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Subject: FW: Letter from Shasta County Superintendents
Date: Monday, November 15, 2021 11:29:50 AM
Attachments: CA Leaders Letter 11.15.21.pdf

FYSA

Respectfully,
Tomás Aragón

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Director and State Public Health Officer
California Department of Public Health
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CDPH—a nationally accredited health department—mobilizing communities and institutions to transform policies and systems towards a culture of equity, antiracism, healing and health for all people and our planet.

From: Judy Flores [REDACTED]
Date: Monday, November 15, 2021 at 11:18 AM
To: Brooks Allen [REDACTED]
Cc: Bruce Ross [REDACTED], Alice Bennett [REDACTED],
Ramstrom, Karen@[REDACTED] Tony Thurmond
[REDACTED], Karen Stapf Walters [REDACTED], Tim Taylor
[REDACTED], Sud, Sohil@[REDACTED] Aragon, Tomas@CDPH
[REDACTED]

Subject: Letter from Shasta County Superintendents

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Good Morning,

Please find the attached letter from Shasta County Superintendents. Physical copies of the letter are being mailed to all those to whom the letter is addressed.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Thank you,

Judy

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Judy Flores
Shasta County Superintendent of Schools

Shasta County Office of Education
1644 Magnolia Avenue
Redding, CA 96001



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SHASTA COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

November 15, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom
Toni Atkins, Senate President Pro Tem
Senator Shannon Grove, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Dr. Richard Pan
Senator Ben Allen
Senator Brian Dahle
Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
Assemblymember Marie Waldron, Assembly Minority Leader
Assembly Committee on Education Chairman, Assemblyman Patrick O'Donnell
Assemblywoman Megan Dahle

California Leaders,

As part of school and district communities across Shasta County, we are writing to ask for your support in **not** moving forward with legislation around the COVID vaccine mandate this spring, but to leave it as written on October 1, 2021 as a California Public Health school vaccine requirement. By not moving forward with legislation, the personal exemption can be provided.

We have received many emails and have heard many hours of public comment from parents who are concerned about how quickly these vaccinations have been developed and tested. A majority of the families in our community are expressing hesitancy with regard to vaccinating their children - as many as 80% according to one of our largest district's surveys. They are voicing their request for a choice and their plans to withdraw their children from public school if vaccines are required. 45% of families across Shasta County public schools kept their students home on October 18 to demonstrate their opposition to the vaccine mandate. By allowing more time for exemptions to remain in place, our families will have an extended opportunity to observe evidence of the vaccine's safety and make a thoughtful decision. Due to the heightened sense of urgency and fear in our county, we believe many families will withdraw their children from public school reactively if there is no opportunity for a personal belief exemption next school year. Independent study does not seem to be an acceptable alternative either which could create real disparities in education opportunities and outcomes for Shasta County students where 58% are identified as high poverty (using free or

reduced lunch counts). Allowing the personal exemption for at least the 2022-2023 school year would allow for more time for families who are hesitant to move forward this quickly with the vaccine mandate.

We are hearing anywhere from 25-70% of students, depending on the district, whose parents will not enroll their children in Shasta County public schools next year if the mandate is legislated and the exemption is eliminated. This could very well mean closure of many of our smaller school districts and fracturing of our larger districts.

We are hearing from parents who have shared many concerns, a few of which are highlighted below:

- 1. "Forcing my child to homeschool or independent study is not an equal education opportunity equivalent to that provided to vaccinated children."*
- 2. "Recently released on the 'Get Vaccinated' website was this statement: 'the latest CDC data indicate that youth in CA are being hospitalized at less than one half the rate of the nation as a whole.' If this is so, vaccination should be a choice, allowing parents who deem it an added protection to vaccinate if they want and those undecided to wait for further data."*
- 3. "We want medical choice for our own children. We know our children and their needs better than anyone."*

We have a high rate of hesitancy and are requesting more time so that families don't preemptively pull their children out of public schools. Time will help alleviate fear; a move to require vaccination without a personal exemption feels rushed to many in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Flores, Superintendent, Shasta County Office of Education
Tom Safford, Superintendent, Black Butte Union Elementary School District
Jason Provence, Superintendent, Cascade Union Elementary School District
Clay Ross, Superintendent, Columbia School District
Doug Geren, Superintendent, Cottonwood Union School District
Heather Armelino, Superintendent, Enterprise Elementary School District
Merrill Grant, Superintendent, Fall River Joint Unified School District

Moira Casey, Superintendent, French Gulch-Whiskeytown School District
Steve Henson, Superintendent, Gateway Unified School District
Rob Effa, Superintendent, Grant Elementary School District
Shelly Craig, Superintendent, Happy Valley Union Elementary School District
Rob Adams, Superintendent, Igo-Ono-Platina School District
Greg Hawkins, Superintendent, Indian Springs Elementary School District
Clay Ross, Superintendent, Junction Elementary School District
Mindy DeSantis, Superintendent, Millville Elementary School District
Michael Wharton, Superintendent, Mountain Union Elementary School District
Kevin Kurtz, Superintendent, North Cow Creek School District
Cathy Henderson, Superintendent, Pacheco Union School District
Rob Adams, Superintendent, Redding School District
Rob Adams, Superintendent, Shasta Union Elementary School District
Jim Cloney, Superintendent, Shasta Union High School District
Cindy Gonzalez, Superintendent, Whitmore Elementary School District

cc: Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, California Department of Public Health Director and State
Public Health Officer
Dr. Sohil Sud, California Department of Public Health
Dr. Karen Ramstrom, Shasta County Public Health Officer
Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Instruction
Karen Stapf Walters, CA County Superintendents Educational Services
Association
Tim Taylor, Small School District Association