



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NAACP ON DCPS COVID-19 VACCINATION MANDATE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The NAACP DC Branch supports the DCPS COVID-19 vaccine mandate, while urging DCPS to explore options to ensure unvaccinated students have access to public education through continuing and expanding the remote learning program. The DCPS COVID-19 vaccination mandate for students 12 and older is important to support a healthy, educational environment for students, teachers, staff and ultimately their families and the community at large. However, mandatory vaccinations will have a racial and educational impact on student attendance, resources and students' academic success.

The NAACP urges DCPS to implement targeted COVID-19 outreach to unvaccinated households to combat vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccinations, while offer a remote learning option for these students.

- DCPS must conduct targeted outreach phone calls to households of unvaccinated students to schedule free in-home vaccination appointments.
- DC must offer free in-home vaccination appointments for unvaccinated students
- DC should target the Vaccine Clinic Mobile vehicles to zip codes with highest unvaccinated populations and station outside of target schools the first week of school.
- Lastly, an option must be provided for students opposed to vaccinations. DCPS must invest in building a robust high school, middle school and special needs virtual online program with designated teachers and staff designated to addressing the achievement gaps and lessons learned from 2020 and 2021 virtual learning issues. Last year's online program should be continued, expanded and development to support academic excellence.
- Offering a remote, online learning option will impact DCPS enrollments rates, so DCPS must hold-harmless, ensuring school funding is not impacted by enrollment declines.

Akosua Ali, NAACP DC Branch President, stated, "The DCPS COVID-19 vaccination is critical to foster a safe, healthy, educational environment. This pandemic is not over. COVID-19 and aggressive variants continue to ravage communities and unvaccinated, Black families are impacted at disproportionate rates. However, the racial and educational impacts on Black and Brown student attendance and academic success is a serious issue. Mandatory vaccinations will impact attendance, and attendance impacts school funding, resources and students' academic success. A quality, virtual learning program is necessary to keep students safe, while ensuring existing achievement gaps are not exacerbated."

Continued under-resourcing and disinvestment in DC public schools and healthcare access in Ward 7 and Ward 8 is a serious racial justice issue. Although, Blacks are only 43% of the total population of the District of Columbia, Blacks are 91% of the population in Ward 7 and Ward 8. East of the River has the highest and most rapidly growing population. 45,922 children live in Ward 7 and 8 combined, while 13,428 live in Ward 3. Racial inequities in technology access, DCPS facility modernization and healthcare access and misinformation continue to be issues impacting COVID-19 surges and access to quality education for families East of the River.

The NAACP is a strong, advocate committed to fighting for policies to positively impact the health and well-being of Black lives. The NAACP, has a long-history of advocating for policies, budget, and legislation advancing racial equity through political, educational and economic empowerment. Today, the NAACP continues to be a fierce, advocate for education equity, health and well-being across all 8 wards of the District.

For more information, please email naacp@naacpdc.org with any questions.

ABOUT NAACP:

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. The mission of NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social and economic quality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.