



Superintendent's UPDATE

Thursday, February 3, 2022

COVID-19 School and Vaccination Update

Dear San Mateo County Education and Child Care Community,

January 2022 may go down on record as one of the most challenging months during the most challenging two years, but we made it through. Hello February! We start this new month with case rates on the decline in schools, in the county, and across the region. That is enough to fuel my optimism about school life in the weeks and months ahead with May graduation season glowing on the horizon.

As cases continue to decline, our education workforce may be able to look up from nearly nonstop testing and contact tracing and find themselves more time for all that feeds their hearts and spirits – student learning, student and family connections, student engagement and leadership, and building positive pathways to success. Though Valentine's Day is more than a week away, I proclaim my love for all school employees. You are amazing!

Vaccination News

Vaccinations remain the big news, with the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration's \(FDA\) announcement](#) on Tuesday that it will consider Pfizer's request for emergency use authorization of its vaccine in children six months to four years of age. That meeting will be held on February 15th, and the FDA has made it clear that having a safe and effective vaccine for this age group is a priority.

In addition, the [FDA announced](#) on Monday its approval of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, which is now marketed as Spikevax, for individuals 18 years of age and older. Until now, the Moderna vaccine has been available under emergency use authorization only. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is scheduled to meet tomorrow to vote on whether to endorse the approval.

Pediatric Vaccinations

San Mateo County has gotten into a steady rhythm with vaccinations. Opportunities for vaccinations are numerous and varied, and vaccination rates continue to climb. As of this week, 53.5 percent of children ages 5-11 have received two doses of vaccine, up almost 4 percentage points from last week, while 62.6 percent have received one dose of vaccine, up 1.3 percentage points over the same period. There doesn't seem to be much movement in the percentage of youth

ages 12-15 who have received two doses – that number remains at 81.2 percent. However, 28.0 percent have received a booster, up from 16.6 percent when I reported on this two weeks ago. If you are looking for a vaccination or booster, please visit the [SMC Health website](#).

More Supplies for Schools and Childcare Programs

The distribution of home test kits to childcare providers and preschools continued this week. The focus was on programs that serve families who receive childcare vouchers based on their household income. This is equity in action when families with the greatest needs have access to the resources they need for child and family health and wellness.

The County Office of Education is expecting a shipment of child-size KN95 masks and home test kits from the California Office of Emergency Services in the coming days. We will arrange for the distribution of these products – as well as child-size surgical masks – to schools once we receive them.

Questions about Guidance

We continue to receive questions about inconsistencies in State guidance, especially around the testing of those who recovered from COVID-19 within the last 90 days, as well as testing for children under age 5. The California Department of Public Health promises to address these issues shortly. We will keep you informed.

We also are hearing more requests (and demands) concerning the lifting of masking and other safety requirements in schools. We are not there yet, so let’s continue to work together to keep students and staff safe, healthy, and in school.

That’s a wrap for today. I wish you all a joyful Friday and weekend.



Nancy Magee
San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools

Please note: A copy of this letter in Spanish will be [posted here](#) shortly.