



WELLPINIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spokane Indian Reservation

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Subject: COVID-19 Vaccine NOT Required for Students Next Fall

Dear Staff, families, Students and community,

As you may know, the State Board of Health (SBOH), who determines immunization requirements for students in all of Washington's K-12 schools, has been considering whether or not to require the COVID-19 vaccine for students.

Today, SBOH voted to not require Washington's students be vaccinated against COVID-19 for school attendance. This means this fall, immunization requirements for our students will remain unchanged. SBOH overwhelmingly supports the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine and notes that vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and those around you, especially against severe illness.

Before making this decision, the State Board of Health organized a technical advisory group (TAG) made up of doctors, public health officials, school partners, and other community members. Over a series of meetings, the TAG met to understand the benefits and challenges of requiring a COVID-19 vaccination for students. In late February, the TAG concluded their work and recommended to the State Board of Health that the vaccine not be required. In today's SBOH meeting, they reviewed the TAG's recommendation before deciding they agreed.

We are anticipating the current health and safety guidance from the state Department of Health will remain in place next fall. This includes encouraging—but not requiring—masks, regular cleaning and disinfecting, sharing reminders of proper hand hygiene, and physical distancing to the extent possible while ensuring a full-time in-person opportunity for all students. As a reminder, as we have learned throughout the pandemic, the situation with the virus can evolve and sometimes the guidance changes for us to continue providing the safest learning environment possible for our school community.

As we prepare for returning to school buildings next fall with no mask or vaccine requirements for students, we continue to encourage students and families to get vaccinated to protect against COVID-19. Widespread vaccination is one of the most effective strategies we have to reduce the spread of the virus.

Sincerely,

John M. Adkins
Superintendent
Wellpinit School District