



State of Louisiana
Louisiana Department of Health
Office of Public Health

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 13, 2020

TO: Louisiana Department of Education
Office of Public Health Leadership,
Regional Administrators, Medical Directors and Immunization Consultants

FROM: Stacy Hall, RN MSN
Director, Immunization Program

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Medical Director, Immunization Program

Subject: Annual School Vaccination Coverage and Exemption Data

In accordance with [RS 17:170](#), chief administrators of schools are responsible for electronically reporting student immunization or exemption information to the Office of Public Health (OPH). School immunization requirements help safeguard children and adolescents by making sure they are protected when they get to school, where potential for vaccine-preventable disease transmission is higher. School vaccination assessments identify pockets of under-vaccinated students. [Multiple studies](#) have shown that vaccine exemptions tend to cluster geographically, increasing the risk for outbreaks.

OPH collects information from the LINKS School Nurse Module for an annual school vaccination coverage rate report. Data is provided as percentage complete for both non-public and public schools. The vaccination rates are assessed for Kindergarten and 6th Graders. The Kindergarten Assessment includes 4:3:2:3:2 (DTaP, Polio, MMR, HepB, VAR) vaccinations. The 6th Grade Assessment includes 1:2:2:3:1 (Tdap, MMR, VAR, HepB, MenACWY) vaccinations.

This report is submitted to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), shared within OPH and with the Department of Education. The chart below reflects the percentage of students who are up-to-date for the recommended vaccination series along with previous results for comparison.

School Year (SY)	Kindergarten		6 th Grade	
	Non-Public	Public	Non-Public	Public
SY 2014-2015	93.1%	96.6%	84.1%	89.3%
SY 2015-2016	94.4%	96.8%	86.0%	90.3%
SY 2016-2017	92.9%	96.2%	87.2%	87.9%
SY 2017-2018	88.1%	95.2%	82.1%	87.0%
SY 2018-2019	85.2%	95.4%	83.5%	83.2%
SY 2019-2020	90.2%	94.5%	84.0%	82.7%

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As background, for school year 2019-2020, the Louisiana Department of Education reported 13.3% of Kindergarteners were in non-public schools and 86.7% in public schools this school year; 6th Graders were 12.6% in non-public schools and 87.4% in public schools. There were 13,672 home study students for school year 2019-2020. This is slightly lower than last year's 13,708.

For the first time, with the 2019-2020 data, each parish result will include an exemption rate, the percentage of Kindergarten students who have requested an exemption from school immunization requirements. School-level data is used to ensure high vaccination coverage and to help during outbreak response in the identification students most at risk of disease, allowing them to be protected. The Louisiana non-public and public school exemption rate is 1.5% for school year 2019-2020, an increase from 0.6% in school year 2014-2015. This exemption rate is below the national average of 2.5 %, but there are parishes and schools in Louisiana with exemption rates above the state and national average.

The [Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) recently commissioned a poll showing that most Louisiana parents and families believe vaccines are safe and important for preventing serious illnesses. A majority of poll respondents believe that children should be immunized to attend school, and that it is important for schools to know whether children are vaccinated.

The attached ranked parish level information is provided to the OPH Regions and the Louisiana Department of Education to encourage continued excellence or recognize a need for improvement. Maps of these results are on the [LDH Immunization](#) webpage under "Data & Charts." We anticipate being able to share school-level data within the next month.

November 15th will again be the deadline for the 2020 school immunization assessment reporting as required by [Louisiana Law](#). Please contact the Immunization Program at 504-568-2600 if you have questions about the data or would like more information about increasing vaccination coverage rates in your parish or schools.

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