



November 2, 2020

Honorable Gavin Newsom
State Capitol, 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814



Governor Newsom,

It has been seven long months since school facilities closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We all recognize that the best place for students to learn is in schools. We also know the impact of this virus may be with us for some time to come and during this period it is imperative that all students are able to return to school. Our shared objective is to facilitate this return as soon as possible, but the health and safety of all in the school community must remain our top priority. So today we offer a Common Standard for schools to safely reopen and remain open.



Collectively, our schools impact more than a million students, over a hundred thousand staff members and over seven million people in the communities we serve. Many of the challenges society faces – poverty, inequity and now COVID-19 – present themselves in our schools each day, and schools alone cannot solve these problems. While each of our school districts and hardworking employees are doing remarkable things to provide the best possible education for students, additional assistance is critically necessary to reopen, and keep open, schools safely. In this area, educators, labor and management, are agreed: **it will take collective action and additional funding to bring students, teachers and staff back to schools in the way that is as safe as possible and sustainable for the long-term.**



California has long maintained a set of standards for health, education and employee practices in schools. This crisis is not a time to lessen standards which could compromise the health and safety of all in the school community, the quality of education being provided to students or the protections for employees in the workplace.



As we plan for a new semester, which will begin in January, there is a pressing need for a clear and consistent set of guidelines which would set forth the health, education and employee practices and standards needed to reopen our schools, and keep them open.

Representing geography from northern to southern California, multiple counties and diverse communities, the undersigned superintendents have agreed that a Common Standard is needed to serve as a blueprint for schools to safely reopen and remain open. The Common Standard should attend to the critical areas of work outlined below (see Appendix A). Our ability to implement a Common Standard, however, is dependent upon the necessary funding and participation by federal, state, and local governments and health authorities.

Clearly the overall level of COVID-19 must be within the guidelines already set by the state of California for schools to consider reopening. Once that community threshold has been reached, this Common Standard will provide the additional clarity needed by all who work in schools, as well as the families we serve, to be confident that schools will reopen and remain open in the safest way possible while providing the best possible education to students.

We hope you will join us now in implementing a Common Standard for schools to safely reopen and remain open so the foundation can be in place for our school districts to provide as many students in-person instruction as safety will allow.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you at your earliest convenience.

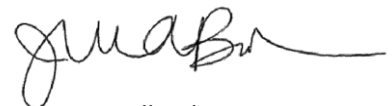
Sincerely,



Jorge Aguilar
Superintendent
Sacramento City Unified



Jerry Almendarez
Superintendent
Santa Ana Unified



Jill Baker
Superintendent
Long Beach Unified



Austin Beutner
Superintendent
Los Angeles Unified



Kyla Johnson-Trammell
Superintendent
Oakland Unified



Cindy Marten
Superintendent
San Diego Unified



Bob Nelson
Superintendent
Fresno Unified

CC: California Congressional Delegation

Appendix A
A Common Standard
for schools to safely reopen and remain open

Health and Safety Practices at Schools

Ensure common health and safety practices are identified, including:

- Appropriate signage to encourage safe health practices in language that is accessible to students and families
- Health check and temperature checks (at home or school) before entering school each day
- Cleaning and sanitizing classrooms and school facilities before use by students or staff
- Appropriate ventilation in classrooms and workspaces
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face coverings, hand soap and hand sanitizers
- Assurance of appropriate social distancing in classrooms and common spaces with the maximum possible distance between students in classrooms and at least 6 feet distance between students and teachers or other staff members
- Appropriate staffing in schools to coordinate student and adult movement and to maintain safe distances in common areas
- Standards and protocols for isolation (care) rooms at all schools
- Safety training materials for employees, students and families
- All students and staff wear face coverings, as required by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), unless medically exempted

COVID-19 Testing at Schools

- Criteria for regular surveillance testing for school personnel and students, free of cost to students, staff, and school districts (including any future increases in insurance premiums)
- Free to the individual immediate testing for all symptomatic students, employees, and families whose students test positive or students or employees who are exposed to a Covid-19 positive person
- Expectation that all teachers, staff and students will be tested on a regular basis, with students being tested at school, including the additional appropriate personnel to conduct on-site testing for students
- Tests will be the currently recommended industry standard and capable of being self-administered
- Testing will be provided at sites within the community
- Results of test to be available within approximately 24-48 hours to allow rapid intervention, i.e. a test taken on Monday would provide results in the time to intervene before Wednesday's school day
- Multi-lingual hotlines and/or other technological aids will be established to assist families and employees with general Covid-19 questions and contact tracing
- Testing aligned with HIPAA regulations

Community Engagement and Contact Tracing

- Multi language ability to contact those who test positive within 24 hours of the availability of test results

- Ability to publish and share school COVID report card to identify both the cohort impacted by the virus in a school and the cohorts which are not impacted
- Information system in place to share data with appropriate staff, students, families and local authorities and monitor compliance with testing and tracing program
- Information system to protect the security of the data

Instruction

- Meet or exceed all SB98 requirements to have agreed upon instructional baselines through methods of in-person Instruction - frequency may vary.
- Provide in-person related service for students with disabilities.
- Provide on campus space (and staffing) for students unable to access asynchronous instruction from home.
- Adequate staffing to ensure assessments and services are provided in a timely manner for students with disabilities, English-learners, and gifted students
- Technology and connectivity access for all Pre-K-12 students and employees

Student Supervision

- Students are provided with a supervised learning environment during and after school hours

Transportation

- All students in need of transportation receive necessary services in a manner consistent with appropriate health practices

Community Health Metrics

- Follow the COVID-19 levels County dashboards to determine eligibility for reopening. Follow the CDPH guidance to determine school closure due to community spread

Employee Protection (In all cases, employees will work with their supervisor to determine if working remotely is an option. If remote work is not an option, the following apply):

- Employees who have an underlying health condition that puts them at increased risk may:
 - Be eligible for Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) benefits, including Employee Paid Sick leave (EPSL) (prior to 1/1/21)
 - Utilize their benefitted time, including a leave of absence, consistent with applicable CBA's
 - Request a Reasonable Accommodation
- Employees who cannot physically return to a worksite because they are responsible for individual(s) with an underlying health condition may:
 - Use benefitted time such as personal necessity/kin-care for a qualifying relationship for up to six days
 - Be eligible for a personal unpaid leave of absence consistent with applicable CBAs
 - Be eligible to utilize FFRA benefits such as EPSL (only for COVID related sickness) if the person under their care is under quarantine (prior to 1/1/21)

- Employees whose children's schools are closed/child-care provider is not available may utilize FFCRA benefits including Family Medical Leave Act Plus benefits (prior to 1/1/21)
- Employees who feel uncomfortable about physically returning to the worksite may work with their supervisor to determine if working remotely is an option or take an unpaid leave of absence