

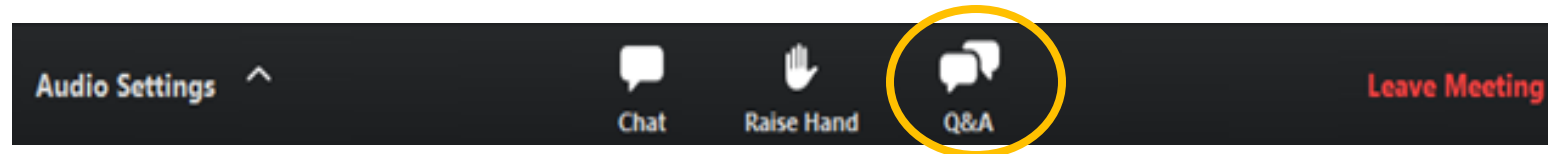
Boosting Childhood Immunizations: Practical Strategies for Effectively Engaging Schools and Families

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

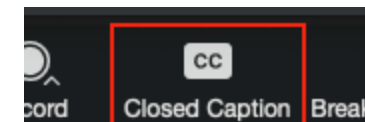
2:00 – 3:00 pm ET

REMINDERS

- All attendees are in listen-only mode.
- To ask a question during the session, use the “Q&A” icon that appears on the bottom of your Zoom control panel.



- To turn on closed captioning, click on the “CC” button.
- Please complete evaluation poll questions at the end of the presentation.



Our Initiatives

For more than 20 years, the School-Based Health Alliance has been at the forefront of efforts to advance child and adolescent health. Our collaboration with national, state, and local partner organizations has yielded a multitude of resources, learning collaboratives, and initiatives that have helped to establish and enhance school-based health care as a critical component of community health.

OUR WORK

We are continually making An impact

Through our initiatives, we have been able to empower school-based health providers with the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to respond effectively to the unique health needs of children and adolescents. By building their capacity and promoting best practices, we have not only improved the quality of care provided but also helped to establish a strong foundation for future generations.

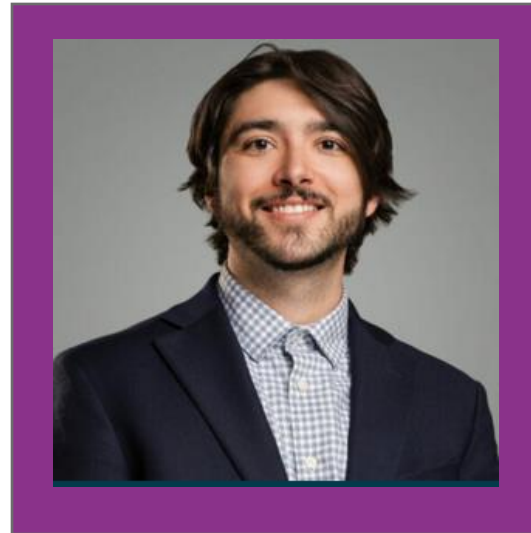
Our work has had a profound impact on the development of school-based health care and the broader community. By investing in this critical area of healthcare, we have been able to help promote the well-being of children and adolescents and create a healthier, more prosperous future for all.

Learn More About Our
Work at
<https://www.sbh4all.org/>

Today's Presenters



Dannielle Dobbins, M.Ed
Director
School-Based Health
Alliance



Donnie Greco, BA
Associate
School-Based Health
Alliance



Diana Bruce
CEO/Founder
Diana Bruce and
Associates LLC



Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to...

- Identify strategies health centers can use to increase childhood immunization delivery for school-aged children.
- Describe one approach for integrating family-centered care coordination into health center workflows to improve immunization access for school-aged children.

How Do Schools Support Student Health?

1

Provide students with comprehensive school health and wellness services.

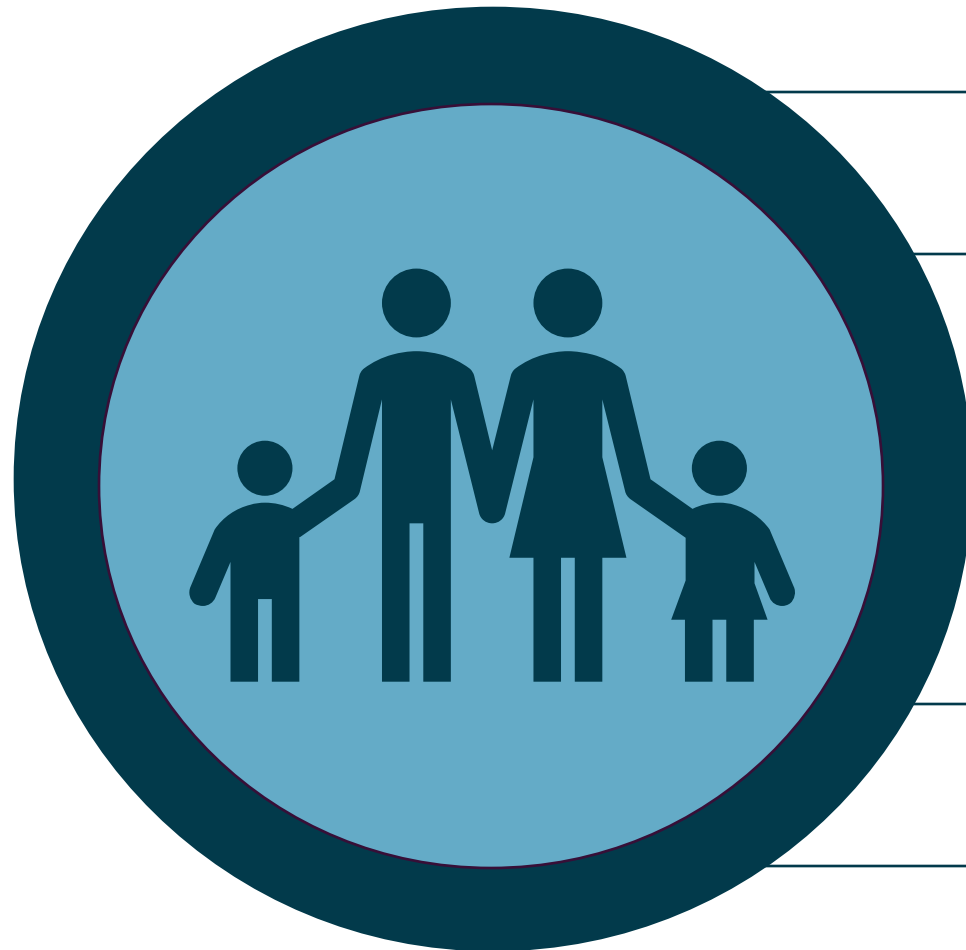
2

Create and uphold intersecting systems of care that support children in being healthy, feeling safe, and effectively engaging with school.

3

Schools can support student health through several models: school health services and school-based health care.

How Do Families Support Student Health?



1 Reinforce healthy behaviors at home

2 Communicate openly about health and wellness

3 Partner with schools and providers

4 Maintain up-to-date immunizations and preventive care

5 Help reduce barriers to accessing care



How Do Immunization Services Support Student Health?

01

Reliable immunization services protect students from serious illness

02

Keep students in school by reducing illness-related absences

03

Limit the spread of disease across the school community

Childhood Immunization Schedule Overview

- **Why immunization schedules matter**
 - Provide recommended timing and dosing to protect children and adolescents from preventable diseases
 - Developed and updated based on evolving evidence, safety data, and public health priorities
- **Important considerations**
 - Guidance may be updated periodically
 - Clinical decision-making may vary based on patient needs, risk factors, and organizational policies



Childhood Immunization Schedule Resources

- Key resources for providers
 - CDC Childhood Immunization Schedule (<https://www.hhs.gov/childhood-immunization-schedule/index.html>)
 - American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Immunization Guidance (<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/immunizations/>)



Recommendations may vary across organizations. Providers should follow applicable clinical guidance and local/state requirements.

What Health Centers Can Do

- Create referral systems with schools for immunizations
- Identify students missing vaccines using school and clinic data
- Make every visit an opportunity to assess immunization status
- Offer on-site or school-linked immunization opportunities
- Identify a school champion (nurse, counselor, administrator)
- **Health centers:**
 - Provide direct access to vaccines
 - Reduce barriers to care
 - Integrate immunizations into routine visits
 - Build trusted relationships with families



Engaging Families in Conversations About Immunizations

- **Start with what matters most to families**
 - Safety is the top concern
 - Acknowledge questions and concerns directly to build trust and support informed decision-making
- **Use trusted, consistent messaging**
 - Share clear, evidence-based information from reputable sources
 - Reinforce messages across care teams to promote consistency and confidence



Engaging Families in Conversations About Immunizations

- Use motivational interviewing to guide conversations
 - Ask open-ended questions and listen actively
 - Affirm concerns and provide tailored information
 - Support families in making informed decisions without judgment





Hello, I'm Diana Bruce.

- 25+ years working at the intersection of **public health and education** policy and programming
- Provide clients with **strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, policy development, and training**
- School advisor on childhood immunizations and communicable diseases
- Former school administrator for health and wellness
- Board member, yoga teacher
- Proud parent of young adults!

Why do I do this?

Our job is to ensure
every student learns;
to learn, *they* must thrive.





Why do you do this work?





Immunization Programs in Schools



What do you remember about immunizations as a child?



Immunization Programs in Schools

- 1855 – smallpox vaccine required for school in MA
- 1950s – Polio vaccines in schools across the country
- 1970s – U.S. goal: 90% children fully vaccinated
- **1979 – DC law passed requiring ALL schools to collect immunization documentation from students, and excludes those not up to date**
- 1980 – ALL states require immunizations for school



<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/history-disease-outbreaks-vaccine-timeline/requirements-research>

Why do schools focus on immunizations?

They have to (aka it's the law).

Students and staff are protected from diseases that can hurt them and cause harm to others.

Unimmunized individuals exposed to measles may be quarantined at home for 21–28 days—missing school, work, childcare, and all public activities.

Source: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. *Measles Guidance for Schools*. Published February 12, 2024. Accessed April 22, 2026. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-08/measles-guidance-for-schools-021224-ver1.pdf>

School Immunization Policy Benefits

Protect us from diseases that can hurt us

Protect others in a student's circle

Provide economic and health savings

Protect those immunized from long quarantine requirements



Consequences of NOT Implementing Immunization Policy



Unvaccinated students remain unprotected from life-threatening diseases

Herd immunity threshold (95%) not met - leading to outbreaks

Outbreaks lead to long periods of absenteeism and make teaching harder

State enforcement actions for schools that don't follow the law

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Preparing and Responding to Measles: Checklist for K-12 Schools*. Published 2024. Accessed April 22, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/downloads/measles-checklist-K12-schools.pdf> & Spector C. *Measles outbreak led to outsized jump in student absences, Stanford research finds*. Stanford Graduate School of Education. Published December 17, 2025. Accessed April 22, 2026. <https://ed.stanford.edu/news/measles-outbreak-led-outsized-jump-student-absences-stanford-research-finds>





**What keeps you up at night when you think about
childhood immunizations in your community?**





Case Study





What barriers do your schools, students, and families face in meeting childhood immunization requirements?



Case Study - The Problem

In 2019, immunization rates fell sharply - leaving schools vulnerable to school operations disruption cause by outbreaks and leaving students/staff vulnerable to vaccine-preventable illness and death.

In DC, schools enroll students and then give them 20 school days to submit immunization records.

In DC, students must provide immunization records every year.

In DC, half of the students attend public charter schools.

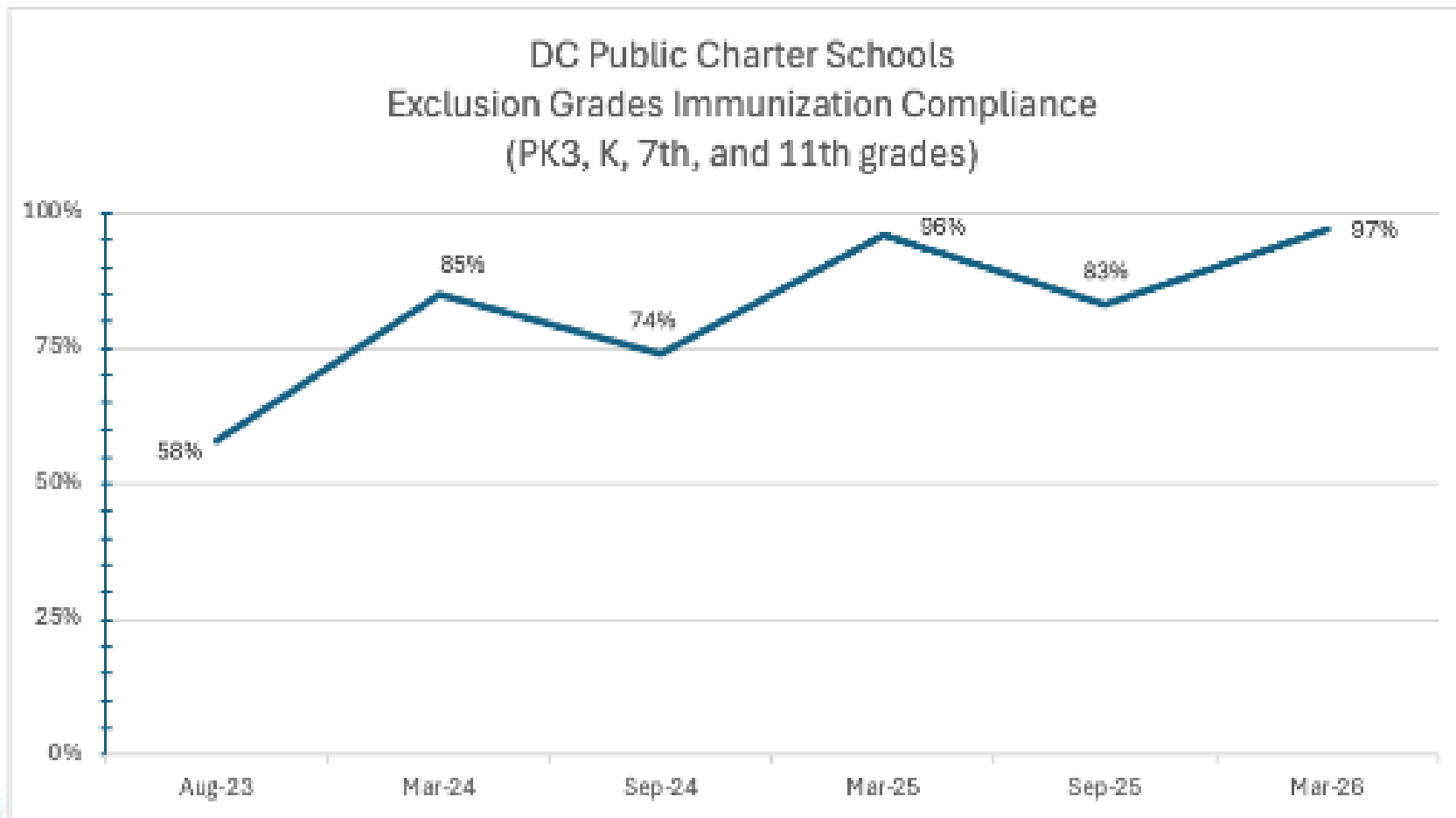


Case Study - The Solution

- Clear policy (<https://osse.dc.gov/immunization>)
- Prioritize 4 grades for school exclusion
- More resources ... and coordination
- Communication and more communication,
- Dedicated data tracking tools
- Public Charter School Board hired health consultants to advise charter schools in implementing the school immunization policy



Case Study - The Results



Case Study - The Results

**HUGE increase in immunization rates
among exclusion grades!**

- The vast majority of students got up-to-date
- Few students required to be excluded
- Families engaged and knew that their school cared about their students' safety and well-being



Case Study - What Worked

Public Charter School Board investment and engaged schools

State education agency policy, website, and staff

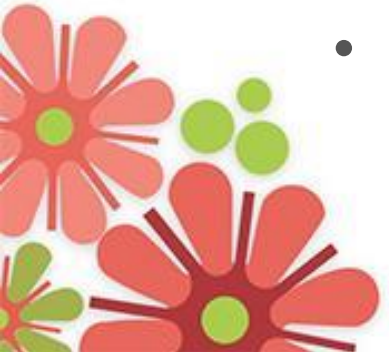
Health department immunization registry, staff technical assistance (TA),
and links to community vaccine providers

Partnership, Collaboration, and Communication at every level



Case Study - Send In Reinforcements!

- Health consultant assigned to each public charter school
 - 1:1 meeting with each school point of contact (that accepted offer) at the start of the school year
 - On-call technical assistance support by phone and email
 - Regular email updates
- Monthly community of practice in the fall
 - Share and learn best practices
 - Shared space for updates
- Individual support for corrective action, local education agencies (LEAs).



Case Study - What's Next?

- Exclusion grades have seen progress, but overall PK-12 compliance is slower to rise (but they are rising!)
- Exclusion grades won't impact all students until school year (SY) 29/30.
- Need to keep our eye on measles.
- Vaccine hesitancy – more family engagement/education.
- Funding/support for immunization compliance varies each SY



Case Study - What's Next?



Grades Impacted by Current or Previous SY's exclusion grades immunizations requirements							
<i>It will take until SY29/30 for every grade to have experienced an exclusion year.</i>							
Grade	SY24/24	SY24/25	SY25/26	SY26/27	SY27/28	SY28/29	SY29/30
PK3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
PK4		x	x	x	x	x	x
K	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
1		x	x	x	x	x	x
2			x	x	x	x	x
3				x	x	x	x
4					x	x	x
5						x	x
6							x
7	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
8		x	x	x	x	x	x
9			x	x	x	x	x
10				x	x	x	x
11	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
12		x	x	x	x	x	x





Keys to Immunization Success



Who Plays a Role in Getting to 100%?

Student

Parent/Caregiver

Health Center Staff (Pediatrician, Community Immunization Provider, School Nurse/Health Tech, Immunization Point of Contact)

Education Partners (Registrar, School Health/Operations Director, Campus Leader, School/District Leader, State Education Agency)

School Immunizations Require ...

Managing the numbers

+

Being organized

+

Effective family engagement



7 Keys to Immunization Success

- Effectively use all available resources
- Work as a team within the school
- **Provide consistent/persistent/creative family engagement**
 - “I mean what I mean”
 - **AND meet all family notification deadlines**
- Prioritize ongoing, regular data entry
- Prioritize ongoing, regular data tracking
- Share and celebrate progress/wins along the way



5 Dos (and 1 Don't)

- Remain curious and diligent
- Prepare for parent questions and pushback
- Meet partners where they are
- Fill knowledge gaps
- Manage influx of immunization documents
- Don't get left in the dark



Menti Poll: Reflection



- What support do your families and schools need?
- What role can you play in meeting these needs?

**Please log on to Menti.com
and enter code:**



Partner with Families to Identify Opportunities for Support

What questions do they have?

What barriers exist?

What are the biggest fears?



Engage Families

- Educate about the importance of immunizations at every visit
- Communicate what immunizations are due or missing (in writing and verbally)
 - The first time they hear from you or your team should NOT be after their student is facing exemption.
- Provide clear information about your immunization services (e.g., same-day appointments, extended hours, or pop-up clinics)
- Ensure processes are in place to deliver timely and complete immunization documentation to schools and families
- Use a variety of communication approaches to meet family needs and preferences
- Meet them where they're at; follow up notifications with phone calls/face-to-face contact
- Multiple modalities and multiple times!

Keep Empathy at the Center

**Empathy is seeing
the perspective of
someone else.**



Menti Poll: Action Steps

- What is one strategy you heard or thought of that you can put into practice in your work?
- What will you do this month, this school year, next school year to implement this strategy?

Please log on to [Menti.com](https://www.menti.com)
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Key Strategies for Strengthening Health Center, School, and Family Partnerships



School Engagement and Partnership Summary

- Build a planning team to establish common goals
- Regularly meet with school partners to coordinate and problem-solve
- Identify a school champion
- Create a system for school staff to refer students to the health center
- Create events and opportunities to immunize students, families, and school staff
- Partner with schools to host immunization events



Family Engagement and Partnership Summary

- Co-create family outreach messaging with school partners to ensure clarity and consistency
- Use multiple touchpoints (calls, texts, in-person, school events) to reach families
- Integrate immunization conversations into every interaction with families
- Host events to allow parents to ask questions, learn about immunization benefits, and share their concerns
- Distribute accurate, simple resources like infographics or calendars to keep track of required immunizations
- Provide simple scheduling options and allow walk-in appointments whenever possible



What's Possible with Strong Partnerships



- **Strong partnerships can lead to...**
 - Increased immunization uptake
 - Improved school attendance
 - Stronger connection between families and care
 - Better health and academic outcomes for students

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program. Updated 2025. Accessed April 10, 2026. [cdc.gov/vaccines-for-children/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-for-children/about/index.html)
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Resources Continued

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Questions & Answers



Please complete our Zoom poll





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