

Trouble viewing this email? [Click here »](#)



Labor proposal for school reopening echoes some aspects of CSBA advocacy while adding further barriers to in-person instruction

California's statewide labor unions released a [seven-page COVID-19 school reopening proposal](#) Feb. 3 that calls for an even heavier lift to open campuses for in-person instruction than Gov. Gavin Newsom's [Safe Schools for All](#) plan.

Specifically, the proposal would bar schools from reopening for in-person instruction until their school is in the red or orange tiers under the California Department of Public Health's four-tier color-coded system for regulating commercial and school activities. Even then, the document notes that schools in the red or orange tiers could only reopen if vaccines are available to school staff. Schools would be required to reopen once in the yellow tier — the level with the lowest risk of transmission — and when vaccines are available and mitigation strategies are followed.

Under the plan proposed by the California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers, California School Employees Association, Service Employees International Union and other unions representing school staff, the state must prioritize vaccinations for employees who are already working in in-person settings.

Importantly, the proposal calls for a host of new health and safety standards — including the mandate that students and staff maintain at least 6 feet of distance at all times, and that 3-ply disposable surgical masks be provided for all employees rather than 2-ply or reusable cloth masks — as well as a requirement that schools adopt the testing cadence described in the current [CDPH guidance](#), which covers all staff and students. Currently, those cadences are not required and the cost would be prohibitive for most local educational agencies.

CSBA understands the concerns brought forth by our labor partners. That is why we've been engaged in fierce advocacy on behalf of LEAs calling not only for mitigation efforts that will keep students and staff safe, but for support from the state that will make reopening requirements realistic.

In a series of letters to Gov. Newsom and in several meetings with administration officials and legislators, CSBA and our management partners have called for the state to **prioritize school staff** in the distribution of vaccines and provided **extensive recommendations** that must be included in a statewide school reopening plan. At a minimum, any proposed reopening plan must include sufficient and equitable funding that targets support for California's neediest students; covers all COVID-19 testing and other health-related expenses; and any additional costs associated with offering in-person instruction during this pandemic.

However, while labor unions are calling for all school safety protocols to be subject to local collective bargaining and the Legislature and Governor mandate it in law, such a demand is inappropriate and would effectively halt attempts by many LEAs to reopen campuses in a timely but safe manner. CDPH guidance already calls for LEAs to consult with labor, parent and community organizations in the development of school reopening plans. This is sufficient.

Governor announces \$10 billion surge in state revenue

Gov. Newsom announced Feb. 3 on TikTok an additional \$10.3 billion in General Fund revenue. The new infusion of funds are "going to put us in a position to do even more to help support our small businesses, support our vaccine administration and support our efforts to reopen our public schools for in-person instruction," he said in the **26-second video**. Under Proposition 98, schools can expect roughly 40 percent of those additional funds — approximately \$4 billion — to be directed to K-14 education.

Under the Governor's Safe Schools for All plan, \$2 billion in Prop 98 funding would have been made available through grants to expedite the reopening of campuses. **CSBA**, legislators and other education advocates and researchers spotlighted numerous concerns with that approach. Key among those: COVID-19 testing and other health-related expenses are inappropriate uses of the Prop 98 General Fund. Every dollar of Prop 98 spent on public health is a dollar that is no longer available to benefit students for instructional support, social-emotional services and learning loss mitigation.

CSBA urges the Governor and the Legislature to allow LEAs the flexibility to use this additional funding as needed to meet the educational needs in their own communities. Districts are working to meet new or expanded academic, technology, mental health and other needs among students, families and staff. Additionally, while we appreciate the Governor's initial proposal to pay off two-thirds of the apportionment deferrals from the last budget, these additional funds would provide even more revenues for the state to fully pay off the money owed to California schools.



[Website](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)