

WESTERN PLACER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

600 Sixth St, Suite 400, Lincoln CA 95648
Ph: (916) 645-6350 • Fax: (916) 645-6356

Board of Trustees: Damian Armitage
Criste Freymond
April Nitsos
Jason Price
Kris Wyatt

Superintendent: Kerry Callahan

February 15, 2022

To: Dr. Richard Pan, State Senator, District 6
State Capitol, Room 4070
Sacramento, CA 95814

Scott Wiener, State Senator, District 11
1021 O Street, Suite 6630
Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

Subject: **Senate Bill 866 and Senate Bill 871**

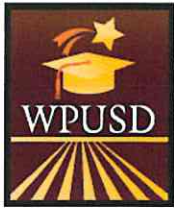
Dear Senators:

The purpose of this letter is to express the Western Placer Unified School District's (WPUSD) serious concerns regarding Senate Bills 866 and 871.

Senate Bill 866 would allow a minor of 12 years of age or older to consent to approved vaccines without the consent of their parent or guardian. Senator Wiener stated, "Giving young people the autonomy to receive life-saving vaccines, regardless of their parents' beliefs or work schedules, is essential for their physical and mental health." However, framing these minors as "young people" is misleading. Some of these minors are middle school students whose bodies and cognitive abilities have not fully developed. You are asking these children to make medical decisions that they are not capable of making at their adolescent age. They do not understand vaccines or how it could affect their health. It is not truly "consent" if the child does not have the capacity to understand their actions.

WPUSD encourages you to allow adult parents and guardians to make medical decisions for these children, or at least increase the proposed age of consent to a level at which the minor has the capacity and ability to give consent for these important medical decisions.

Senate Bill 871 would add "COVID-19" to the list of diseases for which immunization is required to attend in-person instruction. However, COVID-19 is unlike any other disease on that list. Multiple variants have come and gone over the course of the pandemic, each with its own unique characteristics. For example, current vaccines provide different levels of protection depending on the type of variant. Will a new variant of COVID-19 still be considered "COVID-19" even though the new variant may require a different vaccine and/or booster than a previous variant? The authors of this bill should define "COVID-19" to clarify the ambiguity.



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Recently, government leaders and the scientific community pronounced that the pandemic is transitioning to an endemic. We will have to live with COVID-19 like we have to live with the seasonal flu. However, the seasonal flu is not on the list of diseases for which immunization is required to attend in-person instruction. Even though the flu causes tens of thousands of deaths in the United States on average every year, and even though there are flu vaccines, the seasonal flu is not on the list. The reasoning is perhaps that requiring flu vaccines to attend in-person instruction is impractical and ineffective. A flu vaccine cannot target every type of flu every season. Scientists do their best to predict which strain will be most prevalent and recommend the appropriate vaccine to be mass-produced. The vaccine will be different every year, which means that each student would be required to get that vaccine every year to attend in-person instruction. Without the appropriate infrastructure in place to document and monitor each student's flu vaccine, it is impossible for a school to keep track of each student's vaccine record. This could lead to countless students being excluded from in-person instruction.

COVID-19 has similar characteristics to the seasonal flu in how it spreads and mutates. Immunization to COVID-19 could cause even more hardship because it requires boosters at least once a year. Moreover, if a new strain pops up, there may be yet another vaccine with more boosters to follow. Schools and students will not be able to keep up with the rapid changes.

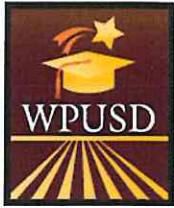
Each enumerated disease and its vaccine has been well documented and studied for much longer than COVID-19. However, not enough is known about COVID-19 and its vaccines to impose a vaccine requirement on school children at this time. Requiring immunization to COVID-19 is premature and could lead to countless students being excluded from in-person instruction. WPUSD encourages you to pause adding COVID-19 to the list of diseases until more is known about it and its vaccines.

Additionally, Senate Bill 871 would remove the personal belief exemption to immunization for any unenumerated disease. This exemption is not a loophole. Rather, it is a safety net that has worked as intended during the pandemic. Notice that the personal belief exemption does not apply to immunizations of the enumerated diseases that have been studied for decades. Students should not be required to take a new vaccine that they or their parents/guardians believe is not safe. These beliefs are reasonable and justified during times of uncertainty, such as this pandemic. Thus, WPUSD encourages you to retain the personal belief exemption to immunization for unenumerated diseases.

Respectfully,

Damian Armitage
Board President, Western Placer Unified School District





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April Nitsos
Board Member, Western Placer Unified School District

Kris Wyatt
Board Member, Western Placer Unified School District

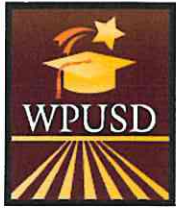
Kerry Callahan
Superintendent, Western Placer Unified School District

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

cc: Dr. Tomás Aragón, Director and
State Public Health Officer
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377

cc: Dr. Mark Ghaly, Director of
Health and Human Services
PO Box 997377, MS 0500
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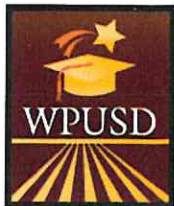
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- cc: Dr. Rob Oldham, Interim Health Officer
Placer County Public Health
11484 B Avenue
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- cc: Kevin Kiley, Assemblyman
8799 Auburn Folsom Rd. Ste. A
Granite Bay, CA 95746-8509
- cc: Senator Brian Dahle
1021 O Street, Room 7230
Sacramento, CA 95814



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- cc: Sergey Terebkov, Board Member
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- cc: Dr. David Patterson, Board Member
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- cc: Dr. Renee Regacho-Anaclerio, Board Member
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- cc: Senator Connie M. Leyva (Chair)
Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814
- cc: calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/