



Summary: California's Safe Schools for All Plan

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom has prioritized the health and safety of California's children and schools. As a father of four, Governor Newsom agrees with parents, educators, policymakers, and pediatricians that in-person is the best setting to meet not only the core learning needs of students, but also their mental health and social-emotional needs. It's especially important for our youngest kids, students with disabilities, and those already disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Resuming in-person instruction is critical for kids, families, and communities throughout the state.

The safety of staff and students is foundational. With growing evidence that the right precautions can effectively stop the spread of COVID-19 in schools—especially in elementary schools—the Administration is committed to doing everything it can to make in-person instruction in schools safe for students and staff. Developed in partnership with the Legislature, the Administration's plan focuses on ensuring careful implementation and building confidence by supporting schools to bring back the youngest children (TK-2) and those who are most disproportionately impacted first, then phasing in other grade levels through the spring, as conditions allow. This phased-in approach recognizes that younger children are at a lower risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19, with core safety measures in place.

At the same time, distance learning will remain an option for parents and students who choose it and for those whose health status does not allow them to return to school in the near term.

Today, Governor Newsom pledges to advance, with the Legislature, California's Safe Schools for All Plan, built on four pillars:

1. **Funding.** The Budget will propose for immediate action in January, \$2 billion for the safe reopening of schools beginning in February, with a priority for returning the youngest children (TK-2nd grade) and those who are most disproportionately impacted first, then returning other grade levels to in-person instruction through the spring. These funds will provide approximately \$450 per student to school districts offering in-person instruction and will be weighted for districts serving students from low-income families, English learners and foster youth.

2. **Safety & Mitigation.** To further ensure health and safety in the classroom, the Administration will focus on implementation of key measures, including testing, PPE, contact tracing, and vaccinations.
 - a. **Testing.** The Administration will support frequent COVID-19 testing for all school staff and students, including weekly testing at schools in communities with high rates of transmission. For example, any interested public school will be on-boarded to the state-owned Valencia Branch Lab for PCR tests at one-third the market rate and the State will establish a hotline to help schools implement testing.
 - b. **PPE.** All staff and students in schools are required to wear masks. Furthermore, surgical masks will be recommended for school staff, and the Administration will distribute millions of surgical masks to schools at no cost. The Administration has also enabled schools to leverage state-negotiated master contracts for PPE to reduce costs and streamline supply chains.
 - c. **Contact Tracing.** Schools will continue to be on-boarded onto the School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT) to improve collaboration between school and health officials, and members of the state contact tracing workforce will be deployed to improve communication with schools.
 - d. **Vaccinations.** School staff will be prioritized in the distribution of vaccines through the spring of 2021.
2. **Oversight & Assistance.** Dr. Naomi Bardach, a UCSF pediatrician and expert on COVID-19 transmission in schools, will lead the Safe Schools for All Team, a cross-agency team composed of dedicated staff from CDPH, Cal/OSHA, and educational agencies. The Team will provide hands-on support to help schools develop and implement their COVID-19 Safety Plans. These supports include school visits and walk-throughs as warranted, webinars and training materials, and ongoing technical assistance.
3. **Transparency & Accountability.** A state dashboard will enable all Californians to see their school's reopening status, level of available funding, and data on in-school transmissions. Additionally, a web-based "hotline" will empower school staff and parents to report concerns to the Safe Schools for All Team, which will lead to escalating levels of intervention, starting with technical assistance and ending with legal enforcement.

California's Safe Schools for All Plan provides the support and accountability to establish a clear path to minimize in-school transmissions and enable, first, a phased return to in-person instruction, and then ongoing safe in-person instruction.

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