

EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD HAVE PRIORITIZED ACCESS TO COVID VACCINATIONS

The Public School Forum of NC commends the more than 180,000 public school personnel and staff who have been working every day to ensure that North Carolina's 1.5+ million students have access to learning opportunities -- through remote learning options or inside of school buildings -- as together we work to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

We understand the desire to increase the number of students who have access to in-person learning opportunities in the coming weeks. In order to reopen all public school buildings safely — and for the health and safety of those who are already working and learning in school buildings that have reopened — we must ensure that all educators and school personnel have prioritized access to COVID-19 vaccines along with PPE, social distancing, cleaning supplies, ventilation, and student health checks, to ensure the safety of our educators and students. North Carolina has administered over 1,000,000 doses of the vaccine, and the total number of teachers and other school personnel represents less than 20% of that amount. North Carolina can do this expediently.

North Carolina Teachers and School Personnel by the Numbers (2019-20)

	Traditional Public Schools	Public Charter Schools	Total
Teachers	93,923	7,523	101,446
Additional Personnel*	80,196	4,066	84,262
Total	174,119	11,589	185,708

*Full-time.

“Another key part of reopening, Fauci said, is to ‘get teachers vaccinated as quickly as we possibly can.’”

Ed Week

COVID rates in North Carolina remain high, and many of our schools serve communities that are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and employ many individuals who are at high risk for serious illness. We must ensure that the health and safety of all members of our school communities, especially those who are most impacted by the virus, are prioritized.

School district leaders are best positioned to determine the local needs of their students, teachers and families, and they need continued flexibility to determine how to best keep their communities safe, relying on local health department assessments, vaccination rates, and other factors to inform local decisions, including whether and how schools should operate under plans A, B, or C.

At least 25 other states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico have accelerated COVID vaccine eligibility for teachers, including Kentucky, which has committed to having all teachers receive the first dose of the vaccine by the end of the week. Maryland, Virginia, New York, and several other states have vaccinated large numbers of educators, as demonstrated in Ed Week's Vaccine Tracker.

Since March 2020, educators, administrators, and support personnel have made remarkable efforts to create innovative learning opportunities for their students, as they too endure the impacts of living through a historic global pandemic. North Carolina has the opportunity to demonstrate its support for the health and safety of its educators and school personnel by ensuring they have prioritized access to available COVID-19 vaccines.

State* First Dose of Vaccines for Educators

New York	1.11.2021
Michigan	1.11.2021
Arkansas	1.18.2021
Maryland	1.18.2021
Oregon	1.25.2021

*States listed above are a subset of those that are currently prioritizing educators for COVID-19 vaccines.

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