

# NASN Raises Concerns for School Communities in Face of Omicron

In the first weeks of January 2022, the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant continued to surge through the U.S. At the same time, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its guidance on COVID-19 prevention in K-12 schools, specifically related to [COVID-19 isolation and quarantine recommendations for close contacts of persons with COVID-19](#).

While we acknowledge the value of in-person school for students, the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) raises concerns from school health services teams for the health and well-being of school communities during this surge in disease.

As school communities work together to keep students and families safe during this pandemic, NASN supports continued layered COVID-19 prevention strategies that include vaccination and boosters for eligible persons, universal indoor masking, testing, increased ventilation, physical distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Partnerships to increase vaccination in eligible student populations will help during this Omicron surge. Additionally, it is imperative for school nurses and school administrators to collaborate, working together as a team to effectively communicate guidance to their school communities.

## Concerns include:

- Implementation of mitigation strategies is dependent on resources, both personal and within individual school buildings and communities. Funding and availability for resources such as appropriately sized close-fitting masks for students and space for distancing during unmasked eating during breakfast and lunch is not universal.
- NASN is concerned about the inequities of COVID's impact on children health, safety, and education. Children mirror the disparities in adults who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19: living in rural areas, people with disabilities, immigrants, and people who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black or African-American, and Hispanic or Latino.
- The CDC reports an [increased diabetes risk post COVID-19](#) diagnosis in children/youth under 18 years old. School nurses offer an opportunity to monitor these trends through data collection.
- The number of children under 11 years old with COVID-19 has increased. Vaccines remain the primary mode of prevention. The increase in pediatric COVID cases illustrates the need to address vaccine access and confidence in the pediatric vaccine. School health services, when adequately funded and supported, provide an opportunity to address these challenges.