



October 27, 2021

Ms. Lydia Grant
Sunland-Tujunga Neighborhood Council
PO Box 635
Tujunga, CA 91403

Dear Ms. Grant,

Thank you for the opportunity to share more about L.A. Unified's vaccine requirement and address the concerns you raised. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented challenge for all of us, including our students, families, and schools. Due to the unpredictability of the virus, we have had to respond nimbly as conditions change.

The decision to require vaccination for all our staff and eligible students has not been made lightly, nor was it made hastily. The Board has been hearing from our parents and communities about our district's safety protocols, including the vaccine, for many months. We have been consulting regularly with experts about how best to ensure the continued safety of our students, families, and staff, which has meant that L.A. Unified leads the nation in its safety protocols.

As far as the Board's processes for public comment, at our regular meetings we typically hear from seven speakers on every agenda item, as well as fifteen speakers on non-agenda items. For our special meetings, such as the one to establish the student vaccination requirement, we hear from seven speakers on each agenda item. There are, however, several other ways we hear from our stakeholders on these topics—including phone calls, emails to individual Board members and to the Board as a whole, and even physical letters. I have received many of these communications regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, including from parents and community members in Sunland-Tujunga.

Public input is critically important to my work as a Board member. In the case of the COVID-19 vaccine, the input of experts in medicine and science is also essential. They affirm that the vaccine is the single best way to slow the spread of the virus. They attest that they are safe and effective. Those data factored in heavily in the Board's decision on the requirement, both for employees and students. As you likely know, since our meeting in September, Governor Gavin Newsom has enacted a statewide COVID vaccination requirement across all schools, both public and private. His action further emphasizes the importance of vaccination as the best tool to keep our students safely learning in school.

Just as with the other required vaccinations to attend public school, we will offer medical exemptions, if needed, and students may be conditionally admitted if they are in one of these groups: foster youth, experiencing homelessness, migrant, military family, or have an individualized education program (IEP). Additionally, in line with my answer at your recent meeting, vaccination requires parental consent. If parents do not consent to having their student receive the vaccine, students will be enrolled in our online learning program in January. The online program allows families to continue to be part of the L.A. Unified system should they choose not to be vaccinated at this time.

Throughout every phase of the pandemic, I have sought to ensure our students are safe and able to learn. COVID-19 has made that journey unpredictable, but my commitment to safety and quality public education remains the same. I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you and the entire Sunland-Tujunga neighborhood to achieve those goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Gonez', written in a cursive style.

Kelly Gonez
Board President
Los Angeles Unified School District, Board District 6