

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)**



Public Roundtable on  
“No Shots, No School” in SY22-23

Testimony of  
**Dr. Brenda Elliott**  
Chief, School Improvement and Supports

Before the  
Committee of the Whole  
The Honorable Phil Mendelson, Chairperson

June 29, 2022  
Zoom Video Conference

Good afternoon, Chairman Mendelson, members of the Council, staff, and members of the public. I am Dr. Brenda Elliott, Chief of the Office of School Improvement and Supports for DC Public Schools (DCPS), and I am honored to testify before you on the critical topic of required immunizations for school year (SY) 2022-23.

Vaccinations are safe, effective, and help ensure our students can learn in-person. DCPS will fully enforce “No Shots, No School” next school year. As our city partners have said, at DCPS, we want our students to be healthy and in school each school day, safely learning. That’s why this past school year, DCPS hosted over thirty vaccine clinics at our schools and we continue to work every day to expand access to vaccinations and ensure families know about the legal requirement for all students to be vaccinated. We are working diligently to reach our families and connect them to resources and vaccinations, as we don’t want any child to miss school.

DCPS Central Services has already begun training school registrars and nurses on vaccine requirements and enforcement expectations for the upcoming school year. We regularly send out District-wide reminders and support DC Health’s communications efforts. We are preparing postcards for families who are out of compliance and targeting extensive supports to families who need extra assistance. In August, for example, we plan to host a telethon for English Language Learner families to assist them with making vaccine appointments. And because a significant percentage of our non-compliant students specifically need their HPV vaccine, we will host a targeted HPV vaccine campaign in July, immediately following the last day of school.

At the school level, enrollment teams are monitoring the completion of the Universal Health Certificate. If there is an outstanding record, school-based health service teams are reaching out to families via weekly phone calls, letters, emails this summer. To our school-based staff, who always wear many hats – **thank you for your diligent efforts.**

DCPS is also pleased to support our city partners as we come together to expand access to vaccines over the summer. We are collaborating with our school-based health centers, which will be open to *all* school aged students in the District for summer vaccination appointments starting next month. Additionally, we are partnering with DC Health so that DCPS schools with low vaccination rates can host mobile clinics at the start of school, in addition to schools being able to request on-site summer vaccine exchanges. Finally, we continue to highlight the availability of COVID centers in all eight wards where students can walk in to receive their COVID vaccines seven days a week, as well as the mass vaccination sites in September.

Beginning on the first day of school, we will accelerate our support for families who are non-compliant with immunization. School health teams will be speaking to parents in-person, conducting phone calls, and connecting families to resources closest to their homes. Our school nurses, who primarily serve as the Immunization Point of Contact (IPOC) at our schools, are an essential component in our immunization compliance response. School nurses, in collaboration with the school-based health teams, will be working extremely hard to support students who are

out of compliance, providing updated rosters on a daily basis so schools can ensure timely, accurate daily outreach.

We have a robust plan of outreach and touchpoints with our families over the summer and from Day 1 of school to Day 20. This complements the public outreach and communications work led by our partners at DC Health, which you'll hear more about today. Once school starts, schools will regularly review the updated noncompliance roster and provide targeted outreach to families still not on-target with the required immunizations. We will follow the law and notify families that students who do not yet have the required vaccines will not be allowed to attend school on the timeline consistent with legislation. Immunization noncompliant students will be coded as "Unexcused Absence – Immunization" and we will continue supporting families in reaching compliance as soon as possible.

To our DCPS families, thank you for the incredible way that you support your students' readiness for school. Please schedule your child's wellness visit, physicals and/or immunizations as soon as possible and at your earliest convenience turn in the updated Universal Health Certificate to your school. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.