



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

# EDUCATION

July 6, 2020

Dear School Leaders,

As a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, District health care providers have recorded an extremely low rate of pediatric immunization administrations. According to DC Health, the rate of pediatric immunization administrations has dropped by 70 percent in the District as families have avoided or not had access to well child care during the emergency period. Due to this, many children in the District are not fully immunized, creating a high risk for an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable infectious disease such as measles among our students. DC Health has advised that such an outbreak of another infectious disease could be as much, or even more, of a public health risk for school communities than COVID-19 itself, and would add another complex obstacle for school operations this year.

District law and regulations require schools to verify immunization certification for all students as part of attendance (DC Official Code § 38-501 et seq. and DCMR 5-E § 5300 et seq.). **Beginning in the 2020-21 school year, all schools will be required to enforce this District immunization law by requiring immunization certification as part of school attendance, including notifying and potentially removing non-compliant students from in-person instruction after a 20-school day period until they obtain the necessary immunizations** (DC Official Code § 38-505).

Please carefully review the attached Immunization Policy for In-Person Attendance which provides guidance on the implementation of this law beginning next school year. To prepare schools and families for this policy, OSSE is encouraging school leaders to review this policy and ensure immunization compliance is part of planning for the start of school. **We request your assistance with communicating immunization requirements to families now to ensure their children are protected from vaccine-preventable infection, and to give them as much time as possible to make appointments with their health care providers and receive necessary immunizations before the start of school.** DC Health will continue to encourage District health care providers to notify patients of missing immunizations and prioritize immunization appointments.

School leaders should generally direct questions about enforcement of the immunization attendance policy to your LEA central office. OSSE has posted resources and trainings on the [OSSE website](#) to support implementation of this policy, and the [DC Health Immunization Program](#) is available to support schools and families with immunization information, data, and access to care in the District. OSSE's Health and Wellness team is also a resource and can be reached at [OSSE.SchoolHealth@dc.gov](mailto:OSSE.SchoolHealth@dc.gov)

Thank you for your partnership to keep our students and families safe and healthy,

Hanseul Kang  
State Superintendent of Education