



January 13, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor of California
 1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: "Safe Schools for All" Reopening Plan

Dear Governor Newsom,

We are writing as a coalition of civic leaders representing education and community-based organizations with a shared goal of a safe reopening of public schools and the return of all students – especially our most vulnerable populations – to in-person instruction. Meeting this objective will require clear and consistent state COVID standards, additional funding and a commitment to equity for our students and families.

While pleased that "Safe Schools for All" prioritizes the reopening of public schools with additional one-time state funding, the plan fails to address the needs of the Los Angeles Unified School Districts (Los Angeles Unified) and other urban school districts who serve a majority of students from low-income and under-resourced communities. COVID has compounded life challenges for students and their families, especially for those that have lost work and lack the resources to purchase basic necessities.

Despite heroic efforts by students, school staff, families and community-based organizations, online learning is not a substitute for in-person education and it will take a coordinated effort by all in state and local government to reopen classrooms. "Safe Schools for All" provides a foundation on which to add other necessary elements that, together, will lead to the reopening of schools in the safest way possible.

- A COVID relief plan from local and state government officials to drive down COVID case rates in high-needs communities to enable local schools to open.

- Funding for all schools to redress the disproportionate impact on low-income communities we serve who will not likely meet the proposed ‘Safe Schools for All’ deadline of February 1 and many experts say even March 1, given current health conditions.
- Public health funds, not K-12 educational funds from Proposition 98, should be used for COVID testing and vaccinations.
- A clear state standard for COVID-related health issues in schools.
- Integration of school-based health services, including distribution of state funds directly to school districts and LEAs to cover costs, including COVID testing, contact tracing, and administration of vaccines – in the same way and at the same rate as other municipal agencies and providers.
- Additional instructional time and targeted funding for students who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, including English-learners, students with disabilities, and homeless and foster youth; and for additional professional development focused on intervention and credit recovery.
- Funding to support reopening of schools including, child-care services; additional funding to maintain clean, safe, and sanitary schools; infrastructure and transportation.

Immediate legislative action and budget appropriations needs to take into consideration the issues reflected in this letter. We hope your team, together with the state legislature, will provide an opportunity for public engagement about the proposed “Safe Schools for All” plan with all of the stakeholders involved in public education.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Chief Executive Officer
Parent Engagement Academy

Maria S. Salinas
President and CEO
LA Area Chamber of Commerce

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