



## Washington State Senate

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February 3, 2021

The Honorable Jay Inslee  
Washington State Governor

**Subject: Seeking vaccine change for in-person educators, more local discretion, and public clarification**

Dear Governor Inslee,

On January 11, I joined my fellow legislative education committee leaders in sending a bipartisan letter to you urging that all school employees – regardless of age – have an opportunity to gain access to the COVID 19 vaccine in Phase 1B2. At that time, based on the calendar you and the Department of Health published, that phase was to begin in February.

I appreciate the step that you took to modify your vaccine plan to allow all school employees regardless of age to gain access in Phase 1B2, however, you significantly slowed down the process to move to that phase. As I have communicated previously, our school employees are on the front lines – many currently providing in-person instruction – and helping our state fulfill its paramount duty regarding education. They deserve to be protected.

In a recent news conference, you compared a 25-year old teacher to an 80-year old Washingtonian. To me, this greatly oversimplifies the policy argument about access to vaccines. You did not mention that under your current plan, for example, a 64-year old teacher is unable to be vaccinated yet a 65-year old retiree who can still self-isolate is eligible. I support prioritizing our older Washingtonians and vulnerable adults, but our school employees (administrators, teachers, and support staff) deserve to be prioritized alongside these older Washingtonians, especially those who are providing direct student support today. Our state will not get back to normal until our schools are successfully functioning.

Please consider advancing our state to Phase 1B2, allow school employees providing in-person instruction today to be assigned to Phase 1B1, or authorize local health providers to utilize their discretion when administering vaccines. Additionally, please clarify publicly your support for all school employees to gain access to the vaccine – regardless of age – in the same phase per your decision on January 18, as your response at a recent news conference appears to contradict your revised guidance.

Thank you for your consideration and please respond to this letter.

Sincerely,

Brad Hawkins