



January 15, 2021

Dear Ypsilanti Community Schools staff,

Today, the Washtenaw County Health Department updated vaccination prioritization guidelines for educators who work in special education in Washtenaw County. As vaccine supplies continue to be limited, WCHD has chosen to further prioritize special education teachers and paraprofessionals working in close contact with high-need students in self-contained classrooms as part of the 1A healthcare worker vaccination group. The remainder of school staff will still receive vaccine prioritization as part of the Phase 1B group, with school staff over the age of 50 receiving initial 1B prioritization.

This decision was made after further reviewing the unique responsibilities of special education educators and their role in serving students who require close contact with school staff and/or may have difficulty wearing a face mask.

Vaccination priority for Washtenaw County educators and how they can expect to hear about the next steps will be as follows:

- 1. Phase 1A (revised):** Now includes special education teachers and paraprofessionals who work in self-contained classrooms. Ypsilanti Community Schools is already working with the Washtenaw County Health Department to provide them a list of who meets these criteria. *Staff who meet these criteria should watch for information on how to schedule an appointment from the Washtenaw County Health Department.* School staff, part of the revised 1A group, will be able to schedule vaccine appointments early next week.
- 2. Phase 1B (School staff 50+ years old):** School staff who are 50+ years old will be prioritized first within the 1B group, including contracted staff such as bus drivers and custodial staff over age 50. *Staff who meet these criteria should watch for information on how to schedule an appointment from Ypsilanti Community Schools.* (Contractors will receive information on scheduling an appointment through their employer.) At this time, the Washtenaw County Health Department anticipates that school staff 50+ years old will be able to schedule vaccine appointments for early to mid-February.
- 3. Phase 1B (All other school staff):** This includes the remainder of school staff in Washtenaw County, as well as contracted staff such as bus drivers and custodial staff. *Staff who meet these criteria should watch for information on how to schedule an appointment from Ypsilanti Community Schools* (Contractors will receive information on scheduling an appointment through their employer.) At this time, the Washtenaw County



Health Department anticipates that all other school staff will be able to schedule appointments for the end of February through the month of March.

Please remember that **vaccination for Phase 1B may take 8-12 weeks**, and this timeline may shift as vaccine allocations change over time. We urge everyone to have patience and understanding that the Phase 1B group includes many vulnerable people in our community who are all eager to get the vaccine.

The Washtenaw County Health Department also encourages anyone over the age of 65, including school staff, to consider vaccination opportunities through Michigan Medicine, St. Joseph Mercy Health System, and IHA as these become available. Additionally, Washtenaw school employees who live in another county may seek vaccination through that county's local health department.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work in partnership with the Washtenaw County Health Department to ensure school staff can be vaccinated as quickly and as efficiently as possible. As we continue to know more about the next steps, we will share them with you as soon as possible. More information will be forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Alena Zachery-Ross

Alena Zachery-Ross
Superintendent
Ypsilanti Community Schools