



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Mike H. Morath
Commissioner
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701-1494

Dear Commissioner Morath:

Recently, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended adding the COVID-19 vaccine to immunization schedules for adults and school-aged children. Although this recommendation did not create a federal vaccination mandate, many schools across the United States, including some in Texas, rely on CDC guidance to craft school entry requirements for students.

In light of the CDC recommendation, I urge you to remind our state's schools that per Executive Order GA-39, which has been in effect since August 25, 2021, no governmental entity in Texas can mandate the COVID-19 vaccine. This Executive Order allows parents to opt out of the COVID-19 vaccine for their children while further empowering Texas parents to be the primary decision makers in their children's health care. Despite attempts at federal overreach into the health care decisions of Americans, in Texas we must continue to honor and defend the freedom of parents to choose what is best for the health and well-being of their families.

Also, the Texas Legislature has enabled parents to opt out of vaccinating their children for health reasons and reasons of conscience through a number of statutes, including Texas Education Code § 38.01(c)(1); Texas Health & Safety Code §§ 161.004(d), 161.0041; and Texas Human Resources Code § 42.043(d).

Regardless of what the CDC may suggest, in Texas, the COVID-19 vaccine remains voluntary. Texas schools shall not require students to receive the COVID-19 vaccine for any reason.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter and your assistance in protecting the rights of parents and students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:sgd