

THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

SAN DIEGO SUPPORTS MORE CAUTIOUS SCHOOL REOPENING

San Diegans overwhelmingly approve of SDUSD's cautious approach to reopening schools that includes coordination with the local science and public health community, according to a survey released by pollster The Mellman Group. (For full memo see [page five](#)).

The poll of 400 likely voters, which was conducted in September, shows that 59-percent of voters within San Diego Unified School District's boundaries agree that the District is moving at the right speed in determining when to reopen schools. Another 18-percent of voters believe the District is moving too quickly

in discussing how to safely return to in-person instruction.

The poll shows that despite the coverage in the local media, which has focused on protest by a small but vocal minority of parents, the public strongly supports a safe approach to reopening schools.

San Diego Unified has taken a more cautious approach to reopening schools than other districts, which includes starting the year with online learning and requiring community outbreaks to be under control before bringing students back to campus.

"Educators appreciate that the community as a whole supports the health

and safety of both students and district staff," said SDEA President Kisha Borden. "This sends a strong message that science, and not misguided political pressure, should determine when it is safe to fully return to campuses."

San Diego Unified leadership has yet to announce a date for a return to full in-person instruction and continues to implement online instruction for all of its schools and programs. [Phase One of reopening](#), which includes voluntary small cohort instruction for at-risk elementary students, begins October 13.

DISTRICT REORGANIZES EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DURING PANDEMIC

Please [sign](#) the following petition to the School Board regarding ECE reorganization: In the middle of a global pandemic, SDUSD leaders have decided to overhaul Early Childhood Education.

In March, just a few days before schools closed, SDUSD announced to Early Childhood Educators their plan to close some 75 percent of preschool classrooms to create new, commingled TK classrooms. The commingled TK classes combine preschool students who are as young as 3 years old with TK students who are as old as 5, and will be co-taught by a Preschool and a TK Teacher. This has never been done before in SDUSD, and the Director of Early Childhood Education

(ECE), Stephanie Ceminsky, even bragged that it's never before been done anywhere in California.

ECE Teachers said it wasn't the right time to make a big change. We told school board members, Executive Director of HR Acacia Thede, Executive Director of Labor Relations Jessica-Falk Michelli, and Ms. Ceminsky that it's a bad idea to reorganize Early Childhood Education in the middle of a pandemic, school closures, and online learning. But SDUSD leaders didn't listen and plowed ahead.

Now SDUSD leaders say they don't have time to fulfill their legal duty to bargain with SDEA members over the reorganization.

SDEA members asserted our right to bargain over the impacts of the reorganization in an April 3rd letter to SDUSD. Labor law requires that SDUSD bargain within 30 days, but SDUSD waited four months -- until August 6 -- to come to the table. Now SDUSD is dragging its feet again. The last bargaining session was August 28, and SDUSD's bargaining spokesperson, Acacia Thede, said they can't come back to the table until five weeks later "due to [their] impacted calendars." Delaying bargaining like this is an unfair labor practice, and it's creating chaos at elementary schools with commingled TK classrooms.

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LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

KISHA BORDEN
SDEA PRESIDENT

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SDEA VICE PRESIDENT



SAN DIEGO UNIFIED CAN LEAD THE WAY WITH SAFE REOPENING

We write this one month into a school year unlike any other school year that has preceded it. We are going above and beyond to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of our students during online learning and at the same time managing all of the added responsibilities and new stressors in our own homes.

While online learning will never match the potential of physical classrooms to build relationships and engagement, we have risen to the occasion and found creative ways to keep students' love of learning alive during these difficult times for everyone.

As the experts on fostering students' ability to push themselves to persist in the face of formidable obstacles, educators are eager to return to our schools where we know the environment allows us to reach our full potential as facilitators of student development of knowledge and skills. Students who were already at a disadvantage due to structural inequities with homeownership, education, jobs and health care before the pandemic are at risk for further learning loss with each day that they continue to attend school online.

We need to plan for a gradual return to the physical reopening of schools, especially in low-income communities and communities of color in San Diego that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and our economic crisis. Nevertheless, schools cannot fully physically reopen until our federal, state and local governments work together to prioritize and fund testing and contact tracing to suppress the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. To protect our students, community and all school staff, we must use science-based standards when making decisions about how we return to onsite learning.

Phase One of SDUSD's school reopening, which begins on October 13, is an opportunity to slowly and methodically ramp up to a full physical reopening with [criteria provided by the UCSD epidemiological and pediatric experts](#) that must be met before progressing to the next phase. Widespread access to testing, contract tracing and treatment as well as mitigation strategies such as symptom screening, requiring masks, social distancing and proper ventilation must accompany any phased return to onsite learning. While this first phase of school reopening is voluntary for educators and students, future phases that are contingent on broader participation must adhere to the highest standards.

A rising tide lifts all boats and therefore we must make sure community transmission of COVID-19 is low in all communities before making the determination that the entire district is ready to progress to the next phase.

San Diego Unified can be a statewide leader in developing best practices for the safe transition back to in-person schooling in a diverse, urban district but this can only happen if we keep science and equity lenses at the forefront of our decision-making. As a union of experienced and committed educators, we have the power to confront the loudest critics who do not represent the majority of our communities and push district leadership and policymakers to move in a responsible direction that centers the needs of students and families. **Whatever challenges we face, together we are stronger!**

KISHA BORDEN
SDEA PRESIDENT

KYLE WEINBERG
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

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DISTRICT CHANGES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION DURING PANDEMIC

Bottom line: If SDUSD leaders are too busy to fulfill their legal duty to bargain over the reorganization, then they weren't ready to reorganize. They should have listened when we said that now was a bad time.

SDUSD can't delay any longer. We call on the school board to tell their staff to bargain now, and in good faith, over the issues that matter for commingled TK.

SDUSD's bargaining team needs to come to the table immediately to bargain over the commingled TK issues that matter to educators, including:

- Staffing levels and class size in a commingled TK class
- Preparation time, including the rights of the Prep Time Teacher
- Training on co-teaching and regulatory requirements
- Closing the pay gap between

Preschool and TK Teachers co-teaching in the same classroom

Bargaining in good faith means that SDUSD needs to come to the bargaining table immediately and with the authority to bargain. SDUSD must commit to holding bargaining sessions at regular intervals and holding bargaining sessions that are long enough to make substantial progress.

LABOR ENDORSEMENTS FOR NOVEMBER 3RD, 2020 ELECTION **LIVE BETTER, VOTE UNION**



ENDORSEMENTS

UNITED STATES CONGRESS

- 49TH DISTRICT MIKE LEVIN
- 50TH DISTRICT AMMAR CAMPA-NAJJAR
- 51ST DISTRICT JUAN VARGAS
- 52ND DISTRICT SCOTT PETERS
- 53RD DISTRICT GEORGETTE GOMEZ

CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

- 39TH DISTRICT TONI ATKINS
- 76TH DISTRICT TASHA BOERNER HORVATH
- 77TH DISTRICT BRIAN MAIENSCHIN
- 78TH DISTRICT CHRIS WARD
- 80TH DISTRICT LORENA GONZALEZ

- PROPOSITION 15 YES
- PROPOSITION 16 YES
- PROPOSITION 20 NO
- PROPOSITION 22 NO
- PROPOSITION 25 YES

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE ENDORSEMENTS](#)



ENDORSEMENTS

PROPOSITION 15 YES

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- DISTRICT 4 ANDREA CARDENAS

SAN DIEGO MEASURE A YES

SAN DIEGO MEASURE B YES

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- DISTRICT B BERNIE RHINERSON
- DISTRICT 3 MARY GRAHAM

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE ENDORSEMENTS](#)



To: SDEA
From: The Mellman Group
Re: Voter Attitudes Towards SDUSD School Opening Policy
Date: September 14, 2020

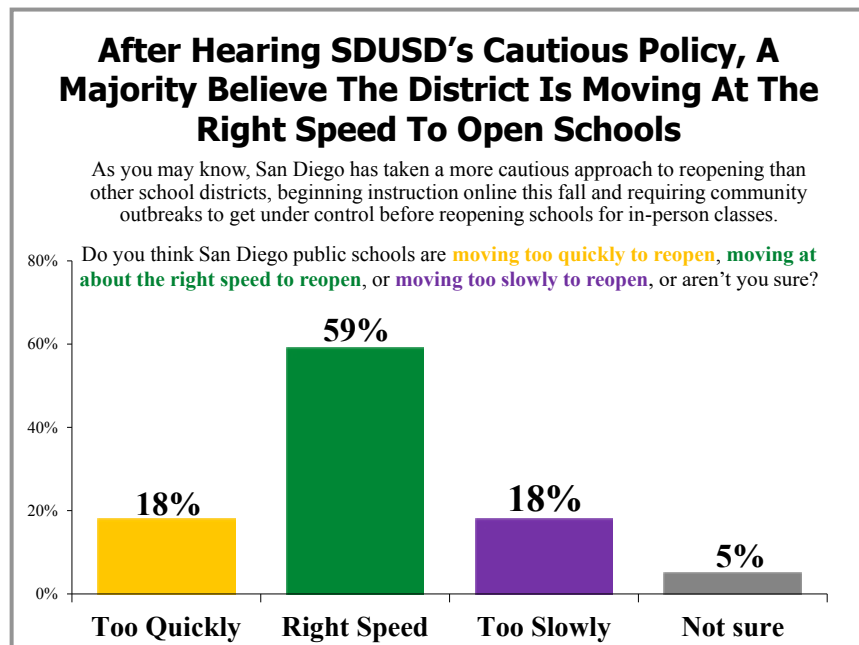
This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 400 voters in the San Diego Unified School District representing the likely November 2020 electorate. The survey employed a registration-based sample which included cell phones and landlines. It combined live interviews with text-to-online responses. Interviews were conducted August 31-September 3, 2020. The statistical margin of error is +/-4.9 percentage points at a 95% level of confidence for overall results. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

Our poll reveals broad and robust support for SDUSD's cautious approach to reopening schools. Before hearing any description of SDUSD's policy, a plurality (43%) believe the district is moving at the right speed to reopen schools. An additional 29% worry that schools are moving too quickly, while only 17% think they are moving too slowly (10% not sure.)

Once respondents heard a description of SDUSD's policy for reopening schools, a large majority (59%) believe the district is moving at about the right speed to reopen. An additional 18% still worry schools are reopening too quickly, with another 18% thinking schools are reopening too slowly.

Majorities of Democrats (66%), independents (58%) believe schools are reopening at the right speed after hearing SDUSD's policy, as does a near majority (47%) of Republicans.

Clearly, San Diegans support SDUSD's cautious approach to reopening schools with online instruction this fall and getting community outbreaks under control before reopening schools for in-person classes.





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