

THE ADVOCATE

SAN DIEGO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL PLAN TO REOPEN SCHOOLS

As demonstrated by extensive surveying of SDEA members since the pandemic began to hit our local communities in the spring, educators want to get back into the classroom when it is safe to do so.

One of the most important elements that must be in place for that to happen is comprehensive COVID testing, tracing and monitoring. This is why SDEA partnered with San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and the District to [send a letter](#) to California Governor Gavin Newsom requesting that the state provide no less than 50,000 COVID-19 diagnostic tests per week for SDUSD students and staff.

With [Vista Unified being forced to shut down school sites](#) less than a week into a reckless reopening without sufficient virus transmission mitigating strategies in place, and rising [state](#), [national](#) and [global](#) positive COVID cases, the SDUSD school board has affirmed that a robust asymptomatic COVID testing program is necessary to determine that the virus is not being spread on school campuses. This is essential to implement districtwide, but even more important for the well-being of SDUSD communities of color like the 92113 zip code that

encompasses much of southern San Diego and has [consistently been one of the areas of the county hardest hit by the coronavirus](#).

If families and educators can trust that SDUSD will stay the course and stick to science when making their plans for safe reopening, [we will not see the low rates of parents opting their children into in-person learning](#) that are being seen across the country and [even in places like New York City](#) that have much fewer recent COVID cases than San Diego.

As the public looks to SDUSD, the largest district in the county, the fifth largest employer in the city of San Diego, and as the regional leader on public health as it relates to K-12 education, it is crucial that the district maintain its safety-first stance and not be swayed by political pressure from those who do not represent the [large majority of stakeholders who support a science-based reopening](#).

If SDUSD takes a cautious, incremental approach with clear benchmarks for progress to more expanded phases of school reopening, students, families and educators will not experience the

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SDEA LEADS IN CALLING FOR COVID TESTING PROGRAMS

Testing for COVID Is A Critical Component of a Layered Defense Against COVID in Our Schools

Health experts have continually said that while no one method of prevention by itself is 100-percent effective, layered safety strategies within schools boosts prevention with each measure knocking off some percentage of COVID-19 transmission risk. Experts agree that testing is a critical layer in the prevention methods that can be deployed.

Testing has been the centerpiece of professional sports restarting in the NBA, NFL and MLB. The [NFL, for example, conducted 55,000 COVID tests](#) of its players and staff in between August and October. However, districts across the country have been woefully inept at implementing a comprehensive testing program to prevent transmission and outbreaks in schools. To make matters worse, the state and county have created an environment where schools can open without an integrated program for testing and tracing.

SDEA LEADING IN BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS ON COVID TESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS

Our union, along with SDUSD leadership, has been working with experts from VEBA, CTA, UCSD, UCSF and San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer to work towards starting what may become the most comprehensive COVID testing and tracking program in any school district in the country.

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SDEA

San Diego Education Association

10393 SAN DIEGO MISSION ROAD
STE. 100, SAN DIEGO, 92108

PHONE (619) 283-4411 FAX (619) 282-7659
WEB WWW.SDEA.NET



@SANDIEGOEDUCATIONASSOCIATION



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LETTERS IN SOLIDARITY

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SDEA PRESIDENT



KYLE WEINBERG
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

UNITY THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

At this point in the school year, many educators have settled into a routine. A groove. They know their students and their students know them. The workdays are long, but some are actually having fun.

However, there are other educators that are still struggling every day. Zoom fatigue weighs heavily on those educators. They are having trouble reaching all of their students. Technology is a constant challenge. Regardless of which situation you find yourself in, we can all agree that all of this is extremely difficult. All of us are under a lot of stress, but we cannot let that stress divide us.

The SDEA motto that Together We Are Stronger is not just a catchy phrase. It is the foundation of our union. We cannot advocate for stronger schools unless we work together. We cannot advocate for a safe return to schools unless we speak up with a unified voice. It is unlikely that the school board or the superintendent will hear the concerns or demands of a few of us. When we speak as a broad community of educators, our voices are amplified.

Now, we do not always agree on everything. There are more than 6,000 SDEA members with just as many opinions and beliefs about how things should be done. And in this environment, we all have the same desire to do what is best for our students while ensuring the safety of the entire school community.

It is so important for us to remain united. There is no advantage to SDEA splintering into opposing factions. We must ensure that we are able to disagree without disengaging. As we move forward toward reopening schools, whenever that happens, we will have to have tough conversations. But those conversations must remain grounded in our core shared values.

The work we are doing is difficult. The upcoming changes will also be challenging. When we stick together and support one another, we can overcome any obstacles we might face.

Together We Are Stronger!

KISHA BORDEN
SDEA PRESIDENT

KYLE WEINBERG
SDEA VICE PRESIDENT

LONGTIME TEMPORARY TEACHER WINS PROBATIONARY JOB THANKS TO UNION CONTRACT, ATTORNEY

In October, long-time temporary teacher Annette Rawers went from underemployed visiting teacher to full-time teacher at La Jolla High School, thanks to a grievance and a union attorney.

Annette was a temporary teacher in SDUSD for two years. In the May 2020 post she bid on a position at SCPA, but the District broke the union contract to give the position to someone else.

The District didn't hire Annette at all and, in fact, at the start of the school year Annette found herself unemployed.

"I was hopeless and thought it was a done deal," Annette said. "But then the union rep called me and told me my rights were violated and I had a right to a job."

With a little more research, it was uncovered that, in addition to breaking the contract, the District possibly also broke the law when it didn't hire Annette. That's because an obscure provision of Education Code gives temporary teachers priority over external candidates to probationary positions in the grade level or subject area they taught.



But the District hired an external candidate to teach Social Studies instead of hiring Annette, who'd been teaching the subject as a temporary teacher for two years.

Because Annette is a union member, she was provided a union attorney to help enforce her rights under the Education Code. There was a two-pronged approach for Annette: File a grievance over the contract and make a legal claim over the

law. Between the two, the District perhaps felt caught between a rock and a hard place and agreed to hire Annette as a probationary teacher at La Jolla High. Now Annette is on the track to becoming a permanent teacher.

"I feel relieved now," Annette says. "Temporary teachers have all the responsibilities of being an educator. I'm glad that by being union members, we also have all the protections of our union contract. I want us as a union to keep watching out for temporary teachers."

The rights of the union contract are for temporary teachers too, not just probationary or permanent. For example, the pay scale and right to fully-paid family healthcare apply equally to temporary teachers.

How would that be different if temporary teachers were not part of the union? For starters, the District could pay temporary teachers as little as they want, and decide whether or not to pay for temporary teachers' health benefits. Imagine how that would go!

[If you're not yet a member of SDEA, you can join online today.](#)



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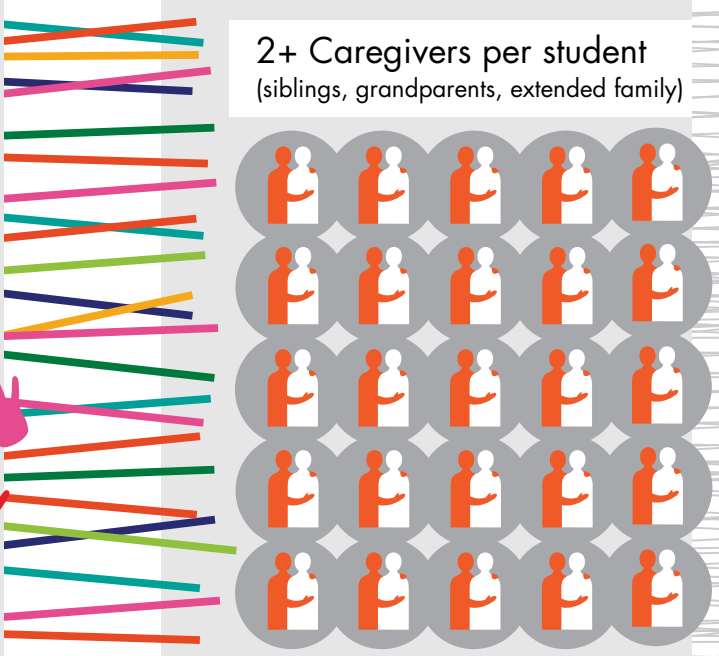
journeyplan.org

WE CAN'T HAVE A SAFE CALIFORNIA WITHOUT SAFE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Why School-Based Testing is Critical



Mrs. Harris
A 3rd Grade Teacher at Jackson Elementary School has 25 students.

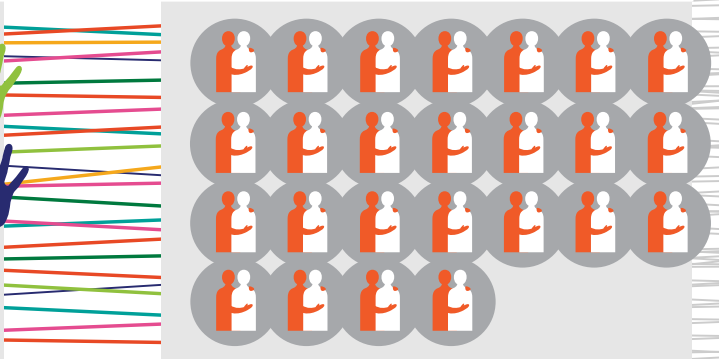


Schools are central to our communities. And they are essential to our safety as well.

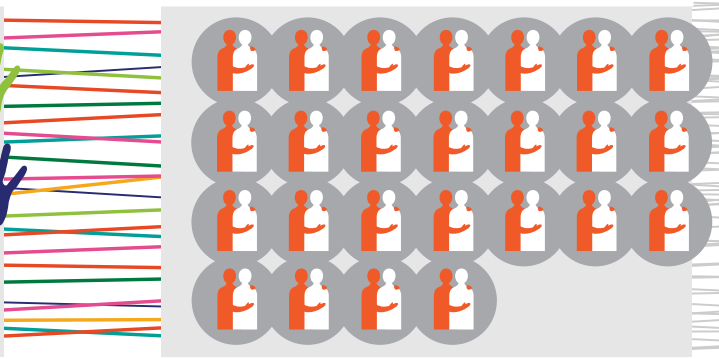
When public school employees and students leave for the day they touch the lives of 20 million Californians. By providing school-based testing, you can help stop the spread of COVID-19. Please contact your local school board members, mayor, assemblymembers, senator and the governor. Ask them to support site-based testing for our schools.

Mr. Gomez

Her colleagues also have 25 students each.



Mrs. Jones



There are 600,000 school employees in California

California DOE, 2016-17.

There are 6,100,000 public school students in California (K-12)

California DOE, 2019-20.

These students and school employees leave school and touch the lives of 20,000,000 Californians daily

(600,000 employees + 6,100,000 students) x 3 (two family members) = 20,000,000

That's more than half of California's population of 39,780,000.

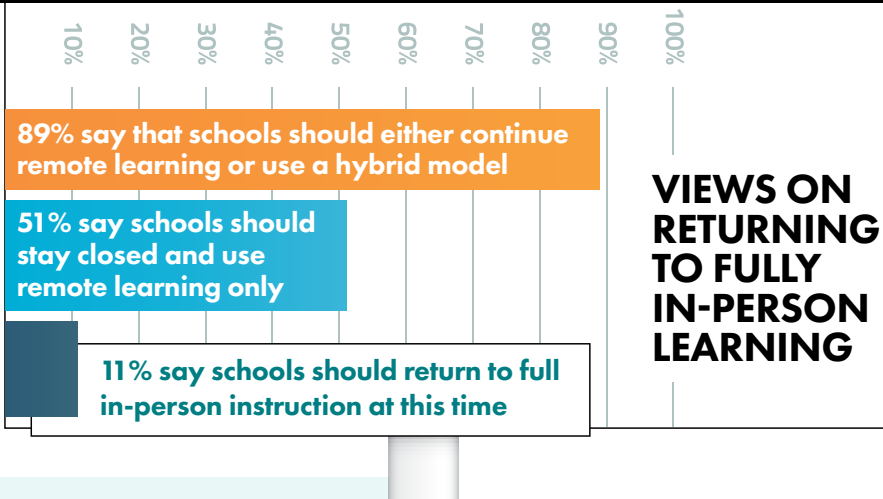
State Department of Finance, 2020.



CALIFORNIA PARENTS & VOTERS SHARE CONCERNS about REOPENING SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19

A new statewide poll reveals California parents and voters are most concerned for the health of students, educators, and families in reopening public schools for in-person instruction. Vast majorities say the spread of COVID-19 is still a serious problem and fear the worst of the virus is yet to come. *The poll was conducted for CTA in September 2020, by Hart Research Associates.*

Read the full report at www.cta.org/covid19

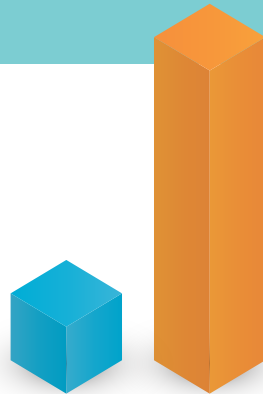


VIEWS ON RETURNING TO FULLY IN-PERSON LEARNING

VIEWS ON COVID-19 IN CALIFORNIA

79% think the coronavirus is still a serious problem

21% believe it is "pretty well under control"



21% 79%

54% believe the worst is yet to come

VIEWS ON TRUSTED SOURCES

When it comes to decisions on whether, how, and when schools should open, parents and voters trust local teachers second only to Dr. Anthony Fauci.

VIEWS ON SAFETY BEING THE DRIVING FACTOR IN RETURNING TO SCHOOLS

Which should be the biggest factors in whether, how, when your local public schools should reopen?

Biggest factor
Top Two Factors

Protecting the health of students/staff and families



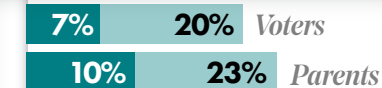
Avoiding additional spread of coronavirus in community



Meeting educational/social needs of students, keeping them on track academically



Allowing working parents to return to jobs, so we can reopen the economy



80

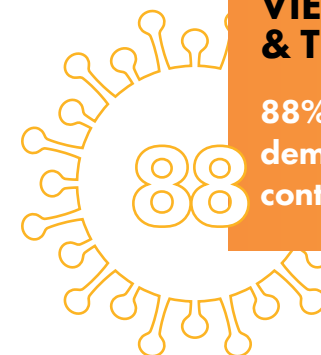
VIEWS ON ADDITIONAL FUNDING

80% of voters and 79% of parents say more money needs to be invested in schools to deal with the crisis.

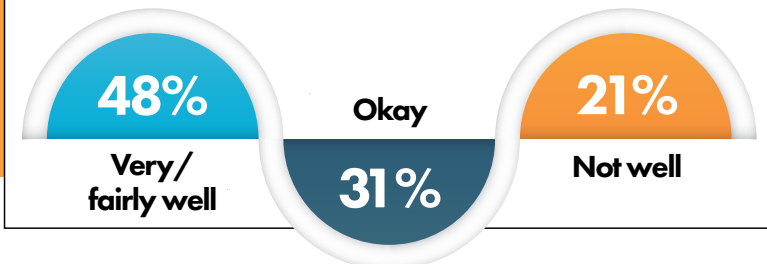
79

VIEWS ON TESTING & TRACING

88% support educators' demand for testing and contact tracing.



VIEWS ON HOW WELL AT-HOME INSTRUCTION HAS WORKED FOR YOU



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A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL PLAN TO REOPEN SCHOOLS

destabilizing yo-yo effect of opening, quarantining and closing seen in places like [Boston](#), [New York City](#) and other districts in San Diego County that has exacerbated the stress of those that are already on shaky ground during this crisis.

One way to track progress toward meeting scientific criteria for reopening is a comprehensive dashboard such as the one being employed by [San Francisco Unified School District](#). This keeps families and educators apprised of how close the district is to reaching the indicators that have been collectively established. By making this progress transparent and accessible to the

public, it alleviates the anxiety of all of us who are emotionally exhausted by the uncertainty inherent in this pandemic.

Future phases of school reopening cannot begin or be implemented without first bargaining with SDEA members. While the District has announced tentative dates for future phases that are contingent on [meeting scientific criteria established by UCSD public health experts](#), Superintendent Marten [made a commitment](#) that “future growth in the program would be created collaboratively and at the bargaining table.”

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SDEA LEADS IN CALLING FOR COVID TESTING PROGRAMS

Professors Natasha Martin, Chip Schooley and Howard Taras of UCSD, along with Professor Bob Harrison of UCSF have been providing critical technical advice to this newly formed testing coalition. Dr. Martin, an Oxford educated expert on infectious disease spread, was critical in informing our now shared goal of building towards a testing program that would strive for testing all staff and students every two weeks. Dr. Martin’s work shows that a biweekly cadence of testing, along with physical hygiene measures, can prevent close to 90-percent of potential COVID cases in schools.

Other health experts are also recommending a greater scope and frequency of COVID testing in schools. The Duke-Margolis Center for Health

Policy calls for testing all students and staff every two weeks and an increased frequency when disease trends worsen. And, if there is an outbreak in a class or school, at least two rounds of weekly testing may be needed to ensure COVID transmission has stopped.

ADVOCACY AT THE STATE LEVEL ON PROCURING TESTING RESOURCES

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) requires testing all school staff once every two months. CDPH directs schools to increase testing based on community spread. However, the CDPH’s plan does not envision testing our students, who just like adults, are able to spread COVID. In light of that shortage in the state’s plan, SDEA, along with SDUSD and

Mayor Faulconer, is also [advocating](#) for support from the State in procuring the tests needed by our schools.

ANY REOPENING PLAN MUST INCLUDE A TESTING PLAN

As we address the potential for future phases of reopening, it is critical that we as a union rally around a comprehensive testing program and plan for our schools. Many schools have reopened, only to reclose, because testing was not central to their response plan. Our bargaining team will be taking the lead on this important component for reopening as we reengage in impacts and effects bargaining of reopening with the school district.