

Dear Health Commissioner Hiddleson:

The Big Walnut Board of Education would like to thank you and your team for your diligent work during this extraordinarily challenging global pandemic. Your tireless efforts have helped keep our families safe and our students in school by providing thoughtful guidance, grounded in science, and through testing, contact tracing, and notification. We can only imagine how exhausting these past ten months have been for you and your staff and want you all to know how much we appreciate your efforts.

Our administration and faculty were very excited to hear Governor DeWine's announcement that teachers and staff would be priority recipients of the coronavirus vaccine as part of Phase 1B. As you know, we have been the only public school district in Delaware County to maintain full-time, in-person learning for our students during this school year. Like you, our staff has been on the front lines of the pandemic fight in an effort to provide a quality education to our children, important nutritional and social stability, and some sense of normalcy within the chaos. Our teachers have done this all while facing not insignificant risk to their own health. Governor DeWine articulated that making teachers priority recipients of the vaccine would allow the students of our state to return to in-person schooling by March 1. Our students are already there and have been the entire school year. This is due to the significant efforts of our teachers and staff and their willingness to make personal sacrifices to make this happen.

The Big Walnut Board of Education firmly believes that the teachers, staff, and administration of the Big Walnut Schools should be the first school district in Delaware County to receive the vaccine. Our teachers are, and have been, at school all day, every day with our students. While the vaccine will allow other districts to prepare to return to in-person learning, our teachers are already doing this work. Vaccinating our employees first makes logical sense as they are currently facing the most potential risk.

We will commit to do everything possible within our ability to assist in the vaccination efforts. Our administration and nursing staff will engage with you and local health professionals to insure that we are prepared to assist in the administration of the vaccines in an efficient and effective manner. We believe that we can and should serve as the model to the other districts in the county.

Please let us know that our teachers will be the first to receive the vaccine and when we can get started. We are ready.

Best regards,