



January 26, 2021

Dr. Kathleen Toomey, Commissioner
Georgia Department of Public Health
2 Peachtree Street, NW
15th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dr. Toomey,

Thank you for meeting with us in July to discuss the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on Georgia's students and teachers. As you know, Georgia public schools serve 1.7 million students and employ about 240,000 adults. Providing the COVID-19 vaccine to these adults is critical to protect them as they work to meet student needs. For more than 10 months, Georgia schools have struggled to provide on-site instruction. School closures due to community surge or school staff exposure is common, and several school districts are not yet serving students in face-to-face settings.

In our capacity as representatives of more than 95,000 Georgia educators and school staff, we write today to strongly urge you and your colleagues to do everything you possibly can to prioritize all Georgia educators and school personnel for immediate COVID-19 vaccination. Those in need of priority vaccination include teachers, paraprofessionals, school bus drivers, school nutrition workers, custodial staff, substitute teachers, school administrators, and all other members of the education team.

In addition to expedited vaccination, PAGE respectfully asks state leaders to implement the following:

- Vaccination sites at local schools in conjunction with local school leaders. Immediate authorization and training of school nurses and other local health providers to administer the vaccines. Numerous Georgia school superintendents have expressed the desire to serve their communities in this way.
- Publication of school-employee focused vaccination best practice plans, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Education.

- Oversight of local health departments and transparent accounting of vaccine supply and its earmarked use. Available vaccine should not go unused without an articulated important purpose.
- Consistent and transparent reporting of COVID-exposure in local schools. Without reliable public health data, local communities are unable to make informed decisions regarding student instructional delivery in face-to-face, virtual, or hybrid settings.

Educators are stewards of Georgia students and our state's future. Educators and school staff must be vaccinated quickly. In some other states, all educators already are eligible for vaccination. As public servants in their communities, Georgia educators and schools play a pivotal role in successful local vaccine rollout. PAGE stands ready to work with you to ensure this happens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Harper', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Harper
PAGE Executive Director

CC: Gov. Brian P. Kemp
State School Superintendent Richard Woods
Jill Hay, Esq. PAGE General Counsel, Director of Legal Services
Margaret Ciccarelli, Esq. PAGE Director of Legislative Services
Jimmy Jordon, PAGE Director of Member Services