



December 17, 2020

Governor Greg Abbott, TEA Commissioner Mike Morath:

Please accept this letter as a plea to support our school personnel in keeping them safe and sustainable by providing them early access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Since March 2020, Pflugerville ISD teachers, support staff, board, and administrators have worked tirelessly to keep our students and staff safe and keep our school environments healthy, sustainable, and operating. The pandemic has disrupted so many "normal" routines, and schools have not been immune.

In the case of Pflugerville ISD, we are the heart of our suburban community. When schools are closed and students do not participate in on-campus learning or extra-curricular activities, the community feels it to its core. Even with limited numbers of in-person learners (Pflugerville ISD has approximately 45% of students on campuses), our days are filled with positive cases, notification letters, quarantines, and program pauses. It can be exhausting. It *is* exhausting.

Our priorities during this pandemic have been centered around sustainability. Without healthy staff, we cannot hold school. Without healthy students, we cannot thrive at what we do best – teach. Simply put: the less illness, fewer quarantines, less reliance on substitute teachers, less disruption of instruction, the better morale is on our campuses. We urge Gov. Greg Abbott and those determining the prioritization of access to a COVID-19 vaccine to consider those who work in schools of utmost importance. We believe giving teachers and support staff priority access to vaccinations is critical for sustainability – in Pflugerville ISD and throughout Texas.

We ask that you include school personnel including teachers, specialists, instructional support personnel, aides, food service and custodial workers, and principals, as a priority group for administering the vaccine for the suppression of COVID-19.

School shutdowns profoundly affect families as well as local economies. Most parents either cannot work, are forced to work, leave children unattended, or try to juggle working from home with childcare. Our students are incredibly resilient and doing the best they can, but we have seen too many dealing with increased stress and mental health issues as they cope with their new way of learning and living. Our students need to come back to school safely, educators want to welcome them back, and no one should have to risk their health to do so.

Please consider this amazing group of classroom heroes when distributing the COVID-19 vaccination. We understand first prioritizing healthcare workers and frontline responders. We believe those who work in schools and educate the children of Texas should be prioritized, too.

Thank you for your service to our great state. You are tasked with many difficult decisions, and we appreciate your willingness to review our suggestion. We hope to add useful information to your deliberations. Please contact us if you have questions or need additional information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DK", with a long, sweeping underline.

Douglas Killian, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools
Douglas.Killian@pflisd.net

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vernagene Mott", with a stylized, cursive font.

Vernagene Mott, Board of Trustees President
Vernagene.Mott@pflisd.net

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING GOVERNOR ABBOTT TO INCLUDE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL IN THE OFFICIAL EXPERT VACCINE ALLOTMENT PANEL'S DEFINITION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS

WHEREAS, the Pflugerville Independent School District Board of Trustees (Board) recognizes that the United States Government, the State of Texas and Local Health Authorities have declared a disaster and emergency regarding Coronavirus/COVID-19 (hereafter "COVID-19") and its spread across the State and Nation and continue to extend these declarations;

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that COVID-19 is an unforeseen and unavoidable emergency of urgent public necessity, that the World Health Organization has declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and that additional emergency declarations have been and will continue to be issued in the coming days, weeks and months;

WHEREAS, the Public Schools of the State of Texas impact millions of students and personnel and have a profound effect on educational, social, economic and public health issues and are integral to the general welfare of the State;

WHEREAS, the Public Schools of the State of Texas are charged with the task of caring for, educating, nourishing and providing extra-curricular activities to millions of Texas students 5 days a week, thus allowing a vast number of parents the opportunity to engage in gainful employment to support and nurture wholesome home environments for our Texas students;

WHEREAS, the Public Schools of the State of Texas are dependent on dedicated school personnel from administrators, teachers, educational and professional specialists to clerical, maintenance, transportation, child nutrition, security and other support staff to conduct the day to day operations of our schools and ensure the mission goal of the efficient delivery of instruction;

WHEREAS, although our District and our personnel as well Districts across the State have responded heroically to the challenges brought forth by COVID-19 regarding the delivery of instruction, issues persist in the quality of learning especially among students that would most benefit from live, face to face instruction;

WHEREAS, the Texas Department of Health recently reported 31,678 students and 18,742 school employees tested positive for COVID-19, and the Board, having a substantial public interest in protecting the health and safety of its students, staff, and community, therefore, desires to ensure that the School District and community be prepared to the fullest extent possible in light of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, a substantial number of School District employees are more susceptible to complications and/or death from COVID-19 due to age or pre-existing medical conditions;

WHEREAS, it appears that through the significant efforts of the public and private sectors, effective vaccines may soon be available to administer to our citizens in an effort to thwart the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and return our lives to a semblance of normality and stability;

WHEREAS, the State of Texas convened a team of external and internal subject-matter experts into the Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel (EVAP) to develop vaccine allocation strategies as recommendations to the Texas Commissioner of Health, including guiding principles for the equitable distribution of the vaccine across the State which appropriately prioritize making vaccines available to **FRONTLINE WORKERS** and vulnerable populations;

WHEREAS, in order to balance the educational, health and economic issues described above, the Governor of Texas, the Texas Commissioner of Education and the Texas Education Agency prescribed guidelines and directives to Public School Districts to currently make available live instruction to those students who request it and to continue to aggressively phase in live instruction for all students in the near future;

WHEREAS, the Board and Administration are following advice and directives from federal, state and local authorities in responding to COVID-19;

WHEREAS, Texas Public School District personnel are essential to the day to day operations of a District as described above and critical for the resumption of live, face to face instruction;

WHEREAS, Mr. Ruben Cortez, Jr., District 2 Member of the State Board of Education recently requested of the Governor Abbott that School District employees State wide be defined as **FRONTLINE WORKERS** for purposes of vaccine allocation, the Board wishes to join Mr. Cortez and support him in his request to the Governor.

IT IS THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Board of Trustees finds a substantial public purpose exists in requesting of the Governor and EVAP that all Public School District personnel be designated **FRONTLINE WORKERS** as that term is defined by EVAP and as essential **FRONTLINE WORKERS** be given appropriate priority in the State wide administration of the COVID-19 vaccine as it becomes available.


The above Resolution is passed and adopted this 17th day of December, 2020 by the Pflugerville ISD Board of Trustees.

APPROVED:



Vernagene Mott
President, Board of Trustees

ATTEST:



Tony Hanson
Secretary, Board of Trustees