

Resolution to Add COVID-19 to Massachusetts' Immunization Requirements for School Entry

Whereas 20,063 Massachusetts residents died of COVID-19 between the start of the Coronavirus pandemic and August 24, 2022.

Whereas the US Centers for Disease Control maintains that “the most important prevention strategies to prioritize in schools include vaccinations for teachers, staff, and eligible students, the use of masks and physical distancing, and screening testing” and recommends that all eligible teachers, staff, and students get vaccinated for COVID-19 before school opens.

Whereas 51%, 79%, and 73% of Massachusetts children and youth aged 5-11, 12-15, and 16-19 respectively were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of August 24, 2022, according to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

Whereas the state of Massachusetts has established Immunization Requirements for School Entry to “protect students and members of their community from serious vaccine-preventable diseases by ensuring high vaccination rates.”

Whereas the Massachusetts Department of Public Health regularly updates these requirements, most recently in advance of the 2020-21 school year.

Whereas it is difficult for municipalities to add additional vaccines to school immunization requirements because there is no legal mechanism for enforcement, and

Whereas 62%, 78%, and 91.5% of Somerville Public Schools students in grades K-6, 7-10, and 11-12 respectively were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as of September 9, 2022, according to the Somerville Public Schools.

Now, therefore, be it therefore resolved that the Somerville School Committee calls on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to add the COVID-19 vaccine to the Immunization Requirements for School Entry beginning SY2022-23.

And be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Massachusetts Secretary of Public Health.

Voted: Unanimously

Date: September 12, 2022

By: Somerville School Committee