

Subject: Comment for March 17 Board Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 11:10:48 AM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Katie Gardner <katiewgardner@gmail.com>

To: info@smcoe.org <info@smcoe.org>

To All,

I am writing to you to request that you please change the spacing guidance for San Mateo County schools from 6' down to 3'-4' so our schools can reopen full-time as early as this spring. Both the CDC and the State of California have given $\geq 4'$ guidance if it allows for the reopening of schools.

The [Journal of Infectious Disease](#) released a study last Wednesday that compared the impact of $\geq 3'$ vs $\geq 6'$ social distancing requirements where other safety protocols (masks) are strictly enforced. ***Conclusion: Lower physical distancing requirements can be adopted in school settings with masking mandates without negatively impacting student or staff safety.***

Dr. Fauci has also [publicly agreed](#), "the study appeared to indicate three feet would be sufficient distance to curb transmission of the virus."

Schools not only in California but right here in the Bay Area have followed these guidelines. [Kentfield School District](#) in Marin just announced they will modify their social distancing requirement and plan to bring ALL kids FULL TIME 5 days per week starting next week. If schools in Marin county (who follow CDPH guidelines) are able to adjust the social distance requirement, why do you refuse?

I have three children in the Menlo Park City School District and directly feel the educational loss and social/emotional drain this has taken on them. Our school district has gone 5 straight weeks now without one COVID case! There has also never been a case of in-school transmission. San Mateo County is now in the Orange Tier and all teachers and staff will have been fully vaccinated by next week. Please consider this email to be one of many voices advocating change in the policy at the upcoming meeting on March 17th.

We urge you to make the amendment to the Pandemic Recovery Framework immediately to allow our schools to fully prepare our sites for all students on campus, increase in-person learning for our students, and offer a more traditional school experience. It is safe and it is time.

Sincerely,

Katie Gardner

Subject: Comment for March 17 Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 5:51:18 PM Pacific Daylight Time

From: Chelsea Friedenbach <chelsea.collins831@gmail.com>

To: info@smcoe.org <info@smcoe.org>

Good Evening,

Thank you for hosting this meeting tonight and including public comment. I greatly appreciate it. I am a public school educator and live in San Carlos with my husband and two school-aged children. I have a few comments as well as questions this evening that I hope you can help answer.

My comments and questions are regarding social distancing in schools and how Judge Cynthia Freeland's recent ruling in the San Diego parent lawsuit against districts and the state, most notably, the temporary restraining order against the state, and how it plays a role in reopening schools and offering a free, appropriate and equitable education. Dr. Fauci reports that CDC will be releasing new information, whether it's a requirement, recommendation, or guidance regarding the number of feet for social distancing in schools, but how will semantics play a role with so many parties involved? The American Federation of Teachers union has commented on this future modification and appears to have concerns, immediately requesting a meeting with the CDC and already disagreeing with possible revisions. And we know the California Teachers Association will too. There are three filters to re-open schools, the state, the county and the teacher's unions. I truly believe a lack of state leadership and mandates has resulted in our current situation, an educational crisis. We now have SCIENCE, DATA, funding, PPE, and vaccines. Teachers, school staff and community members are or will be vaccinated soon. CA is 50th in re-opening its schools and providing our children with a quality education. How are we not acknowledging all that has changed from a year ago? Why are we not focusing and talking about a plan to return to school full-time in the fall? Are we going to continue to fail our students? In addition, the inconsistencies and inequities will continue to grow and gaps will increase without data-driven leadership and a plan for all CA schools and their students.

Thank you in advance for your time and response.

Kind Regards

--

Chelsea Friedenbach, M.A., CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathologist