



February 25, 2021

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: DEMAND IMMEDIATE REOPENING OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS OF ALL GRADE LEVELS

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of [Open Schools California](#), we are writing you today to demand the immediate reopening of public schools for all grade levels in this state. Without a doubt, school closures have exacerbated the existing gender, socioeconomic and racial inequities, as well as hurt the mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of our children. The only way to prevent further damage is to reopen public schools now for all grade levels and give parents the choice if they would like their children to receive in-person education.

We can all agree that remote learning is no comparison to in-person education. We see every day that the mental, physical, developmental, social and academic health of our children is suffering. Helping our kids during this period, which pediatricians are calling “a public health crisis for our children,” has been our sole focus.

Throughout the pandemic, you have stressed the importance of following the science and data. The science shows we can reopen safely with proper mitigation measures in place and the data shows our COVID-19 daily case rate is rapidly declining. The time to reopen schools is now. In fact, the [Harvard Global Health Institute issued a revised recommendation in December](#) saying “that schools be open even at the very high levels of spread we are now seeing, provided that they strictly implement strategies of infection control.”

We understand that you are engaging in negotiations – still – with the legislature to reopen our public schools. Students do not have a union, lobbyist or advocacy organization in Sacramento – but they do have their parents who are witnessing firsthand the negative impacts of school closures. We deserve a voice.

Our kids have been out of school for 349 days. We are rapidly approaching one year mark of public school closures. It is time for action, not further negotiation. To that end, if you cannot reach agreement with the legislature to reopen schools immediately with the principles outlined below, we demand action through whatever means necessary to ensure no child is left behind.

- 1) **Reopen schools for ALL grades.** Children of all ages are suffering like never before. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) reported that compared with 2019, the

proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits for children aged 5-11 and 12-17 increased approximately 24% and 31%, respectively. Additionally, [UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland](#) has seen an alarming 75% increase in the number of children brought in for emergency mental health services that required immediate hospitalization. We cannot afford to leave one student behind and must reopen all grades PK-12.

- 2) **Create broad-based, achievable guidelines for reopening safely.** If the goal is to reopen schools, we need broad guidelines that enable, not impede, schools to reopen. An [American Academy of Pediatrics study](#) found that when four mitigation measures were employed, there were zero instances of child-to-adult transmission reported in schools. Those four principles were: masking, social distancing, hand washing, and daily symptom monitoring and temperature checks. These should be the guidelines.
- 3) **Eliminate conflicting state and county health department guidelines.** Schools have been unable to reopen due to the conflicting guidelines provided by the state and local health departments. In some instances, county health departments have remained silent, so schools have paused reopening as they await county guidance. To expedite the reopening process, our county and state health departments need to work together, not hamstringing schools and prevent reopening.

On behalf of the parents we represent across the state of California, we thank you for standing firm against SB 86 and implore you to show strong leadership and ensure that California can successfully get all our children back in school where they need to be."

Sincerely,



Megan Bacigalupi
Parent Organizer
Open Schools California

On behalf of parents in the following school districts:

ALAMEDA
ALBANY
ALEXANDER VALLEY
AUBURN
BELMONT REDWOOD SHORES
BERKELEY
BERRYESSA
CAMBRIAN
CAMPBELL UNION
CARLSBAD
CENTER
CENTRAL
CHAFFEY POINT
CHICO
CHULA VISTA
CONEJO

CONTRA COSTA
CULVER CITY
CUPERTINO
DAVIS
DENAIR
DESERT SANDS
DIXON
DUARTE
DUBLIN
ELK GROVE
FOLSOM
FOLSOM CORDOVA
FREMONT
FRESNO
GLENDALE
GLENDORA
GRAVENSTEIN
HACIENDA LA PUENTE
KERN
LAFAYETTE
LAGUNA BEACH
LAKE TAHOE
LAS VIRGINES
LODI
LONG BEACH
LOOMIS
LOS ALAMITOS
LOS ANGELES
LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS SARATOGA
MANHATTAN BEACH
MARIN
MOUNT SHASTA
MOUNTAIN VIEW LOS ALTOS
MOUNTAIN VIEW WHISMAN
MT DIABLO
NATOMAS
NOVATO
OAK GROVE
OAKLAND
OCEANSIDE
ORINDA
PACIFICA
PAJARO
PALO ALTO
PALOS VERDES
PASADENA
PIEDMONT
PLACENTIA
PLEASANTON
REDONDO BEACH

REDWOOD CITY
RIVERSIDE
ROSEVILLE
ROSS VALLEY
SACRAMENTO
SAN CARLOS
SAN DIEGO
SAN DIEGUITO
SAN FRANCISCO
SAN JOSE
SAN JUAN
SAN LUIS COASTAL
SAN MATEO FOSTER CITY
SAN MATEO UNION HIGH
SAN RAMON VALLEY
SANTA BARBARA
SANTA CLARA
SANTA CRUZ
SANTA MONICA MALIBU
SANTA PAULA
SANTA ROSA
SEQUOIA UNION
SOMIS
SONOMA VALLEY
SOUTH PASADENA
TAMALPAIS
TEMECULA
TWIN RIVERS SACRAMENTO
UNION
VICTOR VALLEY UNION HS DISTRICT
VISALIA

CC:

Assemblymember Phil Ting
Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula
Assemblymember Steve Bennett
Assemblymember Richard Bloom
Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo
Assemblymember David Chiu
Assemblymember Jim Cooper
Assemblymember Jim Frazier
Assemblymember Laura Friedman
Assemblymember Cristina Garcia
Assemblymember Reginald Byron Jone-Sawyer, Sr.
Assemblymember Alex Lee
Assemblymember Kevin McCarty
Assemblymember Jose Medina
Assemblymember Kevin Mullin
Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian
Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell

Assemblymember James C. Ramos
Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes
Assemblymember Luz M. Rivas
Assemblymember Blanca E. Rubio
Assemblymember Mark Stone
Assemblymember Jim Wood
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Jim Nielsen
Senator Anna M. Caballero
Senator Dave Cortese
Senator Brian Dahle
Senator María Elena Durazo
Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman
Senator Shannon Grove
Senator John Laird
Senator Mike McGuire
Senator Melissa A. Melendez
Senator Dave Min
Senator Josh Newman
Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
Senator Richard Pan
Senator Richard D. Roth
Senator Henry I. Stern
Senator Bob Wieckowski