

As School Year Begins, Governor Walz, Lieutenant Governor Flanagan Encourage Minnesotans 12 and Up to Get Vaccinated

Today, as students and educators head back to the classroom for the 2021-22 school year, Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan encouraged students, their families, and all Minnesotans to get fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Governor Walz kicked off the school year today at University Avenue Elementary School in Blaine. Photos are attached.

“It is invigorating to see students and educators across the state back inside the classroom today after a year and a half of interrupted in-person learning. There’s nothing quite like the first day of school. As a teacher for more than 20 years and as a dad, I know firsthand that in-person learning is critical to a child’s wellbeing and academic success. I also know that getting vaccinated is the best way to keep our students safe, healthy, and in the classroom,” said Governor Walz. **“Kids look to adults in their life to keep them safe. As Minnesotans, the best thing we can do to protect our children and school communities is for everyone who is eligible to get the vaccine.”**

“As the mom of a third-grader, I know that the start of the school year is a time of excitement and new challenges for Minnesota families – especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Getting your COVID-19 vaccine helps prevent severe illness and reduce the spread of the virus, especially to our young people who cannot be vaccinated yet. The COVID-19 vaccine works, and our educators, students, and their families deserve this level of protection as they head back to the classroom this fall,” said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **“We know that kids do best when they’re in the classroom learning from their teachers, playing with their friends, and engaging in sports and activities. It’s our job to be good role models and show our kids how we care for each other by getting the eligible members of our family vaccinated.”**

Minnesotans 12 and older can get vaccinated wherever the Pfizer vaccine is being administered. Minnesotans can visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to filter by vaccine type and find a provider offering the Pfizer vaccine in their area, call their pediatrician to make an appointment, walk into a local pharmacy, or visit the Community Vaccination site at the Mall of America.

Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan know learning in classrooms with teachers and classmates is critical to students’ development. That’s why the Walz-Flanagan Administration has prioritized Minnesota’s students to help ensure they catch up on learning and have the opportunity to succeed. Last spring, Governor Walz allocated \$75 million of Minnesota’s American Rescue Plan funds to provide summer academic enrichment and mental health support to help make up for lost learning opportunities. Governor Walz also delivered Minnesota’s COVID-19 Recovery Budget, which includes \$1.2 billion for education over four years, including the largest formula increase in 15 years. Just last week, the Governor allocated another \$29 million of the American Rescue Plan to ensure that funding decreases due to

enrollment loss in Minnesota's schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic does not negatively impact students.

Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health are working together to offer free COVID-19 test kits to every school in the state, building on Minnesota's first-in-the-nation school testing program launched last winter. Nearly \$170 million in federal money is allocated toward this program. This includes millions of dollars in grants to schools that are offering testing, in order to ensure they have the staffing and administrative capacity to successfully implement these programs.