



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on May 27, 2021

“Dear Vaccine”: Massachusetts Fifth-graders Write Poems to COVID Vaccines

The vaccine rollouts around the world have inspired people to express their excitement to be inoculated with experimental gene therapeutics in a variety of creative ways. We’ve seen a slew of [selfies](#), vaccine [anthems](#), [street art](#), [posters](#), and [tattoos](#), including designs such as bandages over the jab spot on the arm or the date of the shot along with the name of the brand (#pfizergang). Happily vaxxed people share their relief and gratitude on social media — a lot.

Now, some Massachusetts fifth-graders have [reportedly](#) been instructed to write poems to honor the COVID shot, which they are not even eligible to receive yet.

The “Global Vaccine Poem” [project](#) asks children and adults alike to read the model poem “Dear Vaccine” written by Naomi Shihab Nye, then “choose a prompt to respond to. Add a few lines of your words. Don’t worry about rhyming, don’t worry about grammar or spelling. Simply share your thoughts.”

Nye’s poem reads:

Save us, dear vaccine....

Children in kindergarten.

So many voices, in chorus.

Give us our world again!

Tiny gleaming vials,

enter our cities and towns

shining your light....

It’s a quick prick in the arm

You’ll barely notice it ...

Face-to-face conversation

someday soon? ...

Vaccine, please make the air clean!

“We turn to poetry at times for a birth, a death, for marriage, for first moments in our lives that are big moments of intense emotion, and this is certainly one of them,” [said](#) David Hassler, co-leader of the Global Vaccine Poem and director of the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University, Ohio.

Hassler said the first prompt, “Dear vaccine,” is about sharing what the shot means to you, and the impact it will have on your life. The second prompt is “We liked,” and lets people write about life before



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the pandemic; while the third prompt, “It’s the,” is intended to conjure images of the physical act of getting the shot.

The final prompt, “Vaccine, please,” is about your hopes and wishes for coming out of the pandemic.

Massachusetts school districts are [reported](#) to be stepping up their efforts to vaccinate eligible students before the end of the school year. [Thousands](#) of Bay State adolescents aged 12-15 have either received or scheduled their first shot of the recently authorized Pfizer/BioNTech injection.

Mass vaccination of schoolchildren is said by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the second largest teacher’s labor union, to be a prerequisite for elementary-school students to stop mask-wearing and social-distancing while at school.

AFT President Randi Weingarten [said](#), “In elementary schools, until we have the vaccines, it seems like unfortunately, we’re going to have to still keep wearing our masks and be physically distant so that we don’t have outbreaks.” The AFT sent out the quote on [Twitter](#) misspelling both “elementary” and “unfortunately”:

“In elementary schools, until we have the vaccines, it seems like unfortunatly we still going to have to keep wearing our masks and keep social distancing because we don’t want outbreaks.”

Weingarten also took a swipe at Texas and Iowa over dropping their mask mandates and threw in the fear of the India variant for good measure: “The politics have been as such that states like Texas and Iowa then rush to say no mask mandates when we still don’t have a vaccine that’s okayed for elementary school students, and we’ve seen what happened in India with the variants and young kids.”

Vaccines for elementary school-aged children are expected to hit the market by early 2022, [according](#) to Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Biden’s chief medical advisor and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

BioNTech co-founder and chief medical officer Dr. Ozlem Tureci [says](#) the data on how well the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 injection works in kids ages five to 11 could be available as early as the end of this summer, and young children could get vaccinated by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, many high schools across the country are being turned into pop-up vaccination sites for the eligible adolescent, with school officials [claiming](#) the kids are “happy to get COVID-19 vaccine at a familiar location.” To date, 11 of 13 Massachusetts school districts [host](#) vaccine clinic sites within their district. Some of the districts’ representatives already [stated](#) they will be mandating a coronavirus vaccine for students when the shots receive full FDA approval.



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