



A VOICE FOR CHOICE  
ADVOCACY

June 8, 2020

The Honorable Tony Thurmond  
Superintendent of Public Instruction  
California Department of Education  
1430 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AVFCA Response to Letter regarding concern over School Vaccination Rates

Dear Superintendent Thurmond,

A Voice for Choice Advocacy (AVFCA) is aware of a letter sent to you last week by Assembly Member Levine, among other legislators, regarding their concerns that children entering school this fall may be behind on their vaccination requirements and therefore a threat to public health. Through our supporters, even during this unusual time, we have heard that school nurses and administrators are communicating the vaccination requirements to incoming TK, Kindergarten and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. They are doing their job and are on top of it, as they have been since 2015, when stricter vaccination requirements were implemented.

**However, even if there are children entering TK, Kindergarten or 7th grade who have not been able to see their doctors there will be NO greater public health threat than usual to TK-12<sup>th</sup> graders from contagious diseases for which there are vaccinations this fall.**

CDPH stated on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 that “in comparison to April 2019, in April 2020, the number of shots given to children 0 through 18 years old in California decreased by more than 40 percent” (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/NR20-090.aspx>). While this may be true, this does not mean that K-12 school children are lacking in vaccinations to the point where if there were an outbreak children would be at risk. There are several key factors to consider:

- Vaccines for Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR), Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTaP), Varicella, Polio and Hepatitis B are required prior to entering Kindergarten or TK. However, if a child has followed the CDC vaccination schedule, the only vaccines that would be scheduled in the six months prior to Kindergarten would be the second dose of the MMR vaccine and the second dose of the Varicella vaccines.
    - According to the vaccine manufacturer and the CDC, the first dose of both of these vaccines confers immunity to 95% of those who receive it. The second dose is only given to try to confer immunity to the remaining 5%.
    - Furthermore, the CDC recommends the second dose of these two vaccines to be given between 4 and 6 years of age (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mmr/public/index.html>).
- Therefore, while there may be some children going into Kindergarten or TK, in the fall, who are currently missing the second dose of the MMR and Varicella vaccine this does not pose a public health threat even if there were a measles, mumps, rubella or chicken pox outbreak. 95% of them would be immune from the first dose, and they would all still be within the CDC guidelines of getting the second dose by age 6.



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- The next time vaccinations are required for school is at 7<sup>th</sup> grade entry. Prior to entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade one dose of the Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis vaccine (Tdap) is required.
  - The CDC recommends the Tdap be given at the age of 11 or 12 years (<https://www.cdc.gov/pertussis/vaccines.html>).
  - If a child has followed the CDC vaccination schedule, they would have received 5 doses of the Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis vaccine (DTaP) vaccine prior to age 6.
  - Diphtheria and tetanus are not contagious diseases that would be caught in the classroom.
  - Pertussis is contagious, but research shows, and the CDC concurs, that the pertussis vaccine is not effective due to strain mutation and vaccination inefficacy. 95% of those who get pertussis in the US are fully vaccinated ([https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/6/5/00-0512\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/6/5/00-0512_article); <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4482312/>).
  - While the pertussis vaccine may reduce symptoms, it does not stop transmission of the disease from asymptomatic vaccinated carriers (<https://www.pnas.org/content/111/2/787>). Therefore, while there may be some children going into 7<sup>th</sup> grade, in the fall, who are currently missing this dose of the Tdap vaccine, this does not pose a greater than normal public health threat, even if there were a pertussis outbreak. They would all still be within the CDC guidelines of getting the second dose by age 11-12, and have had previous doses.

Most TK-12<sup>th</sup> grade students attending public or private school are up to date with their vaccinations and those who are not fall within the CDC age guidelines for their outstanding vaccines. Some parents have been hesitant or unable, due to the closure of pediatrician's offices due to COVID-19, to get their TKers, Kindergartners and/or 7<sup>th</sup> graders these vaccinations. In most areas, doctor's offices are scheduling fewer appointments due to COVID-19 restrictions and appointments over the summer for physicals and vaccinations have booked up quickly. **Given this and the above information indicating there is no public health threat, A Voice for Choice Advocacy respectfully requests you to order schools to give parents some flexibility in getting their children up to date with the school required vaccinations.**

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working with you and legislators on this issue.

Sincerely,

*C. E. von Dore Hildebrand*

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Giving issues a voice, A Voice for Choice Advocacy advocates for people's rights to be fully informed about the composition, quality, and short- and long-term health effects of all products that go into people's bodies, such as food, water, air, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

CC: Assembly Members Marc Levine, Bill Quirk, Christina Garcia, Blanca Rubio, Rob Bonta, and Senator Richard Pan, Governor Gavin Newsom