



May 22, 2020

Where we stand on reopening schools and community colleges

Ensure the Health and Safety of Students and Staff

The health and safety of all students and staff must be the first priority in reopening public schools and colleges. When we physically return to school campuses, it needs to be planned and deliberate with public health at the forefront of all decision-making. There must be clear guidance from the California Department of Public Health on how schools open safely and responsibly, as well as triggers that require schools to physically close again.

We want our students to be safe and ready to learn. This must include safety supports for students and educators:

- **Deep cleaning and continuous cleaning of campuses and busses by trained school employees.**
- **Accommodations to allow for physical distancing in classrooms, cafeterias, gyms and other shared spaces.**
- **Students and school employees have daily health assessments before entering campus or school transportation with appropriate student and school employee privacy, with special considerations to protect students and staff with compromised and underlying medical conditions.**
- **Students and school employees wear facial coverings and practice routine and regular handwashing.**
- **Access to health services including nurses and medically trained personnel to assist and monitor student and employee health in collaboration with county health departments.**
- **Mental health counseling and emotional support by trained counselors for students, staff and the school community.**
- **Schools have a robust communication system between schools, parents, caregivers, county health departments, and school employees.**

Protect School Funding and Prevent State Budget Cuts

Deep budget cuts to public education will stand in the way of readying our schools for the safe return of students and educators and further prolong the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and colleges cannot reopen safely with the funding level proposed in the revised budget plan.

The governor and legislature should reject cuts and maintain school funding, including previous commitments for Special Education revenues, for all school districts. As schools prepare to reopen safely in the fall, it will require significant resources, as unprecedented challenges remain due to COVID-19. Social distancing will require smaller class sizes and school schedule changes.

Schools will need appropriate cleaning and sanitization as well as safety supplies and training to prevent the spread of the virus on school campuses and transportation systems.

Extra funding is needed for struggling students who may not have been able to access and engage in distance learning. Additional school nurses, counselors and other medically trained personnel will be needed to assist students.

A 10% cut (\$6.5 billion) to the Local Control Funding Formula equates to:

- **Cutting \$1,230 per student, or**
- **Cutting \$21,667 per classroom, or**
- **Increasing class sizes by 19%, or**
- **Laying off more than 57,600 teachers. or**
- **Laying off more than 125,000 education support professionals.**

Provide Teaching and Learning Flexibility

Flexibility in required instructional minutes and days is needed in the event schools need to offer both in-person and distance learning to meet the unique needs of vulnerable students and to have the flexibility to pivot to distance learning in the event of future COVID-19 outbreaks.

School attendance should be held harmless for all districts in the event there are parents who opt to continue to keep their children home absent a vaccine. If COVID-19 surges, school districts should have a plan for distance learning including one for vulnerable and struggling student populations, and must include school supplies for students, textbooks, devices and access to internet. Plan also includes feeding students, and supervision of children of essential workers, as necessary.

Include Educators in the Decision

Educators must continue to be part of conversations and decisions that directly impact their students, along with how and when schools will reopen.

Educators work with our students and their families, day in and day out, and are intimately aware of the challenges they face, their life struggles and the areas in which they need attention. Any recommendations issued by the state will provide a framework and guidance for local educators and their unions to negotiate with school districts to ensure the needs of their local students and communities are met.