize the classroom environment. Our teachers and staff are frontline workers and their efforts contribute not only to the health of New Jersey's economy but to the future of every child in this state.

It is of course imperative that our first responders, essential workers, medical field workers, medically vulnerable, and senior citizens receive the vaccine first; however, those who work in public and private schools (K-12, colleges, universities, daycare centers, and other educational institutions), must be provided vaccinations as soon as possible. Vaccinating those who work with students means increasing the possibility of in-person education. It also means we can begin the long road to remediating the academic and social-emotional concerns resulting from a year without consistent in-person schooling.

We also have to share our willingness to offer our facilities, skilled staff and operational planning teams to the vaccination effort. From a logistical point of view, New Jersey's schools are ideal vaccination locations. School districts and our schools know how to plan for and set up large events, staff them, run them, and keep people safe.

Many districts have adequate parking, large indoor spaces, and staffing and communications capabilities that make them conducive for designated vaccination sites. Schools deal with large-scale events and the logistics associated with them all the time. We plan graduations, sporting events, and musicals that involve hundreds of people in attendance at one time. We move hundreds of students and staff in and out of our schools daily, and transport students across our towns.

In closing, we know that you share our motivating goal to open up our schools as safely, effectively and quickly as possible. By prioritizing vaccinations for school employees, you can help us achieve this important goal that will benefit so many of our students and community members. We are prepared to work collaboratively with all stakeholders in order to expedite the vaccination process.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Gloucester County Superintendents

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