



Tuesday, December 14TH, 2021

Major Victory for Students and Families as LAUSD Pushes Back Vaccination Deadline

In a decision that will set the stage for how school districts around the country proceed with mandates, Los Angeles Unified School District voted this afternoon to wait until Fall 2022 to require students 12 and up to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - In a special meeting of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) held today at 2pm, the Board voted 7-to-1 to delay the deadline for removing unvaccinated students, 12 and up, from in-school learning to the city's understaffed and underfunded virtual learning program, City of Angels. Unvaccinated students now have until the Fall semester of 2022 to receive both doses of the vaccine, rather than January 10th, 2022.

PUBLIC SUPPORT RALLY OUTSIDE BOARD MEETING

Hundreds of parents, teachers and members of the public gathered prior to the LAUSD special session. Holding signs, singing and giving speeches, the group remained outside the building while waiting for the Board to vote. Amongst those who gathered to oppose the original mandate was Protection of the Educational Rights of Kids (PERK) co-founder, Amy Bohn, who declared "This is the civil rights battle of our century." Hours before the vote, the group received notice of the Board's change of mind from board member, Jackie Goldberg's Twitter statement, "Today the Board voted to suspend enforcing LAUSD's vaccination mandate and delay transferring students who did meet the requirement into online independent study". The official vote was not taken and announced until 6:30pm local time.



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SPECIAL SESSION PUBLIC COMMENT

The District's Superintendent and eight-member Board listened to live call-in testimony from fourteen members of the public. Twelve spoke in favor of the Board delaying - or cancelling - the planned deadline to remove unvaccinated students from in-person learning. In three-minute speeches, these individuals spoke of the far-reaching consequences of removing the students from in-person learning. Their arguments addressed a wide range, including the lack of science for forced segregation of healthy students, the science of natural immunity, the vaccine's inability to prevent transmission, the illegality of forcing medical interventions, the budget drain of losing 34,000+ students, and the extreme educational detriment to students placed into a subpar online format. In a brief interlude to the data and fact-based public presentations, a call came from a group who chanted 'Our Kids, Our Choice' for the length of their call.

BOARD MEMBER VOTES EXPLAINED

Prior to the official vote, five Board Members, including Board President Kelly Gonez, explained their reasonings for the pushback. One explained his 'no' vote. The reasons provided for delaying the date until Fall 2022 included providing more time for individual outreach to unvaccinated students and their families, more time for families to upload their vaccination credentials and more time to properly reinforce the infrastructure of the City of Angels program. Each member voting to delay stated that the mandate would remain in place, but on a delayed timeline.

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BACKGROUND TO LAUSD'S SPECIAL MEETING TODAY

LAUSD announced last Friday that, due to its nearly 87% vaccination rate of students 12 and up, it would hold today's special meeting. This decision to discuss the deadline came less than 48 hours after a preliminary injunction hearing, on Wednesday, December 8th, in the lawsuit filed by Facts Law Truth Justice LLP (FLTJ), in partnership with Children's Health Defense – California Chapter (CHD-CA) and PERK against LAUSD. Initially, the hearing seemed to favor LAUSD as Los Angeles Superior Court Judge, Mitchell L. Beckloff, had prepared a 14-page 'tentative' ruling in favor of LAUSD. However, Judge Beckloff decided to deliberate, rather than summarily rule for LAUSD, after each side presented their arguments.

PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION UPDATE

This morning Judge Beckloff, potentially in relation to the impending vote by LAUSD, issued his ruling in favor of LAUSD by denying the injunction.

LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST LAUSD REMAINS IN PLACE

While the deadline extension represents a victory for the families of the 34,000 LAUSD students who may now stay in school until Fall of 2022, the lawsuit filed by FLTJ, CHD-CA and PERK against LAUSD will proceed as other aspects of LAUSD's current policy remain contested. Unvaccinated students will still be prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities, such as science clubs, drill and athletics. They will also continue to have COVID testing requirements and mask mandates.

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