



## Oregon School District Fires Three Teachers Who Refused Covid Shot

Despite facing a shortage of qualified educators, the Bend-La Pine School District, which serves the cities of Bend and La Pine in Central Oregon, officially fired three teachers who chose not to receive Covid-19 vaccines. In August 2021, far-left Democrat Governor Kate Brown signed a vaccination mandate that required healthcare workers, teachers, school support staff, and volunteers to be vaccinated or sign a religious or health exemption.

Three teachers in the school district — Kelly Lundy, an elementary-school teacher; Zachary Webb, a middle-school teacher; and Mountain View High teacher and football coach Mark Schulz — chose to forgo the risky vaccination, causing them to be put on unpaid leave. Last week at a school board meeting, District Superintendent Steve Cook said that the district essentially had no choice but to fire the renegade teachers.

“It’s unfortunate that we’re here,” Cook said. “But the law is clear. We believe without compliance with the law, our hands are tied.”

While saying that the school district harbored “no ill feeling” toward the teachers, the school district’s Chief Human Resources Officer Steven Herron claimed that the district simply had no choice given Oregon’s vaccine mandate.

“This, from the district’s perspective, is strictly the need to follow the law, until or unless a court declares the OHA [Oregon Health Authority] requirement unlawful or the OHA vacates its regulations.” Herron explained.

Asked why it took so long — nearly a year — to finally fire the teachers, Herron noted that Governor Brown had lifted the vaccine requirement for state workers in the spring and that the district “wanted to wait to see if it was waived for school district employees.”

But Herron explained that the OHA had adopted a permanent rule for schoolteachers and the district didn’t see the state changing that rule anytime soon.

The three teachers were all given a chance to plead their case before the school board. A common thread seemed to be that their concerns were less about the vaccine than they were about the state government strong-arming their employees.

The 51-year-old Schulz was the one teacher who had no interest in retaining his position, having



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“already decided I will never work for Bend-La Pine Schools again.”

Schulz did think that the district owed him an apology, however.

“I did not want to give up my God-given constitutional right by signing the exception,” the high-school teacher said.

“The whole vaccine mandate was never about safety, and the public deserves to hear that,” Schulz pointed out. “To be clear, I am not anti-vax. People should have a choice.”

Schulz explained that in Oregon, “a mother has a choice to kill her unborn child.” He pointed out another choice should have been to refuse to subject himself to an “unproven vaccine. My body, my choice.”

“It was never about the vaccine. I’m not an anti-vaxxer. I did not believe the vaccine was the right choice for me. I don’t have a religious conviction against this vaccine,” said Webb, who had been a ski instructor with his school as well.

“Athletes say they’re not going to ski if I’m not back to coach,” Webb said.

Webb explained that he thought he had “the right and freedom we have in this country to choose what is best for ourselves.”

“May my students learn this lesson and stand for the rights they still have,” Webb concluded.

Webb promises to appeal the school board’s decision to Oregon’s Fair Dismissal Appeals Board.

Lundy, a kindergarten teacher, said she was “devastated” by her dismissal and the effect it had on her students.

“You may have argued that I had a choice,” Lundy said. “But I didn’t have a choice, to say no.”

The school district may or may not have had a choice to fire the teachers, but one organization, the Oregon Moms Union, is loudly calling for an immediate revocation of the vaccine mandate, arguing that “this rule is exacerbating public education staffing shortages by banning qualified teachers, staff, and volunteer parents from classrooms for not being vaccinated.” The group is petitioning the OHA to rescind the rule.

“The CDC guidance has changed since this rule was implemented and they no longer differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals,” said MacKensey Pulliam, founder of Oregon Moms Union. “Parents are asking why this outdated rule is still in effect when we need to prioritize getting teachers the support they need and giving parents the ability to get back into the classroom to get our kids caught up.”





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