



# TSTA NEWS

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## **TSTA: Don't let your guard down, governor. Educators and voters still want safe schools and vaccine priority for school employees**

Texas State Teachers Association President Ovidia Molina released the following statement on Gov. Abbott's remarks:

Like Gov. Abbott, we believe we are making progress against the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are not there yet. Far from it. The COVID numbers have been coming down, but there were still 1,637 new confirmed cases of COVID in Texas yesterday and 59 deaths. More than 5,600 COVID patients were in Texas hospitals, and much is still unknown about the more-infectious variants of the deadly virus that have started striking our state.

Gov. Abbott needs to quit obeying his political impulses and listen to the health experts, who are warning that it is too soon to let our guard down without risking potentially disastrous consequences. The experts caution us to continue the safety practices that have worked against this disease, including widespread mask use and social distancing.

The Texas State Teachers Association urges the governor to keep his mask mandate in place, especially in our public schools, and see that it is enforced. We also repeat our call for the governor to give teachers and other school employees priority for the COVID vaccine.

A third COVID vaccine has won government approval, but so far fewer than seven in 100 Texans have been fully vaccinated against the disease, and very few of them are educators.

Texans want to see all their public schools reopened, but they want to see them reopened safely. That includes continued safety practices, including mask use, and vaccines for educators.

An overwhelming majority of Texas voters (81 percent), believe teachers should be given priority for vaccines, according to a bipartisan poll commissioned by TSTA and released this week. That strong level of support represents all demographic and partisan groups.

More vaccines are on the way, and voters believe Gov. Abbott must reserve some for educators.

<https://tsta.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/20210301-TSTA-teacher-priority-vaccines.pdf>