



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

December 10, 2020

Jinlene Chan, M.D.
Acting Deputy Secretary of Public Health Services
Herbert R. O'Connor State Office Building
201 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

RE: Maryland COVID-19 Vaccination Plan for Child Care and School Staff

Dear Dr. Chan:

Thank you for your continued, tireless efforts in securing the public health and safety of our schools and child care facilities. Our partnership is especially invaluable now as we redefine education and child care environments as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. As we continue to focus efforts on reopening our schools for in-person instruction, we look forward with optimism to the distribution of vaccines to our most vulnerable and frontline communities.

On October 16, 2020, the Maryland Department of Health submitted its COVID-19 Vaccination Plan to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Plan indicates, consistent with recommendations from the U.S. Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, includes workers in essential and critical industries, including education.

It is essential that we return to full or hybrid instructional models for the overall wellbeing and success of our prekindergarten through grade 12 students. Prolonged school closures have resulted in our children experiencing learning loss, diminished academic achievement and social-emotional distress. The lack of in-person instruction is starkly reinforcing the inequities embedded in our society, and continuing the perpetuation of achievement and learning gaps, leaving our most underserved children even more vulnerable.

Additionally, since the start of the pandemic, Maryland's child care workers have been providing critical education and care services for parents who conduct a range of operations and services essential to our infrastructure and pandemic response. The health of child care staff must be maintained to ensure the safety of these programs not only for the providers themselves, but also for the many parents who depend on these services.

I know there are many factors influencing the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccines, but the safety and education of our children demand immediate attention. Therefore, I am requesting that teachers, school staff and early child care workers receive the vaccine as first priority in the plan tier designated for Essential employees. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

cc: Diane Croghan