Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools Released

Redwood City, CA—The San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE), along with the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities, released today the Pandemic Recovery Framework for Schools. The Framework provides school leaders with health, education, and legal guidance needed to develop their own local plans for a safe return to on-campus instruction and learning.

The Framework is based on science and best practices, was developed in direct consultation with San Mateo County’s Health Officer, and reflects guidance for schools recently released by the California Department of Public Health and the California Department of Education. It places a special focus on equity and meeting the needs of those students most severely impacted by the Shelter-in-Place order, including students from families with limited financial resources, students with special learning needs, students with disabilities, and students who are working below grade level or who are behind in credits.

The Framework is founded on Four Pillars essential to creating and sustaining the safest, most healthy environment for students and staff and to prevent the spread of communicable disease. These pillars include:

- **Health and Hygiene** - practicing daily hygiene routines, conducting daily health screenings, including temperature taking, providing essential protective equipment (EPE), and conducting effective cleaning routines.
- **Face Coverings** - based on extensive research, face coverings are essential to stem the spread of COVID-19 and are required for everyone on campus from kindergarten students to staff, except those, who for medical reasons, cannot wear one. Schools will provide information and guidelines on face coverings.
- **Physical Distancing** - is another critical element to limiting the spread of contagious disease, including COVID-19. Schools will employ strategies for limiting the number of people in any space, which may include alternative schedules for students, rearranging classrooms, using outdoor spaces for classrooms, and limiting the use of common areas on campus.
• **Limiting Gatherings** - addresses the need to limit in-person meetings and group events that occur outside of the instructional setting. Teachers and students convening for learning is an essential activity and does not constitute a gathering. Activities outside of the instructional setting should be conducted remotely, postponed or otherwise restructured.

The Framework also calls for an incremental but steady approach to reopening schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Although schools typically provide much more than academic instruction, a key goal for the 2020-21 school year is to maximize instructional time and provide high quality academic intervention and support.

Included in the Framework and its accompanying documents is guidance on addressing cases of COVID-19 in the school community, providing a continuum of instruction, supporting the mental health needs of students and staff, and preparing for a second wave of COVID-19, as well as other resources and information to help schools and districts develop plans for a return to on-campus instruction and learning.

According to San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee, “The Pandemic Recovery Framework anchors schools in the necessary pillars of public health that ensure the safest possible environment for staff, students, and families. Schools can rely on this guidance to craft their local plans for safe school operations that reflect local conditions and needs. It represents our shared goal of bringing students and staff back on campus, while recognizing that their safety is our paramount concern.”

The San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools, the San Mateo County Health Department, school district superintendents and staff, and members of the San Mateo County Counsel’s Office collaborated on drafting the Framework. The Steering Committee of the San Mateo County Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities and members of San Mateo County School Boards Association reviewed the Framework and provided recommendations.

The Framework and its accompanying documents, an FAQ, and additional resources for school administrators, teachers, and families will continue to be developed and updated and can be found on [SMCOE’s website](#).

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The San Mateo County Office of Education is committed to ensuring excellence and equity in education by inspiring students, investing in teachers, invigorating leaders, and involving communities.