

June __, 2021

The Honorable Steve Sisolak
Governor of Nevada
101 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

RE: Covid Mitigation Efforts in the Elko County School District

Dear Governor Sisolak:

We, the Board of Trustees of the Elko County School District, are writing to share concerns of the board, parents, educators, students, and community members. Although we appreciate your efforts to keep all Nevadans safe during the Covid pandemic, we have serious reservations about what the future might bring.

We spent the last school year managing a district of nearly 10,000 students during a pandemic. Needless to say, we learned a lot of lessons along the way. The most important lesson learned is that children, having been blessed with amazing immune systems, are extremely resilient. The board recognizes this resilience and the importance of parental/ guardian choice in regard to the welfare of their children. Indeed, this is a basic Constitutional right protected by the 14th Amendment.

Our concerns are as follows:

1. Potential extension of the mask mandate;
2. The possibility of mandatory Covid immunization; and
3. Potential restrictions on participation in school activities based on immunization.

These issues are weighing heavily on the Board and our communities. We would like to receive some assurances from your office addressing each of these concerns.

For the academic success, athletic excellence, and mental well-being of our students, it is respectfully requested that mask mandates and any mandatory Covid vaccination not be required in subsequent school years. In addition, student participation in activities should not be restricted based on Covid immunization. The wearing of a face covering and Covid vaccination should be an optional medical decision left up to parents/ guardians and their children. Each community, based on local factors, should determine the necessity of mitigation efforts.

Of equal, if not greater, importance are the current and potential directives, mandates, and policies of our state regarding Covid vaccinations. NRS 392.435(1) contains a list of immunizations required for school enrollment. Although this statute was not amended by the recently concluded 81st Legislative Session, there is

growing concern that the Covid vaccine could be added by regulation or emergency directive prior to the start of school in the fall. This seems like a real possibility given the statute's catch-all language regarding, "Such other diseases as the local board of health or the State Board of Health may determine."

As you are no doubt aware, the Covid vaccine has been designated by the FDA as Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). Until full licensure and approval has been obtained, no vaccine should be forced upon the population, least of all upon our children. Even without the EUA designation, the decision of whether or not to inject a child should be made solely by a parent or guardian. Under no circumstances should the right to a public education, guaranteed by the Nevada Constitution, be made conditional upon receipt of any vaccine.

The Elko County School District Board of Trustees, with support from our local communities, requests mask mandates and any mandatory Covid vaccination not be required in ensuing school years; and furthermore, any mitigation efforts be left to local control. Thank you for your time and prompt attention to these important topics.

Sincerely,

ELKO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JIM COONEY, President

TERESA DASTRUP, Clerk

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