

# Educators receive COVID-19 vaccines

## Effort aimed at keeping people healthy, schools open

**By Rick Dandes**  
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MONTANDON— Teachers came to the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (CSIU) by pre-registered appointment time on Sunday, with more scheduled today, to be vaccinated with a single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine as part of a statewide initiative by the Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

“By the end of the day Monday, we’ll have vaccinated 2,000 people,” John Kurelja, assistant executive director

of the CSIU, said on Sunday.

Vaccinations are scheduled to continue from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. today.

The procedure is being carried out with strict rules. Cars carrying educators are stopped at the entrance to CSIU by state police who only allowed those with appointments into the parking lot.

“We structured the way it ran at our site,” Kurelja said.

The CSIU worked with AMI (Aspen Medical Institute), the sole contractor to the state’s Department of Health and Human Services, who provided the vaccinators and administrators.

“We supplemented that with our volunteers,” Kurelja explained.

“And then we have a team calling people to fill the slots so that we get to 2,000 by Monday night.”

The state released a priority list for all the superintendents to follow, he continued.

“So that they first focus on educators of the students that are most vulnerable,” Kurelja said.

“The idea is to get them back to school as soon as possible. You start with special education educators, K-6 educators, and then once those spots are filled you move up the ladder to

get to educators of the older students.

“We’re just really proud at the CSIU that we could help make this happen,” he said.

Also included: contracted employees, including bus drivers.

Hillary Haddon, of CSIU’s ELECT teen parenting program, was vaccinated about 11:15 a.m. Sunday and said, “It was a relief, yes, in some ways. Like a lot of people, you think about the newness of it (the vaccine), but I’m ready to get on with life ... back to normal.”

Haddon said she was “a little bit sore. But not much.”

Mifflinburg Intermediate School

third-grade teacher Sarah Gemberling said she was relieved to be vaccinated.

“It will be nice to know that we can be in school with the kids safely,” Gemberling said.

“I also think it will help bring back some kids whose parents might have been wary about them being in class in person.”

She said she had no soreness from the vaccine.

And student teacher Margaret Cowan, of the Chief Shikellamy Elementary School, said she was pleased pleased to have finally received a vaccine.

“It’s a lot off my mind and I’m grateful,” Cowan said, adding that she was feeling fine with no immediate after-effects.