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Department of Education Visits Palisades School District, Applauds COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

Eligible children aged 12 and up are encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccine as a strategy for a safe return to classrooms.

Kintnersville, PA – Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Secretary Dr. Noe Ortega and Executive Deputy Secretary Dr. Deb Carrera joined Palisades School District educators and community partners to discuss the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccine prior to the start of the new school year. PDE also helped welcome new teachers to the district in Bucks County and toured their classrooms

“As communities across the commonwealth prepare for a new school year, we must work together to create healthy and safe conditions for our students, teachers, and staff now and in the future,” said Secretary Dr. Ortega. “We commend the Palisades School District and their community partners for their efforts to offer eligible school children and families the COVID-19 vaccine this summer before the new school year begins.”

Palisades Middle School held a COVID-19 vaccination clinic for students, staff, and community members in July and a second dose COVID-19 vaccination clinic later today.

“I value the support that the Palisades School District has received throughout this pandemic from our local school community including parents, students, teachers, staff, administrators and school board, as well as the resources and guidance provided by our county, state and federal partners. During the 20-21 school year, all Palisades' buildings remained open for face-to-face learning, five days a week, and we also provided a quality online learning option. We enjoyed so many outstanding academic, athletic, and extracurricular achievements by our students last year which demonstrates the true strength and resiliency of this community and the power of partnerships,” said Palisades School District Superintendent Bridget O’Connell. “I would like to thank our county, state and federal partners in education for providing the resources necessary for Palisades to deliver an excellent education to our students that promotes their safety and wellbeing. Those resources include funding to support both the hiring of additional staff to support our cyberlearning option and additional learning opportunities for students, funding to support facilities upgrades, as well as the county and state support to run vaccine clinics in our school buildings. Today marks our fourth in-school vaccine clinic. We are so pleased to host this visit today so that we may share our story as we look forward to our students returning to classrooms in ten days for another great year!”

On Monday, the Pennsylvania Department of Health directed vaccine providers to support COVID-19 vaccination clinics at K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Additionally, the departments of Health and Education are partnering with Concentric by Ginkgo Bioworks (Ginkgo) to provide free COVID-19 testing in K-12 schools across the

commonwealth to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and outbreaks in schools during the 2021-2022 school year.

In March, the Wolf Administration, in partnership with the COVID-19 Task Force, created a special initiative that vaccinated more than 112,500 teachers and staff in three weeks. The administration applauds Palisades School District and supports efforts by schools across the commonwealth to vaccinate eligible school children prior to the start of the new school year.

To support school communities in preparing for the 2021-22 school year, the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) released its [Return to School Roadmap](#) last week. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, PDE regularly provided technical assistance and guidance to LEAs to support instruction while navigating the pandemic. This included through the PDE online resource, the [Roadmap for Educational Leaders](#). PDE will continue to support LEAs as they prepare for and navigate the upcoming school year. This includes through the latest chapter of PDE's Roadmap for Education Leaders; [Accelerated Learning through an Integrated System of Support](#). This toolkit includes a professional learning series for school leaders and educators to help address students' learning loss and other issues caused by the pandemic.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health is working to ensure the vaccine is provided in a way that is ethical, equitable, and efficient to all Pennsylvanians:

- All Pennsylvanians aged 12 and older are eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Use [Vaccine Finder](#) to find a COVID-19 vaccine provider near you.
- Text your zip code to GETVAX (438829) for English, or VACUNA (822862) for Spanish and receive three possible COVID vaccination sites in your area, with phone numbers to call for an appointment.
- A [commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination guide](#) explains the current process for getting one. Pennsylvanians with questions about the vaccination process can call the Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- [Vaccine dashboard data](#) can also be found on the website to find more information on the doses administered and showcase demographic information.
- The [Unite Against COVID Weekly Update](#) is a round-up of news you can use and answers to your most pressing vaccine questions – delivered directly to your inbox every week.
- [Access answers to frequently asked questions on the COVID-19 vaccine](#).

To access photos and video from today's event, please visit [PACast](#).

For more information on the [U.S. Department of Education](#), please visit their website.

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