



Office of the President

August 5, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you to everyone who continues to be engaged in campus conversations about COVID-19 vaccinations and testing. At last night's board meeting, the Board heard several public comments, then discussed and ultimately adopted a resolution asking that the district develop a District vaccination/testing program that:

- facilitates protection of faculty, staff, and students who participate in District educational activities;
- ensures that exceptions to the vaccination program be carefully considered;
- potential partnerships and incentives be fully explored; and
- all appropriate collective bargaining obligations are observed.

We will be presenting a procedure for review at the August 18 regular board meeting, with a target implementation date of September 30, 2021. The procedure will follow the mandates set forth by the Governor for state employees.

Board President Birkey said something that resonated with many of us at last night's meeting. He stated that he recognized there is no path that perfectly accommodates what all of us individually are feeling as it relates to vaccines, testing, and equity due to the pandemic. He added that these issues are very personal to each of us, yet we cannot only think of our own feelings because all of us are at risk. This situation requires that we see ourselves as part of a collective, but as individuals we struggle to find a reasonable balance. And as Trustee Birkey also stated, I too am deeply grateful for the philosophical and technical work of the entire college community in this regard.

We know that this protocol is not going to prevent every outbreak. It will not prevent any one of us from being completely free of COVID-19. No vaccine has ever been developed that makes us 100 percent immune to an illness. The role of the vaccine is to prevent the severity of the disease at individual and societal levels. As a campus community, we analyzed this situation not only from our individual views. The decision is based on what we think is a good measure of safety to add within the college to be able to serve our students and community, while still providing for exceptions for those who do not wish to vaccinate.

Thank you for your continued hard work. Please let me know if you have questions.

Jose

Jose L. Fierro, D.V.M., Ph.D.
President/Superintendent