



Gov. Newsom announces vaccination and testing mandate for TK-12 schools

LEAs must be fully compliant by Oct. 15, 2021

On Wednesday, Aug. 11, California became the first state to require a COVID-19 vaccination or regular testing for school staff when Gov. Gavin Newsom unveiled a [new public health order](#) during a press conference at Oakland USD's Carl B. Munck Elementary School. The mandate requires that all TK-12 school staff, both public and private, either show proof of full vaccination or be tested at least once per week. The order does not extend to home schools, child care centers or institutions of higher education.

The order takes effect on Aug. 12, 2021, and schools must be fully compliant by Oct. 15, 2021. Under the policy, school staff will be required to present a COVID-19 vaccination record card or photographic or [QR code documentation of the card](#) that includes the name of the employee, the type of vaccine received and the date of the final dose. (If you've been vaccinated, you can generate a QR code [here](#)).

Staff will be considered fully vaccinated two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or a single-dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Staff who are not fully vaccinated or who have not submitted documentation of such will be considered unvaccinated for official purposes and are not exempted from the testing requirement even if they have medical issues preventing vaccination, since they are still potentially able to spread the illness. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated workers must be tested at least once weekly with either PCR testing or antigen testing.

The new mandate presents additional challenges for local school districts and county offices of education in terms of verification, reporting and enforcement. Local educational agencies must have a plan in place for tracking verified worker vaccination status and, upon request, make records available to relevant health agencies. LEAs must also record test results, conduct workplace contact tracing and report that data to local public health departments. The California Department of Public Health emphasized in its order that internet platforms are available to facilitate these processes and provided a [link to free resources for school testing](#). CDPH has partnered with Concentric by Ginkgo on a [program to provide no-cost, fully staffed, pooled COVID testing](#) in K-12 schools. CSBA is also making testing and related resources available to members through a partnership with [AMI Expeditionary Healthcare](#) (AMI), which [provides services](#) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of State and currently manages COVID testing for Los Angeles USD and other California school districts.

Schools may use funds received from multiple sources to address costs associated with employee vaccination verification and COVID-19 diagnostic screening testing, including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) I, II, and III; Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) I and II; and In-Person Instruction Grants (AB 86). Additionally, the CDPH provides access to subsidized COVID-19 testing for schools through specified partners.

"We support a safe return to school and one that hopefully allows students to experience full-time, in-person instruction for the duration of the 2021–22 school year. Yet, as we've seen with the new independent study regulations as well as the masking guidance, issuing mandates is only part of the equation, particularly when the state's orders must be implemented on a tight timeline while navigating many outstanding logistical questions," said CSBA CEO & Executive Director Vernon M. Billy. "It's imperative that, in addition to financial resources, the state offers the support needed to carry out the mandate and provides clarity on enforcement so parents, board members and local communities understand exactly what the state intends for compliance to look like across California."

In his remarks Wednesday, Gov. Newsom stressed that the new order is meant to ensure that as many students as possible are in the classroom and noted that it builds on previous vaccination mandates for California state workers. "We are now following up today to align

our school strategy to the state strategy and become the first state in the country to require that all of our staff, not just teachers, credentialed staff, paraeducators, custodial staff, the bus drivers, folks that are critical to supporting the entire school ecosystem also submit a verification of vaccination or submit to weekly testing. We think this is the right thing to do and we think this is a sustainable way to keep our schools open and to address the number one anxiety that parents like myself have for young children,” Gov. Newsom said. “That is knowing that the schools are doing everything in their power to keep our kids safe, to keep our kids healthy and that’s what we’re doing here in the state of California.”

The statewide directive follows similar measures announced on Tuesday by school districts in Long Beach, Oakland, Sacramento and San Francisco. San Jose USD made a similar announcement in July. U.S. Education Secretary Miguel Cardona also voiced support for vaccine mandates for the first time on Wednesday, at a virtual National Press Foundation event. Cardona told the audience that he believes the vaccine is safe and that he would “favor the vaccine being required.”

In Oakland, the Governor was joined by Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-13), State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond, Alameda County Office of Education Superintendent L.K. Monroe, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaff, Oakland USD Superintendent Kyla Johnson Trammell and Oakland Education Association President Keith Brown. All speakers stressed the importance of unity as school resumes throughout state and educators and families confront the rise of the delta variant.

“This announcement is critically important for the ongoing safety and the ongoing progress that we’re making in the state of California to be sure that this is a totally joyful, engaged and productive school year. And that we encourage people to continue to get vaccinated, to protect their health, and of course, to wear their masks,” Darling-Hammond said.



California School Boards Association | 3251 Beacon Blvd., West Sacramento, CA 95691

Phone: (800) 266-3382 | Fax: (916) 371-3407

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