

Message from the Millbrook Central School District Board of Education Related to NYS Immunization Legislation

The Millbrook Central School District Board of Education would like to express its gratitude to those who have come forward regarding the issue of immunizations. We know that, despite differing opinions and views, we are all dedicated to the growth, health and well-being of all of our students.

On several occasions, and most recently at the January 14, 2020 Board meeting, members of our school community spoke during our public input agenda time, regarding mandates for compulsory vaccinations. The community members who spoke addressed issues both of currently mandated vaccinations, and those vaccinations which are currently under committee review in the state legislature (such as the flu and human papilloma virus (“HPV”) vaccinations). Speakers requested that this Board lobby the State Education Department to oppose the addition of mandatory HPV and flu vaccinations should this legislation make it to the senate floor for a vote. Others urged the Board to send a position statement to the Governor’s office to oppose the current mandates.

All of the speakers were eloquent, passionate and quite moving in their public comments. The board members were all affected by the personal stories shared and have profound empathy for the families who have been forced to make impossibly hard decisions since June of 2019, when the State repealed Section 2164(9) of the Public Health Law and the NYS Department of Health subsequently modified its regulations pertaining to immunization requirements.

As a whole, the Board members agree to the following:

1. We, as individuals, do not agree on the issue of HPV and flu immunizations specifically, except that we cannot support the prospect of the immunization processes being forced onto a school district. School is a place to educate our students and we do not feel that it should be the responsibility of the school district to provide immunizations to the students directly.
2. It is impossible for the board to represent the entirety of our community given the widely differing views within our community.
3. It was suggested that we, as a District, have the ability to ignore state mandates regarding immunizations. The Millbrook Central School District and its Board members have an affirmative obligation to comply with state and federal laws and regulations. Our District, therefore, must comply with the New York State Public Health Law, as it is not discretionary.

The Millbrook Central School District Board of Education members are unified in stating that we will not campaign either for or against this proposition. However, we do strongly urge community members to make outreach to both State legislators and the Department of Health to advocate for the respective outcomes that you desire.

Furthermore, we will look to the New York State School Boards Association for guidance and updates as more information becomes available.

While this may not be the desired outcome for some members of our community, we would like to emphasize our dedication to the well-being of our community at large.

Thank you to everyone for their support and passion for the Millbrook Central School District.

Sincerely,

Millbrook Central School District Board of Education