

## **MTA Board Motion on Vaccinations Passed on August 16, 2021**

The MTA is a union of 115,000 educators. Our number one priority is to return to safe, full in-person learning with our students, from preK through higher education. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we and our 400 affiliated locals have led the way on implementing the CDC-recommended COVID-19 mitigation strategies — including ventilation upgrades, masking, distancing, vaccination and regular testing — to protect the health and safety of students, educators and our communities.

We are in unprecedented times. With the rapid spread of the highly contagious delta variant, the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. In fact, COVID-19 cases in the past four weeks are nearly triple those of COVID-19 cases in the same four weeks in 2020.

Vaccination is our strongest protection against COVID-19. Yet children under the age of 12 are not eligible for the vaccine, and the vaccination rate of eligible children between the ages of 12 and 18 is still too low to deter transmission.

We take seriously our responsibility to protect our students, preK through higher education, our members and their families, and our communities. While research indicates that educators already have high rates of vaccination, the MTA supports required vaccination of all education workers and eligible students in our schools and colleges. We also support regular COVID-19 testing in lieu of vaccination for those not yet eligible or those for whom vaccination is not medically advisable.

We will support our locals as they negotiate — as required under collective bargaining laws — responsible agreements on behalf of their members. Such agreements must build in appropriate medical and religious exemptions, provide additional sick leave for those impacted by the effects of vaccination, and codify other crucial health and safety approaches that we have long insisted on — including masking, ventilation, distancing, reducing class size, and testing.