

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2022

Key Points

- To protect children and their peers from outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases at school, Michigan students must receive a minimum of [6 different immunizations](#), unless they receive a medical, religious, or philosophical waiver. In 2014, Michigan added an education requirement to the waiver process.
- Following the educational requirement, Michigan's overall waiver rates dropped by more than a third (from 4.8% in 2014 to 3.1% in 2015). For the next 5 years, waiver rates fluctuated between 3-4%, but that ended in 2021 when waiver rates increased to 4.2%. The waiver rates further increased to 4.8% in 2022.
- In 2022, immunization waiver rates increased in all grades with reporting requirements:
 - Kindergarten: 5.5% compared to 4.6% in 2021
 - Seventh grade: 4.6% compared to 3.9% in 2021.
 - New entrants to a school district: 4.5% compared to 4.1% in 2021.
 - Overall (kindergarten, 7th grade, and new entrants combined): 4.8% compared to 4.2%
- This increase in waivers occurred amidst an overall decline in childhood immunizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This leaves many children susceptible to disease.

History of Immunization Waivers in Michigan

Routine childhood immunizations offer safe and effective protection against 14 different serious, even life-threatening diseases. To prevent outbreaks in schools and other places where children congregate, a high percentage of children must be immunized. States meet this need through a variety of different school requirements.

Over time, Michigan has implemented laws and rules to ensure that children are adequately immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases:

- 1978: each student, upon entry to kindergarten or a new school district involving grades 1-12, possess a certificate of immunization at registration or not later than the first day of school.
- 2000: *Public Act 89* mandated an immunization assessment for each sixth-grade student.
- 2010: additional immunizations were added to the list of requirements.
- 2012: Senate Bills 237, 238, and 239 moved the sixth-grade assessment to seventh grade.
- 2014: new educational requirement for Michigan parents opting their children out of getting vaccinated before entering school

Current Immunization Requirements in Michigan Schools

Prior to a child entering or attending school, parents or guardians are required to produce documentation confirming that the child has received all doses of the [school-required immunizations](#), or has received at least one dose of each required immunization and is currently waiting to receive subsequent doses after the appropriate interval. (In the following tables these children are considered “complete.”) A required vaccine may be waived or delayed if:

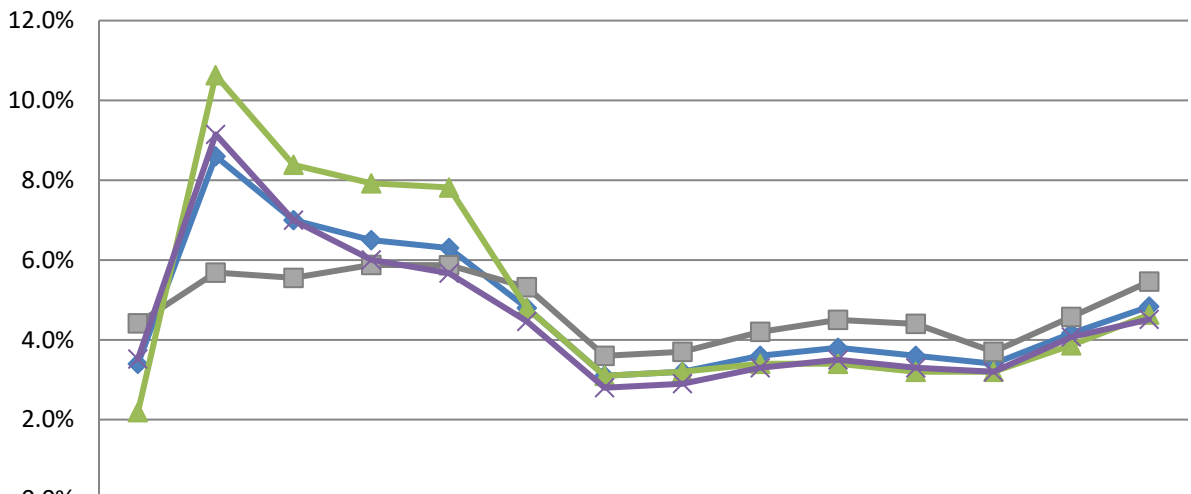
Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2022

- 1) A valid medical contraindication precludes the child from receiving the vaccine. A medical waiver must be completed and signed by the child's physician and shall state the contraindication(s), the vaccine(s) involved, and the time period the child is precluded from receiving the vaccine(s).
- 2) The parent or guardian holds religious or philosophical beliefs that preclude receipt of a vaccine(s). Any parent/guardian wishing to claim a nonmedical waiver must receive education on the benefits of vaccination and the risks of disease from a local health department (LHD) before obtaining the certified nonmedical waiver form from the LHD. An updated waiver must be presented each time the child's immunization status is reported (additional information available [here](#)).

Michigan's Waiver Rates over time

Each year, schools are required to report the immunization status of kindergarteners, 7th graders (6th graders prior to 2012), and new entrants to the school district. The higher a school's waiver rate, the fewer children have gotten all required vaccines. Michigan's overall waiver rate has ranged from a high of 8.6% in 2010, when additional vaccine requirements were added, to a low of 3.1% in 2015, following implementation of the education requirement, (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Percentage of Children in Michigan Schools Waiving at Least One Vaccine, 2009 - 2022



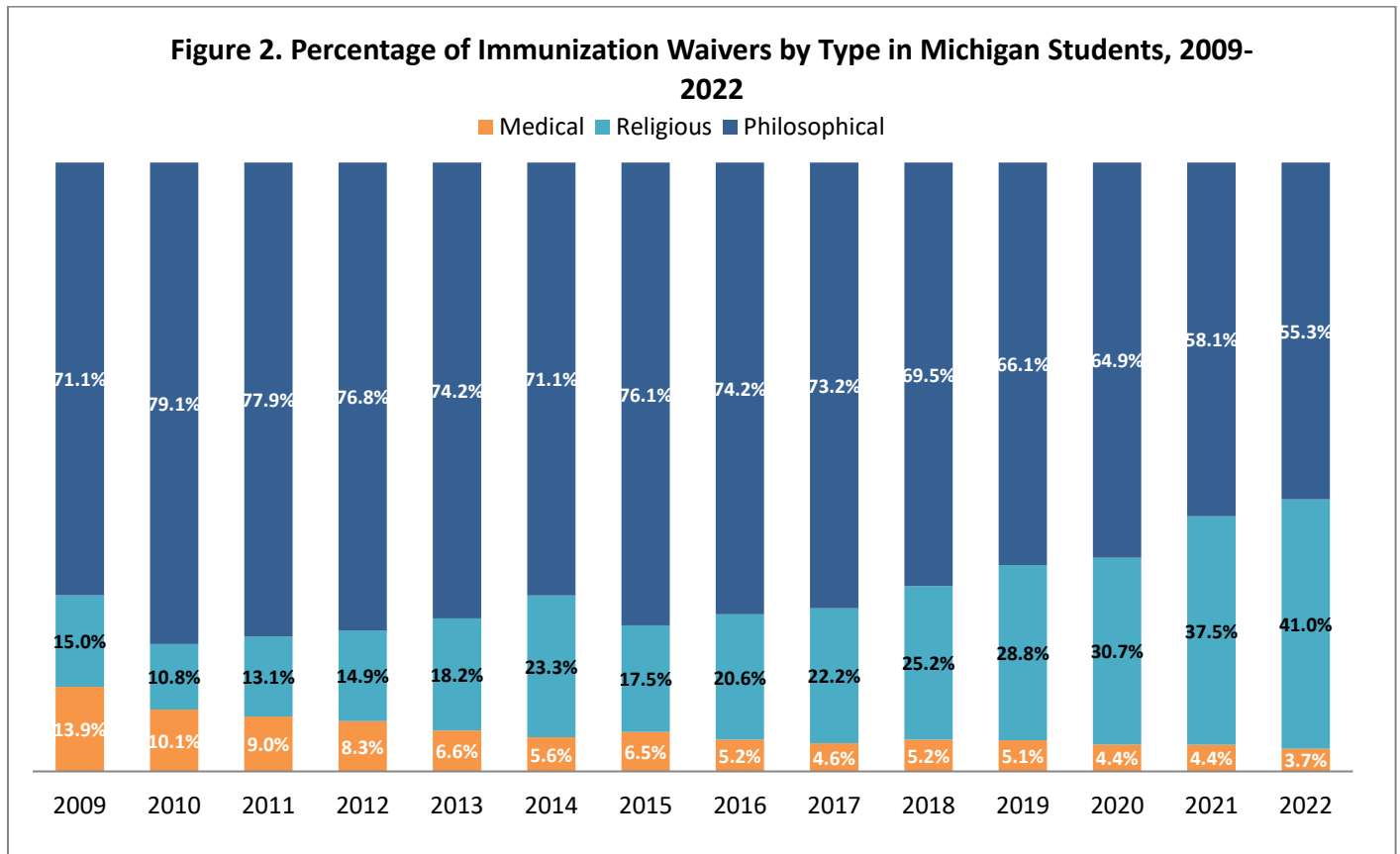
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
◆ Total	3.4%	8.6%	7.0%	6.5%	6.3%	4.8%	3.1%	3.2%	3.6%	3.8%	3.6%	3.4%	4.2%	4.8%
■ Kindergarten	4.4%	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%	5.9%	5.3%	3.6%	3.7%	4.2%	4.5%	4.4%	3.7%	4.6%	5.5%
▲ 6th/7th	2.2%	10.6%	8.4%	7.9%	7.8%	4.8%	3.1%	3.2%	3.4%	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%	3.9%	4.6%
✕ New Entrants	3.5%	9.1%	7.0%	6.0%	5.7%	4.5%	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%	4.1%	4.5%

^Total is the combination of kindergarten, 6/7th grade, and new entrants to the school district.

**In 2012 a Senate Bill was passed to move the sixth grade assessment to seventh grade.

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2022

In 2022, overall waiver rates rose to 4.8% which is the highest since 2014. As seen in figure 2, most of these waivers are for nonmedical reasons. Philosophical waivers accounted for more than half (55.3%) of all waivers in 2022, and the share of religious waivers rose to 41.0% of all waivers in 2022.



Immunization Status at Public vs. Private Schools, 2022

In 2022, public schools had higher immunization completion rates (92%) compared to private schools (85.2%) and lower waiver rates (4.5% compared to 9.0%). This can be seen in Table 1, which compares how many children at public versus private schools were considered “complete” (i.e., completed all required immunizations or had received at least 1 dose of all required immunizations and were waiting to receive additional doses), as well as how many children had each type of waiver.

Table 2 further breaks down these numbers by grade level. Similar trends hold within each grade level, with public-school kindergarteners, 7th-graders, and new entrants all having higher completion rates and lower waiver rates than their private-school peers. (Note that percent complete plus percent waived does not always equal 100% because some students may still have incomplete/pending documentation at the time of reporting.)

Immunization Status of School Children in Michigan, 2022

Even more granular data is available by school building on the [MDHHS website](#). (Note that schools with Kindergarten/7th/New enrollments < 5 are suppressed to protect privacy.)

Table 1. Immunization status of Michigan students at public vs. private schools, 2022

	Public	Private	Total
Number of reporting schools	3,211	699	3,910
Total students	341,535	30,752	372,288
No. students complete	314,081	26,210	340,292
% complete	92.0%	85.2%	91.4%
No. students with waiver	15,217	2,777	17,994
% waived	4.5%	9.0%	4.8%
Medical waivers	561	109	670
% medical	3.7%	3.9%	3.7%
Religious waivers	6,169	1,201	7,370
% religious	40.5%	43.2%	41.0%
Philosophical waivers	8,487	1,467	9,954
% philosophical	55.8%	52.8%	55.3%

Table 2. Immunization status of Michigan Kindergarteners, 7th graders and new entrants at public vs. private schools, 2022

	Kindergarten			Seventh Grade			New Entrants		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
No. of schools	1,651	536	2,186	1,149	498	1,647	3,181	644	3,825
Total students	102,250	10,363	112,613	97,159	7,456	104,615	142,126	12,933	155,060
Complete	93,439	8,902	102,341	89,657	6,212	95,869	130,985	11,096	142,082
% Complete	91.4%	85.9%	90.9%	92.3%	83.3%	91.6%	92.2%	85.8%	91.6%
Waiver	5,074	1,074	6,148	4,148	699	4,847	5,995	1,004	6,999
% Waived	5.0%	10.4%	5.5%	4.3%	9.4%	4.6%	4.2%	7.8%	4.5%
Medical	191	35	226	152	30	182	218	44	262
% med.	3.8%	3.3%	3.7%	3.7%	4.3%	3.8%	3.6%	4.4%	3.7%
Religious	2,052	463	2,515	1,558	286	1,844	2,559	452	3,011
% rel.	40.4%	43.1%	40.9%	37.6%	40.9%	38.0%	42.7%	45.0%	43.0%
Philosophical	2,831	576	3,407	2,438	383	2,821	3,218	508	3,726
% phil.	55.8%	53.6%	55.4%	58.8%	54.8%	58.2%	53.7%	50.6%	53.2%