

April 8, 2022

The Honorable Senator Connie Leyva
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 871 (Pan) – Minors: Public Health: Immunizations • OPPOSE •

Dear Senator Leyva,

As Natomas Unified School District (NUSD) Board Trustees, we write in opposition to SB 871 (Pan), which adds COVID-19 to the list of diseases that a child must be vaccinated against as a condition of being admitted to any public or private elementary or secondary school. The bill also repeals the personal belief exemption, thereby creating a dilemma for many parents who are not ready for their young children to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

While we agree there is a shared responsibility for public health, we believe SB 871 is not the answer because it does not:

- Define the term “fully immunized” with respect to COVID-19;
- Specify the timing of COVID-19 shots and booster shots with respect to student admittance;
- Address the changing nature of the COVID-19 variants; and
- Honor parental choice.

NUSD has skillfully guided our school community through each challenging stage of the pandemic and was among the first districts in the state to reopen for in-person instruction. For the last two years, NUSD has been committed to protecting the health of our employees and students while working diligently to get students back in the classroom.

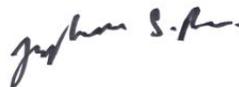
We hear from parents nearly every day that their children are suffering from depression and struggling academically, and our teachers confirm that the achievement gap in education outcomes is widening. As we move into the endemic phase of COVID-19, we need to remove some of the significant challenges— isolation, physical distancing requirements, and remote learning environments—still faced by California’s students. It is imperative that our children return to their classrooms without another state-imposed restriction that will force parents to choose between their personal beliefs and the enormous social-emotional costs of keeping their children out of school.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose SB 871.

Sincerely,



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cc: Senator Ochoa Bogh, Vice Chair, Senate Education Committee